This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

MID-CAREER WOMEN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN: NEGOTIATING LIFE, LIKE CLOCKWORK

presented by

MONICA MARCELIS FOCHTMAN

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education

Major Professor's Signature

AUGUST 12, 2010

Date

MSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

MID-CAREER WOMEN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN: NEGOTIATING LIFE, LIKE CLOCKWORK

By

Monica Marcelis Fochtman

A DISSERTATION
Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education

2010

ABSTRACT

MID-CAREER WOMEN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS
WITH YOUNG CHILDREN:
NEGOTIATING LIFE, LIKE CLOCKWORK

By

Monica Marcelis Fochtman

In the existing student affairs literature about career development and work-life balance, women administrators of all professional levels and women with children of all ages have been studied together. As a result, little is known about the unique rewards and challenges that result from simultaneously negotiating the different stages of motherhood and a career in student affairs administration. The purpose of the current study was to better understand the tools and strategies mid-career women used to negotiate their multiple roles and the mechanisms they used to make meaning of their experiences. The study specifically focused on mid-career professionals because the mid-career stage is a time of personal and professional convergence, especially for women. Using a qualitative research approach, multiple in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 mid-career women student affairs administrators who were also mothers to young children, infant to age five. Mid-career was defined as more than five years of professional experience, but less than 15 years.

Data analyses revealed three main themes related to how women negotiated their lives as mid-career mothers. Those themes included: (1) like clockwork- the timing and alignment of multiple roles; (2) make it count- tools and strategies participants used to maximize their time; and (3) scaffolding- the support structures participants utilized to help them negotiate their multiple realities. Two themes related

to why the participants chose motherhood and student affairs also emerged from the data. The women were (1) agents of their own experiences and (2) actively chose to maximize their mid-career time to help them achieve various personal and professional goals. I referred to these choices as "mid-career agency." The women were motivated to persist in student affairs administration because they saw themselves as part of a larger collective of mothers and student affairs professionals. As a result, they blazed a path for themselves, their children, their students and institutions, and for the next generation of professionals.

The lived experiences of mid-career women with young children suggest that a dichotomous rendering of work-life balance is no longer useful and the national conversation about work-life balance should be re-conceptualized. Participants did not experience work-life balance; rather, they negotiated their various realities in purposeful and meaningful ways. It was the convergence of motherhood and work that made their lives challenging and rewarding. In addition, findings from the current study diverge from previous renderings of mid-career as a stagnant time. The participants were not stuck at mid-career and they were not victims; they were the creators of their own experiences who chose to make the most of their mid-career positions.

Findings from the study have implications for student affairs professionals at all career levels, as well as those who are parents and non-parents. Policies such as parental leave, flexible time, and compensatory time should be widely available to student affairs administrators. By example, mid-career and upper-level administrators should create an office culture where staffs are actively encouraged to utilize these policies.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the men in my life,

Connor, Luke, and Sean Fochtman,

kind, honest, smart, funny, generous, and warriors, all;

and to mid-career working mothers everywhere.

Guilt, be gone! We are smart, powerful, and strong.

And, best of all, we are not alone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pursuing a doctorate degree can be an isolating process, especially the writing stage. I was alone with my data, codes, themes, and thoughts for months. Yet, I was never lonely. There are many people who supported me- emotionally, physically, spiritually, and financially- on this journey. I am grateful for the opportunity to thank them here.

I would like to say thank you to the members of my committee- Drs. Jayne Schuiteman, Marilyn Amey, Kristen Renn, and Matthew Wawrzynski, my advisor and chair. I appreciate the time that you invested to give me such careful and thoughtful feedback throughout this process.

Jayne, I am thankful for your "can-do" attitude and cheerful perspective on life, work, and motherhood. I barely knew you when I walked into your office and held my breath hoping you would agree to serve on my proposal guidance committee. I am grateful you said yes! Thank you for sticking around until the bitter end. I appreciate your wisdom.

Marilyn, you are one of the strongest women I have ever met. It has been my privilege to work with you these past five years. If I hadn't needed to drop your class in Spring 2007, I would never have done that independent study (Summer 2007), which led to the summer research fellowship and my pilot study (Summer 2008), which led me here to this. Thank you for planting the seeds and then stepping back to let me nurture them.

Kris, who knew that when we met at Boston College almost 13 years ago, our lives would continue to cross paths like this? Thank you for all of your cheerleading

over the past five years, especially the last 15 months. I appreciate your kind heart and your willingness to talk me down from my qualitative research cliff. Your insights have been invaluable to me. I am grateful to be your colleague and excited to see how and where our paths will cross again next!

Matt, THANK YOU for helping me focus on the end result and reminding me that hurdles could be moved forward or backward. I appreciate that you let me have my own timelines and priorities throughout this process. Your words of wisdom to "just touch it every day and keep making progress" were so helpful to me. Although it was hard, I appreciate that you kept pushing me to do my best work. I am really proud of this dissertation and you were a big part of that, thanks.

I would not have finished this dissertation without the encouragement and support of my writing partner, peer de-briefer, and cohort mate, Dr. Katie Stolz. Katie, I appreciated your patience with my long and circular writing process. Having those weekly meetings with you really pushed me to keep going. I will miss our Wednesday night tea and conversation sessions. I look forward to many more conferences and professional collaborations.

Carole Hughes, Ph.D. has been my mentor for 12 years. I am so fortunate to have her in my life! Carole, thank you for listening and encouraging me to forge ahead. You always listened without judging and I am forever grateful for the grace and acceptance you have shown me. I am thankful for all of your advice: "Eyes on the prize." "Your life right now is not your life forever." I took notes during every one of our conversations this last year and I referred to those sticky notes often. I am so inspired by and grateful for you, Carole. Thank you for being my friend.

It was my great honor and privilege to "meet" the 10 women who served as participants in this study: Alice, Amelia, Brenda, Diana, Diane, Eva, Judy, Madelyn, Monique, and Toni. I am grateful for your generous spirits and willingness to share the intimate details of your lives with me. This profession is fortunate to have amazing leaders like you. You are, indeed, "blazing a path" for your children and the next generation of women student affairs professionals.

My passion for education was nourished by my family, especially my parents, Eileen Marcelis and William Marcelis. Now that I am a parent, also, I know and appreciate the sacrifices they made to send me and my siblings to all those years of private school. Mom and Dad, thank you. I am also blessed with supportive and generous siblings and extended family. Thank you to the Marcelis, Russella, Carroll, Fochtman, and Henry families for the love and encouragement you showed me, especially this last year. I am blessed to have you in my corner.

I have waited three years to write the next three paragraphs about the men in my life. I think it was Margaret Thatcher who said, "Behind every great man, is a woman." While I think that is true in most situations, ***behind me*** are the most amazing, kind, and generous ***men*** that any ***woman*** could ever know. My words here do not do them justice.

My son, Connor Michael Fochtman, you have blessed my life with your smile, snuggles, hugs, and kisses. Connor, you make me laugh *every day* and you fill my heart with pure joy. Thank you for being the agreeable, flexible, kind, and generous boy you are. No more, "Momma, home wait." This dissertation is finally done and my attention is all yours! Let's go have some fun!

My son, Luke Ignatius Fochtman, you made me a mother and every day I have tried to be worthy of that gift. I am inspired by your wisdom, strength, positive attitude, and your tenacity. Sometimes I forget that you are four! I cannot wait to see and hear what you will do next, buddy. Watching you fight and defeat cancer the last 15 months was the most humbling and inspiring experience of my life. There just aren't enough words to express how proud of you I am. Your courage has made me strong and because of you, I know there is nothing that we can't do!

Last, and *most important*, I could not have done any of this without the love, support, and encouragement of my best friend, husband, and partner, Sean Christopher Fochtman. For the last five years, I have literally disappeared every weeknight from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. and all day on Saturday and Sunday so I could do "homework." Not once, not ever, did you say "no." Anytime I was asked, "how do you do it?" my immediate response was always, "I have Sean." And, I thank God for you every day. You have taken everything in stride and been an amazing friend, husband, and father. There aren't enough stars in the sky to express my gratitude to you. I might be earning a doctorate- finally!- but you have earned my eternal devotion and thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Brief History of the Student Affairs Profession

During the colonial period of American higher education, faculty members taught, lived with, and disciplined their students (Nuss, 1996; Thelin, 2004). Co-curricular organizations and events emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a student-led response to the strict oversight of student time and out-of-classroom activities, which began in colonial times. Students banded together and formed literary societies, debate clubs, and Greek-letter organizations to meet their growing desires for social outlets and more holistic development (Nuss; Thelin, 1990). At the same time, American colleges increasingly embraced the German model of education and its focus on research; consequently, demands on faculty time and interest mounted and faculty could no longer supervise their students' out-of-classroom activities and development (Nuss). These events, along with other watershed events such as the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the increased participation of women and minorities in higher education, helped set the stage for the development of the student affairs profession in the early 1900s (Nuss).

Some of the earliest student affairs professionals were vocational counselors who worked in "organized placement bureaus supervised by staff specialists" (Nuss, 1996, p. 28). Student health centers emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and by the 1920s campuses had even more specialized positions such as dean of men, dean of women, social director, and career counselors (Nuss). Like American higher education in general, the student affairs profession has evolved; once a small group of

people with narrowly focused job responsibilities, it now constitutes an expansive cadre of professionals serving in diverse roles on campus. At the core of the student affairs profession is a commitment to the holistic development of students. In 1937, a group of college administrators gathered in Washington, D.C. to discuss their work, share ideas and strategies, and make recommendations to the Committee on Problems and Plans in Education of the American Council on Education (ACE). As a result of their meeting, the group released a report entitled, *The Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1937), a document which laid the foundation for the student affairs profession. The document articulates the student affairs profession's core value of caring for students as individuals and honoring their development in all areas: emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. *The Student Personnel Point of View* also called on administrators to serve as role models for students, in and out of the classroom.

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s saw increased federal regulation of higher education, which led to even more specialized student affairs positions on campus. The 1970s brought significant change to American higher education as *in loco parentis* was challenged in courts and the role of student affairs professionals shifted again from disciplinarian to programmer and educator (Nuss). Student affairs professionals continue to serve important functions such as administrators, counselors, and student educators (Young, et. al., 1990; Sandeen, 1991).

Women in Student Affairs

Since its inception, women have been active members of the student affairs profession. The profession itself can be traced back to the dean of women position which originated in the late 1800s; women were also pioneers in the development of

student affairs professional organizations (Schwartz, 1997). Despite women's significant contributions to the profession, women have not always had equal representation in the field, either on campus or nationally. During the 1960s and 1970s many colleges and universities moved toward co-education; as a result of this movement, the dean of women position was phased out or replaced with a dean of students position. Consequently, the women administrators who served as deans of women also disappeared from campus leadership (Schwartz, 1997). Women did not achieve representation in association leadership until the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) elected its first female president in 1976 (Nuss). Unfortunately, the trend of women's underrepresentation in advanced leadership positions on campus continues. "Women are underrepresented at senior administrative levels and clustered disproportionately in those positions requiring the greatest amount of student contact and offering the least potential for advancement" (Blackhurst, 2000, p. 400).

Women at mid-career in student affairs

It is important to note that any definition of mid-career or middle management in student affairs is not exhaustive, given the unique characteristics of institutional size and type, job titles, and job descriptions within the student affairs profession (Houdyshell, 2007). The definition utilized in this study incorporated those advanced by Young (1990), Carpenter (1990), and Penn (1990). Young identified a middle manager as "one who manages professional staff and/or one or more student affairs functional areas" (p. 10). Carpenter added that middle managers are usually in their late 20s to early 40s and are sometimes also mid-career professionals. Penn suggested that mid-

career student affairs professionals worked in functional areas such as housing, financial aid, or student activities and hold professional titles such as assistant or associate dean/director. Although Young and his colleagues used the term middle management, the term mid-career is used in the current study, as not all mid-career professionals are middle managers. Additionally, I was more interested in the number of years women worked in the profession than in their administrative titles.

Women in their 30s are often building their careers, establishing professional reputations, and in many cases, also starting a family (Evans, 1986). For student affairs professionals, many women in their 30s are also in mid-career positions; in addition, many women choose to have children during this time (Belch, 1991; Belch & Strange, 1995; Carpenter, 1990; Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004). Thus, for women, the mid-career stage collides with prime child-bearing years. Despite this fact, there is little literature which reflected these intersections. Currently, there is literature about women in student affairs, student affairs professionals with children, and student affairs professionals at mid-career; however, after an extensive review of the literature, nothing that combined all three could be found. Blackhurst (2000) suggested that future research include questions relevant to both mid-career professionals and women with children, "continued investigation into the effects of parenting status and relationship status on the career satisfaction and personal well-being of women in student affairs seems warranted" (p. 412). The focus of the current study was mid-career women student affairs administrators with young children.

Women student affairs professionals with children

The literature about the career development of student affairs professionals is focused on entry-level professionals and causes of job strain or stress (Berwick, 1992), attrition (Burns, 1982; Evans, 1988; Ward, 1995), or the career paths of successful professionals in the latter stages of their careers (Barrax, 1985; Evans & Kuh, 1983; Tinsley, 1985). Within the student affairs literature, only a few studies included student affairs professionals with children. The studies that did include women with children (Bird, 1984; Belch, 1991; Belch & Strange, 1995; Marshall, 2002; Marshall & Jones, 1990; Nobbe & Manning, 1997) did not separate women by career stage or by the number or age of their children. Women administrators at all professional levels have been studied together, as have women with children of all ages. Thus, the unique rewards and challenges of entry, middle, and upper level administrative positions are lost in the analysis as are the different needs and benefits which come with having small, school-aged, or adult children.

I discuss the literature about women student affairs administrators with children in greater detail in Chapter two. Briefly, findings from the literature suggested that women student affairs administrators found great joy in their roles of professional and mother and that having children helped them become more efficient and effective professionals (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004). However, the presence of children also led to significant trade-offs in other areas, including but not limited to: lack of professional advancement and career options; delaying or giving up educational goals; and lack of time for self (Marshall; Marshall & Jones, 1990; Nobbe & Manning).

Findings from Nobbe and Manning (1997) and Marshall's studies (2002) suggested that women administrators with children were able to balance their dual roles because they were excellent time managers, had reliable day-care for their children, and many also had supportive husbands who helped co-parent. Although important to the body of literature about women administrators with children, neither Nobbe and Manning nor Marshall's studies addressed questions specific to how women navigated or made sense of their experiences as administrators and mothers. In addition, Nobbe and Manning's study was exploratory in nature and is now almost 12 years old. Marshalls' study, although more recent, was focused on upper level administrators with school-aged children.

Reason for the Study

Findings from the pilot study I conducted in summer 2008, anecdotal conversations and meetings with other mid-career women, and my own experiences as a student affairs administrator with small children continually suggested that being a mid-career mother was not only common, but critical. Yet, existing literature about work-life "balance" only focused on two roles, professional and mother and consequently continued the work/life dichotomy. Women will continue to have children; many women will also choose to work in the context of higher education. Some women will also choose to have children and a career in student affairs administration. In addition, the critical periods of motherhood and mid-career will likely continue to collide. It is important, then, for the student affairs profession to understand why women choose to have careers and families, the specifics of how they manage those choices, and the

practical tools and support structures that can be implemented to support professionals with children.

Research Question

The current study was guided by the research question: How do mid-career women student affairs administrators with small children negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles? More specifically, the research question was subdivided into two smaller parts: (1) negotiate and (2) make sense. The first question, negotiate, was a question of "how." I investigated the specific tools and strategies women used to negotiate their lives. The second question, make sense, was a "why" question; I asked women to reflect on their multiple roles and the sense-making and meaning-making processes they used to understand those roles. For the purpose of the current study, the unit of analysis was individual women, specifically women student affairs professionals with more than five but less than 15 years of professional experience who were also the mothers of young children. I intentionally solicited participants with five or more years of professional experience to distinguish them from new professionals and more senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) both of whom were already included in the literature.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that informed the current study included two key ideas: (1) navigational tools and strategies and (2) individual sense making. This framework influenced the interview protocol I used with participants and served as the foundational principles I considered throughout data collection and analysis. Dividing the research question into two constructs served two important purposes. First, I hoped to learn more about the practical tools and strategies mid-career women used as they

negotiated their lives. Findings from the existing literature addressed the challenges of balancing a career in the academy with family demands; however, the literature did *not* address the *specifics* of how women actually negotiated this "balance." I wanted to know more about the practicality of participants' lives, including: time at work; time spent with children; how they managed the second shift (Hochschild, 1989); finding time for personal interests and hobbies; and strategies for maintaining relationships and friendships. Second, by asking specific questions about individual sense making, I hoped to better understand the meaning women discerned from their multiple roles. Research findings suggested that women student affairs professionals *knew* that managing a career and family is difficult, yet, many women continue to do just that (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002). The current study explored "how" and "why" women negotiated their lives. I address the purpose and significance of the current study and its potential contribution to the student affairs literature in the following section.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The existing work-life balance literature in higher education focused on the challenges and obstacles facing working families, specifically tenure track faculty with children. Findings from the literature revealed that while work-life balance is difficult for everyone, it is even more so for women because women bear children and despite having familial support, women continued to shoulder the majority of child-rearing responsibilities as well (Curtis, 2004; Drago, et al, 2005; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004a; Williams, 2004). The academic motherhood literature revealed similar findings (Armenti, 2004a, 2004b; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Mason & Goulden, 2004; Philipsen,

2008; Pillay, 2007; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b). Although the work-life "balance" and academic motherhood literature are helpful in understanding some of the cultural and systemic biases that exist within the academy, both of these literatures are focused exclusively on faculty and it remains unclear if student affairs professional contend with the same issues as their faculty counterparts. Consequently, there is a gap in the literature regarding the work-life/family balance, child-bearing, and childrearing strategies used by student affairs professionals.

The purpose of the current study was to better understand how women negotiated and made sense of their many roles and the benefits, rewards, and constraints that resulted from having young children *and* a mid-career student affairs position. Findings from the small-scale pilot study that I conducted in summer 2008 suggested that previous conceptualizations of women's roles and their work-life "balance" did not align with the actual lived experiences of mid-career mothers. These findings from my pilot study informed the conceptual and methodological approach I used in the current study.

As a feminist and a qualitative researcher, I began my study with two key assumptions. First, I assumed that women were juggling multiple roles, not just two, as previous literature suggested. Second, I assumed that the existing conceptualizations of work-family "balance" did not match how women thought about the relationship between their work and life, nor did it match how women actually lived their lives. Rather than perpetuating the work-life "dichotomy," I intentionally investigated the specific tools and strategies participants used to negotiate their roles, a focus that was also missing from the existing literature.

Although parenting is rewarding and challenging at every stage, young children, by their very nature, require a different level of time and attention than do older children. In addition, young children who are not yet school-age require constant care and supervision (Bianchi, 2000; Hallberg & Klevmarken, 2003; Silver, 2000). Thus, the child-care and day-care needs of small children represent significant time and financial burdens to working women. Previous studies on women with children (Bird, 1984; Marshall, 2002; Marshall & Jones, 1990; Nobbe & Manning, 1997) failed to acknowledge the realities and challenges of parenting young children while balancing a career in student affairs.

The literature about women's career development revealed that women juggle and balance multiple roles throughout their lives, not just at the beginning and end of their careers. Unfortunately, the existing literature about career development for women student affairs professionals focused on those in entry-level or chief student affairs positions, with little being known about the middle stages. I intentionally focused on mid-career student affairs professionals in the current study, a group that has been excluded from student affairs research. Studying the lived experiences of mid-career women student affairs professionals with children provided a more detailed picture of the rewards, obstacles, and challenges that they faced and provided insight into the reasons that they continued to choose family and work. My study also contributes to the literature by reflecting how women student affairs administrators negotiate their lives, rather than perpetuating a dichotomous picture of work-life "balance" that women do not actually practice.

Findings from the current study indicate that women student affairs administrators negotiated multiple roles. How those roles were negotiated was a function of role salience and alignment. The participants in my study also indicated that rather than managing their time, they "made their time count" at work and at home by mentally focusing on the task at hand and continually renegotiating the relationship between their personal and professional lives. The women in my study were agents of their own experiences and actively chose to see their mid-career professional positions as opportunities for growth. The participants also articulated a profound desire to "pay it forward" and as such, they blazed a path for their children, their students and institutions, and the next generation of professionals.

My study was significant for several reasons. First, the participants in my study can serve as role models for future generations of women who may choose to simultaneously negotiate motherhood and a career in student affairs. Understanding the practical tools and strategies women used to negotiate their multiple roles can also help women who are currently mid-career and mothers negotiate their own lives in a way that is meaningful for them. Second, my study has broader implications for policy and practice, especially for: entry-level professionals who may someday advance to mid-career positions, mid-career professionals who supervise new professionals and report to senior administrators, and senior level administrators who may supervise mid-career professionals and professionals with children.

Definitions of Terms

I used the following terms and definitions in the current study.

Academic motherhood. The body of literature which examined the childbearing, childrearing and work-life balance strategies of tenured or tenure-track women faculty with children.

ACPA. American College Personnel Association. A national professional organization for student affairs administrators.

Faculty. Full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

Mid-career. Administrators working in a student affairs functional area, with at least five, but less than 15 years of professional experience.

Mid-career mothers. Abbreviated term I used throughout the study to refer to the participants who were mid-career women student affairs professionals with young children.

NASPA. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). A national professional organization for student affairs administrators.

Professional organizations/national associations. The various national organizations that student affairs administrators join to network with colleagues and continue to gain professional expertise. The professional development that these associations provide can take many forms including: on-line training seminars, conferences, and access to scholarly journals and publications.

Senior student affairs officer (SSAO). The highest ranking student affairs professional on her/his respective campus. Titles associated with this position usually include, but are not limited to, Dean of Students or Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA).

Student affairs functional areas. Areas that include but are not limited to: academic advising; admissions; career services; counseling; dining and food service; fraternity

and sorority life; financial aid; housing and residence life; judicial affairs; leadership development; orientation; and student activities.

Vice president for student affairs (VPSA). The most senior ranking student affairs officer on campus.

Work-life/family "balance." A broad term that encompassed various aspects of an employee's life: work, time away from work, children and child-care issues, elder/older parent care, family leave policies and benefits, health and wellness issues. Although other commitments outside of work were addressed in participant interviews, these commitments were not a focus of the current study. The current study focused on the childbearing and child-rearing aspects of women's lives.

Young children. Children who were infant to age five.

Organization of the Study

This study contains seven chapters. This chapter, chapter one, provided a brief introduction to the student affairs profession and the existing literature about women student affairs professionals who are also mothers. I highlighted gaps in the literature and the need for more research about student affairs professionals was discussed. I also explained the research questions which guided my study. Chapter two includes a review of the literature related to women's career development; career development within student affairs; work-life or work-family balance; women administrators with children and academic motherhood, the literature about women faculty with children. In chapter three, I explain the methodology and methods used to explore the research question. Chapter four contains detailed portraits of each participant and includes information about their personal histories and career trajectories, age and number of their children,

relationship status, mentors and support networks, and personal interests and hobbies. The themes which emerged from the data are discussed in chapters five and six. Chapter five contains findings related to "how" participants negotiated their roles and responsibilities. Chapter six explains "why" participants chose to stay mid-career and the agency they used to make the most of their experiences. The seventh and final chapter includes an in-depth discussion of the findings related to being a mid-career mother in student affairs and the implications of those findings for both policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

As outlined in chapter one, the focus of the current study was mid-career women student affairs administrators who are the mothers of small children, infant to age five. The related literature that I draw from includes five broad categories: women's career development; career development within student affairs; work-life or work-family balance; academic motherhood, the literature about women faculty with children; and women administrators with children. In this chapter, I review the relevant literature within each broad category to provide an overview of major themes and findings and, where appropriate, identify gaps and areas where further research is needed.

Women's Career Development

In student affairs the career development literature did not address the personal career development issues of women, instead the existing literature referred to cohorts of people by career stage with primary attention paid to entry and senior-level administrators, virtually ignoring the mid-career stages. To better understand careers in general and women's career development specifically, I examined the business and human resource literature where the developmental issues women face were explored.

Early career development literature focused on men and their career trajectories. As women entered the workforce, the literature about them and their career development slowly followed; consequently, the study of women's career development is scattered across disciplines such as business, economics, education, psychology,

sociology, and women's studies. The literature about women's career development can be divided into three main phases. The first phase, from the 1960s and 1970s, highlighted women's unprecedented entrée into the professional workforce. The second, from the 1980s and 1990s, explained differences in male and female career trajectories; examined reasons women left and/or returned to the workforce; and stressed the urgent need for career development programs to match women's unique career needs and priorities. The third, most recent phase focused on issues and trends for women in the twenty-first century. Within the broader category of "career development" authors have included other constructs such as: education; workforce entry and departure; sexual harassment; the glass ceiling; mentoring; childbearing effects; and non-traditional work arrangements. The cumulative effect of all these factors is a body of literature without cohesive theory about women's career development (O'Neil, et al., 2008; Schreiber, 2008).

Although patterns of women's career development do not fit traditional career stage theory (Carter, 2002), careful examination of existing literature revealed two key themes that are also relevant to the current study of mid-career women. First, findings from the career literature suggested that women's careers follow different trajectories from men's, a finding that is consistent in the literature about the career development of student affairs professionals as well (Belch & Strange, 1995; Renn & Hughes, 2004; Young, et al., 1990). Second, by their very nature and structure, careers and organizations are not designed for women and women's life cycles (Acker, 2000); the work-life and academic motherhood literature in higher education support these findings as well. These two themes are reviewed further in the subsequent sections.

Women's career trajectories

Typically, women's careers do not follow the same linear trajectory as men's but tend to be more cyclical in nature, characterized by lateral moves, stop-outs and/or alternative work strategies such as part-time work, job-sharing, and telecommuting (Kropf, 1998; Schreiber, 1998). Women's careers have a cyclical pattern for several reasons: childbearing and childrearing responsibilities impact women and their career trajectories in more significant ways than they do men (Kropf); women face discrimination and bias in the workplace, especially in the forms of the glass ceiling and pipeline problems; women have different views of what constitutes professional "success" (Matzat, 1992); and finally, women more often incorporate their professional work and career status into their core identities (Auster, 2001; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; O'Neil, et al., 2008; Schreiber, 1998; Whitmarsh, et al., 2007;).

"Male" careers and organizations

Despite the fact that women have been a significant part of the American workforce since the 1970s, careers and organizations are structured in ways that privilege men and male career trajectories; careers and organizations are designed for White men with stay-at-home wives who handle the childbearing, childrearing, and household responsibilities (Acker, 2000). Because men had a wife who stayed home and handled all the household responsibilities, men were then expected to work a traditional forty-hour work week and more if necessary. Acker labeled this phenomenon, the ideal worker. Career development literature from the 1990s called for changes to career development and training programs, suggesting that training programs

based on male models of trajectory and success were incompatible with women's career timelines and priorities (Kropf, 1998). Even in the new millennium, authors are still challenging the business world to change the model and structure of organizations to better suit women's multiple roles and responsibilities (Shapiro, et al., 2008; Whitmarsh, et al., 2007). Recent literature suggests that in order to retain women in the workforce, especially women with children, the very nature of careers must change and career development and training programs need to be redesigned (O'Neil, et al., 2008). Women's career development scholars and advocates have also questioned the use of terms such as opting-out, stopping-out, or mommy-track because they privilege linear-male- trajectories as the norm, thus relegating careers that do not fit that pattern to deviant or other status (Shapiro, et al.; Whitmarsh, et al.).

Findings from the work-life balance (Curtis, 2004; Drago, et al., 2005; Williams, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004a) and academic motherhood literature (Armenti, 2004a, 2004b; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b) from higher education reviewed later in this chapter suggested that the work and reward (i.e., tenure) systems in higher education are also designed for White males with stay-at-home spouses and are therefore structurally biased against women. Research on mid-career student affairs professionals also suggested that the student affairs profession should rethink its definition of success to include non-traditional career paths such as those often taken by women (Belch & Strange, 1995).

Business literature about mid-career

The business literature about mid-career women provided insight into the unique rewards and challenges of the mid-career stages for women (Gersick & Kram, 2002;

Gordon & Whelan-Berry, 2000; Mott, 1998; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; O'Neil, et al., 2008). In the business literature, mid-career was defined as the time in a woman's professional life when she had proven herself beyond the new professional stage, was establishing her professional reputation, and looking forward to potential retirement (Whelan-Berry & Gordon). While mid-career was a time of professional promise, it can also be a time of great stress as mid-career women were constantly juggling questions of identity and purpose (Gersick & Kram, Gordon & Whelan-Berry, O'Neil et al.). These questions of identity are often related to women's multiple roles and responsibilities and can involve significant decisions such as: choosing to marry/partner; have children; continue educational endeavors; stay in the workplace or leave for other endeavors; and caring for elderly or aging parents (Gersick & Kram, Gordon & Whelan-Berry, O'Neil & Bilimoria, O'Neil et al.). Research also suggested that having advanced positions and school-aged children provided greater freedom and flexibility than did entry-level positions and having young children (Whelan-Berry). Thus, mid-career is a collision of personal and professional obligations that women must negotiate and make sense of, often without help from their respective organizations or institutions.

Limitations of the business literature

Although relevant to the current study, the business literature on mid-career women is not without its limitations. For example, most of the literature was a retrospective analysis; the research was conducted with women who were *already beyond* midcareer. The existing career development literature involved senior level or mid-life (aged 45-55 years) women reflecting back on their experiences at mid-career;

there is little literature about mid-career women that was conducted with women *while* they were mid-career. Another disadvantage of the business literature is that there has not been a consistent definition of terms. More specifically, terms such as mid-career and mid-life are often used interchangeably. This is problematic for the current study because not all student affairs professionals who are mid-career are also in the mid-life stage, and vice versa. Literature particular to career development in student affairs is reviewed in the following section to provide a more complete picture of the unique nature of the student affairs profession in general and the middle career stages in particular.

Career Development in Student Affairs

As explained in chapter one, the literature about student affairs professionals focused either on entry-level professionals and causes of attrition (Bender, 1980; Burns, 1982; Evans, 1988; Ward, 1995; Wood, et al., 1983), or the career trajectories and mobility of seasoned professionals who have attained high-ranking positions (Barrax, 1985; Evans & Kuh, 1985; Tinsley, 1985). The attrition literature (Evans, Ward, Wood, et al.) suggested two primary reasons for departure from the student affairs profession: role strain or stress (Berwick, 1992) and low levels of job/career satisfaction (Bender, 1980; Blackhurst, 2000; Blackhurst, et al., 1998); in addition, women have a higher attrition rate from the profession than their male colleagues (Burns, 1982). The literature about successful student affairs administrators focused on questions of mobility and career path (Barrax, Evans & Kuh, Tinsley); specific issues related to childbearing, childrearing, and gender were not examined in any of these studies.

The existing student affairs literature served as bookends, informative about the developmental issues relevant to the beginning and end of student affairs careers with little information about the middle stages. There are three pieces of literature focused specifically on mid-career student affairs professionals (Belch & Strange, 1995; Renn & Hughes, 2004; Young, et al. 1990); each of which is discussed in the next section to highlight the rewards and challenges unique to this career stage.

Student affairs professionals at mid-career

Scott's (1980) work, *Lords, squires, and yeomen: Collegiate middle-managers in the U.S.* laid the foundation for examining middle managers in higher education; however, this text offered a less than flattering view of this position. Scott stated that the middle manager's experience was characterized by professional dissatisfaction, organizational conflict, and powerlessness. Scott also suggested that by encouraging specialization, professional organizations indirectly contributed to the dissatisfactory middle experience. Young's (1990) edited volume, *The invisible leaders: Student affairs mid- managers,* was a response to Scott and brought positive attention to middle managers in student affairs by highlighting the unique rewards and challenges of the sometimes invisible middle manager. In their book, Young and his colleagues defined mid-management, highlighted the different needs and challenges mid-managers faced, and offered professional development strategies for mid-managers and their supervisors. Mid-management was defined as administration, but not counseling or instruction; in addition, middle managers supervised staff and managed programs, but were not part of the college or university's executive leadership.

Houdyshell's (2007) study focused on the benefits and challenges of the mid-career stage and how that influenced participants' "professional development, satisfaction, and intention to stay in the field" (Houdyshell, 2007, p. 13). Participants in his study were between the ages of 30 and 55, had earned Master's degrees, worked in student affairs functional areas, and had previously attended a mid-career institute sponsored by either ACPA or NASPA. Houdyshell's (2007) research was grounded in the premise that how the student affairs field and institutions portrayed the mid-career stage did not match professionals' actual experiences. He used this mismatch to suggest that professional development for mid-career professionals focus on people's actual experiences of mid-career, not the field's perceptions of what mid-career professionals should be experiencing. In his discussion, Houdyshell suggested that rather than trying to establish clear boundaries or markers- such as reporting lines or titles- to define the mid-career stages, the student affairs profession shift its focus to student affairs professionals actually experience while they are mid-career.

The existing literature about student affairs professionals at mid-career is small, especially when compared to the literature about entry and senior level professionals. This scarcity of information is an interesting parallel to middle managers themselves, who reported feeling invisible and unappreciated (Young, et al., 1990). Middle managers' feelings of invisibility can be attributed to lack of understanding about the middle manager position and it's often conflicting commitments. Middle managers and mid-career professionals are often in the challenging position of administering programs and services that they do not have the power to change or redirect, all while serving students and supervising staff (Young, et al., 1990). The difficulties of mid-career are

compounded by the fact that this is the time in life when professional and personal obligations collide, requiring constant negotiation of roles and responsibilities (Belch, 1991; Belch & Strange, 1995; Fochtman, 2008; Renn & Hughes, 2004).

Mid-career stages. Prior to 1995, the literature about professional mobility in student affairs was quantitative and talked about mobility as an aggregate concept (Belch & Strange, 1995). To give attention to individual voices and to learn more about the experiences of those professionals in the middle management trenches, Belch and Strange interviewed three men and three women student affairs professionals working as deans or directors at different types of institutions. All three of the women participants were married, although two of them did not have children. Of the men, two were married with children and one man was divorced without children. All of the participants were middle managers, although their time as middle managers varied. To distinguish between those who were "new" (quotations mine) mid-managers and those with longer tenures in mid-management, Belch and Strange (1995) suggested three stages of mid-management: early, mid, and late. Early was defined as five years or less in a middle management position. Mid was five to eight years and late mid-management was defined as eight or more years in a middle-manager position.

Belch and Strange's (1995) data analysis revealed four themes: the meaning of mid-management, career aspirations, dilemmas and choices, and career orientation. Two distinct career orientations were identified: transitory and professional. Those with a transitory orientation saw their current position as a means to another more advanced position, while those with professional orientations had made conscious choices to stay at their current level of employment. Variations in the middle manager position and the

tasks required depended upon participants' career stage (early, mid, late) and orientation (transitory or professional), institutional context (small, large, public, or private) and personal characteristics (marital and parental status, age, and gender). All six of the participants stated that "multiple roles and inherent conflicts were an expected part of everyday functioning" (p. 212). The fact that middle managers *know* that conflict is part of their jobs speaks to the challenging nature of the middle manager position and the level of skill and resilience one must have in order to persist in such a position.

Consistent with the business career development literature, the men in Belch (1991) and Belch and Strange's (1995) studies defined their career aspirations in distinct, linear terms and articulated desires to pursue upper level administrative positions. Women were equally committed to their careers as their male colleagues; however, unlike men, the women admitted that their personal commitments outside of work influenced ***how much*** time and attention went to their careers. This translated into the possibility of not pursuing upper level positions, or delaying the job search in favor of other life pursuits such as marriage, children, or volunteering. Although women participants were more likely to cite personal commitments and responsibilities as reasons for their non-linear career trajectories, *all* of the participants in Belch (1991) and Belch and Strange's (1995) study talked about the challenging nature of the middle manager position and its coincidence with major life-cycle changes. For example, during the course of the study, two of the participants became first-time parents, one participant was widowed, and a third went through a divorce and lost a parent. The challenges of middle management are not only the intense and vague nature of the position itself, but also the fact that major life changes occur simultaneously.

Traditional hierarchical models of organizational structure and career path suggested a linear model of career mobility (Belch & Strange, 1995); in this traditional model, organizations and career paths are like pyramids, with more positions available at the bottom and fewer at the top. Consistent with the business literature about women's career development, Belch and Strange's (1995) findings suggested that a cyclical view of career progression was more useful and appropriate in understanding the changing needs, priorities, and subsequent decisions that middle managers made about their careers, *especially women*. The authors concluded that as a profession, student affairs needed to reconsider "its assumptions about what constitutes a successful career path in the field" (p. 217).

Similar to Belch & Strange's (1995) findings, personal narratives from mid-career women in student affairs revealed that the mid-career stages were rife with personal and professional questions, decisions, and subsequent trade-offs (Renn & Hughes, 2004). Some of these issues include but are not limited to: pursuing a doctorate, maintaining dual-career relationships, motherhood, and finding long-term positions (Renn & Hughes). The women authors who contributed to Renn and Hughes' edited volume also stated that the notion of balance was elusive for anyone in the profession, but especially for women with children. Although the expectations of student affairs culture were demanding, it was equally rewarding; mid-career women expressed deep satisfaction with their professional roles and were confident in their decisions to pursue and continue their careers in higher education.

The career development literature suggested that women always negotiate multiple roles, regardless of career stage (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005); therefore, women

should be studied at every career stage, not just at the beginning and end of their careers as the current student affairs literature reflects. "Mid-career is a particularly interesting stage to focus on for professional women because it is often the period during which work/life tradeoffs and the struggle to juggle the needs of children and high performance expectations collide" (Auster, 2001, p. 720). The existing literature about mid-career student affairs professionals mixed men and women, parents and non-parents. Only Renn and Hughes' book focused exclusively on mid-career *women* administrators, but their work was based on anecdotal evidence, not empirical research. All of these factors suggest the need for more research on mid-career women in order to accurately understand their experiences. The current study addressed this gap in the existing literature by studying mid-career student affairs professionals while they are in the mid-career stages. Literature about work-life/family "balance" within the context of higher education is reviewed in the next section.

Work-life/family "Balance"

Broadly conceived, work-life "balance" is a term used to explain the various aspects of employees' lives inside and outside of the workplace, which can include but are not limited to: time at and away from work; flexible or non-traditional work arrangements; children and child-care issues; elder care; and personal health and wellness. Within the literature the term work-family balance (Hochschild, 1997) is used interchangeably with work-life; because the focus of the current study was women administrators with children (i.e., families) I use the same liberties here as well. The older literature on work-life balance in higher education narrowly defined family as parents and children. Recent studies indicated that at research institutions nationwide,

the definition of "family" has broadened to include foster and step children, elderly parents, and domestic partners (Quinn, Lange, & Olswang, 2004). Work-life balance is a consideration for everyone in the academy, not just married people or those with children. However, the focus of the current study was women with children, therefore, the work-life literature reviewed here is specific to academic administrators and student affairs professionals with children. It should also be noted that the literature reviewed in this section focused exclusively on faculty. It is reviewed here because it provided a strong point of contrast to the literature about administrators which I address in later sections.

Copious review of the work-life balance literature revealed two themes relevant to the current study. First, achieving work-life balance was difficult for everyone, but even more so for women because academic work and timelines were structurally biased against women. Second, the existence of work-life or family friendly policies did not equal a family friendly environment. Environmental factors like institutional culture, departmental climate, and how policies were communicated greatly influenced faculty members' willingness to utilize the various family-friendly policies available to them. Specific studies which fit into these two categories are reviewed in the subsequent section.

The structure of academic life

The current model of faculty life- to work 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and all 365 days of the year- is rife with inherent structural inequalities that overwhelmingly biased women rather than men (Curtis, 2004). Expectations regarding the typical work-week schedule, research productivity, and the tenure timeline are based

on an antiquated model of male career progression (Armenti, 2004). Tenure was designed for married men with stay-at-home spouses who handled all of the childrearing and household responsibilities (Armenti, 2004). In addition, for those women who chose to have a family, the biological and tenure clocks coincided, which lead to some women feeling that they had to choose between work and family (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b). Consequently, women are disproportionately represented in community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and in part-time and non-tenure track positions all of which are more "family-friendly" (quotations mine) than tenure track positions at research universities (Mason & Goulden, 2002; 2004).

Policies do not equal environment

Research has shown that *how* family-friendly and work-life balance policies are communicated on campus greatly influenced faculty willingness to utilize them. Despite the availability of various "family-friendly" policies such as part-time tenure track positions, tenure clock extensions, and dual-career hiring, significant issues and challenges exist with policy implementation and execution (Quinn, Olswang, & Lange, 2004). These issues or challenges included: inconsistent communication about policies themselves; decentralized decision-making at the department level, which led to more inconsistencies in policy implementation; and third, lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Similarly, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004b) found significant differences in policy implementation and utilization between major research universities and smaller private institutions. Overall, smaller, private institutions had more flexible work-life policies and faculty there utilized them more frequently than faculty at large research universities. Second, across institutional type, Ward and Wolf-Wendel found

generational bias from older faculty, both men and women, toward younger faculty. Older faculty who did not have access to family-friendly policies during their pre-tenure days viewed such policies with disdain and saw them as special privileges. Older faculty articulated that younger faculty should have to endure the same tests that they did. The cumulative effect of these factors is a pervasive culture of fear in the academy (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b).

Drago, et al. (2005) coined the term bias avoidance behaviors to explain the work-life balance strategies employed by faculty in the academy. These behaviors included not using policies that were available to them and actively downplaying their family and childrearing responsibilities in front of peers and supervisors rather than openly admitting that they had other commitments. Women faculty who used bias avoidance behaviors, such as choosing to remain childless or delaying child-bearing, achieved tenure earlier than women who did not use them. Not surprisingly, faculty located in departments with supportive chairs exhibited fewer avoidance behaviors and faculty with the fewest family concerns and commitments were found to be the most successful. All of these factors together indicate that the nature and structure of academic life are biased against faculty with children, indicating a *systemic* bias against care-giving. Thus, the existence of work-life balance policies does not equal a family-friendly *environment.*

In sum, the work-life balance literature indicated that the structure of academic life privileges men and the male life-cycle. Conversely, the tenure and childbearing timelines often coincide for women; women are often in their prime childbearing years at the same time that they are trying to achieve tenure. The structure of academic life

must change if women are to be accepted as full members with the same rights and privileges as their male colleagues. The work-life literature also concluded that merely having family-friendly policies was not enough to change academic culture. Inconsistencies in how policies are communicated and generational bias from older faculty, leads many women (and some men) not to utilize the various work-life and family-friendly policies available to them. In the next section, I examine the literature relative to women faculty with children and how they negotiate work-life balance.

Academic Motherhood: Women Faculty with Children

The term academic motherhood referred to the childbearing, childrearing, and work-life balance strategies of tenured, or tenure track, women faculty with children (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b). It is noted that this body of literature does not reflect the experiences of women administrators or student affairs professionals; however, I review the academic motherhood literature here for several reasons. First, it is the only body of literature that empirically examined academic women who were trying to simultaneously balance careers and young children. Most of the literature about women administrators with children is retrospective analysis, that is, women were asked to reflect back on the time when they were mid-career and/or had young children (Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Marshall, 2002). Second, the academic motherhood literature focused on women faculty who, like student affairs professionals, worked within the greater context of higher education institutions. Finally, the volume of literature about women faculty with children provided strong contrast to the literature on student affairs administrators with children and served as one justification for the current study.

Findings from the academic motherhood literature revealed two themes. First, women academics significantly altered their childbearing and childrearing plans to fit their academic timelines and commitments. Second, despite the challenges women faculty faced in balancing their work and family lives, women faculty also reported great personal satisfaction with their dual roles of professor and mother and indicated that having children provided a sense of perspective about work. These themes are highlighted in the following section and where appropriate, comparisons to women administrators are made as well.

Fitting children into academic life

Research on academic mothers suggested women faculty significantly altered their childbearing and childrearing plans to fit their academic lives, rather than rearrange their academic plans to fit their hopes of creating a family (Armenti, 2004a, 2004b). When life adjustments needed to be made, it was women, not men, who did so; and, at great personal and professional cost (Philipsen, 2008; Pillay, 2007). In order to accommodate their careers, women academics significantly altered their family plans- by having no children, fewer children than planned, or having children later than intended (Mason & Goulden, 2004); Armenti called this trend the "hidden pregnancy phenomenon" (p. 212). Armenti also found generational differences in how women faculty approached childbearing and childrearing. The older generation of women academics: had May babies, delayed their careers for their children, or gave up on the idea of tenure all together (Armenti). Younger women professors followed one of two childrearing patterns: had their children pre-tenure, but received significant help from stay-at-home spouses who handled the primary childrearing responsibilities, or waited

until they had achieved tenure to begin their families. These were called post-tenure babies. Regardless of their age or childbearing strategy used, women academics hid "their maternal desires to meet an unwritten professional standard that is geared toward the male life course" (Armenti, p. 219).

The timing of children also has tremendous impact on women's academic careers. Mason and Goulden (2002) defined early babies as those who join the household prior to five years after PhD completion and late babies as those who join the household more than five years after earning a PhD. Women with early babies were less likely than their male counterparts to achieve tenure and more likely to occupy non-tenure track, fixed-term, and part-time positions. Late babies had less of an impact, for both men and women. Overall, tenured women were less likely to have children at all. None of these trends were present for male academics.

Within the academy, women with children are disproportionately represented in non-tenure track, adjunct, or part-time positions at less prestigious institutions (Mason & Goulden, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2004). Williams suggested that this trend was the result of two different, but related forms of gender bias: the glass ceiling and the maternal wall. Women in academia must contend with the glass ceiling, but mothers are doubly burdened by the glass ceiling and the maternal wall. For example, women who utilized maternity leave policies available to them were viewed by their faculty colleagues as less competent; conversely, professionally competent mothers were often perceived as too assertive (Williams). Researchers suggested that there is a glass ceiling in student affairs as well, as indicated by the small numbers of women in senior level administrative positions compared to the large pool of women in middle management

positions (Blackhurst, 2000; Twale, 1995). Women student affairs administrators reported that while it was common to have worked with male supervisors who are parents, very few worked for women supervisors who were also mothers (Fochtman, in press; 2008; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Renn & Hughes, 2004). These findings suggest that a maternal wall also exists in student affairs; however, more research is needed to discern how parental status influences women's upper level position attainment.

Benefits of dual roles

Women faculty articulated struggle and sacrifice associated with their dual roles of professor and mother yet, they also stated that they would not change any part of it and that their children and families provided a needed perspective about their academic work (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b). Ward and Wolf-Wendel's study of tenure-track women faculty with small children was the first to frame the dual roles of professor and mother in a positive light; participants in their study talked about the unanticipated benefits of dual roles. "These benefits manifest themselves for academic women in two ways: buffering and an expanded frame of reference" (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b, p. 253). Buffering allowed women to focus on different roles when stress levels in another became high or overwhelming; when pressure and tension in one area mounted, women turned to and found relief in the other. Having dual roles also allowed participants to gain perspective about each of these roles. Research about women student affairs professionals with children also suggested that having children slowed women's career trajectories, but parenthood also provided a deep sense of personal fulfillment and needed perspective about work (Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997).

Limitations of the academic motherhood literature

As articulated previously, the academic motherhood literature was included to provide some insight into the rewards and challenges of being a mother and a professional in the context of higher education. The academic motherhood literature was not without its limitations, especially as it related to the current study; there are three significant limitations of the academic motherhood literature that warrant close attention. First, the duality of "work-life balance" is unrealistic; second, the current literature only investigated two roles- mother and professor; and third, the terms used by authors such as Armenti (2004a, 2004b) and Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004b) continued to privilege academic life rather than question it. I discuss each of these limitations in the following section.

The academic motherhood literature created a rigid divide between work and family; this suggests that "balance" is even possible and if at times one area needs more attention than another, that there is then unbalance. Research findings (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Pillay, 2007) and personal narratives from mid-career student affairs professionals (Renn & Hughes, 2004) suggested that balance in the traditional sense is unrealistic. Women do not make sense of their lives using rigid categories like "work" and "life" rather, their framework was more expansive, consisting of multi-layered roles and responsibilities which overlap and interact (Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002); this suggests then, that the term work-life balance does not adequately address the complexities of women's lives and the skilled navigation and negotiation skills required to make it all work.

Similarly, Ward and Wolf-Wendel's (2004b) use of the term "dual" suggested that women in the academy only maintained two roles- professor and mother- and that

women did not have any other roles or commitments that they must negotiate. Research findings suggested the opposite: women are constantly negotiating multiple roles, including but not limited to: wife, mother, professional, daughter, sister, friend, colleague, supervisor, and supervisee (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002). To frame women's lives in dualistic terms is a disservice to women and does not accurately portray the motivation, skills, and desire necessary to persist in the academy while juggling all of these responsibilities. Finally, the ways in which Ward and Wolf-Wendel and Armenti (2004) presented their findings were also problematic. By framing their results in academic terms, such as the "need to watch the clock" (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, p. 247) and "the career-related time crunch" (Armenti, 2004b, p. 6) the authors continued to privilege academic life over the individual stories and experiences of women.

The academic literature set the ground rules for institutional policy reactions related to women with children. Findings from the academic literature assumed that creating and implementing so-called family-friendly policies were enough to have people actually utilize those policies and thus, reduce faculty's stress related to balancing work and family commitments (Curtis, 2004; Quinn, Lange, & Olswang, 2004). Some of these family-friendly policies for faculty included stopping or extending the tenure clock and adjusted or reduced teaching loads (Curtis, 2004; Quinn, Lange, & Olswang, 2004). Research findings suggested that the reality of women's lives did not bear this out; in fact, many women faculty intentionally did not use institutional policies for fear it would adversely affect their careers and professional reputations (Drago, et al, 2005). Drago and his colleagues (2005) labeled this behavior, bias avoidance behavior.

It is not yet known if student affairs administrators also utilize bias avoidance behaviors as a work-life strategy. In addition, student affairs administrators are not part of the tenure track, so many of the family-friendly polices that exist in the academy do not pertain to administrators. Areas of professional development that are of interest to student affairs administrators include having the time and resources for professional conference attendance and scholarly writing. It is not yet clear how or if these two professional development activities are influenced by student affairs professionals' status as parents.

To better understand how mothers persist in higher education organizations and why, more research which examines the tools and strategies women administrators use to make sense of their multiple roles is needed. The current study addressed these gaps by studying how and why women managed their many roles *and* a career in student affairs. The current study was also grounded in the idea that women professionals negotiated and made sense of *multiple* roles, not just two. In the next section, I review literature about women administrators with children and discuss the findings that are relevant to the current study.

Women Administrators with Children

Unlike the work-life balance and academic motherhood discussed previously, the research on women administrators with children is not a cohesive body of literature with consistent findings; rather the literature is small in size and the findings inconclusive. The existing research has included women of various career stages and women with children of all ages (Marshall & Jones, 1990; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997). For example, participants in Nobbe and Manning's study occupied

similar professional positions- director or higher- but the ages of their children varied significantly; four participants had children under age three, three had children between ages four and nine, and three women had adult children. Participants in Marshall's (2002) study were senior administrators- both in number of years in the profession and their positions on campus- and their children ranged in age from six months to 25 years old. Questions specific to career stage, parental status, and the intersection of these two factors were not asked in the existing literature; in addition, questions about *how* student affairs professionals with children *negotiate and make sense* of this intersection remain unanswered. The cumulative effect is a dearth of literature about the unique rewards and challenges which come with each respective career stage (early, mid, late) and the varying ages of children (small, school-aged, and adult).

Early research on student affairs administrators with children suggested that the order in which women obtained advanced degrees, entered the workforce, and had children did not impact future position attainment (Marshall & Jones, 1990). However, women student affairs professionals also indicated that having children slowed their career trajectories and limited their career options (Marshall & Jones, 1990; Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004). This contradiction in findings remains unresolved in the literature.

Similar to their academic counterparts, student affairs professionals with children also articulated tremendous satisfaction with their roles as mothers and believed that having children forced them to be more productive, organized, and better time managers (Fochtman, in press; Fochtman, 2008; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997). Literature on women administrators with children also suggested that

having a supportive partner and finding reliable child-care are crucial to balancing work and family commitments (Fochtman; Marshall; Nobbe & Manning). Consistent with the work-life balance and academic motherhood literature, women student affairs professionals with children indicated that maternity and family leave policies need to be available and clearly articulated (Nobbe & Manning, Marshall); flexible work arrangements should be available (Marshall); and, more generally, the student affairs profession should re-think its conception of work and the hours required to accomplish it (Nobbe & Manning).

Student affairs culture- unsupportive of mothers?

Findings from the existing literature suggest that the culture of student affairs was unsupportive of women with children; this lack of support is manifest in three ways: maternity leave policies, the attitude of supervisees and subordinates, and lack of parenting role models in the workplace. Women student affairs professionals often take the initiative to create and negotiate their own maternity leaves because institutional policies are unclear and not easily accessible (Fochtman, in press; Nobbe & Manning, 1997). Related to maternity leave and child-care issues, women with children were deeply affected by the attitudes of their subordinates and colleagues, more so than those of their supervisors. For example, upon their return from maternity leave, many women reported "feeling watched" (Nobbe & Manning, p. 105), that their professional work was under greater scrutiny from subordinates and colleagues. My research on high-achieving administrative women (Fochtman, in press) and mid-career student affairs professionals (Fochtman, 2008) revealed similar findings as well.

Particularly disturbing is that participants in Nobbe and Manning's study stated that they did not have female parenting role models in the workplace. Only one participant had worked for a female supervisor with children, yet *all* of the participants had worked for a male supervisor with children. Despite this lack of role modeling, or perhaps because of it, all of the participants articulated the importance of role modeling for the next generation of women professionals. Findings from my own research with high achieving women administrators bear this out as well (Fochtman, in press).

The literature on academic mothers and student affairs professionals with children was clear: having children is personally fulfilling and rewarding. It is also equally challenging. Research findings suggested that women *knew* that having a career and a family simultaneously was difficult, but they choose to juggle both anyway (Fochtman, in press; Fochtman, 2008). What remains unknown is how women negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles; the current study will address these questions and the intersection of career stage and motherhood.

Summary

In this chapter, the relevant literature on women's career development, career development in student affairs, work-life balance, academic motherhood, and women administrators with children was critiqued and existing gaps were exposed with the intent of highlighting areas needing more research. Findings from literature about women's career development suggest that women's careers follow different trajectories than men's careers (Kropf, 1998; Schreiber, 1998) and that the very structure of careers and organizations are biased against women (O'Neil, et al., 2008; Shapiro, et al., 2008; Whitmarsh, et al., 2007), especially women with children.

The existing work-life balance (Curtis, 2004; Drago, et al., 2005; Mason & Goulden, 2002, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004a; Williams, 2004) and academic motherhood literature has advanced the academy's understanding of the work-life balance issues facing women faculty. Both bodies of literature suggest that balancing a career in academia with a family is difficult and that women shoulder more of this burden than do men (Philipsen, 2008; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004b). More specifically, the academic motherhood literature suggested that women plan their families around their careers, not vice versa (Armenti, 2004a, 2004b). Yet, despite the challenges involved in balancing academic commitments and motherhood, women faculty with children also reported great satisfaction with their roles as mothers (Pillay, 2007; Ward & Wolf-Wendel).

Much is known about the issues facing new professionals (Burns, 1982; Evans, 1988; Ward, 1995; Wood, et al., 1983) and senior level administrators within student affairs (Barrax, 1985; Evans & Kuh, 1985; Tinsely, 1985), yet little attention has been paid to mid-career professionals. Anecdotally, mid-career student affairs professionals reported feeling invisible and sometimes, unappreciated; the fact that mid-career or middle management positions are often misunderstood contributed to these feelings of invisibility (Young, et al., 1990). Mid-career is also a time of significant personal and professional challenge, especially for women, as that is when their multiple roles and obligations collide (Belch & Strange, 1995; Houdyshell, 2007; Renn & Hughes, 2004).

While little is known about mid-career student affairs professionals, even less is known about women student affairs professionals who are also mothers. Motherhood and childrearing were not a primary focus of existing student affairs literature. The

literature about women administrators with children was limited in several ways. First, academic and student affairs administrators were often studied together (Bird, 1984; Marshall, 2002; Marshall & Jones, 1990) so any differences between these types of positions were not discussed. Second, children were considered an aggregate category, without consideration given to the challenges inherent in different ages and developmental stages (Nobbe & Manning, 1997). And third, only one existing study asked questions specifically related to the intersection of career stage and parental role (Fochtman, 2008). The effects of childbearing and childrearing on women student affairs administrators' career trajectories remain unknown. By investigating the lived experiences of student affairs professionals who were also mothers, the current study provided an understanding of "how" and "why" mid-career women student affairs administrators negotiate motherhood and work. In the next chapter, I explain my methodological approach to the current study and how I selected participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of the current study was to investigate how mid-career women in student affairs negotiated and made sense of their multiple roles. The goal of this research was to better understand the lived experience of women, therefore a feminist qualitative methodology was chosen. More specifically, interpretive case studies (Merriam, 1998) were used to present portraits of individual women and then compare and analyze across cases to create themes and patterns. In this chapter, I outline the overarching methodological ideologies that guided the study, participant selection, and data analysis and collection procedures. I also discuss the principle of trustworthiness as it relates to qualitative methodology, the measures I took to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality, and quality of the overall study and its findings. Finally, I address the concept of researcher as instrument and detail my interest in the topic and my qualifications as a qualitative researcher.

Methodology

As articulated in chapter one, the current study was guided by the research question: How do mid-career women student affairs administrators with small children negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles? Given the intimate nature of the topic and the depth of understanding sought, qualitative methodology was appropriate to answer the research question (Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1990, 1994; Patton, 1980, 1990, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). Qualitative methodology also allows researchers and participants to understand an issue, problem, or phenomenon within its context (Patton). Specifically, the current study was a phenomenological

study as it was concerned with the lived experience and subsequent sense making of individual women.

I identify as a feminist qualitative researcher and therefore, methodologies that honor and validate women's stories and experiences were employed throughout the current study. Feminist methodologies are distinctive in their intent, methods, and applications, yet they are also without clear definitions or boundaries (DeVault, 1996). By identifying as a feminist researcher I did not align myself with a singular methodology or method; instead, I intentionally relied on several different methodologies that supported the notion that meaning was both constructed and contextual. Therefore the design of the current study used elements of the naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), phenomenological study (Patton, 2002), and heuristics (Moustakas, 1990). I discuss each of these briefly.

The naturalistic paradigm, which is sometimes referred to as constructivist, assumes that the phenomenon being studied is context and value bound and should be studied as such (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is, the process of study is discovery-oriented and relies heavily on the interaction between participants and researcher. In addition, the naturalistic paradigm suggests that a study's findings are not intended to generalize to a broader population; rather, naturalistic studies provide insight and understanding about a specific group of people within a certain context. Phenomenological studies are primarily concerned with what individuals experience and how they make sense of those experiences (Patton, 2002). The goal of phenomenological studies is to better understand the essence- the heart and soul- of a shared experience. The phenomenon investigated in the current study was that of being

mid-career women in student affairs and the mothers of young children. Finally, the methodology that I employed also drew from Moustakas' (1990) conceptualization of heuristic inquiry. Heuristics is a subset of phenomenology and stems from the researcher's intense autobiographical experience with the subject being studied. In addition, heuristic studies seek answers to questions about participants' thoughts, feelings, and meaning-making of certain experiences. My interest in the current study stemmed from my own experience as a mid-career student affairs professional and the mother of two young children. I provide more detailed information about myself as the researcher/instrument in the final section of this chapter. Next, I briefly discuss the nature of feminist ontology and epistemology as they related to the current study.

Ontology and epistemology

The concept of ontology refers to the nature of reality. The paradigms that I drew from to organize the current study contend that there are multiple realities and that these realities are contextually bound. Relativist ontology suggests that each "reality" (quotations mine) is valid in its own right (Stanley & Wise, 1993); therefore, there is not one universal truth, or one universal experience which accurately encompasses everyone. Related to the current study, I recognized that each participant had her own experience of being a mid-career student affairs professional with young children and make sense of that experience in her own way. I did not force the participants' experiences into a priori theory; rather, I listened carefully for patterns and themes which emerged from all 10 of the participants' stories.

Epistemology refers to the origin and nature of knowledge. As a feminist researcher, I believe that participants are equal partners in the creation of knowledge.

Therefore, participants' stories were honored as powerful, worthy, and true in their own right without need for external testing or validation. "Feminist research seeks to respect, understand, and empower women. Therefore, feminist epistemologies accept women's stories of their lives as legitimate sources of knowledge and feminist methodologies embody an ethic of caring through the process of sharing those stories" (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 778).

Research method

The current study was guided by the research question: how do mid-career women student affairs administrators with small children negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles? Case study methods (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) are often used to answer "how" questions. The purpose of case studies is to understand what "facts" (quotations mine) mean in their natural context (Greene & David, 1981); this is accomplished by gathering comprehensive, in-depth information about each case (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). For the current study, a "case" was defined as an individual woman who was a mid-career student affairs professional and also the mother of young children. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews (Patton, 1980). In semi-structured interviews, each participant is asked the same questions, but there is also room for follow-up questions and informal conversations as needed.

Participant selection

Yin (2003) suggested that previous literature in any given field, including gaps in that literature, can help define the case or unit of analysis of future studies. As outlined in chapters one and two, previous literature on student affairs professionals has

considered women, women at mid-career, and women with children; however, nothing exists which encompasses all three of these pieces. Therefore, the unit of analysis for the current study was women student affairs professionals with five or more years of experience (but less than 15 years), who were also the mothers of young children age infant to five years old. I intentionally chose five and 15 years of experience as the cut-off points because I was interested in mid-career professionals, not new professionals (who have less than five years experience) or senior administrators (who tend to have more than 15 years of experience). For the current study, student affairs professionals were defined as administrators who worked in co-curricular functional areas, including but not limited to: academic advising, admissions, career services, counseling, dining and food services, fraternity and sorority life, financial aid, housing and residence life, judicial affairs, leadership development, multicultural services, orientation, and student activities.

I utilized several layers of purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) to solicit participants for the current study. First, I employed intensity sampling, the purpose of which was to find information-rich cases. I created an on-line questionnaire (see Appendix B) that asked demographic information such as name, race, position title, student affairs functional area, and number and age of children. I sent my participant solicitation letter (see Appendix A) and a link to the on-line survey to four list-servs and discussion boards that were run by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the two leading student affairs professional organizations. Several professional colleagues also forwarded the email solicitation to their colleagues. One of my

colleagues also posted the solicitation letter to NACADA, the National Academic Advising Association. This first layer of sampling yielded 37 on-line responses. I initially chose eight women from the list, allowing for maximum variation by institutional type, student affairs functional area, number of years in the profession, number and ages of children, and race/ethnicity. I excluded women whom I knew personally, as well as those who indicated that they were not available for interviews and did not work full-time. I also eliminated women whose children were too old and women who did not yet have five years of full-time experience. Three of the eight women I chose responded to my initial inquiries and we coordinated times for interviews. After I sent follow-up messages to the remaining five participants, two more of them indicated that they were willing to serve as participants. This yielded a total of five participants.

In the second layer of participant selection, I used snowball or chain sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) to identify participants. This type of sampling involves asking participants and other student affairs professionals to recommend women to be interviewed. I asked six professional colleagues to forward my participant solicitation letter to their colleagues. In looking at the original 34 responses, there were three gaps in the participant pool: women of color, women with more than one child, and women who were at the lower end of the mid-career scale. To increase the potential pool of participants, I posted my solicitation letter to five different higher education and professional association "groups" on "facebook," a social networking site. The facebook postings increased the on-line responses to 57. I continued to use snowball sampling to recruit potential participants. One participant, Alice, was referred to me by

another participant, Amelia. That increased my participants to nine. Finally, I went back to the list of 57 on-line respondents and because women of color and women with two or more children were still underrepresented, I asked Toni to be a participant. These various solicitation methods resulted in 10 participants.

By using intensity and snowball sampling procedures, I achieved maximum variation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). "Maximum variation sampling can refer to both sites and people (Seidman, 2006, p. 52). The goal of maximum variation is to have the broadest range of participants and sites, yet still be within the limits of the study and its purpose; for the current study, a "site" was the institution where participants were employed and a "participant" was an individual woman. For the current study, I had maximum variation in both participants and sites. Within maximum variation samples, each participant reflects the phenomenon or question being studied, but the context may change. For the current study, all of the participants were mid-career women student affairs professionals with young children but, participants varied in other areas: student affairs functional area; institutional type; tenure as mid-career professionals; and number and age of children. A table which details the demographic information of participants is included in Appendix E. Maximum variation was a particularly effective sampling strategy for two reasons. First, it allowed me to examine commonalities within the phenomenon. Second, having maximum variation lent credibility to the patterns and themes which emerged from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seidman, 2006); because the participants were from a variety of institutions, different student affairs functional areas, of different ages and races, I am confident that the themes I uncovered accurately reflect the phenomenon I studied, mid-career women with young children.

Finding an appropriate sample size in qualitative research depends more on the content and thoroughness of the data collected than it does on the actual size of the sample. Two criteria are important in determining if a qualitative sample has enough participants (Seidman, 2006). The first criterion is sufficiency. A sample is sufficient if there is enough information presented "so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect with the experiences of those in it" (p. 55). The second criterion is saturation, which occurs when the stories of participants become repetitive and the researcher is no longer learning new information (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When saturation is reached, there are enough participants within the sample and the researcher can stop looking for new participants. I achieved both sufficiency and saturation in the current study.

Data collection

For the current study, I collected data from two different sources: in-depth interviewing and document analysis of résumé's. After participants were indentified, I reviewed each participant's resume and the website of her home institution. Reviewing the resume ensured that each participant met the study criteria; in addition, the experiences listed on the resume influence some of the interview questions I asked related to institutional context, size and type of institution, and geographic location. Secondly, by analyzing the website of each participant's home institution, I gathered information about the institution's maternity leave and work-life/family balance policies; this information also influenced my interview questions as appropriate.

The primary method of data collection was one-to-one, in-depth interviews; each participant was interviewed twice; two of the participants were interviewed three

times. Each interview lasted at least 90 minutes and the longest of the interviews lasted two and one-half hours; I collected a total of 43 hours of interview tape. All of the interviews were digitally audio-recorded and then transcribed. Throughout data collection, I made detailed observations about participants, including but not limited to: where the interview was conducted; their verbal and non-verbal (where appropriate) language and communication. My observations of participants as well as my detailed field notes were recorded in my research log.

Data analysis

My data analysis relied heavily on the constructivist (naturalistic) and feminist paradigms which suggest that theories *emerge* from the data, they are not determined before the data is collected. The qualitative researcher assumes a position of neutrality related to the phenomenon being studied; by being neutral, the researcher allows the multiple realities and complexities of the phenomenon to shine through rather than forcing them into pre-existing categories or ideas (Patton, 1990). As I stated previously, I transcribed all of the interviews. I then coded each interview transcript using open, axial and selective coding. In open coding, I read each transcript and created initial codes. I then used axial and selective coding (Merriam, 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2007), the process by which codes or data (Merriam, 1998) are grouped together to become a category (Merriam, 1998) or theme. After all of the transcripts were coded, I then used inductive (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), cross-case analysis to look for patterns and themes which emerged from all 10 cases.

In case studies, especially feminist case studies, it is important to understand individual cases before making comparisons across cases. The raw data that I collected

during the course of the study- interview transcripts, on-line questionnaire answers, and participant resumes- were synthesized into a case study of each participant. The case study was a comprehensive portrait of the participant and included a detailed account of: experiences, thoughts, feelings, meaning-making processes, and social and structural contexts (Patton, 1990). I sent the final case study, or portrait, to participants for review and participants' thoughts, comments, and edits were incorporated into the final product if necessary and appropriate.

Within the broader category of inductive analysis, there are two distinct procedures for analyzing data and creating codes: emic and etic analysis (Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In emic analysis, the participants themselves create terminology and codes using language and concepts indigenous to them and their experience. Etic analysis utilizes codes and themes created by the researcher based on data gathered from the interviews. The experiences of my participants were essential to the research question put forward in the current study and, as the researcher, I am committed to honoring and valuing those stories. However, participants' stories *alone* were not the point of the current study. The purpose of the current study was to discern common experiences within and across the phenomenon of being a mid-career student affairs professional and mother; therefore, I used etic analysis procedures throughout data analysis.

As an ethical qualitative researcher, I am committed to doing no harm to participants and took all the necessary steps to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were asked to assign pseudonyms to themselves and their institutions (see attached consent document in Appendix C). As part of the data

collection process, I also sent each participant the interview transcripts, the case study/portrait I created from the data, and a summary of the themes that I generated from the data. Participants were given ample opportunity to review and offer suggestions about revisions to these documents as appropriate.

Trustworthiness

In the next section of this chapter I discuss the concept of trustworthiness as it relates to qualitative studies. Trustworthiness is an overarching concept suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of translating the quantitative standards of validity, reliability, and objectivity into terms and constructs suitable to qualitative research. Trustworthiness includes: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the following paragraphs, I offer a definition of each of these concepts and demonstrate how I will incorporate them into my study design and sampling plan.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research has three parts: rigorous data collection techniques and methods; credibility and transparency of the researcher as instrument of the study; and a commitment to the phenomenological and naturalistic paradigms (Patton, 1990). I discuss my credibility as a researcher in the final section of this chapter. I have already expressed my commitment to the naturalistic paradigm in previous sections of this chapter. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the techniques I used to ensure the credibility of the current study, including: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks.

The process of triangulation in qualitative study is often misunderstood to be the process of using multiple sources to confirm data from the first source. Triangulation

actually involves using multiple sources to "test for such consistency" (Patton, 2002, p. 248). Inconsistencies, if found, offer an opportunity for further insight into the phenomenon being studied and its relationship to the methodological approach, and should not be considered a weakness of the study or its design (Patton, 2002). There are two kinds of triangulation that I will employ in the current study, data and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Data triangulation involves using multiple sources of data and comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information gathered from each source (Patton, 1990); for the current study data was collected from participant interviews and document analysis. Methodological triangulation is achieved by using multiple methods for collecting data. Different forms of purposeful sampling are also a form of triangulation (Patton, 2002). As mentioned in the participant selection section of this chapter, I used two forms of purposive sampling, intensity and snowball sampling, to solicit participants.

Qualitative researchers also ensure the credibility of their studies by utilizing a peer de-briefer and providing opportunities for member checking. A colleague from my doctoral program cohort served as my peer de-briefer for the current study. My peer de-briefer was a student affairs professional, but she was not yet mid-career nor did she have any children. She was an ideal candidate for a peer de-briefer because she brought a necessary "outsider" perspective to the study. I met weekly with my peer de-briefer; in our meetings we discussed themes that emerged from the participants' stories and how I made sense of them as the researcher. My peer de-briefer also coded two of the participant interview transcripts and then we compared our codes. I took detailed notes at each meeting and those notes were included in my research log. Member checking is

the process of allowing members- the study participants- the opportunity to check the data which has been collected and coded (Merriam, 1998). I sent each participant a copy of the interview transcript, the portrait of her that I created, and a detailed explanation of the "how" and "why" themes that I generated.

Transferability

The purpose of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to the larger population. Themes, patterns, and relationships which emerge from qualitative research are reflections of a specific context, time, place, or experience; they do not represent the experience of a larger group of people. The value of qualitative research, then, rests with transferability. Transferability refers to how well the study reflects and portrays the participants' experiences and the context of those experiences. This is accomplished through thick description, which is the process of using participants' words to demonstrate themes. The essence of qualitative research comes from what the participants say, not what the researcher espouses (Patton, 1990).

Dependability and confirmability

Dependabilty and confirmability are parallel constructs of reliability and objectivity. Dependability is a measure of the consistency of results. Confirmability is achieved by providing evidence that the researchers' findings and conclusions are grounded in the data gathered from participants. Qualitative researchers can demonstrate dependability and confirmability through the use of a detailed audit trail which traces data sources, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. I maintained an audit trail throughout my research process and the notes I created are included in my research log.

Researcher as Instrument

Feminist scholars suggested that the researcher be visible in the research product and that this visibility be considered a resource, not a weakness (DeVault, 1996). In addition, a methodologically sound and transparent qualitative study should include a section on the preparation and training of the researcher (Patton, 2002). Therefore, in this final section of chapter three, I discuss my role as the human instrument in the current study. I address why I was interested in the research question, my qualifications as a feminist qualitative researcher, and the efforts I took to bracket my own experiences so as not to unduly influence the study's findings.

My own experiences as a student affairs administrator and mother informed my interest in this topic. I have a Master's degree in higher education administration and professional experience in several student affairs functional areas. Like the participants, I am also the mother of two young children, ages four and two. During the past four years of my doctoral studies, I immersed myself in the literature about women leaders in the academy, particularly mothers and student affairs professionals. This was a time of tremendous convergence as my educational, personal, and professional lives were becoming more intricately intertwined and the boundaries of the multiple roles I was maintaining- professional, scholar, mother, wife- became less defined. Simultaneously, I continued to be discouraged by the literature; the findings suggested that "balancing" a career and family is possible but challenging and draining, especially for women. In addition, the existing literature does not explain *how* women negotiate their multiple roles or why.

Through my experiences as a student affairs professional at several different institutions, I was fortunate to work with and for several professional women who were also mothers. In addition, I am trying to manage my own life as a student affairs professional, doctoral student, and mother. There is a gap in the literature about the lived experiences of women administrators in general, and student affairs mothers in particular. To better understand the experiences of women administrators and to try to fill a gap in the literature, in summer 2007 I conducted an exploratory study of high achieving women. The data analysis and findings from that study were compelling: women persist *despite* the culture of the academy not because of it; and second, women are deeply committed to "pay it forward" (Fochtman, in press) by mentoring the next generation of professionals. I also found myself intrigued by the stories of those participants who were also mothers. The following summer (2008), I interviewed three women student affairs administrators who were the mothers of young children; this small-scale research project served as a pilot for the current study. Throughout the summer of 2008, I was also able to experiment with my interview protocol and interview each participant twice. Preliminary findings from that study informed my research question and helped me narrow the focus of the current study.

In addition to my professional and research experience, my education as a doctoral student prepared me to conduct the current study. I successfully completed all of the necessary coursework, including several methodology classes and two feminist sociology courses. Specifically, a sociology course I took on gender and power further exposed me to feminist theory and methodology and helped me articulate my own ideologies as both a qualitative researcher and a feminist.

In qualitative inquiry, the term Epoche is used to explain the process of setting aside one's personal experiences with and assumptions about the phenomenon being studied and striving to see the experience through the eyes of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Although I shared some characteristics with the participants, the goal of the current study was to share their stories, not mine. My peer de-briefer and my doctoral committee members helped me bracket my experience and honor the data. My role as a researcher was to process and synthesize the participants' stories with the hope of creating a better understanding of the lived experience of mid-career student affairs professionals who are also mothers.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

My study examined the lived experiences of mid-career women student affairs administrators who were also mothers to young children. As a qualitative study, it was bound by the phenomenon studied and by the period of time in which it took place; therefore, the findings from my study are not intended to be generalized to any other people or period of time. Although I achieved maximum variation in my participant pool, my study was also limited by its lack of participant diversity. Only three of the 10 participants were women of color, eight of the participants were married and one was engaged, and only three participants had more than one child. The majority of my participants were white, married, and had one child.

Delimitations

The current study was not intended to define mid-career or work-life "balance" although both are broad concepts that served as part of my conceptual framework and

guided my data collection and data analysis processes. It is also not an investigation of or commentary on the importance of mentors and support networks, although both of these support structures were mentioned by the participants and are discussed in the two chapters of findings. Finally, the participants in my study were women; men were intentionally excluded from the participant pool. The current study was not intended to provide information about the lived experiences of mid-career men in student affairs.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I outlined the methodology and methods I used in the current study. Data analysis procedures were also discussed as were the efforts I will took to ensure that the principles of ethical qualitative research were followed. Finally, I demonstrated my interest in the phenomenon being studied and my qualifications as a researcher. The participant solicitation letter, participant solicitation questionnaire, consent document; and interview protocol are included in the appendices.

CHAPTER FOUR

Participant portraits

As explained in the previous chapter on methodology, the unit of analysis for my study was individual women and their lived experiences as mid-career mothers in student affairs. Ten women participants were chosen and interviewed because they met the following criteria: they had more than five years but less than 15 years of full-time student affairs administration experience and they were also mothers to young children, under the age of five. In this study, I employed an interpretive case study methodology (Merriam, 1998), to understand each case first, and then did cross case inductive analysis to create composite themes and implications. In this chapter I provide a detailed portrait of each participant (Patton, 1990). To give the reader a well-rounded picture of each woman and her experiences, the portraits include information such as the following: family and educational background; basic information about their children and current relationship status; career histories; why participants considered themselves mid-career; self-perceptions related to leadership, mentors, and support networks; and information about personal hobbies and interests.

I achieved maximum variation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seidman, 2006) in several different areas, including: participant's age; relationship status; number and age of children; current student affairs functional area; number of years in the student affairs profession; and current institutional type. All individual and institutional names are pseudonyms. For reference, I included a table of the participants' demographic information in Appendix E. The table and portraits are presented in alphabetical order.

Alice

Alice had an affluent childhood, growing up in a small town in the Northeast. Both of her parents attended college and she and her younger sister were raised with the understanding that "college was an expectation. You *will* be going." Alice earned her bachelor's degree at a private baccalaureate college and then her master's degree at an urban, private, research university, both in the Northeast. She noted with pride that she intentionally chose an urban institution for her graduate studies to try something different from her undergraduate years. "It was definitely the extreme opposite. I was the suburban girl in the city." As an undergraduate student, Alice was a cellist in the orchestra and actively involved in her sorority and campus programming board; involvement in these activities influenced her decision to pursue a career in student affairs.

Alice was 39 years old. She and her husband were married for 14 years and they had a five year old son, Robert. Alice and her husband were dual-career; he worked in the advertising industry. In addition to her roles as a mother, wife, and student affairs professional, Alice was also a doctoral student in an on-line degree program. At the time of our interview, she had completed 30 credits toward her degree.

Alice served as a director of student involvement at Karmen Fellowship College, a public, master's college in the Northeast, and had spent her entire student affairs career in the student activities and leadership functional area. She served in her current position for eight years and had 15 years of professional experience. Alice considered herself mid-career because, as the director of her unit, she was "on the precipice between being the doer and the senior visionary type. This is the break, the mid-point. It

is more of an attitude, a developmental break. If you think of a career continuum, if you are in the middle, you're in the middle, no matter what the position is."

As a professional leader, Alice saw herself as a model for her staff, an obligation that she took very seriously. She said, "I see myself as someone who supports the people I work with. Intensely. Maybe too much. I have a reputation for launching people elsewhere. I do not separate work and home. This is me. I take my role modeling obligation seriously, in an appropriate way." Alice was a technology maven, utilizing various social networking sites to communicate with colleagues and mentors. She also incorporated technology into her work. At Karmen, she created an on-line leadership institute and ran an on-campus scavenger hunt using Twitter.

When speaking about mentors and support networks, Alice mentioned that her current supervisor served as a mentor for issues related to leadership and supervision. But, she also indicated that there was a level of mistrust present, related to her supervisor's potential level of support for Alice's next professional step. At the time of our interview, Alice was a candidate for a more senior position at another institution. About her supervisor, Alice said, "If I leave, I am not sure she [supervisor] will be there for me. Will she actively promote me in a room full of colleagues? I think it is healthy to have a mentor not connected to your supervisor."

Amelia

Amelia was a city girl. She grew up in an urban environment in the northeast. Her grandparents were immigrants from Italy and this heritage influenced how Amelia defined family and support. Amelia's mother had 54 first cousins, many of whom lived in the same neighborhood and raised their children together. Amelia had only one

younger sister, but many cousins of her own who served as a support network for her and her own family. Amelia identified as a first generation college student. She attended a large, doctoral university and lived at home during her undergraduate years. Amelia was involved in a sorority and upon graduation she served as a national consultant for her organization. During that time she met her future partner, Melanie. She also learned that "you could do college as a career" and went to graduate school. She remained in her home state for economic reasons, but after graduation moved to the Midwest to be closer to her partner.

Amelia's first job in student affairs was in the student activities and orientation functional area at a small college in the Midwest. At that time, she and her partner were deciding where to live long-term and were investigating more urban areas back in the Northeast. Amelia was also struggling with a difficult supervisory relationship at work, so she and her partner moved to the Northeast and Amelia took an interim orientation position at Karmen Fellowship College, where she met and worked for Alice. Alice continued to serve as one of Amelia's closest personal and professional mentors. While Amelia enjoyed Karmen and being back on the East coast, she described the orientation schedule as "grueling" and cited the hectic hours as a reason for leaving Karmen Fellowship College. "I thought to myself, I can't keep doing this." After just one year in the Northeast, Amelia and her partner moved back to the Midwest.

Since leaving orientation, Amelia worked in the academic advising functional area. For the past year and a half, she served as a director of student services at Orion University, a large, public, doctoral comprehensive university. She had nine years of student affairs experience and was 33 years old. Amelia and her partner have been

together for 10 years and together they have a two and a half year old daughter, Anna. In addition to her roles as a professional, partner, and mother, Amelia was also a doctoral student at Orion. At the time of our interview, she had finished all of her coursework and was actively preparing for her doctoral qualifying exams. She expected to earn her degree in fall 2010.

As a younger professional, she was an active leader in many student affairs professional organizations and her sorority, but since the birth of her daughter and the beginning of her doctoral studies, she let go of those commitments. Amelia also related that she has made the doctoral program one of her main foci, so she can soon finish and spend more time with Anna. "The Ph.D. program, I am getting through it. I will graduate in fall 2010. I want to get it done now while she is really little."

Amelia identified as mid-career for two reasons: her number of years in the profession and the responsibilities of her current position. "I have been in the field 10 or so years. I am at that point where I am a mid-level manager now. I report to faculty and the associate dean and people report to me. I am in the middle." Amelia's current position is newly-created, which she feels is a significant factor in the tasky nature of the job. Like many of the other participants in this study, Amelia also believed that the current economy exerted great pressure on her and her functional unit.

> My current job is more task-oriented than I thought it would be. I assumed it would be more of the visionary work. With budget cuts, position cuts, you become more task-focused, lots of paper processing. But I do like it. I think those things will work themselves out eventually.

Related to work-life "balance" and time for personal interests, Amelia stated that she was slowly trying to build exercise back into her routine. She used to be a runner; at one point, she had worked up to a half-marathon distance. She considered activities and walks with her partner and her daughter to be embedded exercise. Amelia also spoke at length about her spiritual life. She and Melanie are committed to having a relationship with God and to sharing that faith with their daughter.

Brenda

Brenda grew up in an "old-school, *poor* Southern family" (emphasis hers). Her parents were high school graduates who worked as realtors. As a result, Brenda and her two brothers lived in 27 different houses in 18 years. She was a first-generation college student. The fact that Brenda left home to go to college was a source of tension between her and her family. "I can't think of a single person who helped me. Some people were even blockades." Despite the lack of familial support she received, Brenda earned her bachelor's degree from a public research university in the South.

While an undergraduate student, she was a resident assistant, an experience which exposed her to the world of student affairs. She learned that through graduate assistantships, being involved in residence life could help her pay for school. She earned her master's degree in theology in 1995. She did not intend to pursue a terminal degree. Brenda was married for twelve years and had a two year old adopted daughter. Brenda was 39 years old.

For the past four years Brenda has worked as an assistant dean of students at University of Drama, a Catholic master's college in the Midwest. She had 13 years of administrative experience. She considered herself mid-career because she felt, "really in

the middle. I had worked toward judicial affairs for a long time and now I have landed here. I am at a threshold. I could retire and leave, or be here for another 20 years."
The fact that Brenda's family moved so much during her childhood manifested itself in her personality, her professional life, and her attitude as a mother. She preferred to be moving, rather than rooted to one place. As a professional, her resume was constantly up to date and she has applied for new positions every year. The only years she did not apply for a job were the last two, due to the economy and her husband's recent unemployment. Her need to go, as she said, "impacts my daughter's daily life. On Saturday, we are moving until naptime. I worry that she will feel I am rushing her through life."

Brenda worked in the judicial affairs functional area and intended to stay "as long as they will have me." Before this, however, she worked in residence life for two years. As the child of an alcoholic parent, she realized that she was a crisis junky and needed to be in an area that had "better boundaries and better hours." Brenda was open about her membership in Al-anon and talked freely and with gratitude about how the organization changed her life. She said, "I have a 12 step program that gets your priorities into shape real quick. I do a lot of self-management, self-talk. I definitely learned that at Al-anon. The little key phrases they give you really work."
Outside of work, Brenda was an amateur photographer, an avid TV watcher (thanks to TiVo), and ran a virtual business, "just for fun." In addition, she and her friends had a "Friday night dinner club" where a group of about 12 people gathered for food and fun. Brenda did not exercise, because she "hates it." However, she had recently lost 30

pounds because she no longer skipped lunch. She ate lunch at her desk every day so she had the physical and mental energy to go home and "be there" for her daughter.

Diana

Diana was raised in an Irish Catholic community in a small town in the Northeast. Both of her parents earned their master's degrees and actively encouraged Diana and her older brother to pursue higher education. Diana's enthusiasm and passion for leadership began in high school when she was elected the president of her sophomore class and has continued through to today. Her faith has also played a significant role in her personal development and professional choices. Diana attended Catholic institutions for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees and has worked as a student affairs professional at two different Catholic institutions. She has nine years of student affairs experience and for the last year, has worked as the director of orientation at Victory University, a medium sized, Catholic college in the Northeast. Diana is 33 years old, married, and has one three year old daughter.

While other participants were involved in dual-career relationships, Diana was the only participant who was part of a ***higher education*** dual-career couple. Diana's husband, Brad, worked in residence life at another institution. She relayed that in some ways, this made her career progression and work-life balance easier because her husband had a flexible schedule and an understanding supervisor. In addition, her husband, "gets it;" he knows and appreciates the work that she does as a student affairs professional. However, being dual-career has not been without challenges. Often times in their careers significant work events, such as opening weekend and orientation,

collided. They continue to talk about and work out the differences, for each of them, of seeing one's professional work as a career, versus "just a job."

As a leader, Diana described herself as giving, enthusiastic, and organized. She had a servant's heart and spoke at length about her commitment to students, even seeing them as her "clients" in some cases. More than any other participant, Diana also spoke with great pride and contentment at having found her positional and institutional niche. In previous jobs, she felt she was in the right position, but not at the right institution. In her current position, she has both, the right position and the right institution. As Diana said, "Institutionally, now I have the right fit. The pieces have come together. The puzzle fits, but isn't finished yet, either." This sense of belonging was also why Diana identified as mid-career. She made a distinction between her years as a new professional when she was learning about the field and discerning her professional interests, to now, where she knows what she wants and how to do it. "I am mid-career in the sense that I am not in an entry-level position, and I am not at the beginning of my career path either. Through the past eight years I have been formulating my way, realizing that my passion is first-year students."

Because Diana's current position involved relocation to a different geographical region, she was not involved in any professional organizations. At the time of our interview, she was in her first "down-time" since beginning her job in January 2009. She hoped to get more involved locally. When she was not working, Diana liked to spend time planning special trips and events for her husband and daughter. She was also geographically closer to her parents and extended family and is now able to attend more

family events such as weddings, baby showers, and birthdays. She recently joined a softball league to meet more women in her neighborhood.

Diane

Diane grew up in the South and the Midwest and was raised by a single, working mother. Diane's father passed away when she was 10 years old. Her father's death left an indelible mark on Diane and how she viewed family, commitment, and self-reliance. "I learned I need to take care of myself. There are no guarantees." Diane was a first-generation college student. She attended college at a large, public research university in the Midwest. She said that her plan was to stay for one year and then transfer to an institution closer to her mom who had moved back to the South. But, as she said, "I got connected and I just *could not* leave (emphasis hers)! I was an orientation leader, a resident assistant, and I was mentored by people on campus." After working for her sorority for several years, she earned her master's degree and started working in student affairs. Professionally, Diane has worked at several institutions in different functional areas, but student leadership is her first love and her true passion.

Diane was 36 years old when she got married in 2004; her husband is 10 years her senior. Due to her age, Diane needed the help of fertility treatments to have a family. Her daughter Meghan was conceived through in vitro fertilization (IVF). At the time of our interview, Meghan was about to have her first birthday. Every time Diane spoke about her daughter, it was with awe and thanksgiving. "What it took to get her here...it is a miracle." This sense of gratitude and purpose influences everything Diane does, even staying in her current work situation despite feeling out of synch professionally. Diane served as an assistant director of career resources in the college of

business at Hoover State University, a large, public, research university in the Mid-Atlantic. Diane described her current work environment as "corporate, not collaborative, and not empowering."

Diane applied to a doctoral program at her home university and hoped to be admitted and begin coursework in the fall. Diane stays in her current position to save money for tuition, in the hopes that she can quit her job, enroll in school full-time and spend more time at home with Meghan. At the time of our interview, no one in Diane's office was aware of her plans to leave her full-time position. The fact that Diane would stay in a professional environment clearly outside of her comfort zone in order to get where she wants to be in the end demonstrates her tenacity and focus. Diane was also a person of deep conviction and commitment. She relayed that even though she was not happy with her current position, she continued to work hard and serve students the best she could, because it was the right thing to do. "Of course I put in my best effort. It is the ethical thing to do." Diane considered herself mid-career because of her number of years of experience. She had 14 years of work experience and in her words, "I still have about 20 to go, if I work until age 62."

In addition to work and motherhood, Diane was also a partial caregiver to her grandmother who lived an hour away. Diane also described herself as a daughter, sister, and niece. At the time of our conversation, both Diane's uncle and brother were experiencing some family issues which created some stress for Diane and her family. If she had free time, Diane liked to read and plan family outings. She also commented that she was working to make exercise and church bigger priorities in 2010.

Eva

Eva was born in the Midwest and raised in the South until she was nine or 10 years old. When Eva was in the fourth grade her family moved back to the Midwest to help care for her sick grandmother. Around the same time, Eva's father was laid off from his job in the airline industry. Eva remembered this change as "really traumatic for our family. We went from a middle class lifestyle to being very poor, very quickly. It was definitely downsized." Her father eventually found work as a drug rehabilitation counselor and AIDS educator; her mother got certified as a teacher's aide and foster parent. Despite their working schedules, one of her parents was always home, a feat that Eva admired and appreciated. "Somehow, someone was always home. I am not sure how they did that."

Eva was a first generation college student. She attended a large research university in the Midwest for her undergraduate degree. She met her future husband while they were in college and they have been married for 10 years. They also have two children, a seven year old son and four year old daughter. Eva identified as Black. Eva's path to student affairs started in college when she was a resident assistant. Originally, she planned to enter the corporate world, but she was continually tapped for leadership positions on campus which exposed her to the student affairs profession. In addition, she enjoyed "helping people navigate" and liked the variety that residence life provided. She has spent all of her professional career in the residence life functional area. Eva worked four and half years on the front lines as a hall director and has served in a central staff position since 2004. She currently works as an assistant director at a research university in the Midwest.

Eva was the only participant to use generational monikers to describe herself, her family, co-workers, and staff. At 34 years old, Eva was a Gen-Xer. While her sister, who was twelve years younger, "has definite Millennial characteristics." Eva's work colleagues were from the "Boomer" generation. These differences were a point of humor and tension for Eva. Eva considered herself mid-career because of the nature and scope of her assistant director position. Yet, by age, she was the youngest person on staff and the only Gen-Xer. For the most part, Eva considered this generational difference a benefit of her work. She appreciated the wisdom and experience of her Boomer colleagues. However, she also articulated that sometimes these differences were challenging, especially when it came to balancing work and motherhood. She said, "I am a Gen-Xer, not a Boomer. I have different priorities and a different way of seeing the world. I am not sure if they [Boomer colleagues] have a 'suck it up' attitude. But, I think that some balance is reasonable."

In addition to her roles as a professional, mother, and wife, Eva considered herself a Christian, calling herself "a servant of God." Eva's commitment to living and modeling Christian was apparent in all aspects of her life. "I try to express those [values] at work, in my family, in my marriage." Her faith also served as a guiding force in her career and career-related decisions. When asked if she intended to pursue a terminal degree, Eva admitted that she had been thinking about that quite a bit and that her supervisor and mentor suggested it as well. For now, though, Eva was focusing on her work and her family. School may or may not happen, as she said, "maybe it will happen, if God puts it on my heart."

Judy

Judy grew up in the Southwest. She was from an educated family- both of her parents had doctoral degrees- and like Alice, she and her younger brother were expected to attend college. As an undergraduate student, Judy was the president of her sorority and actively involved in campus activities council. After graduation, she served for two years as a national consultant for her organization, and after speaking with several Greek advisors on college campuses across the country, realized that she wanted to pursue student affairs as a career. She earned her master's degree from Titan University, a research university in the Southwest. Judy was enrolled in a doctoral program at Titan as well. Judy was 36 years old, married and had two children- a five year old daughter and a two and a half-year old son.

Judy spent her entire professional career at Titan, serving in four different functional areas. She had a linear career trajectory, progressing quickly up the student affairs ladder. She served as the interim director of multicultural services, a position she has held since July, 2009. Like Amelia, Judy identified as mid-career because of her position and her experience. "Associate director is a mid-level position. Ten years in the profession is mid-level. I am not a senior student affairs officer, not the dean of students."

As a professional leader, Judy was smart, direct, focused, and organized. She was committed to being viewed as an ethical and responsible professional. "I hope my colleagues say I am ethical and responsible, that I am known for being responsible and organized." She knows who she is, what she wants, and what she needs to do to get there. This is evidenced by how she spoke about both the director position and her

doctoral studies. At the time of our interview, Judy indicated that she did not intend to apply for the director position permanently. She stated, "I am still not going to submit my name for the director position. If I am going to apply, it is because everyone else wants me to and that is not enough reason." Judy was sure that she would remain in higher education for the long-haul. To do so, and to continue to advance through the ranks, she needed the doctorate degree. She said, "I don't want to get to the associate vice president or dean of students position and not have the degree." Yet, she was not willing to do the degree on anyone else's timeline, or compromise her family or her work to get it done. She said this about her educational strategy, "I am not out to win dissertation of the year. I am working full-time and am a part-time student. For my sanity, my staff, and my family, I have decided to only do one course per semester, not two."

When asked about mentors and support networks, Judy shared that she and her supervisor had a strong professional mentoring relationship. Her supervisor was supportive and encouraging of her beginning the doctoral program at Titan. Like Judy, he was also a parent to a young son, so they often swapped stories. Judy also organized a group of women colleagues who have children similar in age to Judy's; they gather frequently to play board games at Judy's house. This group served as an informal support network.

In addition to being a wife, mother, and student affairs professional, Judy volunteered at her church and coached her daughter's soccer team. She was one of only two participants with a dedicated exercise routine. Although she did not necessarily

consider this a hobby, it was one of the few things that Judy did for herself and it brought her great satisfaction.

Madelyn

Madelyn grew up in the Northeast and like Amelia, extended family members were a significant part of her upbringing. Madelyn's grandparents lived with them and her mother had 10 siblings, so there were many cousins around while growing up. Madelyn identified as a first-generation college student. Her father earned an eighth grade education, as she described him, "He was a pull yourself up by your boot straps kind of guy." Her mother finished high school but was not allowed to attend college because she was a woman. Despite her parents' lack of experience with college, or perhaps because of it, Madelyn was raised with the notion that "college and education were important. Growing up, I knew of this concept of college and that I was going."

Madelyn attended Cross College, a small, Catholic, rural institution in the Northeast. College was a life-changing experience for Madelyn in many ways. "It was the first time I was in the country, the first time I saw a cow, the first time I saw wealth." While at Cross, Madelyn was mentored by several people, whom she credits with helping her persist. "There were folks there who mentored me and got me through school. I went from being on academic probation my first semester to the Dean's list my last two years. Without them I would not have graduated." Her undergraduate experiences also directly influenced her desire to work in higher education. Madelyn spoke often of seeing herself as a "companion" to students and believes strongly that her experiences can help others. "I want to play an educational role in students' lives, especially first-generation students since I was one."

Madelyn was one of only two participants (Toni was the other) with an earned doctorate. Like Judy, she also progressed through the student affairs hierarchy. She had work experience in residence life, student activities, and campus ministry. She described herself as a "generalist" working as a dean of student development at St. Rachel University, a Catholic, and medium sized master's college in the Northeast. Madelyn had been in her current position since July, 2008 and had 15 years of student affairs experience. She identified as a mid-career professional because she was "managing from the middle. I am not upper level even though I have a Dean title. I am towards the end of my middle. The next position is at the top." Madelyn expressed ambition to eventually move on beyond her mid-career position to either a vice-president for student affairs (VPSA) position or a college presidency.

Related to mentors and support networks, Madelyn continued informal contact with her undergraduate mentors and credited them with teaching her the basics that she carried with her today. Madelyn also spoke highly of her involvement in professional organizations. She shared that the benefits of this involvement were two-fold. First, her professional involvement challenged her professionally, she said, "it propelled me from new to mid-career, not just in position but in mindset. I went from minion to leader." Second, professional organizations served as a support network and provided most of her "mentors and more regular connections."

As a professional leader, Madelyn described herself as "shy and introverted" but also saw herself as "innovative, creative and collaborative...a team player who takes initiative quickly." Conversely, when speaking of her personal leadership, Madelyn expressed less confidence and more doubt about her abilities. This was due in large part

to the fact that Madelyn was a newlywed and a new mother. At the time of our conversation, she had been married for one and half years and her daughter was only four and one-half months old. Madelyn had only been back to work four weeks when we spoke. For Madelyn, negotiating her new identities of wife and mother were compounded by the fact the she was also relatively new to her professional position and that her husband had been unemployed since July, 2009. Madelyn became the breadwinner for her family, a role that she enjoyed and took pride in, but being the primary income earner for her family was also a source of tremendous stress, personally and in her marriage. She said, "Working moms with a working spouse has been normalized. Through my whole working mom experience, my husband has not been working."

Monique

At 28 years old, Monique was the youngest participant in this study. She was also one of only three women of color to participate; Eva and Toni were the other two. Monique identified as bi-racial; "my mom is White and my dad is African-American." Growing up, Monique's parents were involved in a Bible ministry and as a result, Monique and her siblings lived in several different states across the Midwest and Great Plains. "I moved 12 times before high school. The longest we lived anywhere was a year and a half. In eighth grade we moved to the Pacific Northwest. High school was interesting!" Monique was engaged to be married and with her fiancé she had a one year old daughter. Due to her fiancé's third shift work schedule, Monique functioned as a single parent four days a week.

Monique was a first-generation college student, an experience of which she was incredibly proud and which influenced her career choice. She said,

> I knew college was the next step, but I had no idea how it was going to happen. My mom was like, 'Why is it necessary?' but my Dad and I were on the same page. At the same time, though, *I* was the one who read the fine print, figured out the FAFSA solo. That experience helps me support other first generation students here [at current institution].

Monique worked as a resident director at Inter-city Private University, a medium-sized Christian college in the Pacific Northwest. She had six years of professional experience, all in the residence life functional area. She previously worked at three different institutions but moved home to the Northwest when her younger brother passed away three years ago. By title, Monique had an entry-level student affairs position, but she considered herself mid-career because of her years of experience, skill mastery, and commitment to student affairs for the long-haul. She said this about her mid-career status,

> Entry-level is, 'where are you going?' Now, I am mid-career because I am grounded. I have decided that higher education is for me. I have a lot of experience and experience at a bunch of different institutions. I am in a place different from most entry-level people. I feel more confident in my choice. I have been at Inter-city since July 2008.

Monique took great pride in being authentic, as a leader and woman professional of color. She had a strong sense of self and, by example, encouraged her staff and colleagues to do the same. "First and foremost, I hope my colleagues say that I am an

authentic leader. That I am really dedicated to the student experience. I hope my supervisor notices that I am super dedicated to getting better every day. And, I hope my staff says that I am the most supportive person they have ever had." Monique related that her two professional mentors have been critical in supporting her development as a professional of color and in challenging her to constantly improve.

> My mentor from grad school has been a huge source of empowerment. He is laid back but very effective...He really gets being a person of color in higher education, but can look outside it, too. He is a great perspective check for me. One [mentor] here at inter-city is always helping me find ways to be better. She gives me solid solutions for how to do it. She is support and challenge. She supports, advocates for me. Nothing I ever do is the end. Together, my two mentors support the whole me.

At the time of our interview, Monique was planning her upcoming wedding and deciding her next professional step. She hoped to conduct a job search in the near future, but was geographically limited because she wanted to stay close to her family and because her fiancé was successful in his current position. She tried to exercise daily, usually in the early mornings before her daughter was awake. On the weekends, she worked with her father who ran a professional window-washing company. Before the birth of her daughter, she dabbled as an amateur photographer.

Toni

Toni was born and raised on the West coast. She grew up in a supportive, but "strict and overprotective" family. She was the first in her family to attend college. "My going to college was a great source of pride for my family. With family and peers, I was

the nerdy one. Everyone knew I was going to do something with my life." She lived at home her first year of college. At 18, she became pregnant with her son, David. When tensions at home ran high, she and David moved out. A friend of hers, who later became her husband, let her and David stay in his fraternity house for two weeks while she got settled. Toni graduated from college and then went to work in the public relations industry. She quickly learned that "corporate was not for me." After much soul searching she realized that she wanted to "help others get to higher education," and began her career in student affairs. She is 32 years old; in addition to her son David, Toni also has a two year old daughter, Julia. Toni identified as a woman of color.

Toni earned her doctorate in May, 2009 and worked in an academic advising/faculty hybrid position at Sunshine University, an urban, Catholic, master's college in the Midwest. Continuing to help others, her dissertation focused on persistence of first-generation college students. Prior to making the recent switch to faculty, Toni worked in student activities and multicultural programs. Toni had eight years of professional experience. Unlike most of the other participants, Toni did not consider herself mid-career because of her experience or her current job title. Rather, she considered herself mid-career because she was "transitioning between being new and an expert. I am not exactly where I want to end up yet, but I am definitely past where I was."

When I sent out the call in summer 2009 asking for study participants, Toni listed her relationship status as married. By the time we actually spoke in December 2009, she and her husband were separated and she had initiated divorce proceedings. The recent and drastic change in Toni's life circumstances was understandably

traumatic. By her own admission, Toni was very distracted and "all over the place." When we spoke, she was focusing on re-establishing a sense of routine for Julia [daughter] and herself and figuring out her next steps. Toni considered herself fortunate that her current work situation was flexible and she was surrounded by supportive people, especially her supervisor. She only had to be in her office 20 hours per week and had the freedom to set her own hours.

Toni identified as a Christian and believed that her divorce would make her stronger in faith, a better professional, and a better mother. In addition to work, Toni was actively pursuing a writing career. At the time of our conversation, she was working on two self-help books related to spirituality and love. When she and her husband separated, her son David moved back to the West coast to be with his biological father; Toni hoped to see him in the near future. She was also actively pursuing fun activities for her and Julia to do on weekends. If she had down time, Toni cleaned her house and slept.

In this chapter, I provided in-depth portraits of the 10 participants. Portraits included information related to: family and educational background; basic information about their children and current relationship status; career histories; why participants consider themselves mid-career; self-perceptions related to leadership, mentors, and support networks; and information about personal hobbies and interests. Thick description, in the form of participant quotes, gave voice to the women and their experiences. The portraits presented here provided a frame for understanding the participants and their experiences, which enhances the reader's understanding of the collective (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). In the next chapter, I present findings and

themes that emerged from all 10 cases and that addressed the research questions of "how" and "why" women negotiate their lives as mid-career mothers in student affairs.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings- How

In the previous chapter, I provided a detailed portrait of each participant to help the reader better understand each woman and her lived experiences as a mid-career student affairs professional and mother. In this chapter, I present themes that emerged from the 10 cases. As outlined in chapter three, I transcribed the participant interviews and then read through each transcription and used open, axial, and selective coding to generate codes or data (Merriam, 1998). Using cross-case (Merriam, 1998) and thematic analysis (Creswell, 2007), I grouped codes together into categories (Merriam, 1998) or themes. In this chapter, I use thick, rich description, in the form of participant quotes, to demonstrate the various themes.

My study was guided by the research question: How do mid-career women student affairs administrators with small children negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles? The research question was divided into two sub-questions: (1) the practical mechanics of navigating, "the how," and (2) the ways women make sense of their multiple roles, "the why." I discuss "how" women negotiated their lives in detail in this chapter. Findings related to "why" are presented in the next chapter, chapter six. Across the two chapters of findings, I show the reciprocal nature between "how" participants negotiated their lives and "why." Participants articulated that, because they have multiple roles (how), they utilized the mid-career time for a purpose (why). The women in my study also utilized their mid-career status (why) *because* they have multiple roles (how). The findings I present here and in the next chapter demonstrate

the broader concepts of agency, choice, and purpose that the study participants brought to their lives as mid-career student affairs professionals and mothers.

I began this study with the research question, "How do women negotiate and make sense of their multiple roles." After interviewing participants, coding the interview transcripts, and generating themes, I now use the word negotiate instead of navigate to explain how mid-career mothers made sense of their multiple roles. As this chapter shows, negotiate is a more accurate reflection of "how" and "why" the women in my study managed their lives. The term navigation implies moving around fixed obstacles, similar to roadblocks that cannot be moved. The women in my study articulated that they did not navigate around their roles, rather, they worked with and managed them; thus, the word negotiation is more appropriate here, because it implies relationship.

How

The "how" question in this study focused on the specific tools and strategies women used to negotiate their lives as mid-career mothers in student affairs. Within this heading are three themes: "like clockwork," "make it count," and "scaffolding." The theme of "like clockwork" is a metaphor for how the participants in my study negotiated their multiple roles. I use the image of cogs in a clock to illustrate that women do indeed have multiple roles and how those roles are managed was a function of timing and alignment. "Make it count" is the second theme within "how." "Make it count" refers to the specific tools and strategies that participants used to negotiate and maximize their time. In the third section, I outline the various support structures participants built into their lives that make negotiating multiple roles possible. I label

those support structures "scaffolding." I discuss the first theme, "like clockwork" in the next section.

Like Clockwork

There are two sub-themes which form the broader theme of "like clockwork;" these two sub-themes include: (1) multiple roles; and (2) the timing and alignment of those roles. First, I provide findings which support the notion that the participants in my study had roles in addition to those of mother and student affairs professional. Then, in the section on timing and alignment, I explain how women's roles cycled in and out- like cogs in a clock- depending on the salience of each role at a particular point in time.

Multiple Roles

As was explained in the literature review in chapter two, the existing literature about work-life balance of higher education professionals (cite) and the more specific literature on student affairs professionals with children (cite) focused on two roles that women and men might have, those of parent and professional. Participants in my study articulated that their roles as mother and student affairs professional required the most physical time-on-task but were not the only roles that they have. When asked what roles participants managed in addition to those of mother and student affairs professional, each woman spoke eloquently and with pride about her other roles, which included, but were not limited to: wife or partner, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, friend, volunteer, and woman of faith.

In addition to her roles as a mother and student affairs professional, Diane was a caretaker to family members. She helped care for her sick grandmother who lived an hour away. She also helped her uncle who, at the time of our conversation, was

undergoing radiation treatment. Diane's brother experienced some marital problems and Diane shepherded him through that. Diane related that while she was honored and flattered to have these roles, they were draining physically and emotionally. Taking care of these relatives also involved travel, which in turn, translated into time away from her husband and daughter. Madelyn also had roles layered on top of her responsibilities as a mother and student affairs professional. Madelyn served as an informal life coach to several of her colleagues and friends. She stated that this was a role that she did not expect, but also one that she "enjoyed very much."

As part of my interview protocol I asked participants to reflect on how their personal and professional leadership changed as a result of being a mother. How participants answered this question suggested that they had multiple roles. When participants spoke about themselves as leaders, their personal and professional roles were integrated; they answered questions about personal leadership as professionals and professional as personal. For example, when asked how her personal leadership approach changed, Eva talked about her staff at work. She said,

> I am even more committed to other people having more balance. I have seen the benefits of that in my own life. Some of them, my staff, have partners, families. I try to challenge them, help them figure out what's important related to balance and to use time wisely.

In her answer to how her *professional* leadership approach changed, Eva talked about her home life and her roles as a wife and mother. She said this:

> At home, I am way more patient than I used to be. I am more organized. I have to be. I am trying to set boundaries...I am trying to have a better co-leadership

role with my husband. Usually [because of the work I do] I am in decisive/crisis mode. I need to remember I have a partner. He's not calling me on the duty phone with a crisis. I need to step back. I'm more used to, 'It needs to be done now!' He is more introverted and needs time to process. I have had to re-adjust at home. Family in general has helped me do that. Having kids, you rely on each other [spouse] in a different way. We have to work together to do this, to feed our kids, etc.

Eva's conceptualizations of her personal and professional leadership suggest two things. First, she did have multiple roles that she consistently negotiated. Second, those roles were integrated, not divided into rigid categories such as "work" and "home" or "work" and "life" as existing literature suggests. The previous section suggests that women negotiated multiple roles. In the next section, timing and alignment, I show that participants negotiated multiple roles because the salience of their roles shifted over time.

Timing and Alignment

This section on timing and alignment is the second sub-theme of "like clockwork." In this section, I show that the women in my study negotiated multiple roles and that the salience of a particular role was a function of timing and alignment. I use the image of cogs or gears in a clock as a metaphor for how roles shifted in and out of women's lives, depending upon their level of salience at a particular point in time. More salient roles are represented by cogs that are close together or tightly aligned and in the foreground. Less salient roles are represented by cogs that are further away from each other, in the background. The women worked to keep salient roles in the

foreground and chose which of her other (less salient) roles to let roll away into the background.

The stories from participants also show that some roles were always salient, while other roles were temporally and contextually bound. For example, parenthood is a lifelong status; once you have a child, you are always a mother. For some participants, her role as a Christian or person of faith was also a permanent one. To make time and space for their most salient roles, participants allowed some of their other roles- such as wife or partner, daughter, sister, friend, or volunteer- to temporarily roll into the background. Diana's comment served as an example of the multifaceted nature of women's multiple roles and how role timing and alignment worked. She said, "For me, it is not just personal and work. Even at work I have multiple roles: mentor, supervisee, and supervisor. At home, I am a daughter and sister. Normally those don't flare up, but if they do, they take time. It is multidimensional."

In addition to their roles as mothers, Eva and Toni spoke at length about their faith lives and how their roles as Christian women were always in the foreground. Throughout our conversation, Eva spoke frequently about her faith and how she saw herself as "a servant of God." She actively lived those Christian values and emulated them in every sphere of her life. As a person of faith, she believed that God guided her professional life. Like motherhood, being a Christian was an overarching, or foundational role that Eva had, and as such, that role was always salient for her. About her faith she said,

> God has ordered my steps. As an undergrad, even my hall director was telling me I should be a resident assistant (RA). God knows where we are going, He

> sets your path. I went from being RA, to senior RA, to grad, to full-time professional. Then I went to [residential college] and got academic experience. [Residence halls] are two of our most active buildings; I was there [in those halls] as an assistant hall director and then complex director. There is not much you can throw at me that I haven't seen a piece of before. It prepared me to help others facing that. I know God has led me. He gave me the mind to seek out experiences, committees, people who challenged and pushed me.

In speaking about the additional roles that Eva held, she mentioned that although she was a daughter, she did not have time to devote to this role. She said, "I don't connect with my mom enough." Eva's story showed that simultaneously holding many roles was consuming- mentally and physically. To accommodate or make room for their roles, the women in my study actively chose to focus on some roles more than others. Eva chose for her role as a daughter to cycle to the background so she could devote time and energy to other roles, like mother, worker, wife, and Christian. It was not that her role as a Christian forced her role of daughter out, but it was a statement about the boundaries of time. There are only a certain number of hours in the day, participants reflected; to make it work, participants chose to let some roles go, or cycle out, so they could focus on others. Toni related a similar experience. About her many roles, Toni said,

> As a daughter...I am just constantly keeping my parents in the loop. As a Christian, this is a huge responsibility of mine. I try to have a positive outlook, have strong character. I am constantly trying to live up to those standards and not give in to people who are not respectful of me. My relationships are so

limited right now. I am also a sister; but not a very good one right now. It is not a role I am consistently playing. My brother is in California and we are just so different, we don't identify with each other. I would like to have a role as a wife again. Not with the same man, obviously. I am a loyal, commitment-oriented person. The other day I broke down at the grocery store. I was looking at all these different colored tomatoes planning a recipe. And then I thought, 'Who am I cooking this for?' I had to leave. But, it is a role I would like to have again.

Eva and Toni's stories showed that roles cycled in and out to help women make time and space for other roles and priorities. For Eva and Toni, their roles as mother, professional, and Christian were primary; consequently, other roles, such as daughter (for Eva) or sister (for Toni) rolled away.

Not all of the participants in my study saw themselves as women of faith. However, the participants did have other roles that they negotiated. These roles included professional organization member, volunteer, and friend. In addition to being a mother and student affairs professional, Alice was also a doctoral student. Prior to the birth of her son and the advent of her studies, Alice was an active member of several professional organizations. She served on various local and regional committees and even chaired a national convention. Recently, though, Alice let go of these commitments to make time for her studies. She said, "Right now it's PhD, son, work. Period." Thus, her role as a professional organization member cycled out, so the more salient role of doctoral student could take its place. As Alice's comment illustrated, her roles as a mother and student affairs professional remained and their salience did not

shift. Her new role as a doctoral student was added to or layered on top of those existing roles.

Similar to Alice's involvement in professional organizations, Brenda's role as a committee member cycled out and was replaced by her focus on motherhood and friendship. Prior to the adoption of her daughter, Brenda was involved in 37 campus committees. Since her daughter's arrival two years ago, Brenda narrowed her on-campus commitments to one because it was the one about which she cared most. Brenda worked her entire career to end up in the judicial affairs functional area; she ended up there and stated that she intended to stay there. Her feelings of being settled professionally gave her the time and space to focus on other things, including her daughter and her friends. About her daughter she said, "100% of my energy is about my child. Work is about keeping my job." Related to her role as a friend, she said, "I am a very dedicated friend. I help my friends for a *very long time* (emphasis hers). Friends are my family of choice." Brenda's mental time, attention, and energy shifted to her life outside of work. As a result of this shift in focus, her role as a friend became more salient, while those of committee member or active professional were less salient.

Diane's story exemplified the changing nature of work and work-related demands and how that caused a shift in roles as well. Diane worked as a career services advisor in the college of business. Throughout her tenure in the college of business, her position was both a source of stress that she needed distance from and a grounding force that provided stability and financial security. Diane related that when she and her husband were trying to conceive a child, she needed to physically and mentally remove

herself from the stress that her position created so that she could focus on her own well-being, with the hopes of increasing her chances of conceiving. She said,

> Since I've had my daughter, I leave at 5pm because my time with her at home is so short and precious. I actually had to start this habit earlier because of what we had to do in order to conceive her. I had to try and start having a better work/home balance then and try to alleviate the amount of stress in my life.

At the time of our interview, Diane was utilizing the stability of her current position to shift her focus to preparing for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and being admitted to the higher education doctoral program at her university. In both situations, Diane's work role was not totally gone or forgotten, but its salience shifted. The time and attention devoted to her role as a student affairs professional cycled to the background, so other roles, mother and doctoral student, could potentially take its place.

Diana's story showed that roles can also cycle *back into* one's life and that those new roles can be life-giving and fun, not just time consuming. To accept her current position, Diana moved geographically closer to her family and as a result, her roles as daughter and extended family member became more salient. She said, "The daughter role has upped a bit now that we live closer. Before, I was a once-a-week caller. I am also included in more extended family stuff now- bridal showers and baby showers."

In this section I demonstrated the theme of timing and alignment, by showing that the women in my study had multiple roles and that those roles remained; what shifted was "how" the participants negotiated those multiple roles. By making adjustments to the timing and alignment of their roles, participants were able to keep their role as mother in the foreground and allow other roles to shift to the background.

For some participants, like Eva and Toni, their role as a person of faith was always salient. Other participants did not have active faith lives per se, but they did have other roles such as professional organization member and volunteer, daughter, sister, or friend, which they actively negotiated. Often times, these secondary roles became less salient so participants could make room for more salient roles such as mother, friend, and extended family member. In the next section, I address the specific tools and strategies participants used that made the timing and alignment of their multiple roles possible.

Make it Count

The concept of "make it count" is the second theme related to "how" the participants negotiated their lives as mid-career professionals and mothers. "Make it count" refers to specific strategies participants used to negotiate and maximize their time. None of the participants talked about "time management" as a strategy for dealing with their many roles and responsibilities. Instead, they used words like "compartmentalization," "being present," and "mindfulness." As mothers and mid-career professionals with experience, they knew that time cannot be managed. Despite best efforts, one cannot make time shorter or longer; therefore, participants were committed to making their time count.

The women in my study negotiated their lives with as much control and purpose as their situations would allow. If there was something that could be planned, they planned it. Participants decided when to have children. They found quality childcare for their children, which allowed them to shift their mental attention to work and work-related tasks. Participants also negotiated their mental time and energy while at home.

Having control of their own physical and mental time helped them make it count. There are four sub-themes related to make it count, these include: (1) having children on personal, not professional timelines; (2) finding the right childcare; (3) making time count at work; and (4) making time count at home. I discuss each sub-theme in the next four sections.

Having children on their own time, not career time

In this sub-theme of having children on personal, not professional timelines, I show how the participants in my study approached motherhood with a sense of agency and purpose. The women in my study were adamant that they were not going to miss out on motherhood because of their roles as student affairs professionals. For participants, having children was more about the individual woman's psychological and biological readiness than it was about a specific work position or career timeline.

For Alice, the decision to have children was about feeling settled in her marriage and wanting to experience and accomplish other things before having children. About the timing of the birth of her son, she said,

> We had been married eight years and I had been working full-time for 10 years. We waited. We wanted to do more as a couple like travel and feel ready. It was based on family timing not career timing. It was always understood that it would happen when we were ready.

Amelia, Diana, and Eva began their families because of their strong biological instincts, not because of career or work timelines. All three women articulated that their "maternal instincts kicked in" and that is why they began their families when they did. Amelia said that, originally, she thought her partner Melanie would be the one to carry a

child, but that changed when Amelia turned 30. She said, "My nurturing instinct really kicked in, really hard, right before I was 30. And I thought, 'I really want to carry a child myself.'" It took Diana and her husband almost three years to conceive their daughter. Diana articulated how fortunate she felt to have started the childbearing process when she did. About her experience, Diana said,

> Thank God we started when we did! The proverbial clock was ticking. Trying to get pregnant and then infertility treatments and then adoption, all those processes take years! You find out you can't have a baby, then you try to adopt....At that time, it felt like it took a long time [for us to conceive]. The process was emotionally and physically difficult.

Eva also spoke having her first child in response to her strong maternal instinct. She stated,

> My son was born in 2002. I started working full-time in 2000. We were married in 1999. Originally I thought we would take our time [having kids], but then all of a sudden this maternal instinct kicked in and we decided let's have our children while we are young. Then we can have our time later when they [kids] are older.

When it was time to start a family, Judy considered many factors before moving forward; her career was actually the least of these factors. Her comment showed that other factors such as her age, her parents' age, being financially ready, and the weather in her home state were more influential than her career or career timeline. She said,

> I was 31 [years old] with my daughter. I had been working four years, near the end of my fifth year. I didn't think strategically about my career, didn't think I

needed to be in a certain position. I was 34 with my son. I want to have kids while my parents can still enjoy them physically. We had bought a house. A year later my daughter was born. Having enough money for owning a house, that was a big factor. I wasn't able to get pregnant right away, so I had to do [fertility hormone]. As my daughter was turning two, I started to think, 'Okay, I think I'm ready again.' I didn't think too much about the position I was in. I thought more about time of year- higher education and weather [here] in the summer. It's hot! I also wanted to have kids before 35. I knew after 35 it might get harder, there might be more complications.

Toni's story about having her second child also demonstrated the sense of agency and purpose that participants used when planning their families. Toni's comments reflect that having her second child was about her age, her progression through her doctoral program, and her relationship with her husband, not about work timing. Toni related that her work situation was not a flexible one but she did not let that deter her from having a family. Toni stated,

> With my daughter, I had been working at [previous institution] for two years. I was in the PhD program at Sparrow, was in my second year in the doctoral program. She was planned. I thought the timing would be good; she would still be so young and not remember me being in school. We had been married two years. The plan was to start for a second child when I graduated. The decision was based on my progress through the Ph.D. program at Sparrow. I got promoted [at previous institution] after my first year in the doctoral program...I was just turning 30. I thought, 'We need to get started.' The flexibility really

wasn't a factor. I didn't have much flexibility, at all. We had been married a couple years, I thought, 'It's time.'

The participants in my study indicated that they had children for various reasons: because they wanted to; they were biologically and mentally ready; and because the timing was right for them and their significant others. The participants' work situations, career status, job flexibility or lack of it, were not factors in their decision. As much as one can control or plan when to have children, these women did. The women in my study also brought the same sense of control to their decisions about daycare for their children. I discuss the process of finding the right childcare in the next section.

Finding the right childcare

Finding the right childcare is the second sub-theme of "make it count." There are two significant findings related to childcare. First, seeking care for young children was a complicated endeavor. It involved finding a facility or in-home operation that had space for an infant or young child, was close to work or home, was financially affordable, and was trustworthy and reliable. Participants did this investigative work on their own and visited multiple facilities, researched facility reputations on-line, and used their friendship and professional networks to ask questions. Second, participants articulated that finding the right childcare situation allowed them to feel secure that their children were cared for, freeing them to focus on work. Finding the right childcare was an investment of time and money, but one that participants were willing to make because they saw childcare as a tool or strategy that helped them negotiate work and motherhood.

Eva's comments demonstrated the amount of time and energy it took her to arrange childcare in addition to the varied emotional, social, and economic factors, which influenced her daycare decision.

> Before my son was born, I went to 13 different places to compare. I really wanted to know what I as getting into. I visited lots of places, talked to the directors. I compared prices. 'What am I getting for the money?' We got lucky and found a place close to campus, 10 minutes from here. I looked at cost, and figured, 'Okay, this works in our budget.' I liked the staff. My son was 13 months when he started there; my daughter was 3 months when she started.

Diane equated finding the right childcare to a full-time job in and of itself. She said, "The daycare thing, that is its own thing altogether! It is just nutty! I started talking to friends, did some research on my own."

Seven of the ten participants (Alice, Amelia, Brenda, Diana, Diane, Eva, and Judy) enrolled their children in a structured day-care center. The participants whose children were enrolled at centers spoke with pride about the fact that their children were being exposed to a "curriculum" at the day-care centers. These curricula included, but were not limited to: art, music, stories, gymnastics, and Spanish lessons. Also related to the concept of curricula, Diane, Amelia, and Diana talked about their children being in "school," even though, chronologically, their children were too young for formalized preschool or kindergarten. Referring to day-care as school made it easier for some women to leave their children there and go to work. Diane said, "It's not daycare. She's at school. I say that to help me deal with it." Amelia had high praise for the center where her daughter Anna was enrolled. She said,

> Orion being a research institution, there are lots of research centers, and there are lots of undergrad education majors who work in the center. They love kids and are really happy working there. She [Anna] loves it there. She comes home happy. That's what you want. If you can't be with them [kids], you want someone else to love them almost as much as you do. Not as much as you do, but close. You want them to take care of them the way that you would and, I really feel that way about Orion.

Madelyn and Monique did not have their children in daycare. Madelyn's husband cared for their daughter at home while Madelyn was at work; this was due to his recent unemployment. If he were to find work soon, Madelyn's mother offered to come back to the area and care for her granddaughter until a daycare position would come open. Monique's fiancé worked from 4:30 p.m. until 3 a.m., so he stayed home with their daughter while Monique was at work. So far, Monique and her fiancé were able to, as she said, "pass the baby" for the last year and have not had to put their daughter in child-care. However, in order to accomplish this, Monique negotiated a flexible schedule with her supervisor. Monday thru Wednesday, Monique worked in her office until 3:30pm and then telecommuted from home later at night. On Thursdays, she worked into the evening hours. She worked half-days on Fridays because she had four hours of meetings on Sunday nights.

Toni was the only participant to have her daughter in an in-home childcare setting. In Toni's current city, there was a major crisis related to large daycare centers; there were several reported cases of child abuse and licensed child-care centers using state-provided money to traffic drugs. As a result, an in-home facility was the only

viable option for Toni. Toni worked hard to find the right care for her daughter, and although she was happy with her childcare situation, her comments demonstrate how complicated and serious the childcare decision can be. She said,

> I saw an advertisement [for in-home daycare] at a Christian bookstore. I called a lot of people. She really stood out. I also liked that it was smaller and in her home. There are some serious horror stories here. The daycare situation here [city] is awful. There have been several stories of kids being left in vans in the heat or cold. Just recently three different kids at three different daycares were left in vans. It was hard not to send her to daycare at [previous institution] but it was so expensive. There was actually a ten month old girl who had been raped at a daycare center. *How do you know where to send your kid?* (emphasis hers) The city has just uncovered a scandal where people are using daycare to traffic drugs, or to abuse state money.

In summary, there were two themes related to childcare. First, finding good care was labor intensive work and financially consuming. And second, leaving children in someone else's care was difficult but necessary in order to make time at work more meaningful and productive. Regardless of the care situation, all of the participants spoke about how fortunate they were to have found quality care for their children. The mental space and energy devoted to children during the day shifted to work *because* their children were well-cared for and safe while they were at work. As Alice said, "It also helps my peace of mind to know he's [my son] close. Finding the right childcare is a strategy in and of itself." In the next section, I address specific strategies participants used to make time count at work.

Making time count at work

The third sub-theme of "make it count" refers to the strategies women used to maximize their time at work. As I outlined in the previous section on "finding the right childcare," participants in my study stated that they were able to focus at work because they had found quality care for their children. While at work, participants focused on work-related tasks. The women in my study related that they used two specific strategies to help them focus at work; they actively negotiated and maximized their (1) physical (actual) time and (2) their mental time. Strategies for maximizing physical time included things such as: coming to work early and/or working through lunch; taking advantage of technology to manage their own schedules and appointments; and using flexible (flex) and compensatory (comp) time whenever possible. Participants also maximized their mental time by being mentally focused on the task at hand and establishing professional boundaries. I discuss each of these physical and mental strategies in this section.

Physical time. The culture in Diane's office was to open at nine in the morning and leave at six in the evening or later. Diane actually arrived at work at eight and used that hour from eight until nine to get work done. This allowed her to leave at five p.m. so she could go home and be with Meghan. "People here get here at nine. Some moms take advantage of that. Me, I get here at eight and I get a lot of work done in that quiet time from eight until nine." Brenda, Diana, and Madelyn often ate lunch at their desks so they could continue working and leave before or at five p.m. to go home to their children.

As a mid-career professional in residence life, Eva had the best of both worlds. She related that she worked regular hours as much as possible; by doing this, she was able to complete her work and leave at a reasonable time to pick up her children. She also had the freedom to change her schedule if necessary. Eva was grateful for the flexibility her position provided and whenever possible, she tried to afford her own staff the same freedoms. She said, "The opportunity to schedule things on my own is a definite strategy, meetings with staff, one-on-ones, etc. We have standing Tuesday meetings from one to three in the afternoon. But, I also try to afford my staff the same flexibility that I have, that only seems fair."

Monique's strategies involved doing non-negotiable errands that were dependent upon other timetables- like when the post office or campus business offices were open- when her daughter was at home. Monique did more flexible work-related activities like answering her phone or email from home later in the day, because those tasks could be accomplished while she was with her daughter. Managing her schedule in this way increased her productivity at work and lessened the pressure on her while at home. In addition to email, participants used other forms of technology to help them make the most of their time. Diana mentioned that she had constant access to her Blackberry. Alice and Judy purchased Apple iPhones to help them manage their multiple calendars. Judy said, "I love this phone. It makes like easier, gives me flexibility."

Making actual time count at work also involved using flexible (flex) and compensatory (comp) time. Alice, Diana, Eva, and Toni all spoke about the advantages of having flexible, supportive supervisors and office cultures with generous flex and comp time practices. As a unionized employee, comp time was actually a campus-wide

policy where Alice worked. In addition, she had a supervisor who encouraged her to use flex and comp time to focus on her doctoral studies. At her boss's urging, Alice used comp time on Tuesday mornings to complete papers or research for her doctoral classes. She arrived at work at one in the afternoon on Tuesdays, but then worked until late in the evening because she attended student government meetings that happened after hours. Similarly, Toni was afforded professional latitude by her supervisor to create her own schedule and work hours that accommodated her life as a (newly) single parent. She said,

> I have a phenomenal supervisor and team of colleagues...the way my supervisor has designed my job is a resource. He was deliberate in designing it so I can set my own hours. I just need to be in the office 20 hours per week. There is a lot of flexibility which I really need now.

Mental time. The participants in my study chose to be working mothers in student affairs for various personal, professional, and financial reasons. They also knew that their choice to work pulled them away from their families. Consequently, the women in my study stated that they made intentional efforts to enjoy work and make the most of it. Diane said, "The value of the work has to be important to give it your all, because you could be home instead." Diana stated her feelings even more strongly by saying, "I am spending all this time at work, so I better damn well like it!"

Making time count at work was as much about using *mental* boundaries as it was about maintaining physical ones. Participants knew that they could not make time shorter or longer; however, they made their time more productive and more meaningful by mentally focusing on the task at hand. For example, Brenda said, "I do some of the

same things as before, just not for the same reasons...I *focus* at work, because I am going to leave between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. When I leave this building [work], I don't think about it." Diana also used the word boundaries to talk about the mental fence that she placed around work. "Because of boundaries....now I am going home to be with my child. My style of getting things done has changed. I am not taking work home."

Another strategy for maximizing mental time was to maintain boundaries around their professional relationships. At work, Madelyn learned to say no. Finding her professional voice helped Madelyn focus on the task at hand, made her time at work more productive, and helped her become a stronger advocate for herself and her staff. Madelyn shared this story,

> Maintaining boundaries at work is something I am working on. Saying no, being more direct and vocal. I am starting to think about more and more how I maintain my boundaries and assert my needs. For example, some academic folks were putting together a grant. It was due Thursday. They pulled me in yesterday and they want us [department] to cost share and not give us any money back from the grant. What they were asking for was not reasonable. A year ago, I wouldn't have stuck up for my area. Now, I am not going to take on more responsibility and not get credit or financial benefit for it.

As evidenced by Madelyn's comments above, making it count was also about mutuality and return on investment. If a work endeavor was not mutually beneficial, it was not worth her time and effort. This willingness to maintain boundaries and say no carried over to her professional relationships and personal friendships as well. In speaking about her new strategies for making relationships count, she said,

I am trying to use my lunch hour more effectively. I don't hang out with my colleagues. I get work done or do errands so I can leave on time. I am much more selective in how I use my social time. I have a couple of friends who are really draining. I am more selective now and give them less time. A colleague of mine said, 'If it's not mutually beneficial, why keep investing?'

The participants made their time at work count in two ways. First, they maximized their actual (physical) time by controlling, planning, and managing their own schedule as much as possible. Making actual time count involved coming to work early or working through lunch, setting their own calendars and appointments, and taking advantage of flex and comp time where appropriate. Second, the participants made time count at work by maximizing their mental time-on-task. The women in my study worked with a singular focus and set boundaries around their work-related time and relationships. In the next section, I outline the strategies that participants used to make their time count at home.

Making time count at home

Making time count at home is the fourth and final sub-theme of "make it count." In this section, I demonstrate the connections among motherhood, time at work, and time at home. As outlined in previous sections, participants were able to focus at work because they found quality care for their children. In turn, the women in my study were able to concentrate at home and let work fade into the background because they had focused at work. Similar to the strategies they employed at work, participants negotiated their physical and mental time at home as well. Participants were singular in their focus while at home- children and families are what mattered most. Judy's comment

demonstrates how participants' time at home with children was limited, so it was important to make that time with them meaningful. She said, "I work nine hours a day, and I only get two and a half hours with my kids. I try to make it count." The specific strategies women used to make time count at home are described below.

Physical time. To maximize their time at home, participants stated that they addressed the physical tasks and obligations of caring for children and home as quickly and efficiently as possible so they could focus on their children and be mentally present with them. Making time count at home involved activities such as: actively using calendars to plan out work obligations, children's co-curricular commitments, and family vacations; cooking meals ahead of time and freezing them for future use; and getting organized at night while children were asleep.

Eva's comment about her calendar is indicative of the extent of her planning and how having all of her family commitments laid out helped her negotiate them. She said,

> I try to plan out the entire year. Right now I am chomping at the bit to get their [kids] school schedule. School also knows that last minute doesn't work well for anyone, not just me. I mark their [kids] stuff on all our calendars. My husband's vacation time is very limited. So, when he is off, I need to be off, too. He puts in vacation requests in June. We try to get a week together in September and do something as a family.

Eva, Diane, and Judy cooked meals ahead of time and froze them for future use. Diane related that she and her husband would spend an entire weekend cooking meals. She said, "We both cook. We will take a Saturday or Sunday and cook a lot of food to freeze. Then, we will eat the same thing three or four times a week. It is a big

timesaver." To reduce the amount of work that had to be done in the mornings, Amelia, Eva, and Judy laid out their children's clothing, toothbrushes, school bags and other necessary supplies the night before. Alice and Amelia did doctoral work at home, but only after their children were asleep. Judy's comment demonstrates the scope of activities involved in making time count at home. She said, "Anything, I can, I plan and try to have control of. I cook ahead of time and have dinners frozen so we don't eat out every night. I pick out the kids' clothes the night before, especially now with my daughter in school."

In addition to the strategies listed above, participants articulated that they had husbands or partners who shared the "second shift" (Hochschild, 1989) by helping with the cooking, cleaning, and transporting of children. For some participants, like Judy and Diane, help also came in the form of professional cleaning staff. Hiring outside people to help with cleaning obligations allowed women to shift that time and focus to their children. As Diane put it, "I am not going to spend my free time cleaning!"

Mental time. Making time count at home also involved the negotiation of mental time and space. Diane, Judy, and Amelia all used the word "compartmentalization" to describe their strategies for making time count at home. Diane spoke about intentionally focusing on her family while at home. She said, "I compartmentalize better. Work at work; home at home. It is such a *joy* to be home with my daughter and my husband. I want to *be* with them and not talk about everything that happened at work." Outside of work, Judy compartmentalized her roles so that she could focus on each one at a specific time and in a specific place. She said, "Compartmentalizing is a strategy. At church, I am a mom and wife. I would rather just be the mom of a kindergartner and a

volunteer. I *want* to do those kinds of things. I don't want to think about being the director of a department." Amelia also compartmentalized her time at home. This helped her make the most of her time with her daughter and partner. She said,

> Time and space in the mornings and when I get home at night- that is Anna time. That is her own unique time to spend with me and Melanie. And to not let work creep into that. And that is the best way that I am really able to manage being a working mother. When I leave here, I am going home to be with my daughter and that is her time with *me* (emphasis hers).

There were some exceptions to how participants made time count at home. These exceptions were Brenda, Toni, and Madelyn all of whom had limited routines and articulated few strategies for dealing with second shift responsibilities. Brenda, by her own admission, was "just lazy" and only cleaned when the state of her home bothered her enough to address it. All of the cooking in Brenda's household was done by her husband; this was because he worked from home, had more time to do it, and enjoyed it more than she did. Toni indicated that her schedule "depended on the day." At the time of our interview, Toni's daughter was not sleeping well at night, which translated into a lack of sleep and routine for Toni as well. Madelyn confessed that she and her husband struggled to find a second shift negotiation that worked for them. The lack of routine contributed to her feelings of stress. When asked how she and her husband managed tasks at home, she said,

> We are not doing it well right now. It usually ends up in an argument. We need to get better at talking about it and spending time together. When I get home, I am good at attending to her. He never cooked a meal in his life until we got

married. He's afraid to put her [daughter] down. I keep telling him 'It's okay. You don't have to hold her all day.' If he even did one load of laundry it would help me out.

As a live-in residence life professional, Monique was in the challenging position of living and working in the same physical location. She admitted to struggling with this aspect of her job and trying to find time and space for just her and her family. One way she maximized her time was to restrict the number of people who came to find her in her home; and, she usually limited that to her staff. She said, "Now, I am more territorial about my home space. With students knocking on my door at night, it really should only be my staff." To help create distance between work and home, she and her family also left campus on weekends. She said, "I don't get in my car and go home. I live with 18 year olds, if I want quality time with Clark or with my daughter, I *leave* campus."

The women in my study maximized their physical and mental time, a strategy that helped them make it count at home. Maximizing actual time involved strategies such as actively using calendars to plan and track family commitments, cooking meals ahead of time, and getting materials and supplies organized at night after children were asleep. The participants also made the most of their mental time by compartmentalizing and intentionally focusing on their home lives while at home.

In this section on "make it count" I showed how the participants in my study used various strategies to negotiate their physical and mental time. Participants articulated that time cannot be managed, but it can be prioritized and compartmentalized. For the participants in my study, negotiating life as a mid-career

professional and a mother was not about time management, it was about intentionality. To negotiate and maximize their physical and mental time, the participants in my study: had children on their own timetables; found good care for their children; and they intentionally managed their time at work and at home. This comment from Alice summarized what it meant to "make it count." She said, "My boss told me, 'when you are home, you are 100% home, when you are here, you are 100% here.' This forced me to learn to compartmentalize. I try to practice mindfulness so I am not jeopardizing either piece." In the next section, "scaffolding," I show that although negotiating life as a mid-career professional and mother to young children was a time consuming and sometimes isolating endeavor, the participants in my study did not do the negotiation on their own.

Scaffolding

In this section, I discuss the third "how" theme, which I label "scaffolding." "Scaffolding" is the metaphor that I use to explain the underlying support structures women built into their lives that help them negotiate their multiple roles and make their time count. Participants were able to negotiate their lives because they had help, "scaffolding," from other people and resources. The scaffolding these women used came in various forms, such as: (1) supportive family structures, which included husband, partners, and parents; (2) understanding supervisors and flexible work environments; and (3) professional mentors and support networks of women. For ease of reference, I discuss each element of scaffolding separately; however, it is important for the reader to note that the participants in my study did not use the elements of

scaffolding in isolation. Rather, all of the participants simultaneously used two or more elements of scaffolding to help them negotiate their lives.

Supportive family structures

Alice, Diana, and Judy described their husbands as "co-parents," as such, their husbands were actively involved in their children's lives and helped with various tasks, including but not limited to: transporting children to and from daycare, school, and activities; cooking and cleaning at home; and assisting with various morning and nighttime rituals such as bathing and personal hygiene, dressing, playing, and reading stories. Amelia also described her partner, Melanie, as a co-parent to their daughter, Anna. To help them manage the responsibilities of caring for a small child, Amelia and Melanie rotated days where they served as the primary caretaker. Amelia said this about their schedule,

> We try to do the every other kind of approach. This includes getting Anna ready in the morning, bathed at night, getting her ready for bed. We each help out of course, but there is one person who is primarily responsible for making sure she has her blanket in the morning before we leave for school, she is dressed, went to the potty, has had her hair fixed...Because of our work schedules, I always do drop off and Melanie does pick up.

Having a partner who shared in the child-rearing responsibilities made participants' lives more manageable. As Brenda said, "I am very blessed when it comes to having a husband who cooks and cleans and who doesn't watch sports."

The scaffolding that participants described also included parents and friends. Judy's parents lived just three hours away. Having them close was helpful because she

often relied on them for child-care. It was also important to Judy that her children knew their grandparents. Monique intentionally moved back to the Northwest so she could be close to her parents. She and her father spent every Saturday morning together, working at his window-washing business. Monique stated that washing windows was an escape from her work as a student affairs professional and she thoroughly enjoyed the "quality time" with her father.

Brenda and Toni did not have family geographically close, but had other networks in place that helped them negotiate their lives. Brenda described her friends and colleagues from work as her "family of choice" and related that many of her women colleagues have been active members of her daughter's life and supported Brenda as a mother. She said, "One of my colleagues is my daughter's godmother so we can call her if my husband and I are sick. Or need help." Toni's family was quite far away, but she articulated that they were "a constant source of love and support" for her, despite the physical distance between them. As I mentioned in the previous section on making time count at work, Toni spoke at length about her work environment and how both the people and the culture there were a source of support for her. I address supervisors and work environments in the next section.

Understanding supervisors and flexible work environments

The participants in my study were able to juggle their many roles and responsibilities because they had scaffolding at home and at work. In the previous section I addressed supportive family structures. In this section, I talk about the role of supervisors and work environments in scaffolding. Alice, Diana, Eva, Judy, and Toni related that they had supervisors who supported them as professionals and as mothers

and that this scaffolding helped them negotiate their roles. Alice described her supervisor as an "advocate for working mothers." Alice used the example of negotiating her maternity leave to explain how her supervisor advocated for her as a professional and as a mother. Alice's initial maternity leave request was denied because the human resources staff did not believe that she had accumulated the compensatory time that she claimed. Her supervisor "went to bat" for Alice and took on the negotiation of the leave by demonstrating that Alice had indeed earned the comp time and was entitled to the leave she requested.

Diana was given professional latitude to leave early for her daughter's doctor's appointments, or to pick her up from daycare. In speaking about the flexibility she was afforded by her supervisor Diana said, "She's been ultra-supportive and understanding of where I am currently. I work hard during the day, every day. If 10 minutes need to happen here and there for [daughter], then fine. She's been great." Toni summed up the personal and professional support she received from her supervisor when she said, "It's the same. There is no separating it. He supports me as a professional, as a mother, as me, as Toni."

In addition to supervisors, participants articulated that their work scaffolding included positive relationships with colleagues and an overall sense of team-spirit that created an accepting and flexible work environment. Participants stated that having supportive colleagues not only made work more manageable, but more fun and worthwhile. Alice shared that the culture in her environment was a result of the hard work and professionalism of her supervisor, herself, and her colleagues. She said, "I am pretty happy with the culture here. As the first working parent in this position, I created

it. I have been here awhile. The unions create odd cultures with support staff. But, we are a hard-working group. We laugh a lot and that makes it easier to come to work." Because the environment in Eva's department was open to the presence of children, she often brought her children to work when there was a snow day or when childcare was not available. Several of her colleagues who were also parents did so as well.

Monique was the only participant who stated that she did not have a supportive team of colleagues on which she could rely at work. She believed that this was due to the fact that she was older than the other resident directors and the only parent in the group. She did say, however, that the overall environment at her institution was supportive of her as a working parent. As outlined in the previous section on making time count at work, Monique negotiated a flexible schedule with her supervisor and the residence life department that allowed her to leave work early and telecommute as necessary.

In the two previous sections, I showed how supportive family and supervisors helped the women in my study manage the physical and tangible aspects of motherhood and work. Family helped with the second shift- laundry, cooking, cleaning. Supervisors helped participants negotiate their actual time at work and work-related tasks. In the next section, mentors and support networks, I show that mentors and support networks served as scaffolding for the participants by helping the women negotiate their mental time.

Mentors and support networks

The third element of scaffolding included mentors and support networks. The participants in my study stated that their mentors and support networks helped them combat the loneliness, isolation, and doubt that they often experienced as working parents. All of the participants in my study had at least one professional mentor; the participants stated that their mentors were both women and men and that they found their mentors in a variety of ways. Brenda, Diana, Eva, and Judy described their current supervisors as professional mentors. Amelia and Monique remained in contact with their former supervisors and those relationships eventually became mentoring relationships. Toni found her mentor when she was a graduate student. Alice, Diane, and Madelyn spoke about their previous involvement in student affairs professional organizations and that involvement connected them with their mentors. Diane said,

> I found two mentors early in my career through a women's organization. The guidance you can receive from other women is amazing. The two [mentors] I have had were older and more seasoned professionals in higher education and they could help me navigate a variety of situations I was facing.

The participants in my study looked to their mentors as examples of people who were successfully negotiating work and parenthood. Diane went on to say, "It is helpful to see people doing it [work and parenting] because you're out there thinking, 'Can I really do this? Can it even be done?'"

In addition to their mentors, the women in my study also garnered support from various informal and formal support networks. Diane spoke about her network of mom friends and how helpful they were to her when she was trying to find daycare for her daughter, Meghan. Diane experienced the daycare search process as stressful and

overwhelming; having a network of other moms who had successfully figured out where to place their children helped her deal with it. She said,

> I kept thinking, 'What are we going to do? How are we going to do this?' You have got to have that network that said, 'Here's what we did.' Without it [the network], it's overwhelming! The power of network, have conversations with other moms, learn things from other people that will take you to the next step.

Madelyn was a member of an informal, campus-based group of women all of whom had children around the same time. She said, "There are five of us who have all recently had children, but I am in the highest position on campus. People depend on me to gather the group. But, some women in the group were having their second child, [while I was having my first] so I am getting support from them."

Amelia belonged to two women's groups; one was a formal support group convened by the university and the other was an informal group of colleagues. Amelia's comments about her support networks provide an example of scaffolding. She said,

> There is a working mother support group on campus. They do brown bag lunches every six to eight weeks. Depending on the topic I might go to those. There are also two people I used to work with, we are all now directors in our respective colleges. We were friends before. We all had kids at the same time and they were all girls. We go to lunch once a week. That's been really helpful. We talk about our kids and the work life balance thing and that has been really helpful. They all sort of know what's going on with job stuff and the challenges of having a kid and trying to manage what you're doing with student services types of things. That for me has been one of the best things.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section on "scaffolding," all of the participants utilized multiple forms of scaffolding at one time. Monique's, Toni's and Judy's stories demonstrate the integration and convergence of multiple resources. Monique had a supportive and understanding fiancé and a close relationship with her father whom she saw every weekend. She also negotiated a flexible schedule that allowed her to telecommute. In addition, Monique had two professional mentors, one of whom she worked with at her home institution, and she was beginning to form a support network of people on campus outside the residence life department. Toni also had various forms of scaffolding in place, such as a supportive supervisor, a "flexible and supportive work environment," and a developing friendship with another mother in her neighborhood. Toni's parents were also a support network; they lived far away from her, but they were a constant source of love and support.

Judy also utilized all three forms of scaffolding. She stated that her husband "shared household tasks equally" and was a co-parent to their two children. Judy's parents were also within driving distance. At work, Judy had a supervisor who she considered a professional mentor and personal friend. Her supervisor supported her as a professional, as a mother, and as a doctoral student. She said,

> Professionally, he is probably one of the best supervisors I have ever had...We have a lot in common. His son is one year younger than my daughter. We have conversations like, 'How are we going to balance all this? How are we going to do this?' It is a partnership. I know that is pretty rare...He was supportive of me getting my PhD. He encouraged me, he said, 'We'll make it work. Whatever you need to do.' I have been doing some work at home. He is very supportive of

that. He is supportive of other skills I wanted to develop. He has involved me in day to day decisions. I feel very fortunate. It is nice to have someone in a similar situation. He is also working on his PhD. It is nice having someone to share those conversations with.

In addition to the professional scaffolding Judy had at work, she had a personal support network as well. Judy created her own support network of women by convening a group of her colleagues to play board games at her home. Judy mentioned that the group served as a motherhood support network and an escape from her role as the interim director of her department. She said,

> There is a core group of eight or nine people. Different people float in and out. We all say, 'Let's not talk about work.' I am the director and the program coordinator is also there, so it can be awkward to talk about work. By the middle to end of October, I need the group! I am pulling my hair out. Some of the women who come to play have kids and some of the kids are the same age as mine.

In this section on scaffolding, I provided evidence that the participants in my study negotiated their lives as mid-career professionals and mothers with help from various sources. "Scaffolding" consisted of three distinct support structures including: (1) supportive family structures, which included husband, partners, and parents; (2) flexible work environments and understanding supervisors; and (3) professional mentors and networks of women. Also in this section I showed that while scaffolding had distinct pieces, the participants in my study simultaneously used multiple forms of

scaffolding. The participants in my study built scaffolding around their lives that allowed them to negotiate their multiple roles and make their time count.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I outlined the three themes related to "how" the participants negotiated their lives as mid-career student affairs professionals and mothers to young children. The three themes were: "like clockwork," "make it count," and "scaffolding." The theme "like clockwork" referred to the multiple roles that the women in my study negotiated and the timing and alignment of those roles. In the second theme, "make it count" I referred to the specific tools and strategies participants used to make the most of their personal and professional time. Participants in my study did not manage their time, they maximized it by actively focusing on work while at work and on home and family while at home. In the final section of this chapter, I addressed the concept of "scaffolding." The term scaffolding is a metaphor for the various forms of support that participants relied on to help them negotiate their lives. There were three forms of "scaffolding" including, supportive family, understanding supervisors and flexible work environments, and mentors and support networks. Throughout this chapter, I showed "how" the participants approached their lives. In the next chapter, I address themes related to "why" participants negotiated their lives and show that the women in my study were active agents of their own experiences.

CHAPTER SIX

Findings- Why

In the previous chapter, I presented findings related to "how" participants negotiated their lives as mothers and mid-career professionals. In this chapter, I present themes that highlight "why" the participants chose to manage their lives in the ways they did. Across the two chapters of findings, I demonstrate the reciprocal nature between "how" participants negotiated their lives and "why." Participants articulated that because they have multiple roles (how) they utilized their mid-career time for a purpose (why). The women in my study also utilized their mid-career status (why) *because* they had multiple roles (how). In this chapter, I present themes which focus on the processes and mechanisms mid-career mothers used to make sense of and gain meaning from their lives. Within the "why" are two themes: (1) mid-career agency and (2) blazing a path." In the section on mid-career agency, I outline the various choices that participants made related to their families and careers and demonstrate that participants made these decisions with agency and purpose. Participants in my study stated that their lives did not happen to them but rather, they made active decisions about their lives. In the second theme, "blazing a path," I show that the women in my study saw themselves as part of a larger collective of mothers and student affairs professionals and believed that their work was for a greater good. Before I outline the two "why" themes, it is important to set the context within which my study took place. I interviewed participants in fall 2009 and early 2010, a period of time characterized by bank bailouts, mortgage foreclosures, and rampant lay-offs (cite). The economy had tremendous impact on the American people and it was a cloud that permeated the lives

of the participants as well. The economic downturn caused a shift in roles for some of the participants and their husbands; this shift created financial and emotional stress as well. I address the economy first and then talk about the two "why" themes in subsequent sections.

Setting the context- the economy

Brenda, Madelyn, and Diana had spouses who were recently unemployed. Brenda and Madelyn's husbands were forced into unemployment by lay-offs. Diana and her husband relocated for her new job; consequently her husband was out of work for eight months while he searched for a position in their new location. As a result of their husbands' unemployment, Brenda, Madelyn, and Diana became the financial supporters of their families, while their husbands were the primary caregivers of their children.

Madelyn spoke at length about the stress that her husband's recent unemployment caused and the feelings of isolation that her situation created. As the primary breadwinner with an unemployed husband, she commented that she felt different from other working moms and that her current financial situation seemed out of the norm. She said,

> The role reversal of me and my husband with work has been a big part of my struggle. My working mother issues would be different and feel more normal if he were working, too. The pressure is on me as the breadwinner. Seventy-five percent of the current layoffs are men. I would feel different challenges, not sure they would be better or worse, but definitely different. I would have more in common with them- the other working moms on campus- if my husband was also working. I would have different mentoring opportunities. Working moms

with working spouses has been normalized. Through my whole working mom experience, my husband has not been working. The literature has not caught up with my situation yet.

Fortunately, not all of the participants experienced unemployment. However, the state of the national economy did limit their career choices. Diane chose to stay in her current position so she could earn enough money to hopefully leave her job, attend graduate school full-time, and spend more time with her daughter. She shared that, due to the economy, she had not yet articulated to her supervisor her plans to leave work. She said, "I am not going to be open with them [work] about when I am leaving to start school. In this economy, I am not going to give up a job." Toni also utilized her current professional position as a financial stepping stone to future endeavors. Toni worked because she did not yet have enough money saved up to write full-time, or start her own college consulting business, two of her long-term professional goals. She said, "I need this job to help finance my passion for writing and to support me and my kids." Toni was also recently separated, so she could no longer rely on her husband's income as a form of financial support.

Monique related that she was ready to move out of her entry-level residence life position, but her job search options were restricted by the economy. Monique stated that she and her fiancé, Clark, were fortunate that both of them were gainfully employed. An added bonus was the fact that Clark was personally and financially successful in his position. As a supportive partner, Monique did not want to uproot him from his career and with the distressed economy, neither one of them was willing to risk unemployment by moving to a new geographical area. Monique stated that had the economy not been

so unstable, she and her fiancé might have been more willing to take a risk and leave the Pacific Northwest for a new geographical area. Amelia summed up the financial realities of this particular point in history when she said, "I don't know how you could afford to not work."

Although participants were bound by current economic pressures, they were not helpless victims of the economy. As mid-career women, participants were also agents of their own experiences. Participants articulated that they chose to utilize their mid-career status to advance their personal or professional goals; I called this sense of purpose and choice, "mid-career agency." I explore the concept of mid-career agency in the next section.

Mid-career Agency

To help frame the readers' understanding of "mid-career agency," I take the time here to revisit Judy's story; it is an example of the multiple roles that participants juggled, the various personal and professional decisions that participants continually made, and the agency that negotiating those roles required. Judy served as the interim director of multicultural services. She firmly asserted that she would not apply for the director position, which was influenced by several factors, including: her children, her marriage, and her status as a doctoral student. In not applying for the director position, Judy confessed that she intentionally pulled back from her career by slowing down her progression through the student affairs hierarchy. This decision was not a permanent one, however. Judy said no to the director position, but said yes to a terminal degree. Judy chose to pursue a terminal degree so that she would be qualified for a future position should it come open. She said, "I do not want to get to the associate vice

president or dean of students position and not have the degree. *I* want to determine what I want to do with my career and not have it decided for me. The Ph.D. is preparing me for the future." Judy also demonstrated agency in deciding *how* she was going to progress through her doctoral program. She stated, "For my sanity, my staff, and my family, I have decided only to do one class per semester, not two." Judy's story demonstrates the multi-dimensional nature of women's lives and the level of negotiation required to make the various pieces work.

In this section on "mid-career agency," I show that the participants in my study chose to see their mid-career positions as both a solid foothold they could lean on and a springboard to potential opportunities. I also show that the mid-career stage and the decisions women made while mid-career were temporal in nature. The women in my study made sense of their lives by making "on-time decisions" (quotations mine). Participants acknowledged that their decisions were fluid and characterized by a willingness to forgo short-term opportunities in favor of potential long-term gains. The broader concept of mid-career agency includes four sub-themes. In these sub-themes I demonstrate that participants used their mid-career time to: (1) gain experience and decide next steps; (2) advance their educational objectives, (3) let work fade into the background and focus on family; and (4) "actively stay" mid-career. For ease of reference, I address these concepts individually in the following sections. However, it is important for the reader to note that the participants in my study utilized two or more of these mid-career agencies simultaneously. Similar to the concept of scaffolding that I addressed in chapter five, the concept of mid-career agency had multiple pieces. I talk about them individually for reference purposes only.

Gain experience and decide next steps

In this first sub-theme of mid-career agency, I show that participants were actively engaged in their current positions while simultaneously looking toward the future. Participants stayed in their current positions to gain experience and to build professional capital for future use. Diana chose to move her family so she could accept her mid-career position as the director of orientation at Victory University. As I detailed in the participant portraits in chapter four, Diana stated she finally had positional and institutional fit. While she indicated that she was professionally content, she also acknowledged the possibility that this position was not her ultimate professional goal. She said,

> The puzzle fits, but it is not finished yet either. I could see wanting to move up and onward, maybe here at VU or somewhere else. I could see myself being still interested in first year students and the transitional piece and the important pieces of transition. I see myself in that realm but maybe moving on to another institution. Currently, I love VU, so I can't see that happening right now. But maybe there will come a time when I get tired of working every August, or as a mother that's no longer viable for me, and I move on. I guess that is why I see it as 'mid.' There is the potential for change in four or five years. In four or five years, there will be another position for me to seek out, either here or somewhere else.

Diana's comments above are also evidence of the temporal nature of mid-career. Participants indicated that they made decisions for "right now," not forever.

Like Diana, Toni and Madelyn also utilized their mid-career status to position themselves for future professional gains. One of Toni's long-term career goals was to be a tenure-track faculty member. She hoped to use her current hybrid faculty/academic advising position to segue into the faculty track. When asked why she accepted her current position, she said, "I saw it as a stepping stone to the faculty track. In my previous position, I didn't have a publication track record. Sometimes you have to take a step down to get to another stairwell. I really want to teach people." Madelyn stated that she was nearing the end of her mid-career stage, but needed to stay in her current position and gain enough professional experience to advance to the next level. She said, "I have more dreams and goals beyond this. I want to be VPSA or college president. I am not out of the middle until I have achieved senior status, positionally and with goals...I have another three or four years in this position and then I can move on."

In addition to garnering more experience, participants used their mid-career time to decide their next steps. At the time of our interviews, Alice was actively searching for an advanced position and Monique was exploring other student affairs functional areas. They both used their mid-career positions to help them decide their next professional steps. Alice was able to rely on her professional reputation and the stability of her position to shift her attention to her next professional move. As a mid-career professional and a mother, she also said that her job search lens was different now than it was when she was a new professional. Making her life better, not just her work situation better, was a priority. Alice said,

> I am involved in a job search now. The lens I am using to view potential opportunities is changing. In my first job search, I was looking for less. Now I

want to relax a bit more. I ask myself, 'Is this going to make life better?' The totality of my life. One job I am looking at is an Associate Dean position that would supervise student leadership. I want to narrow more than broaden. I want less to cram into one day.

Monique utilized her time to connect with professionals outside of residence life and to gain experience in other student affairs functional areas such as social justice and diversity education. Like Alice, Monique's thoughts about her next career move were also influenced by her role as a mother. She confessed that her idea of a "dream job" had changed since becoming a mother and partner. She said, "Before I used to think, 'Okay, just pay your dues.' If a perfect job comes along I would go anywhere. Now, my choice impacts way more people. Now, I think, 'Is this good for Clark? Is this good for the baby?'"

Alice and Monique's comments about their job search strategies indicate two things. One, because they were mid-career professionals, they had established professional reputations and a level of job security that allowed them to shift their attention to priorities in addition to their current work. Two, they no longer thought only about themselves in the job search process. As mothers and partners, the lives of their children and spouses were significant factors in their decisions. The fact that other people were involved in and affected by their decisions meant that the women in my study were constantly maneuvering and shifting their priorities to accommodate their careers and their families.

Participants approached their mid-career roles with a sense of anticipation and preparation and used their present situations to position themselves for their next step.

The women in my study articulated that they were not going to miss out on future opportunities because they did not have the necessary experience or credentials. Some of the participants in my study used the security of their mid-career positions to focus on advancing their personal educational objectives. In the next section, I show that the participants in my study relied on the stability and flexibility of their mid-career positions to help them achieve their educational goals.

Advancing educational objectives

The mid-career stage gave women time, if they chose, to shift their attention to other endeavors in addition to their work. For most of the participants in my study, one of those endeavors was doctoral education. More than half of the 10 participants were doctoral students (Alice, Amelia, and Judy), or planned to enroll in graduate school in the near future (Diane), or had already earned their terminal degrees (Madelyn and Toni). Eva temporarily chose not to apply to doctoral or law degree programs. Monique hoped to pursue a doctorate eventually. Only Brenda and Diana stated that they did not intend to earn terminal degrees.

Both Madelyn and Toni earned their doctoral degrees while they were mid-career professionals. Madelyn had nine years of professional experience when she began her doctoral program on a part-time basis. At that time, Madelyn worked as a director of student activities. She quickly learned, though, that she could not continue to work a full-time student activities schedule and finish her dissertation in a reasonable timetable. She said, "I thought to myself, 'This is going to take forever!'" To help her finish her degree faster, Madelyn left her student activities position and took an entry-level residence hall director position at a different institution. That position helped

cover some of her tuition costs and allowed her the time to shift her focus to doctoral studies. Toni also used her previous mid-career position to help her complete her dissertation. She took every vacation day that the university (previous institution) offered and wrote her dissertation in four weeks. As mid-career professionals, Madelyn and Toni relied on the fact that they had established professional capital that they could "cash in" when they needed to pull back from work and focus on their doctoral studies. Madelyn and Toni's stories are indicative of the agency that participants brought to their decisions. Madelyn and Toni actively *chose* to earn doctoral degrees while they were mid-career professionals and they progressed through their programs in a way that worked for them.

Having young children also influenced how the women progressed through their doctoral programs. Amelia's and Judy's academic timelines were dictated by their children. Amelia chose to advance through her program as quickly as possible so that her daughter would not remember her being away. Judy was also influenced by the ages of her children, but in a way opposite of Amelia. By her own admission, Judy was taking her time through her doctoral program because her children were younger. She said, "I will need the Ph.D. long-term, but I am not in a race to get it done. I am not going to miss out on my kids' lives to get the Ph.D."

In the last section of chapter five, I explained the concept of scaffolding and how the women in my study leaned on various forms of scaffolding to help them negotiate their roles. One element of scaffolding was "supportive supervisors and work environments." As I outlined in that section, supervisors played a critical role in the participants' overall satisfaction with work. The same held true for those participants

who were pursuing doctoral degrees. Having a supportive supervisor allowed participants to devote the necessary time and attention to their studies without guilt or fear of repercussions. Alice, Amelia, and Judy stated that their supervisors helped them progress through their doctoral programs. Alice's supervisor encouraged Alice to use her compensatory time off to do work for her academic program. With her supervisor's blessing, Alice arranged her schedule so that she was did work for her classes every Tuesday morning and arrived at work after the lunch hour. Amelia and Judy were also given time off from work to focus on their doctoral studies. At the time of our interview, Amelia was completing her candidacy examinations. Her supervisor gave her time off to prepare for her exams and agreed to have that time off count as professional development time, rather than count against her vacation days. Judy's supervisor gave her carte blanche permission to do "whatever [she] needed" to accommodate her studies into her work schedule.

Many of the participants in my study chose to pursue doctoral education while also fulfilling the obligations of their mid-career positions. The six participants who pursued doctoral education were able to do so because of the flexibility of their professional positions or because they had support from their supervisors. Four of the participants chose either to temporarily delay graduate school attendance, or not to pursue a terminal degree. The women in my study used the mid-career stage to pursue various personal objectives, including spending time with family. In the next section, I show that some participants shifted their mental focus from work to their families.

Letting work fade into the background

In chapter five, I showed that the women had multiple roles and that the negotiation of those roles was a function of timing and alignment. Throughout this chapter and specifically in this next section, I show that the timing and alignment of those roles was possible because the women in my study had agency and actively chose which roles to place in the foreground and which to let fade into the background. Participants in my study were able to shift their roles and the time devoted to them because they were mid-career and because they saw themselves as agents of their own experiences.

Some participants articulated that they intentionally reorganized their priorities and as a result, shifted their mental time and energy away from work and toward their families. Their roles and subsequent responsibilities as student affairs professionals were still present, what shifted was the mental time and energy that participants devoted to those roles. The decision to allow work to fade into the background was a choice that participants made willingly and without reservation. Brenda, Diane, and Eva chose to temporarily forgo some professional opportunities- such as involvement in professional organizations, applying for advanced positions, or attending graduate school- so they could focus on their children. Brenda was not active in professional organizations nor did she intend to pursue a terminal degree. Brenda stated that "Future [professional] thinking is not on the agenda right now." When asked why, she elaborated saying,

> It is not on the agenda because 100% of my energy is about my child. Work is about keeping my job. I eat lunch so I have energy to give her later. I do some of the same things as before, just not for the same reasons. Now, I am consciously

aware that it [work] doesn't mean anything to me. In the end, it's about her. It's about her father. Everything else falls into this. My mission is to take care of her. *Everything* (emphasis hers) falls into that. Everything is for that mission.

Like Brenda, Diane also was not involved in professional organizations, nor was she pursuing an advanced position. Her involvement in professional organizations lapsed during the three year period she tried to conceive a child. She said, "I had a hard time getting pregnant. Going to a professional conference didn't really need to be on my list of priorities." Diane also confessed that networking with her colleagues at lunch or outside of work hours was not a priority for her. As I stated in previous chapters, Diane worked a traditional eight a.m. to five p.m. schedule, rather than the nine a.m. to six p.m. schedule that her colleagues maintained; Diane arrived at work early and left at five p.m. so she could go home to her family.

Eva confessed that having children slowed her career progression and altered her professional goals. Because her children were young, Eva chose not to apply for director-level positions or to doctoral programs. She said, "I would be more career-driven if I didn't have kids. I would be in a Ph.D. program or law school." Like Diane, Eva's involvement in professional organizations rolled to the background when she began her family. Eva chose to nurse both of her children, which limited her ability to attend professional events. She said, "I breastfed my son for six months or so and then my daughter for a full year. She would not take formula. So that took a toll on my professional travel time." Eva decided not to pursue graduate programs, but she also stated that that decision was not a permanent one. She left the door open to the possibility of graduate school. She said, "Maybe it will happen, if God puts it on my

heart." Eva's decision demonstrated the temporal nature of the mid-career time and of the choices women made while mid-career.

Toni and Madelyn used their mid-career positions to simultaneously gain more experience and shift their mental focus to their families. As I outlined in the previous section, Toni was using her position to gain more writing and teaching experience so she could eventually earn a faculty position. At the same time, Toni also stated that she did not want more professional obligations than those she already had. She said, "Right now, with my daughter being two, I have *no desire* to have greater expectations and responsibilities. There is just so much going on at home." As a mid-career professional, Toni was able to rely on the flexibility of her position and shift her mental focus to her daughter. Madelyn also related that her mid-career position served two important functions. First, it helped her gain professional experience so she can eventually advance to a more senior position (see previous section on gaining experience). Second, she chose to make her personal life a bigger priority than work. For the first time ever in her career, Madelyn accepted a professional position for personal reasons. She considered her current position as dean of students a lateral professional move, but a step-up in terms of her personal life. She said,

> I had two offers. For the first time in my life, I made a social decision. I was looking to get back into Catholic higher education. I had an offer [at a college] in [state.] It was a better position, smaller school, but it was in the middle of nowhere! At [previous institutions] I had a great social life and had a dating life. At [first professional job], I had none of that. I thought to myself, 'Who are you going to meet in [state]?' If I had gone to [state], I would have buried myself in

work and not had a social life. St. Rachel was a lateral move. But it was [Catholic denomination] I knew there would be movement, either here or to other schools. My husband was the very first person I met here. We met in elevator as I was going to my interview. It felt right.

In this section, I demonstrated that the women in my study were able to rely on the flexibility and stability of their mid-career positions and shift their focus to their families. Their roles as student affairs professionals and the responsibilities of their mid-career positions did not go away. The women in my study continued to go to work and serve their students and institutions well. What shifted was their internal focus. The participants in my study were agents of their own experiences and determined, for themselves, how to prioritize their mental time and energy. I explore the concept of agency in more detail in the next section, "actively staying."

Actively staying

As I highlighted in the participant portraits in chapter four, each woman had different reasons for identifying as mid-career. These reasons included: number of years in the profession, level and scope of position responsibility, place in the organizational structure, skill mastery, and self-efficacy and confidence in choosing to stay in higher education. The word "stay" often implies "static;" that was not the case for the participants. The women's decisions to stay mid-career were active, intentional, and served a purpose. "Actively staying" is the fourth and final sub-theme of "mid-career agency." In this section, I show that "actively staying" was not one permanent choice but a series of little decisions made for various personal and professional reasons.

The participants in my study were constantly making choices. As a result of these choices, participants often articulated a dynamic tension between staying grounded in the present, while simultaneously preparing for the future. Madelyn gave voice to this tension when she said, "I am ambitious but wanting to feel settled and have a firm footing. There is tension there." The women in my study resolved this tension by "actively staying" mid-career. They chose to stay in their mid-career positions while simultaneously using that position to prepare themselves for the future.

Although the participants chose to stay in their mid-career positions, their staying was not static. To demonstrate this concept of "actively staying" I refer back to Brenda, Diane, and Eva's stories from the previous section on "letting work fade into the background." While these three women articulated that they chose not to pursue some professional opportunities because they were focusing on their families, they were simultaneously engaged in activities that would prepare them for the next step, whenever that time came. For example, Brenda was not involved in professional organizations nor did she intend to pursue a terminal degree, yet at the same time, she stated that her resume was always current and that she frequently applied for other positions. She said, "I send out resumes every year, as I was advised to do by my mentors." She hoped to move closer to her immediate family so she could have help raising her daughter and so her daughter could get to know her grandparents. Brenda said, "I am 40 with a two year old, not 30 with a two year old. I am trying to move south. I am always looking in [southern state] and [southern state]."

Diane's willingness to stay in a job despite the lack of professional fit was also an example of "actively staying." Diane worked as a career services professional in the

college of business at Hoover University. Her choice to stay served several important purposes: it allowed her to save money for future educational expenses; gave her time to study for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and prepare her application for graduate school; it gave her time to focus on her daughter; and it kept her engaged at the university where she hoped to earn her degree. Diane stated that she also chose to stay in her position to help challenge some of the business college staff's assumptions about the student affairs profession. She said, "If the organization is open to it, there is benefit in being a student affairs person in the college of business."

Although Eva chose not to pursue director level positions or apply to doctoral programs, she simultaneously became involved in student affairs organizations to round out her professional experience. She recognized that she did not have enough facilities management experience, so she intentionally chose a professional organization with a facilities focus. Student judicial hearings became a significant part of Eva's assistant director responsibilities, so she also joined an organization for student conduct officers. Eva simultaneously pulled back from advancing her career by forgoing the doctorate degree, but still "stayed in it" (quotations mine) by getting experience that was missing from her resume. The decision to "actively stay" mid-career parallels the negotiation of multiple roles that I addressed in the previous chapter. Just as in the image of the clock, one role cycled out to make room for another role, the participants in my study chose to privilege certain values and activities (time with children) over others (administrative work).

In this section on "mid-career agency" I showed the level of intentionality and sense of purpose that participants used to make decisions and create meaning in their

lives. Some participants used the mid-career stage to gain professional experience and prepare themselves for their next career moves. Many of the women in my study pursued doctoral degrees to help them attain their personal and professional objectives. Other participants deliberately pulled back from their careers and shifted their focus to their families. Regardless of what decision the participants made while mid-career, all of them took advantage of their mid-career time to prepare for the next step; I labeled this "actively staying." In the next section, "blazing a path," I show that participants used their "mid-career agency" to serve a higher purpose. The participants in my study saw themselves as part of a larger collective and were motivated by a deep desire to make people's lives better.

Blazing a Path

In this section on "blazing a path" I show that the women saw themselves as part of a larger collective of mothers and student affairs professionals and subsequently, approached their work with a sense of purpose and a desire to serve the greater good. This sense of purpose grounded them to the present and inspired their choices. The participants were deliberate in their efforts to "pay it forward" and be role models for their children, students, and future professionals. This idea of pay it forward was articulated by Toni when she said she worked to "blaze a path" for her daughter. The second "why" theme, "blazing a path," has four sub-themes. The women in my study "blazed a path" for: (1) themselves; (2) their children, (3) their students and institutions, and (4) for the next generation of professionals. I discuss each subtheme in the next four sections.

Blazing a path...for themselves

The women in my study chose to simultaneously negotiate work and motherhood because it brought them personal pride and satisfaction. Participants articulated that having a professional role gave them an identity and a sense of self-worth independent of their roles as mothers. Judy's comments below are indicative of the pride she took in being both a mother and a student affairs professional and that each role was an important part of her self-concept. She said,

> I still have an identity. I see my friends who don't work and I think they struggle sometimes. I love being [daughter] and [son's] mom. I do. But, I don't think it would be enough for me to be just the mom. I want to be Judy, too. I really like coming in to work, too. The awards I have received, that's cool that I am good at something. Being a mom alone would not be enough for me.

For the participants, being a mother was an important *part* of how they saw themselves, but not the only part. As Diane said, "Going to work, you still get to feel like part of yourself." As I showed in chapter five, the women in my study had multiple roles and responsibilities. Participants blazed a path for themselves by choosing to see their multiple roles as a source of personal and professional fulfillment. About her many roles Madelyn said, "I am fulfilled by them more than obliged by them."

Participants also stated that they were better mothers because they worked and conversely, were better professionals because they were mothers. Diana spoke about how her work and her identity as a mother influenced each other. She said, "I need to be a good professional to be a good mom...Working has helped me flourish as a mom."

As a result of their motherhood experiences, participants also articulated that they were more patient, understanding, adept at handling conflict, more focused, and willing to establish and keep personal and professional boundaries. All of these skills translated to their work and made them better professionals as well. Stories from participants are indicative of the reciprocal relationship between motherhood and work and between the "how" and "why" of multiple roles. The women in my study indicated that personal fulfillment and success as professionals translated into happiness and satisfaction at home and vice versa.

Madelyn also talked about the reciprocal relationship between home and work and the rewards of being a mother and student affairs professional. She said,

> [You] get the best of both worlds. I am intellectually challenged at home and at work. Right now, everything is new and exciting. In my job, I am getting stuff that helps me feel successful. At home, with my husband and my daughter, there is a more meaningful love there.

The women blazed a path for themselves by choosing to be mothers and student affairs professionals. The comments from participants showed that their professional success and subsequent confidence influenced how they saw themselves as mothers. Conversely, being mothers made them better professionals. In the next section, I show that the participants in my study chose to negotiate motherhood and work because they wanted to blaze a path for their children.

Blazing a path...for their children

During our interviews, I asked participants why they chose student affairs as their profession, why they accepted their current positions, and why they continued to

stay. All of the participants articulated that working was beneficial to them personally and it also served their children well. Being working mothers served two important functions. First, the participants modeled non-traditional gender roles for their children; the participants challenged the assumption that only men could work and provide for their families. The women in my study taught their children that women also work and financially contribute to a home, not just men. Alice said, "I want him to see me achieving, to see me and other women achieving. I want him to know we all contribute to bringing in money."

As stated previously, Diana and her husband chose to move their family 300 miles from their previous home so Diana could accept her position at Victory University. Diana articulated that the decision to move was a difficult one because it involved uprooting her daughter from daycare and her husband from his career as a residence life professional. However, the move was important because it helped advance her career and it showed her daughter that families can relocate for the mother's job, not just the father's. Moving her family also challenged the notion that men worked while women stayed home to raise children. After they moved, Diana's husband served as the primary caretaker to their daughter for eight months and Diana worked. Diana said, "Raising a daughter, I don't want her to think that she can't uproot her family and have it be fine that dad stayed home."

The second way that participants blazed a path for their children was to role model healthy boundaries and ways of negotiating parenthood and work. The women in my study carefully chose the tools and strategies they used to negotiate their lives because they knew their children were watching them and would learn from them how

to do it for themselves in the future. In the previous section on letting work fade into the background, I highlighted Brenda's story and her conscious decision to pull back from professional activities so she could focus on her daughter. By acting with that sense of agency and choosing to stay mid-career, Brenda was modeling for her daughter one possible way of negotiating work and parenthood. She said,

> My focus is on raising my baby. The first 20 years of work, everything was career, career, and career. Why put energy into that when you only have so much to give? There are people trying to do both [baby and career] at full steam. They are in a constant state of panic. I don't want to role model that for my daughter. I don't want to be in constant battle with my surroundings.

For Brenda, having a fulfilling personal life was more important than frantically running around trying to "have it all" (quotations mine). Diane articulated similar sentiments when she said that she had no desire to be superwoman. She said, "You can have it all, but not all at once. The whole supermom thing, it is *nutty* (emphasis hers)! Even if you could strive to be that, would you *want* (emphasis hers) to?" The women in my study blazed a path for their children by role modeling healthy and fulfilling personal lives, in addition to their professional ones.

For the participants, working provided a way to teach their children about the family and career possibilities that were available to them, too. When asked why she worked, Toni said,

> Being able to set the example and blaze a path for my daughter to let her know, and I say my daughter because there are so many obstacles for women. Show her, this is where you can be, this is what you can do, and these are the

opportunities that are out there for you. And, I hope to be setting the same example for my son. Actually, I shouldn't underestimate the challenges my son will face as a young Black male. That's the biggest thing, to be setting the example.

On a practical level, there was also financial benefit to being working mothers. Judy said, "There are financial rewards, too. We can do some things, like go out to eat, go to the movies, have cable television, go to children's museums, and have special ice cream nights. Those things are possible because I am working." As the reader will recall from the portraits in chapter four, Eva grew up in a poor family. Part of her motivation for working was to provide her children with the opportunities that she did not have. She said, "The income I bring in, it affords them a different life than the one I had. I don't take that for granted."

In this second sub-theme of "blazing a path," I showed that by choosing to work in student affairs and have families, the participants blazed a path for their children. As mothers, the choices that participants made impacted other people, not just themselves. Participants chose to negotiate work and family in ways that worked for them and their families. In the next section, I show that, as mothers and professionals, participants also paid it forward to their students and institutions.

Blazing a path...for their students and institutions

In this third section, I show that the women were motivated by a deep desire to serve others. The women in my study joined the student affairs profession because they were mentored when they were undergraduate students. Their own undergraduate involvement and the people they met as a result of that involvement inspired them to

pay it forward and help future generations of students also have a positive college experience. As Diana said, "I want to serve as that adult presence and help give students an amazing experience." The participants in my study also shared that the experiences and skills they learned as mothers helped them be better administrators, which in turn served their students and their institutions. Participants stated that because they were mothers, they were also patient, understanding of other parents, adept at handling conflict, and able to manage crises with a sense of urgency and perspective. Participants brought all of these skills to their roles as student affairs professionals as well.

As first generation college students, Amelia, Monique, Toni, and Madelyn blazed a path for students by helping them gain access to higher education and succeed while there. Amelia's position as the director of her unit often pulled her into administrative duties and away from front-line responsibilities where there was more student contact. Despite this, Amelia was committed to staying connected to students and met with students one-on-one rather than relying on her staff to help keep her in the loop about student issues or concerns. She related that she had more student advising appointments on her calendar than her peers in other academic units. Amelia also made sure that any student services related issue was channeled to her, even if it was not directly tied to academic advising, which was her primary function. This was a conscious choice on her part and a way for her to keep giving back to the students and the institution.

In here role as a residence life professional, Monique had daily interactions with students. She related that those interactions were the most rewarding part of her job. Monique referred to her work with students as unpacking them. She said, "In student

affairs, if you help just one person. Unpacking just one person per year is fine. I have yet to have a year when that person that I've helped hasn't existed." In addition to her work with on-campus students, Monique was also involved in several local and state organizations that helped high-achieving, low-income high school students learn about higher education. Toni was also motivated by a desire to help students achieve. She said, "I went through so many barriers. I want to help others get to higher education." Toni even "paid it forward" through her doctoral work; her dissertation focused on the motivation and persistence of first-generation college students of color.

While she was an undergraduate student, Madelyn was mentored by the director of student activities who was a working mother. Madelyn said, "She taught me a lot about work-life balance. She's who I am striving to be. She had two kids and was balanced and happy. She presented this front of, 'If you want this, you can have it.'" Having her own mothering role model inspired Madelyn to pay it forward and be a role model for others, especially students. She said,

> As a mother, I am a better role model for students. I am amazed at how curious they are about my personal life. The students find benefit in my modeling my home life at work. I can't participate in the university community alone anymore. I bring my family because that is part of my life now.

In addition to blazing a path for students, the participants also stated that the work they did as mid-career professionals and mothers was beneficial to their institutions. Madelyn was one of the few women upper-level administrators on her campus. St. Rachel was a small, Catholic school and as a result functioned as a hierarchical organization. Madelyn stated that as a woman and a mother working within

that context, it was important that students saw her as a professional and personal role model. She said, "It is helpful, especially for women on *this campus* [emphasis hers], to see other healthy, well-balanced women."

Brenda spoke about the professional skill set she brought to her work in judicial affairs. She said, "I know about the challenges young people face. I have a high skill level in conflict and that is a benefit to the institution." Brenda also stated that her status as a mother was a benefit to the institution as well. She said, "Being a mother puts perspective on what's important. Why *wouldn't* we want these women at work in our institutions?"

The participants in my study stated that their work was for a higher purpose. The work they did as student affairs professionals helped their students and their institutions. The women in my study blazed a path for their students by helping them gain access to higher education, providing them with a positive college experience, and staying current and connected to student needs. The participants in my study also paid it forward to their students and their institutions by role modeling appropriate ways of managing work and home. As mothers, the women in my study brought experience and skills to their positions that they believed made them more compassionate and more effective administrators. In the next section, I show that participants worked to blaze a path for the next generation of student affairs professionals.

Blazing a path...for the next generation

In this fourth sub-theme of "blazing a path," I show that the women in my study approached their work as student affairs professionals with an ethic of care and an eagerness to help future generations of professionals. The participants in my study were

members of Generation X. The generation ahead of the participants was the Boomer generation. The women administrators in the Boomer generation were usually never married, or had been divorced, or were married but did not have children (Nobbe & Manning, 1997). The participants in my study expressed frustration and disappointment at the lack of role models in the generation ahead of them. Eva said, "I have a hard time finding senior people who have reached similar life goals: women who are married, haven't been divorced, they have kids, and a have a faith life." This frustration with the lack of role models influenced how participants chose to negotiate their own lives and fueled their desire to blaze a path for the generation of women *behind* them.

The participants in my study saw themselves as role models and it was an obligation that they took seriously. Alice said, "I need to role model for my staff, to show them that you can have a life outside of work. I need to role model boundaries and good behavior. I shape how they will shape their own identity in the future as working parents." Diane worked in student affairs to someday achieve a senior level position where she could help the next generation of professionals. She said, "I hope that we women can get into positions where we can help the women below us. I also hope that the next generation gets into the positions *they* want." Eva hoped to change the culture of residence life from within and give future generations the practical tools they would need to negotiate motherhood and student affairs. She said, "I think we need to help people balance. Residence life should not be 24/7. It is 24/7, yes. But, let's give people strategies!"

All of the participants in my study articulated feelings of guilt about their roles as working mothers. Some participants felt guilty for leaving their children at child-care

while they went to work. Others felt guilty that they sometimes missed their children's activities or could not volunteer at their children's schools because they had work-related commitments. And some participants mentioned that they sometimes felt guilty for enjoying their work. These feelings of guilt motivated the participants to persist at mid-career and find new and creative ways of helping the generation behind them not to feel guilty about their own choices. Diane remarked that she chose to stay in higher education so she could help other women achieve their professional goals, too. She said, "I hope we can get into those advanced positions so we can help the women below us do what they want." One of Diana's goals was to continue her student affairs career and be successful in her marriage. She hoped that others would have the same opportunities as well. Diana said,

> I hope for future generations, that they won't feel guilty. I don't think we're pioneers. But it is hard because there aren't groups of people who have done it. I want more people to have gone through it and gotten through it, together, still as a family unit.

Judy also spoke about wanting to help future generations of professionals not feel guilty. Judy related that she had had both positive and negative working relationships with her previous supervisors; her experiences as a supervisee helped Judy be a more sympathetic supervisor to her own staff. She said,

> All of my supervisees have children. It is easier to be sympathetic when you also have children. My former supervisor was a single woman without kids. As understanding as she tried to be, she just didn't quite get it. I try to be supportive

and to lessen their [staff] guilt. If guilt is generated, hopefully it is from them, not from me.

The women in my study stated that there was no standard formula for negotiating multiple roles; instead, participants worked to find strategies that worked for them and encouraged others to do the same. When I asked what advice she would offer to future student affairs professionals, Madelyn said,

> Don't let others' expectations dictate your decisions. Go at your own pace. It will happen. I was in such a race to make my dreams come true that I didn't enjoy them. Now, I am really trying to enjoy them. Don't be so quick to judge others. Especially college women. The women in the class I taught here at St. Rachel's, they were always asking me and then judging me about coming back to work [after baby]. The women's movement should be about being free to make your own choices without judgment.

Toni also passionately encouraged future professionals to develop work-life strategies and to actively seek out environments that supported their personal and professional choices. She said,

> I would say if you plan on balancing work and family it is really important that you be creative. Command your time. Be in control of your own time. I think too many people, women in particular, work themselves into the ground. They don't realize, you can say no, you can cut down, you can cut back. If it is not an environment that lets you do that, find a new environment. They [previous institution] saw me as a troublemaker. Even in staff meetings I would say, 'We talk about work–life balance, where is it?' I would always challenge it. You get

what you expect. I have a quote here on my wall at work. It says, 'The minute you settle for less than you deserve you get even less than you settled for.' You need to constantly fight for what you want. I constantly expect it to get better.

In the previous four sections on "blazing a path," I showed that women in my study saw themselves as role models and hoped that the work they did as student affairs professionals helped others make choices that worked for them. The women in my study blazed a path by staying mid-career and showing themselves, their children, their student and institutions, and the next generation of professionals a different way of conceptualizing careers and families.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented two themes related to "why" the women chose to negotiate a career in student affairs and motherhood which included: (1) mid-career agency, and (2) blazing a path. I also briefly discussed the economy which shaped how some women and their husband's negotiated their roles as breadwinner and caretaker. The economic crisis of 2009 and 2010 also limited some participants' career choices. In the first "why" themes, I introduced the concept of "mid-career agency" and demonstrated that the participants in my study were agents of their own experiences and chose how to utilize their time in mid-career. Some participants used their time to gain more experience and decide their next steps. Others shifted their focus to their children and allowed their professional work to roll into the background. Many of the participants also used the mid-career time to pursue terminal degrees. I labeled the second "why" theme "blazing a path" because the participants in my study were working to make a difference for others. The participants in my study saw themselves

as part of a larger collective of mothers and student affairs professionals and as a result, believed that their work was for a higher purpose. The participants in my study blazed a path and paid it forward to their children, their students and institutions, and the next generation of professionals. In the next chapter, I discuss chapters five and six within the context of the higher education literature. I also address implications for practice and policy and suggest areas where more research is needed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and implications

Discussion

In previous chapters I outlined themes related to "how" and "why" mid-career student affairs professionals with young children negotiated their lives. In this chapter, I analyze the two research questions, "how" and "why," using the contexts of my study as a frame of reference. I provide deeper analysis as to "how" the negotiation of multiple roles was possible and "why" it was necessary. I suggest that the negotiation of multiple roles was possible because of the participants' mid-career status and it was necessary because they had young children. Throughout this chapter, I connect findings from the current study to the existing literature. In the second half of this chapter, I discuss implications for practice and policy and make recommendations for future research.

The Economy

As I showed in the first part of chapter six, the economy had a strong impact on participants' careers and their perceptions of career mobility. Three of the participants had spouses who were recently unemployed and the other participants articulated that, at least temporarily, the economy limited their professional choices. As members of Generation X (born between 1963 and 1981), the participants in my study previously experienced economic stress similar to that of 2009 and 2010. The economy of 2009 and 2010 mirrors the bankruptcies, scandals, lay-offs, and corporate downsizing of the early 1990s, which were formative years for the participants in my study (Kupperschmidt, 1998, online p. 4.) A participant who was 35 at the time of my study attended high school from 1989 to 1993. The 1990s also marked a paradigm shift in

corporate America related to employer loyalty; gone were the days of lifetime employment and then company-sponsored retirement. Many Generation X children witnessed the rapid and dramatic decline of their parents' incomes and their families' subsequent change in socioeconomic status and lifestyle. The reader will recall Eva's story presented in chapter four, Eva related that her father was laid off from his job in the airline industry and as a result, their family became "very poor, very quickly."

As a qualitative study, the findings from my study cannot be generalized to any other group of people or period of time. However, there are lessons to be learned from the ways that the participants responded to the economic crisis. "How" the women negotiated their lives and "why" demonstrated that people can be limited by their circumstances, but not victims. Rather than wring their hands in despair, the participants in my study were agents of their own experiences and actively chose to make the most of their mid-career positions by staying grounded in the present while keeping an eye toward the future. In the next section, I discuss the second context of my study: participants' status as mid-career student affairs professionals.

Mid-Career

I intentionally used a loose definition of mid-career- more than five years of professional experience but less than 15 years- to produce a broader pool of potential participants and subsequently, a more detailed picture of the rewards of the mid-career time and also the challenges that mid-career women face, especially women with children. Additionally, mid-career professionals were more likely to experience the convergence of parenthood and work, which was the main context of my study. In the portraits presented in chapter four, I indicated that the participants had varied reasons

for identifying as mid-career. The benefits and challenges of being a mid-career professional varied for each participant as well. I discuss the benefits of being mid-career first.

Benefits of Being Mid-Career

The participants in my study negotiated multiple roles, made their mid-career time count, and acted with agency to blaze a path for others. In this discussion, I show that all of these choices were possible because the participants were mid-career. As part of my interview protocol, participants were asked to describe the benefits and challenges of their mid-career student affairs positions. Participants stated that the benefits of being mid-career were both practical and intrinsic. The practical benefits of being mid-career varied from person to person and included: job flexibility; sick, comp, and flex time policies; competitive salaries; health insurance and retirement benefits; and opportunities for professional advancement. The practical benefits of mid-career that the women in my study listed mirror the reasons that participants in Collins' (2009) study gave for choosing not to pursue vice-president for student affairs positions (VPSA). While the practical benefits of mid-career varied, all of the participants listed the same intrinsic rewards, including: (1) being in the middle; (2) standing on experience; (3) saying no; and (4) raising children on a college campus.

Being in the middle

The participants described "the middle" as one of the advantages of their mid-career positions; they were in the middle because they were no longer new professionals, nor were they senior student affairs officers (Carpenter, 1990; Young, 1990). Despite previous conceptions of mid-career as "stuck" (Scott, 1980), the

participants in my study saw the middle as an advantage. As mid-career professionals, participants had the best of both worlds; they were grateful not to be proving themselves as new professionals and not to have the pressure of senior student affairs positions. As working mothers in student affairs, they also had the best of both worlds. They had fulfilling personal and professional lives and they worked hard at work worth doing. Being in the middle, the participants did not serve as the final decision-maker on their campuses which gave participants the freedom to sometimes "pass the buck" as Madelyn said. The idea of "passing the buck" was consistent with the benefit of mid-career that Collins (2009) labeled "flying under the radar."

Judy often spoke about the differences between being the interim director of her department and her previous position as the associate director; her story is an example of benefits of the middle. Judy stated that when she was the associate director, she had to read emails late at night but did not necessarily respond to them. As the interim director, she not only had to respond, but often had to physically leave home and return to campus and serve as the departmental representative in times of crises. The different responsibilities of being the associate versus the director were also some of the reasons Judy gave for her decision not to apply for the director position and for the rate at which she progressed through her doctoral program. She said, "It comes down to quality of life." This comment implied that being the director of her unit would change the quality of her life, and not necessarily for the better. Collins's (2009) dissertation focused on six mid-career women who chose not to pursue vice-president for student affairs (VPSA) positions and the personal and professional reasons which motivated their choices. Similar to the participants in my study, the six women in Collins's (2009) study

chose to stay mid-career for their families, because they were confident and successful in their mid-career positions, and because they were approaching retirement and were not looking to change jobs.

Standing on experience

As mid-career professionals, the women in my study had personal and professional experience on which they could stand. Having experience to stand on served several important functions. Experience gave the participants: professional clout in their units and on campus, provided a level of predictability and a rhythm to their work, and allowed them to shift their focus to other priorities such as families or graduate school. Brenda's comment about her work as a mid-career professional in judicial affairs encompassed all of the benefits of experience. She said, "I know what I am walking into every day. The specifics might be different. But, I have the experience to draw on. I am better equipped to anticipate and manage hierarchy and politics."

Houdyshell (2007) suggested that mid-career be defined by the attitudes and lived experiences of mid-career professionals rather than abstractions such as title, job descriptions, reporting structures, or supervisory responsibilities. The women's conceptualizations of mid-career support those suggested by Houdyshell (2007). As I showed in the section, "blazing a path" (in chapter six), the women in my study paid it forward to their institutions. The participants were inspired to do this because they were mid-career professionals and as such, they had personal confidence and professional aptitude that they did not have previously as new professionals. Diane said, "I can lean on experience. I can make a contribution and add value to the organization." Amelia stated that she was "uniquely positioned to serve the students and the institution"

because she was in a position that matched her knowledge, skills, and experience. The level of fit that Amelia articulated was possible because she was mid-career. She spent her new professional years exploring other student affairs functional areas and knew that academic advising was where she was supposed to be. Findings from my study suggest that it was not necessarily title or scope of position that defined mid-career, but a combination of skill, experience, and investment in the work. For example, Monique was in an entry level position but considered herself mid-career because of her attitude.

Saying no

The third intrinsic benefit of being mid-career was the ability to say no to projects that were not mutually beneficial or to late-night student events that would pull the women away from their families. As noted earlier, Madelyn relayed her story about saying no to a faculty-led grant proposal that would have resulted in more work and no financial return for her and her staff. As a mid-career professional, she had enough professional experience to know that saying yes to the grant proposal would not have benefitted her unit or her staff. Judy was the advisor to several student organizations, but stated that this was "in name only." As a mid-career professional, she decided which activities and events she would attend and which ones she would forgo in favor of time at home. She stated that she had no intentions of attending a student organization meeting on a Sunday night. Even though Eva was often "on-call" she still exercised mid-career agency in how she responded to after hours calls. She was clear with her staff that if they called between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., she would not answer because that was time reserved for her children and husband. The participants exercised agency in how they negotiated the night and weekend commitments of their student affairs

positions. When participants did choose to attend on-campus events, they did so on their own terms. Participants said yes when the timing worked for them and if the event was child-friendly.

Raising children on a college campus

The participants chose student affairs as a career because they were mentored by professionals who encouraged them to pursue student affairs full-time. Participants chose to *stay* in student affairs because they wanted to blaze a path for others, especially their children. Similar to other student affairs mothers (Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004), the women in my study stated that there were advantages to raising young children in a college environment. These advantages included, but were not limited to: teaching children the value of education; exposing children to diversity, social justice, and community service; theater, arts, and music; and sporting events. Seeing the college campus as beneficial to their children was a function of the participants' agency. The women in my study chose to see their work environments as a place where their children could be exposed to the real world, even if that exposure meant facing some of the adverse effects of college student behavior, such as alcohol consumption.

The benefits of mid-career that the participants spoke about directly parallel the findings from Marshall's (2002) study of senior administrative mothers. The women in Marshall's study stated that the benefits of mid-career included both personal and professional benefits. Personal benefits included: salaries, enriched personal lives, and personal gratification and the professional benefits were: having a positive impact on students and their children and being better professionals because they were mothers.

The benefits that Marshall's participants listed also parallel the ways that the women in my study "blazed a path." The differences, however, were that the participants in Marshall's study listed these reasons as a benefit of mid-career. The women in my study saw "blazing a path" as motivation for staying mid-career, not solely an outcome of the mid-career stage.

Findings from my study also diverge from the existing literature in how the women conceptualized their mid-career status and why they continued to stay mid-career. The women in my study were not stuck at mid-career and they were not victims. They were the creators of their own experiences who chose to make the most of their multiple roles and the multi-faceted nature of their lives. Just as the women blazed a path to show their children what was possible, participants modeled for mid-career mothers and future generations of professionals what was possible for them, too. The findings from my study present an opportunity to change the conversation about mid-career and re-frame mid-career as a time of growth, agency, and purpose. I discuss the need to re-frame mid-career in more depth in the implications section later in this chapter.

There was a reciprocal relationship between "the how" and "the why," so too was there a reciprocal relationship between the benefits of mid-career and the concept of "mid-career agency." The benefits of the mid-career position made mid-career agency possible. Conversely, participants used their mid-career agency to maximize the benefits of their positions and make their mid-career positions work for them. Although the participants chose to see their mid-career positions as an opportunity for growth,

there were challenges to being mid-career. I address these challenges in the next section.

The Challenges of Mid-career

Scott (1980) observed that the mid-career stage was challenging because it was characterized by a lack of power and authority, mixed messages, and the competing demands associated with serving two different constituencies, students and supervisors. The findings from my study and the existing literature about mid-career (Belch, 1991; Houdyshell, 2007; Collins, 2009) suggest that all of these mid-career challenges still exist. Participants stated that there were several challenges to their mid-career positions. These included: (1) being in the middle and (2) the consequences of multiple roles. I discuss each of these challenges in detail in the following sections and show how the participants exercised agency in responding to these challenges.

Being in the middle

In the previous section, I showed that "being in the middle" was a benefit of mid-career. Consistent with the existing literature about mid-career, the participants in my study indicated that being in the middle was also a *challenge* of the mid-career position (Collins, 2009; Houdyshell, 2007; Renn & Hughes, 2004; Scott, 1980). In his dissertation research on the experience of mid-career student affairs professionals, Houdyshell (2007) suggested that the range and scope of mid-career titles, responsibilities, authority and decision-making capabilities, and how these differences varied by institutional type influenced the mid-career experience. The range and scope of mid-career positions that Houdyshell (2007) described were also reflected in the participants' stories. Alice and Amelia served as the directors of their respective units

and each of them supervised several other student affairs professionals and clerical staff. Diana was also a director but operated as a "one woman show." Judy worked as an associate director of multicultural services and supervised as many people as Eva who had an assistant director title. Judy expressed some frustration with the inconsistencies of titles and position responsibilities across institutional types and believed that she would already have a dean of students title if she worked at a smaller, private institution.

In describing their mid-career positions, Toni and Diana both used the words "expectations" and "responsibilities" but, in very different ways. Toni stated that the lack of expectations and responsibilities associated with her current position were beneficial to her and her current life situation; she used her mid-career status to recover from the recent trauma in her life (her husband's infidelity and subsequent divorce) and to get her personal and professional lives back on course. Unlike Toni, Diana found the responsibilities and expectations of her position to be a challenge. As the director, more was expected of Diana than when she was a new professional; yet, she often felt challenged by the fact that she had to address these challenges on her own because she did not have an assistant director to provide her with support. For Diana, the challenges of her position were compounded by the fact that she was the youngest director in the division. She stated that even though her colleagues were also mid-career and directors of their units, they had "an edge" (quotations hers) over her because they were older and had more experience, as student affairs professionals and at VU specifically. Diana pushed back against this challenge by choosing to stay at VU and by her example, served as a working mother role model for her students and the institution.

There was also a generational effect at play in Diana's story. Diana was a member of Generation X, working in an environment where many of her colleagues and her supervisor were Boomers (Kupperschmidt, 1998; Smola & Sutton, 2002). As a Generation Xer, Diana worked to do a good job and pay it forward to the institution and her students, but also to fulfill her individual goals and aspirations (Helms, 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Conversely, Boomers tended to preference institutional loyalty over personal interests, including work-life balance and family (Helms, 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002). It is possible that the tension between Diana and her colleagues was due to generational values in addition to the fact that Diana was newly mid-career. Stories from the women in my study suggest that generational identity influences not only how the women saw themselves as professionals, but also how others viewed them. Although there is research about how generational identities impact students (DeBard, 2004; Levine & Cureton, 1998) and faculty (Bickel & Brown, 2005; Helms, 2010), not as much is known about how generational status impacts student affairs professionals. More research in this area is warranted.

The second challenge related to being in the middle was participants' lack of decision-making authority on campus. Participants stated that because they were not the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) on their campuses, they did not have the pressure on them to be the university representative for major campus incidents or student crises. Conversely, because they were in the middle and were not the final decision-maker on campus, participants also articulated that they were often micromanaged and had little decision-making authority (Houdyshell, 2007; Scott, 1980; Young, 1990). Madelyn was the dean of students at St. Rachel, but did not have as much autonomy or decision-

making authority as she believed was warranted by her job title, her experience, and her education.

As an example of how she was micro-managed, Madelyn shared that even though she was the dean of students, any email that she wanted to send to the entire campus community needed to be channeled to and approved by her supervisor and the vice president before she could send it. Madelyn believed that the micro-management she experienced was directly tied to the fact that St. Rachel was a Catholic institution and that she was a woman.

Madelyn also shared that micromanagement was the *modus operandi* on campus and that created a culture of competition and backstabbing among the women professionals on campus that she worked hard to avoid. Madelyn stated that although it was difficult to be the only woman dean on campus, her position also represented an opportunity to blaze a path for her students, her institution, and other professionals by intentionally staying at St. Rachel and challenging the status quo on campus. This attitude of, "I can change things by my example" (quotations mine) is what made the participants different and where my study diverges from some of the existing literature (Carpenter, 1980; Houdyshell, 2007; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997;l Renn & Hughes, 2004; Scott, 1980). The women in my study recognized the institutional obstacles that they were up against and continued to choose student affairs and mid-career as a way to generate change from within the profession.

Consequences of multiple roles

In chapter five, I demonstrated that participants had multiple roles and that the salience of those roles and the subsequent time and attention devoted to them was a

function of timing and alignment. In chapter six, I showed that the participants used their mid-career agency to decide which roles to foreground and which roles they let roll to the background. In the following discussion, I suggest that participants' decisions to foreground some roles and background others were not without consequences. The participants stated that as a result of their multiple roles they often lacked time for personal relationships, including their marriages and friendships. Participants also stated that their lack of time often led them to question the relevance of their involvement in professional organizations and other leadership activities.

Lack of time for personal relationships. Contradictory to the literature about Generation X (Kupperschmidt, 1998; Levine & Cureton, 1998; Smola & Sutton, 2002), the majority of the participants had parents who were still married. Only Judy's and Eva's parents were divorced and Diane's mother was a widow. Those participants whose parents were still married spoke about their parents' relationships with great pride and recognized that their parents' marital status was an anomaly for their generation. The women in my study stated that they hoped to have successful marriages similar to their parents.

As I stated previously, the women were frustrated at the lack of women role models who succeeded professionally with their personal relationships intact (Fochtman, in press; Nobbe & Manning, 1997). The participants did not want their own relationships to suffer the same fate as those in the generation ahead of them. As a result, the women articulated an almost fierce determination to keep their own marriages and families in tact. They also stated that they continued to negotiate work and family to prove to themselves and others that women can have successful careers

and families. Diana said that she continued to work so that "more people will have gotten through it, together." Yet, in an unfortunate irony, the women worried about the lack of time they had to devote to their marriages and partnerships. Eva expressed frustration that there were times when she and her husband would go an entire week without really seeing each other or having a meaningful conversation that did not revolved around their children or work. Judy also mentioned that she did not devote as much time to her role as a wife as she did to her other roles. She indicated that, unfortunately, her role as a wife was often the last one on her list of priorities. Madelyn stated the she and her husband had not yet figured out how they could spend quality time together.

The participants were determined to stay married or partnered. Yet, all of the participants also stated that at some time or another, their relationships were last on their list of priorities. For the participants in my study, the role of wife or partner rolled into the background during the mid-career stage so the women could focus on other priorities such as children, work, or graduate school. Previous literature on mid-career professionals and the career development literature suggest that this trend is universal during the mid-career stages (Fochtman, 2008; Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004; Whelan-Berry & Gordon, 2000; Whitmarsh, Brown, et. al., 2007). It is not yet known what long-term repercussions come from the negotiating of multiple roles and shifting role salience. At the time of my study, all of the participants except one were still married or partnered. However, it is logical to assume that there is the potential for marriages and partnerships to be in jeopardy if these relationships continue to receive little time and attention. The previous literature stated that women administrators in the

Boomer generation were either never married or had divorced (Nobbe & Manning, 1997) but the literature does not address how or why this happened. Perhaps the marriages of Boomer women were undone by the time constraints of negotiating work and home. There is a need for more research about multiple roles and the consequences of those roles on marriages and partnerships.

Consistent with the previous literature (Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004), the participants in my study also stated that they lacked time for friendships outside of work. The time constraints of home and work hindered many women's abilities to find and connect with friends. The women indicated that, as mothers, their friendship circles changed or disappeared altogether, which sometimes led to feelings of isolation and loneliness. The women struggled to maintain contact with friends who did not have children. Friends without children didn't always understand or appreciate the time demands associated with young children and those friends who also had young children were too busy to come together and socialize. Monique stated that not having a support network of fellow working mothers was a significant void in her life and she struggled to find a place where she fit. Diana also articulated that she did not know how to find other working moms. She said, "I haven't figured out the playground for grown-ups yet."

Relevance of professional organization involvement. During the mid-career stage, the women started to question or re-think the relevance of their involvement in student affairs professional organizations and in many cases, withdrew from their various leadership roles and commitments all together. Consistent with other literature (Fochtman, 2008; Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004) many of the participants

stated that their involvement in professional organizations lapsed as a result of having young children. Young children demanded time and attention (Hallberg & Klevmarken, 2003; Simon 2000) and in order to make their time count, the women in my study had to give up something. Involvement in professional organizations and volunteer leadership positions were often the first of their roles that women let go of so they could shift their focus to another role or responsibility.

Monique was not involved in professional organizations. She stated that this was for two reasons. One, she did not have the time to devote to them and two, she did not understand the differences between the various organizations and which ones would help her the most. She stated that she needed someone to help her understand the various professional organizations that existed and which one to join based on her interests. Monique's lack of experience with professional organizations illustrated three important points. First, national associations need to do a better job of marketing themselves and their utility to professionals, particularly to new professionals and mid-career women. Second, mentors and supervisors play a critical role in teaching younger professionals about the role that professional organizations can play in personal and professional development. If Monique had someone to help her investigate the various student affairs professional organizations, she might have connected with one and not felt so isolated in her role as a mid-career mother. Third, Monique's story serves as an example of the need for a more visible and powerful networks of mid-career women, especially those mid-career professionals who are also mothers.

Alice was the only participant to indicate that her professional organization involvement did not wean as a result of having a child. Since the beginning of her

career, Alice was involved in a professional organization for student activities professionals. As a mid-career professional and someone who had worked in student activities functional area for 11 years, she was often looked to as a veteran in the field. Now that she was pursuing a terminal degree and a more advanced student affairs position, Alice indicated that she hoped to increase her involvement in other professional organizations with a broader scope. She was frustrated however, that her years of experience and expertise in one functional area and professional organization did not translate to acceptance in another organization. Alice stated that if she were to commit to being involved in another professional association, she would have to start at the bottom- Alice called this "the brownie committee-" and work her way up through the volunteer ranks. At the time of our interview, Alice had prioritized her graduate work over involvement in a new professional organization. Alice's experience calls into question the relevance of professional organization involvement for mid-career professionals, the lack of transference between organizations, and the utility of the hierarchical structures of those organizations.

Scott (1980) suggested that in their attempts to assert themselves, middle managers often became highly specialized professionals. Scott also indicated that professional organizations contributed to this specialization by encouraging administrators to gain skills and experience in a specific functional area. Contrary to Scott (1980) the women in my study actually touted their reputations as student affairs generalists and believed that the depth and breadth of their experiences was an asset to their campuses and their students. Yet, Monique's comments about not knowing which organization would best match her interests and the fact that Alice could not find an

avenue for her previous administrative experience, suggest that professional organizations do operate as highly specialized organizations. This suggests a mismatch between the actual experiences of mid-career mothers, how they think of themselves as professionals, and the student affairs professional associations which are supposed to represent them.

Exceptions. Despite the challenges discussed above, and contrary to some of the existing literature (Scott, 1980; Young, 1990), only Amelia and Brenda used the word "stuck" to describe their feelings about their mid-career positions. Amelia felt stuck in the middle because of the decisions she had to make as the director of her unit. Brenda was the other participant who described feeling stuck at mid-career. She indicated that this was because she was at a professional threshold and did not yet know what to do next. She indicated that she could either retire now or continue on in the profession for another 20 years.

Previous literature (Houdyshell, 2007; Scott,1980; Young, 1990) focused on the challenges of mid-career rather than the benefits and rewards. Scott's (1980) portrayal of the mid-career stage was so negative that he even went so far as to say, "Rewards are limited" (Scott, 1980, p. 397). The findings from my study related to the benefits and challenges of mid-career were consistent with the literature; what differed, or where my study contradicts the literature, was in *how* the participants responded to their mid-career challenges and *why*. As I indicated in the section on "mid-career agency" in chapter six, participants used their mid-career time to gain experience, pursue further education, or to switch their focus to their families. So, even though Amelia and Brenda felt stuck, they still utilized agency in how they dealt with those feelings. The benefits

of mid-career were enough reason to stay and the challenges were not enough reason to leave. Amelia relied on her experience and the flexibility of her mid-career position to prioritize her doctoral studies. Being a doctoral student did not take away her experience of feeling trapped, but "the middle" did afford Amelia the time and space to pursue her doctorate while working and raising a child. Brenda's level of professional expertise and the flexibility of her mid-career position allowed her to shift her focus from work to her family. The participants in my study knew that their mid-career positions were challenging. They continued to choose their positions and worked from within their organizations and units to challenge the status quo and chart a new course for themselves and others.

Houdyshell (2007) suggested that the student affairs profession focus on the actual lived experiences of mid-career professionals, rather than continuing to use out-dated characterizations of mid-career that did not connect with professionals' actual experiences. The experiences of the mid-career women in my study support Houdyshell's assertion that more meaningful and realistic representations of mid-career should be used throughout the profession. My study builds on Houdyshell's recommendations and re-conceptualizes mid-career as an opportunity for growth and a time of agency and purpose. In organizational theory literature, the term satisficing referred to the decisions that individuals and organizations must make when faced with less than ideal circumstances (Argyris & Schon, 1977). The term satisificing implied settling or "making due" (quotations mine). The participants in my study did not settle, nor did they "make due," rather they chose to maximize their mid-career positions to make their lives the best they could be, for them and for their families.

In this section on mid-career, I discussed the benefits of the mid-career position and the reciprocal relationship that existed between the participants' mid-career status and their agency. The benefits of mid-career included: being in the middle, standing on experience, saying no, and raising children on a college campus. I also addressed the challenges of the mid-career position and demonstrated the agency that participants used to tackle those challenges. The challenges associated with mid-career included: being in the middle, lack of time for personal relationships, and the relevance of professional organization involvement. In the next section, I discuss the third context of my study: having young children.

Having Young Children

In chapters five and six I indicated that "how" participants negotiated their lives was a function of "why" and vice versa. In the following section, I place the "how" and the "why" within the context of having young children. Having young children required physical time-on-task, mental energy, and focus (Bianchi, 2000; Hallberg & Klevmarken, 2003; Silver, 2000). Participants articulated that caring for young children was physically and mentally demanding and that the challenges of caring for young children were compounded by the fact that some of their colleagues and friends did not understand or appreciate those demands (Hochschild, 1989; Marshall, 2002). Consistent with the academic motherhood and literature on student affairs administrators with children (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Renn & Hughes, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004), participants articulated a reciprocal relationship between their identities and confidence as mothers and professionals. The women in my study were better mothers because they worked and

better professionals because they were also mothers. Having this confidence helped participants blaze a path and push back against the obstacles they faced as working mothers; these obstacles included: a perceived need to overcompensate for their roles as mothers, managing others' assumptions about them as professionals and as mothers. I discuss these obstacles in the following sections.

Overcompensating?

In chapter five, I addressed the concept of "scaffolding," which was the metaphor I used to explain the personal and professional support structures that the participants utilized. The participants indicated that their work environments were supportive of them as professionals and as mothers. Work scaffolding included: supportive supervisors, flexible and compensatory time policies, and accepting and flexible office cultures where it was safe to sometimes bring children to work. The scaffolding the women in my study utilized was consistent with the coping strategies used by other mid-career women as well (Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Renn & Hughes, 2004). However, while participants indicated that they had scaffolding at work, they also stated that they made intentional efforts not to reveal too much about their children or families. Stories from some of the participants suggest that one potential consequence of "actively staying" was a perceived need to overcompensate for their status as mothers.

Judy and Amelia both stated that they tried not to talk about their children at work too much. Judy was very conscious of how often she spoke about her children at work and when she did speak about them, she tried to make sure she said positive things, not anything too dramatic or that could be interpreted as a complaint. Amelia

stated that she often talked with her colleagues and support staff about the positive aspects of motherhood, such as the funny things her daughter said or her gymnastics accomplishments. Yet, Amelia also confessed that when she interviewed for her current position she did not reveal that she had a child. What Amelia did not say was *why* she felt that she could not or should not out herself as mother in the job search process. Perhaps there were unsaid message in the culture of her office that told her she could reveal her status as a mother if it was a positive story that made people feel good, but anything related to the potential challenges of juggling work and motherhood was taboo.

When asked about specific strategies she used as a working mother, Diana mentioned several different ones, including: being an active planner, technology, and taking minimal time for lunch breaks. She went to great lengths to not have her daughter impact her work life because she did not want to be treated differently because she was a working mother. The strategies that Diana and others used to negotiate their various roles are consistent with those articulated by other women student affairs administrators who were also mothers (Fochtman, 2008; Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002; Marshall & Jones, 1990; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Renn & Hughes, 2004). The women in my study indicated that they willingly negotiated their roles because their children and their careers were worth the effort and, the benefits of being a working mother outweighed the obstacles and challenges. However, the stories from Judy, Amelia, and Diana also indicate that women student affairs professionals went out of their way to not have their children interfere or intrude on their work lives; the women did not want their colleagues or supervisors to treat them differently because they were

also mothers. These stories raise questions about *why* the participants felt the need to overcompensate for their status as mothers and student affairs professionals' uses of bias-avoidance behaviors in the work place.

In their research on faculty with children, Drago and his colleagues (2005) discovered that faculty intentionally did not use the family-friendly policies available to them for fear of career repercussions. Family-friendly policies often included: tenure clock extensions, stopping the tenure clock all-together for the birth of a child, and reduced teaching loads (Drago, et al, 2005). Drago, et al (2005) labeled faculty decisions to forgo the use of these policies, bias avoidance behaviors. To date, the study of bias avoidance behaviors has only focused on faculty. Preliminary findings from the current study suggest that overcompensation is a bias avoidance behavior. More research is warranted to examine what other forms of bias avoidance behaviors student affairs professionals use, the frequency of those behaviors, and why they are utilized. In addition to their perceived need to overcompensate for their status as mothers, the women indicated that they were continually navigating personal and professional obstacles. In the next section I discuss the obstacles that participants faced and how they utilized their mid-career agency in responding to them.

Managing others' assumptions

Participants stated that some of the obstacles they faced included managing others' assumptions about them as mothers and as professionals. Despite the fact that women have been part of the workforce for decades, the women in my study indicated that other women assumed they would stay home with their children rather than return to work. These assumptions came from older women and peers alike and from working

women and stay-at-home moms. Judy indicated that there was no escape from the assumptions and subsequent judgments of other women. She said that even at church other women, especially older women, would ask if she intended to stay home with her children, but assumed that she would and should stay home.

The women indicated that they also managed the assumptions of others at work, including students and colleagues. As a residence life professional who worked on the front lines with students, Monique continually managed her students' assumptions about her as a mother and professional. Before she had her daughter, Monique would often hang out with her staff until 2 a.m. Now that she had a young child, she no longer did that and as a result was not a visible as she once was. Monique felt that her students equated her lack of visibility with a lack of commitment. Alice stated that as a mid-career professional, her colleagues on campus made assumptions that she would "become part of the furniture" at Karmen. That is, because she was already in her position for eight years and at the college for 11, her colleagues assumed that she would not leave and eventually be retired, like old office furniture.

Madelyn's experience illustrated how she had to continually assert herself with her supervisors and supervisees and overcome others' assumptions about her professional commitment level since becoming a mother. When she announced that she was pregnant, her colleagues and supervisors stopped asking about her career aspirations and she was no longer included on "the short list of people who get invited to things on campus." Madelyn's colleagues and supervisors only stopped making assumptions about her career aspirations, after Madelyn re-asserted herself by saying that she still wanted to pursue VPSA or college presidency positions. Madelyn did this

work on her own. Her supervisors never approached her to ask about her future plans and how her new role as a mother fit into those plans. Diane had a similar experience in her work; she stated that she had hired a personal career coach to help her re-conceptualize her career plans and how to negotiate the mismatch she felt between her own career goals and her current work environment. Despite having scaffolding-supportive supervisors, mentors, and encouraging work environments- the women in my study managed their own careers. Participants learned that no one else was watching out for their careers, they had to negotiate those decisions on their own.

The participants in Nobbe and Manning's study (1997) reported feeling watched by their subordinates when they returned to work from maternity leave. Madelyn related a similar experience with her supervisees. While Madelyn was out on maternity leave, her supervisor agreed to supervise her staff. However, Madelyn related that this did not happen and when she returned from maternity leave, she was faced with the fall-out from her supervisees who had not been supervised for almost 12 weeks. Some of her supervisees enjoyed the autonomy that accompanied the lack of supervision; others on her staff resented being left alone. Madelyn experienced her staff as distant and cold toward her and they often questioned her level of commitment to them and to the department. A fellow working mother on campus told Madelyn that she needed to "name it" (what happened) for her staff and make key appearances at campus events to help smooth over the hurt feelings and fear. Madelyn stated that after she spoke to her staff, her transition back to work went much smoother.

Madelyn's and others' stories suggested that the process of re-integrating into professional work after maternity leave can be a long and difficult process, for the

individual and the organization. The women's experiences also reflect the literature which indicated that the transition back to work was done by individuals, with little assistance from departmental or organizational systems (Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997; Renn & Hughes, 2004.) Women student affairs professionals also reported that the processes of negotiating maternity leave itself and creating alternative work arrangements was sometimes difficult and done on their own time (Fochtman, in press; Nobbe & Manning, 1997).

The fact that women student affairs professionals were required to navigate the maternity leave and re-integration processes on their own, is counter-intuitive on many levels. First, the student affairs profession was founded on and continues to be centered on fostering the holistic development of students (ACE, 1937; ACE, 1949; ACPA, 1996); thus, it is reasonable to expect that the holistic development of staff would also be a commitment of the profession, especially given that student affairs professionals are expected to serve as role models to students (ACPA, 1996). Second, women have had and will continue to have children, so it is not as if the women in my study, or in previous studies, were the first to have children. Third, many women will continue to choose student affairs as their profession and fourth, some women will choose to negotiate motherhood and student affairs work. However, despite these basic truths, the structure of higher education has not yet caught up with the lived experiences of mothers in student affairs. As far back as 1979, research suggested that administrative mothers faced significant organizational obstacles (Villadesen, 1979) and that they were forced to navigate those obstacles on their own. Both previous (Marshall & Jones, 1990; Nobbe & Manning, 1997) and current literature (Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002;

Renn & Hughes, 2004) indicate that the inconsistencies between women's lived experiences as working mothers and organizational structures continues. Sociologist Joan Acker and scholars within the academy suggested that this mismatch occurs because organizations, like higher education institutions, are based on and therefore privilege male timelines and career trajectories (Acker, 1990; Armenti, 2004). Until organizational structures are redesigned around female timelines and trajectories, working mothers will continue to face obstacles. The women in my study recognized this and accepted it as reality. They pushed back against these obstacles by fighting from within their own units, departments, and institutions.

Related to being a working mother in higher education, the women in my study faced the same obstacles as previous generations of women (Fochtman, in press; Marshall, 2002; Nobbe & Manning, 1997). The participants differed, however, in how they pushed back against those obstacles. The women stated that they were "managing" obstacles. They did not state that they were fighting against or overcoming obstacles; rather, the women accepted that they would face obstacles on a macro level. They made their impact on a micro level by negotiating their roles in a way that worked for them and their families, by actively staying, and by blazing a path for others. For example, as the first working mother in her department, Alice helped change the cultural expectations of student activities professionals on her campus. By working on a micro level to affect change, Alice modeled for her staff one way of negotiating work and life, which may some day create a "trickle up effect" (quotations mine) to the macro level as well.

For the participants, "the middle" was a benefit and a challenge, an obstacle and a reward. The women used various tools and strategies to make their time count. They also relied on the scaffolding in their lives which helped them negotiate their multiple roles. The women were motivated by a desire to serve a higher purpose and make a difference for others including their children, students, institutions, and future generations of professionals. In the end, it was the convergence of motherhood and work that made their lives so rewarding.

Implications

Good research (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002) changes professional practice based on the insights gained from participants. Consistent with business literature (Kersick & Gram, 2002; Whelan-Berry & Gordon, 2000) and previous narratives from mid-career professionals (Renn & Hughes, 2004), the participants in my study were doing all of the "normal" (quotations mine) mid-career things: having children, gaining professional experience, earning terminal degrees, focusing on family, job searching, and working. What was different about the women in my study was "how" they conceptualized their mid-career life tasks and "why" they choose to keep doing them. The women in my study negotiated their multiple realities- home, work, personal, and professional- in ways that worked for them. Participants had lives that were personally and professionally satisfying and an opportunity to do work that made a difference for others.

There are two implications for practice that I address in the next sections: (1) re-framing mid-career and (2) re-framing work-life "balance." After discussing these implications, I suggest how these implications might manifest for different level of

student affairs professionals: entry-level or new professionals, mid-career administrators, and senior student affairs officers (SSAOs). In the recommendations I offer here, I suggest that research continue to investigate the actual lived experiences of mid-career professionals, especially women with children. Previous literature on women student affairs administrators with children (Marshall, 2002; Renn & Hughes, 2004) and findings from the current study indicated that the convergence of the mid-career stage with having young children was the most rewarding but also the most challenging time in women's lives. Due to the alignment of mid-career positions with developmental life-tasks, like childbearing, this convergence will likely continue for future generations of women as well. More research will eventually result in literature and then practice that more accurately reflects how women are negotiating their lives.

Implications for Practice

Re-framing mid-career

Findings from my study indicate that there is a mismatch between current renderings of mid-career, work-life "balance," and the ways that women actually experience their lives as mid-career mothers in student affairs. Previous portrayals of mid-career were negative (Carpenter, 1990; Scott, 1980; Young, 1980) and perpetuated a "mid-career victim" (quotations mine) mentality. Scott (1980) suggested that mid-career was not a position of power and therefore, oppressive to professionals in those positions. The women in my study pushed back against these messages and reinvented mid-career as an opportunity for growth. For some women, "growth" meant change in the form of a new professional position, having children, or pursuing advanced education. For others, "growth" meant actively staying mid-career and relying on the

stability and flexibility of their positions to prioritize other roles, especially that of mother to young children. The women in my study were agents in their own experiences. They would not be defined by other's assumptions or expectations. Instead, they blazed a path and decided *for themselves* what mid-career means *to them*.

Findings from my study suggest that mid-career women allowed their membership and involvement in professional organizations to lapse because they could not see its value as mid-career professionals. The challenge, therefore, is to create mechanisms and strategies that are relevant to mid-career professionals and that do not perpetuate the specialization of the mid-career stage (Scott, 1980). The recommendations that I suggest here are offered as a starting point to raise awareness about the positive realities of mid-career and begin to reframe the national conversation about the benefits and challenges of mid-career.

As a way to start a new conversation about mid-career and negotiating children and student affairs, I suggest increasing networking opportunities for mid-career women in student affairs groups. Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can provide a forum for mid-career women to network with each other and share tips and strategies for negotiating mid-career motherhood, which the women in my study indicated was critical to their success at mid-career. Being part of a network can also help mid-career professionals fight the isolation that sometimes results from the vastness of the mid-career stage (Houdyshell, 2007).

Another implication of my study is the need for more specific resources for mid-career professionals, especially women and women with children. I suggest that rather than creating another professional organization with a highly specialized focus, that the

existing professional organizations devote more time and resources to the needs of mid-career women. The Standing Committee for Women (SCW) through the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the Women in Student Affairs (WISA) Knowledge Community through the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) are two already established organizations whose foci are women student affairs administrators and are a logical place to begin the conversation about the benefits and challenges of mid-career convergence.

Re-framing work-life "balance"

I began my study with the assumption that the previous framings of work-life "balance" were dualistic because they only focused on two roles and therefore, were not in line with feminist conceptualizations of home and work. Findings from my study indicate that women negotiated multiple roles, not just two; as a result, their conceptualizations of work-life were also multi-faceted. As part of my interview protocol (see Appendix D), I asked each participant to describe her work-life "balance." In their descriptions, participants used various images including: waves, stars, spinning plates, houses and foundations, and percentages. Amelia, Brenda, and Diana were the only participants to use percentages to describe the relationship between work and home but none of them said that the relationship was balanced 50/50. The women in my study compartmentalized and made their time count, but none of the participants related that her life was balanced. Rather, for participants, work-life was a fluid relationship, or a multi-faceted reality, that they constantly negotiated.

Participants' conceptualizations of their own work-life relationships suggest that a dichotomous rendering of "balance" is no longer useful. The women in my study

pushed back against the popular messages that women can "have it all" or that being superwoman was even possible or desirable. The women in my study consciously chose not to buy into those messages and instead, negotiated a work-life relationship that worked for them and their families. Findings from my study suggest that a re-framing of work-life balance is warranted. I recommend that rather than discuss work-life "balance" the conversation should focus on the multiple realities that student affairs professionals, especially women with children, experience and the strategies they use to negotiate those realities.

In addition to understanding the strategies that women student affairs professionals use to negotiate their lives, it is also important to question why those strategies were necessary. The participants in my study indicated that they were forced to negotiate their lives in the ways they did because of the nature and expectations of the student affairs profession. The pervasive culture of student affairs is to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Participants indicated that true time "off" from work was rare; even when participants were away from work, technological advances such as email, facebook, twitter, and conference calls, made them accessible all day, every day. Many of the participants did have access to flexible (flex) and compensatory (comp) time; however there was wide variation in what counted towards it, how safe it was to use the flex or comp time, and the behaviors and attitudes of colleagues and supervisors toward the women when they returned to work after using flex or comp time.

As mid-career professionals, the women in my study were beginning to actively question the necessity and utility of student affairs' culture and push back against the unwritten and unsaid rules about what counted as "work." The round-the-clock nature

of student affairs work has been accepted and perpetuated for years, despite the fact that compelling evidence for the necessity of that culture has not yet been provided. Professionals should be recognized and rewarded for the quality and efficacy of the work they produce, not for how long it took or how busy they appeared while doing it. The culture of student affairs needs to change if the profession is to retain quality mid-career professionals, especially those Generation Xers who are mid-career and are on the cusp of staying in higher education, or leaving altogether. Research suggests that Generation Xers are less willing than their Boomer predecessors to "pay their dues" to an institution; instead, Generation Xers approach their work with a practical orientation and expect to be rewarded for their productivity, not their loyalty (Bickel & Brown, 2005; Kupperschmidt, 1998; Levine & Cureton, 1998; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Implications for all levels of professionals

Not having a cohort of women in front of them to serve as role models motivated the participants to blaze a path for others. By negotiating their own life and work realities in a way that worked for them and actively staying in their mid-career positions, the women were advocating for change at a micro, grassroots level. Mid-career professionals are often supervisee and supervisors, so they are in the unique position of role modeling for the generation of professionals coming up behind them (new professionals) and challenging their own supervisors, who are often SSAOs, to interpret and implement policies in a way that creates a supportive environment for working parents. Reframing mid-career and work-life "balance" will affect student affairs professionals at all levels: new or entry level professionals, mid-career, and senior.

New professionals. The participants were mid-career and indicated that many of the choices they made related to how they negotiated their roles was possible *because* they were mid-career. This is not to say that entry-level or new professionals could not make the same decisions and have a positive work-life relationship. However, the women in my study relied on their experience- past successes as well as poor decisions- and learned from them. As mid-career professionals, they also established professional capital that they could cash in whenever necessary. New professionals are still establishing their professional reputations, so it may not be as easy, or culturally accepted in their departments or units, to establish professional boundaries and say no to night and weekend commitments the way it was for mid-career women.

The women believed that they were work-life role models for the next generation of professionals and they took this role modeling obligation seriously. Findings from my study indicate a need to teach entry level professionals life negotiation skills from the beginning of their careers. Mid-career (and senior level administrators) should also encourage new professionals to ask questions about work-life relationships and family-friendly policies- such as maternity leave, flex and comp time- at the outset of their careers. That way, if women choose to have both a student affairs career and a family, they will already have scaffolding in place when the time comes, rather than trying to learn these skills and build supports as they go. Although the focus of the current study was women with children, it is important to note that successfully negotiating one's personal and professional realities is an important skill for all student affairs professionals, not just those who are also parents.

Mid-career professionals. Women in my study were committed to making changes at the grassroots level, from within their units and departments first. The participants role modeled their own work-life relationships so that others, especially peers and new professionals, could see that negotiating student affairs work and young children was not only possible, but also personally fulfilling and professionally rewarding. As supervisors, the women created environments where it was expected and accepted that their supervisees would also have healthy work-life relationships. If enough mid-career women student affairs professionals also make this commitment, the potential for a paradigm shift exists. As the Boomer generation retires, Generation Xers, like the women in my study, will advance into senior student affairs officer positions and supervise other mid-career professionals. As SSAOs, they will be in the position to interpret and implement policy, especially compensatory and flexible time, and play a critical role in the creation of a departmental culture that is supportive and child-friendly.

Senior student affairs officers. All of the participants indicated that their supervisors played a critical role in their experiences and in their abilities to negotiate work and family in a healthy way. My study suggests two implications for senior student affairs officers. First, SSAOs should be mindful of how they negotiate their own work-life relationships and remember that their behavior sets the tone for the entire office culture. Second, as supervisors, SSAOs play a critical role in the work-life experience of mid-career professionals. Creating an office culture that encourages healthy work-life relationships requires dialogue with mid-career colleagues and supervisees.

Implications for Policy

Maternity leave

The majority of the women in my study had access to maternity leave, flexible time, and compensatory time policies and they utilized those policies when appropriate and necessary. Although women had access to maternity leave policies, the policies themselves varied drastically from institution to institution. For example, Toni had 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and was not required to use any of her vacation time while she was out. Due to when Monique began work at Inter-city Private University she was not eligible for full maternity leave or for coverage under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The institution did compromise and allowed her to accrue vacation days that she could put towards her maternity leave. While a generous offer, this only resulted in 12 days off from work. Monique went back to work quickly after her daughter was born and stated that as a result she felt she had no down time and no time to figure out how to be a mother and residence life professional. Brenda adopted her daughter and consequently was only eligible for three days of maternity leave. The other time that Brenda took counted against her vacation days. Monique and Brenda both indicated that their minimal maternity leaves clouded their time at home with their children and created lingering feelings of resentment toward their supervisors and institutions. Conversely, those participants who had access to maternity leave policies and were able to fully utilize them indicated that their maternity leaves were personally fulfilling and allowed them to spend time with their children and then transition back to work at a pace that worked for them.

Findings from my study have implications for women who do not have access to such policies and how their transition back to work is impacted by this. Stories from my participants indicate that maternity leave policies were crucial to their transition from work to home and then back to work. Changes to the FMLA or institutional human resource policies constitute macro changes that are beyond the scope of this study. However, the inconsistencies in maternity leave policies and implementation can be changed on a micro level. The senior and mid-career professionals who supervise women with children should be given the professional latitude to negotiate maternity leaves with employees in their individual units.

Flexible and compensatory time

The women also had access to flexible and compensatory time policies that were either mandated by their professional unions, or put into practice by their supervisors. Stories from participants highlighted the benefits of having flexible work-life policies and an office/unit culture where it was safe to use those policies; having access to flex and comp time helped the women negotiate their lives in a way that worked for them. Participants also saw these policies as a benefit or perk of student affairs work. The women in my study indicated that they intended to stay in student affairs so they could help the generation of women behind them: this is one area where the women can begin to make an impact. Maternity leave, flexible, and compensatory time policies should continue to be available to working mothers and women should be encouraged to utilize them.

Areas for Future Research

As a result of my study, I suggest the need for more research in several areas, including: student affairs professionals use of overcompensation as a bias avoidance strategy, generations at work, the consequences of multiple roles, women student affairs administrators with more than one child, the persistence of mid-career women of color, and work-life strategies used by mid-career men.

The women in my study used the various family-friendly policies available to them. But at the same time, the participants also overcompensated and went to extreme lengths not to have their children invade their lives at work too much, for fear of not being taken seriously or being perceived as less competent because they were also mothers. More research is needed to see if this is a trend among women student affairs administrators and if so, why. The second suggested area for future research is the affect of generation in student affairs work. Eva was the only participant to articulate generational differences between herself and her colleagues. However, findings from my study suggest that generational dynamics played a role in all of the participants' stories. More research is warranted to better understand the impact of generational differences on student affairs culture and the experiences of student affairs professionals from different generations. This will be especially important as more Boomers retire, Generation Xers advance to SSAO positions, and Millennials move into mid-career, middle manager positions.

As I outlined in chapter three, it was very difficult to find mid-career women with two or more children and mid-career women of color. A recent article in *The Chronicle* suggested that having more than two children was taboo for tenure track

faculty (Wilson, 2009). Although this article was about faculty, not administrators, it is possible that the trend for student affairs administrators is to have one child. More research is needed to see if having only one child is a developing trend and if it is, why. I also suggest that future research investigate the persistence of women of color in student affairs. It is not yet clear why women of color do not reach mid-career parity with their White counterpart and why they were hard to identify for the current study.

My study focused exclusively on mid-career women; therefore generalizations to mid-career men cannot be made. Throughout our interviews, Diana and Judy mentioned differences between how they negotiated their mid-career convergence and their perceptions of how their male colleagues, including their husbands, negotiated their mid-career time. Diana spoke about the different attitudes she and her husband brought to their roles as mid-career professionals; she thought of her work as part of her career, whereas her husband looked at his work as a job that provided for his family. Judy mentioned her feelings of personal guilt and suggested that men did not have similar feelings, or, if they did, they did not talk about them. Given the fact that men are also student affairs administrators, future research on how mid-career men conceptualize their own work-life relationships is warranted.

Summary of the document

The current study was organized into seven chapters. Chapter one provided an overview of the current study and included a brief introduction to the student affairs profession and the role of women in student affairs. I also explained my research questions, the conceptual framework which guided the study, the purpose and significance of the current study, and provided definitions of the terms I used

throughout the study. In the current study, I investigated two research questions: How do mid-career women student affairs administrators negotiate their multiple roles and why? I sought a deeper understanding of the tools and strategies mid-career women used to negotiate their lives and also, the mechanisms that they used to make meaning. My study represented an opportunity to combine gender, career stage, and parental status. I also specifically focused on mid-career women with young children, as the mid-career stage is a time of personal and professional convergence, especially for women. In chapter two I reviewed five main bodies of literature: women's career development, career development within student affairs, work-life/family "balance," academic motherhood, and women administrators with children. Relevant literature within each category was reviewed and inconsistencies in the literature were also discussed. Chapter three provided an overview of the feminist, phenomenological, and naturalistic research paradigms that I employed in my study. I stated my methods for soliciting participants, as well as my data collection and analysis procedures. I also outlined the various steps I took to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, including: rigorous data collection and analysis procedures, data and methodological triangulation, maximum variation of participants, and member checks of the data.

Portraits of the participants were presented in chapter four. I provided a detailed picture of each woman which included information about: her family and educational background, information about her children and relationships, why she considered herself mid-career, and self-perceptions related to leadership, mentors, and support networks. In chapters five and six I presented the themes which emerged from my analysis of the participants' stories. Chapter five outlined three main themes related to

"how" the women in my study negotiated their lives as mid-career mothers. Those themes included: like clockwork, make it count, and scaffolding. More specifically, like clockwork referred to the timing alignment of the participants multiple roles. The section on make it count described the various tools and strategies participants used to maximize their personal and professional time. Scaffolding referred to the various support structures that participants leaned on to help them negotiate their lives. In chapter six I presented findings related to the "why" question. Findings from my study showed that the women were agents of their own experiences and actively chose to maximize their mid-career time to help them achieve various personal and professional goals. I referred to this choice as "mid-career agency." The women also "actively stayed" mid-career and paid it forward to others. Related to "why," the participants in my study saw themselves as part of a larger collective of mothers and student affairs professionals and, as a result, they blazed a path for themselves, their children, their students and institutions, and for the next generation of professionals. In the final chapter, chapter seven, I pulled back from the two chapters of findings and analyzed the findings within the three contexts of my study: the economy, being mid-career, and having young children. I suggested that the women in my study were able to negotiate their lives because they were mid-career and they needed to do so because they had young children. In the implications section of chapter seven, I also suggested that the lived experiences of mid-career women with young children, did not match existing literature and therefore, both mid-career in student affairs and work-life balance should be re-conceptualized to more accurately reflect how women negotiated their lives and

why. I demonstrated the implications of my study for entry level, mid-career, and senior level professionals in student affairs. I also offered suggestions for future research.

APPENDIX A

Mid-career women student affairs administrators with young children:
Negotiating multiple roles
Participant solicitation letter

Dear Colleague:

My name is Monica Marcelis Fochtman and I am a fifth-year doctoral student in the Higher Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) program at Michigan State University. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in being a participant in my dissertation research on mid-career women student affairs professionals with small children. For the purposes of the current study I am seeking participants who are student affairs professionals with five or more years experience and also the mothers of small children, aged infant to five years old. I am interested in learning *how* you navigate and make sense of the various roles you have.

In order to achieve a depth of understanding about the topic, I am seeking a small pool of women- five to eight- who are willing to be interviewed two or three times each. The interview questions will focus on areas such as educational background and career history; personal and professional leadership; mentors and support networks; strategies used to navigate work-life/family "balance" issues; and motherhood.

During the interview, I will ask several open-ended questions about your previous and current experiences as student affairs professional and mother. You may also choose to talk about any other issue(s) or experience(s) you have had as an administrator on campus. With your permission, I would like to audio-record our conversation; you may ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time. Afterwards, I will transcribe the content of the interview(s) and create a case study. The interview transcripts and case study portrait will be sent to you for review and feedback.

If you are interested in participating and are available for an interview, please e-mail me at **fochtm10@msu.edu**, or call me at (517) 944-0558. If you are not interested or unavailable to participate, but know other professionals who meet the research criteria and who may be willing, I would appreciate you forwarding me their names so that I may contact them about this study. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my doctoral committee adviser, Dr. Matthew Wawrzynski **(mwawrzyn@msu.edu).**

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this research study. I look forward to learning more about your experiences.

Sincerely,
Monica Marcelis Fochtman
fochtm10@msu.edu

APPENDIX B

Mid-career women student affairs administrators with young children:
Negotiating multiple roles
On-line participant solicitation questionnaire

Participant solicitation questionnaire
Thank you for taking the time to complete this initial survey of information. The questionnaire contains 19 questions and should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes to complete. The focus of this dissertation research is on the navigational tools and strategies MID-CAREER women student affairs administrators who are the mothers of SMALL children use to make sense of their multiple roles and responsibilities. Respondents who meet the study criteria will be contacted and may be invited to participate. Thank you!

1. Name

2. Email address (where future study communications can be sent to you)

3. Highest degree earned and date

4. Your current professional title

5. To whom do you report (title of that person)?

6. Do you currently supervise other professional staff members?
Yes No

7. If yes to question 6, how many people do you supervise?
1 2 3 4 5 or more

8. Do you work full-time (40 or more hours per week)?
Yes No

9. Institutional type (of institution where you are currently employed)

10. Do you currently consider yourself a mid-career professional (defined here as beyond 0-5 yrs as a student affairs professional, but no more than 15 years as a student affairs professional)?
Yes No

11. Number of years in your CURRENT position

12. Number of years in the student affairs PROFESSION (NOT including graduate school)

13. CURRENT student affairs functional area

Acad. advising	Admissions	Counseling	Career Serv.
Frat/Soror. Life	Hsg./Resid. Life	Finan.aid	Judicial Affairs
Leadership Develop.	Orientation	Stud. Activities.	
Other, please specify			

14. Current relationship status

Divorced	Engaged	Married	Partnered	Single
Widowed				

15. How many children do you have?

0 1 2 3 4 or more

16. Please list the respective age of each child

17. How old are you?

18. What is your race/ethnicity?

19. Are you available and willing to be interviewed two or three times during the 2009 fall semester (for approximately an hour each time)?

Yes No

APPENDIX C

Mid-career women student affairs administrators with young children:
Negotiating multiple roles
Consent document

This study is being conducted by Monica Marcelis Fochtman, fifth year doctoral student in the College of Education at Michigan State University, under the supervision of Dr. Matthew Wawrzynski, doctoral adviser and committee chair. This dissertation research seeks to understand how (tools and strategies) and why (sense making) student affairs professionals who are also mothers of small children (age infant to five years) navigate their multiple roles.

Data will be collected through in-depth, one-to-one interviews with participants. The interview(s) will include questions about: educational background and career history; personal and professional leadership; mentors and support networks; strategies used to navigate work-life/family "balance" issues; and motherhood. Each interview(s) will last approximately 90 minutes, depending on the length of your responses. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or to answer some questions and not others. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record our conversation; you may ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your name will not be included in the final report; at the bottom of this consent document you are asked to assign yourself and your institution (if applicable) a pseudonym. There are no foreseeable risks or potential for harm in participating in this study.

Upon completion, the data, data analysis, and findings from this project will be submitted to the College of Education and the Graduate School at Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctor of philosophy degree. In addition, the information gathered from the current study may be submitted to professional associations and journals for future publication and/or conference presentations.

If you have any questions about this study, such as scientific issues or how to complete any part of it, please contact:
Monica Marcelis Fochtman
Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education (HALE) doctoral student
Michigan State University
519 Kipling Blvd.
Lansing, MI 48912
(517) 944-0558 (ph)
(517) 432-1356 (fax)
fochtm10@msu.edu (e-mail)

If you have any questions about this study, you may also contact:
Dr. Matthew Wawrzynski, Assistant Professor
Doctoral Committee Adviser
426 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 355-6617 (ph)
mwawrzyn@msu.edu (e-mail)

If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact:
Human Research Protection Programs on Research Involving Human Subjects
Michigan State Universiy
202 Olds Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 355-2180 (ph)
(517) 432-4503 (fax)
irb@msu.edu (e-mail)

I am choosing to assign myself the following pseudonym:

_____

I am choosing to assign my home institution the following pseudonym:

_____

I agree to participate in this study. In addition, by signing below I agree to allow my responses to be digitally audio-recorded for the research purposes of this study.

Signature _____

Name (Printed)_____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

Mid-career women student affairs administrators with young children:
Negotiating multiple roles
Interview protocol

(Follow-up questions will be asked as needed.)

Family and educational background

1. As much as you are comfortable, please tell me about your childhood.
    a. How many children in your family?
    b. Tell me about your parents. Are they married/divorced?
    c. What is your parents' educational background?
    d. Did your parents work, stay at home, or some combination of the two?
    e. How were the tasks of laundry, cooking, cleaning, home upkeep and repair divided in your childhood home?
2. Where and when did you attend college? Graduate school?

Career history and current employment

1. Tell me about your career trajectory to date.
2. Why did you choose student affairs as your profession?
3. Why did you accept your current position?
    a. Why do you choose to stay in it?
    b. What aspects of the institutional culture contribute to this?
    c. Approximately how many hours a week do you work?
    d. What is your "typical" work schedule?
4. Tell me about your supervisor.

a. How does s/he support you as a professional?

b. How does s/he support you as a mother?

5. Do you enjoy your current position? Why or why not?

    a. Is there anything about your current position that you would change?

    b. What aspects of the institutional culture contribute to this?

6. Why do you consider yourself mid-career?

    a. What are the benefits of being mid-career?

    b. What are the challenges of being mid-career?

Personal and professional leadership

1. Tell me about yourself as a leader.
2. Tell me about any personal (non-work related) and/or professional leadership positions you currently hold.
3. Was there a significant leadership training or event from your own journey which you think is
4. As much as you are comfortable, please tell me about a time when you made a leadership "mistake" and what you learned from that experience.
5. What do you hope your colleagues say about working with you?

    a. What do you hope your supervisor says about you?

    b. What do you hope your supervisees say about you?

Mentors/Support Networks

1. Do you have a mentor?

    a. What role has s/he played in your career and career related decisions?

b. Tell me about the type of support you receive from your mentor.

2. Is your mentor also a parent?
3. Besides your mentor, are there other campus resources available to you?
    a. Do you utilize them?
4. What kinds of support networks do you utilize, both on and off campus?
5. In what types of professional organizations/activities are you currently involved?
6. Why and how did you choose to participate in those particular organizations?

Motherhood

1. Tell me about your children.
2. When in your career did you have your children and why?
    a. How old were you when you had your children?
3. What were the factors (age, location, job flexibility) which influenced your decision to have children when you did?
4. Was/is there a maternity leave policy available to you?
    a. Did you utilize it?
    b. Are there other work-life, work-family, or family-friendly policies available on your campus?
    c. How did you come to know about these policies?
5. What are some of the *strategies* you use to navigate your roles as a working mother?

a. How did these strategies change between the births of your first and subsequent children?

6. Please tell me about a "typical" day.
    a. When do you work?
    b. Where are your children while you are at work?
    c. If your children are in daycare, what kind of facility is it and how did you find it?
    d. Approximately how many hours a day do you spend with your children?
7. As much as you are comfortable, tell me about some of the obstacles you have faced as a working mother.
    a. What strategies have you used to address these obstacles?
    b. Are these obstacles related to institutional type or the culture of your institution?
8. What, if anything would you change about the culture of your department?
    a. What, if anything would you change about the culture of your institution?
9. How has your personal leadership approach changed as a result of your parenthood?
    a. How has your professional leadership approach changed as a result of your parenthood?
10. How has your career been impacted by your status as a mother?

Work-life/family "balance"

1. When you are not at work, how do you like to spend your time?
    a. What do you do for fun?
    b. Are there any activities that you do just "for yourself?"
2. As much as you are comfortable, please tell me about other commitments you have which require your time and attention.
    a. How do you balance those commitments with your work life?
3. What other roles are you currently managing? I.e., Wife/partner, daughter, sister, friend, colleague, etc.
    a. What are some practical strategies you use to help you maintain these roles and relationships?
4. How do you negotiate the second shift? In your house, who cooks, cleans, does laundry?
    a. Why do you do it this way?
5. Tell me about some of the strategies you use to negotiate work-life/family "balance."

APPENDIX E

TABLE 1. Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Age*	Race	Relation. Status	Gender and Age* of child	Functional Area	# Yrs in Profession	Current Institution
Alice	39	Caucasian	Married	Son, 5	Student Activities	15	Public, master's college, Northeast
Amelia	33	Caucasian	Partnered	Daughter, 2.5	Academic Advising	9	Public, research I, Midwest
Brenda	39	Caucasian	Married	Daughter, 2	Judicial Affairs	13	Catholic, master's college, Midwest
Diana	33	Caucasian	Married	Daughter, 3	Orientation	9	Catholic, master's college, Northeast
Diane	41	Caucasian	Married	Daughter, 1	Career Services	14	Public, research I, Midatlantic
Eva	34	Black	Married	Son, 7 Daughter, 4	Residence Life- Central staff	10	Public, research I, Midwest
Judy	36	Caucasian	Married	Daughter, 5 Son, 2.5	Multicultural Services	10	Public, research I, Southwest
Madelyn	39	Caucasian	Married	Daughter, 4 mos	Dean/ "Generalist"	15	Catholic, master's college, Northeast
Monique	28	Bi-racial	Engaged	Daughter, 1	Residence Life- Front line	6	Christian, master's college, Pacific Northwest
Toni	32	Afr. Amer.	Separated	Son, 13 Daughter, 2	Academic Advising/ teaching	8	Urban, Catholic, master's college, Midwest

*** Ages were those at time of interview, Fall 2009 or Winter 2010.**

REFERENCES

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society, 4* (2), 139-158.

American Council on Education (1937). *Student personnel point of view*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

American Council on Education (1949). *Student personnel point of view*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

American College Personnel Association (1996). *Principles of good practice for student affairs.* Washington, D.C.: Author.

Argyris, C. & Schon, D.A. (1977). What is an organization that it can learn? In C. Argyris & D. A. Schon, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of action perspective*. (pp. 8-29). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Armenti, C. (2004a). Gender as a barrier for women with children in academe. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 34* (1), 1-26.

Armenti, C. (2004b). May babies and posttenure babies: Maternal decisions of women professors. *The Review of Higher Education, 27* (2), 211-231

Arminio, J. L. & Hultgren, F. H. (2002). Breaking out from the shadow: The question of criteria in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development, 43* (4), 446-460.

Atkinson, R. & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies. *University of Surrey Social Research Update, 33.*

Auster, E. R. (2001). Professional women's midcareer satisfaction: Toward an explanatory framework. *Sex Roles, 44*, (11/12), 719-750.

Barrax, J. D. (1985). A comparative career profile of female and male university administrators. *Journal of NAWDAC, 48*, (2), 26-31.

Belch, H. A.(1991). *A view from the bottleneck: The importance and meaning of middle management and "career" to middle managers in student affairs.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University.

Belch, H. A. and Strange, C. C. (1995). Views from the bottleneck: Middle managers in student affairs. *NASPA Journal, 32* (3), 208-222.

Bender, B. B. (1980). Job satisfaction in student affairs. *NASPA Journal, 18*, (2), 2-9.

Berwick, K. R. (1992). Stress among student affairs administrators: The relationship of personal characteristics and organizational variables to work-related stress. *Journal of College Student Development, 33*, 11-19.

Bianchi, S. M. (2000). Maternal employment and time with children: Dramatic change or surprising continuity? *Demography, 37* (4), 401-414.

Bickel, J. & Brown, A. J. (2005). Generation X: Implications for faculty recruitment and development in academic health centers. *Academic Medicine, 80* (3), 205-210.

Bird, G. W. (1984). Family and career characteristics of women and men college and university administrators. *Journal of NAWDAC*, 21-28.

Blackhurst, A. E. (2000). Career satisfaction and perceptions of sex discrimination among women student affairs professionals. *NASPA Journal, 37* (2), 399-413.

Blackhurst, A., Brandt, J. and Kalinowski, J. (1998). Effects of personal and work related attributes on the organizational commitment and life satisfaction of women student affairs administrators. *NASPA Journal, 35*, 86-99.

Burns, M. (1982). Who leaves the student affairs field? *NASPA Journal, 20* (2), 9-12.

Carpenter, D. S. (1990). Professional development and career issues for mid-managers. In R. B. Young (Ed.). *The Invisible Leaders: Student affairs mid-managers.* Washington, D.C.: NASPA

Collins, K. M. (2009). *Those who just said, 'No!': Career-life decisions of middle management women in student affairs administration.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Curtis, J. W. (2004) Balancing work and family for faculty: Why it's important. *Academe, 90* (6), p. 21-23. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

DeBard, R. (2004). Millennials coming to college. In R. DeBard (Eds). Serving the Millennial Generation. *New Directions for Student Services*. 73-85. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). The logic of naturalistic inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, (Ed.). *Sociological methods: A sourcebook* . New York: McGraw-Hill.

DeVault, M. L. (1996). Talking back to sociology: Distinctive contributions of feminist methodology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 22*, 29-50.

Drago, R., Colbeck, C., Stauffer, K.D., Pirretti, A., et.al. (2005) Bias against caregiving. *Academe, 91* (5), p. 22-26.

Evans, N. J. (1986). The self-concept of women in educational and student affairs administration. *Journal of NAWDAC, 50* (1), 14-19.

Evans, N. J. (1988). Attrition of student affairs professionals: A review of the literature. *Journal of College Student Development*, 29, 19-24.

Evans, N. J. and Kuh, G. D. (1983). Getting to the top: A profile of female chief student affairs officers. *Journal of NAWDAC*, 18-22.

Fochtman, M. M. (in press). High achieving women: Navigating multiple roles and environments in academic and student affairs. In P. Pasque, and S. E. Nicholson, (Eds.). *Empowering women in higher education and student affairs: Theory, research, narratives, and practice from feminist perspectives.*

Fochtman, M. M. (2008). *Women student affairs administrators with children: How do they do it?* Unpublished manuscript.

Gersick, C. J. G. and Kram, K. E. (2002). High-achieving women at midlife: An exploratory study. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 11* (2), 104-127.

Hallberg, D. and Klevmarken, A. (2003). Time for children: A study of parent's time allocation. *Journal of Population Economics*, (16), 205-226.

Helms, R. M. (2010). New challenges, new priorities: The experience of Generation X faculty. *The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)*: Cambridge, MA, 1-23.

Hochschild, A. R. (1989). The second shift. New York: Penguin Books.

Hochschild, A. R. (1997.) The time bind. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Houdyshell, M. (2007). *In the middle: How the experience defines mid-career for student affairs professionals.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University.

Kropf, M. B. (1998). Women's career development and part-time arrangements. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* (80), 43-51.

Kupperschmidt, B. R. (1998). Understanding generation X employees. *The Journal of Nursing Administration, 28* (12), 36-43.

Levine, A. and Cureton, J. S. (1998). *When hope and fear collide.* San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass.

Marshall, S. M. (2002). *Women higher education administrators with children: Negotiating personal and professional lives.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Loyola University Chicago.

Marshall, M. R. and Jones, C. H. (1990). Childbearing sequence and the career development of women administrators in higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 31,* 531-537.

Mason, M. A. and Goulden, M. (2004). Do babies matter (Part II)? Closing the baby gap. *Academe, 90* (6), p. 11-15. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

Mason, M. A. and Goulden, M. (2004). Do babies matter? The effect of family formation on the lifelong careers of academic men and women. *Academe, 88* (6), p. 21-27. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

Matzat, M. A. (1992). *Definitions of career success and the impact of caregiving responsibilities: An analysis of women administrators in student affairs.* Unpublished master's thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Mott, V. W. (1998). Women's career development in midlife and beyond. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* (80), 25-33.

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology and applications.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Nobbe, J. and Manning, S. (1997) Issues for women in student affairs with children. *NASPA Journal, 34,* 101-111.

Nuss, E. M. (1996). The development of student affairs. In S. R. Komives and D. B. Woodward, Jr. (Eds.). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

O'Neil, D. A. and Bilimoria, D. (2005). Women's career development phases: Idealism, endurance, and reinvention. *Career Development International, 10* (3), 168-189.

O'Neil, D. A., Hopkins, M. M., and Bilimoria, D. (2008). Women's careers at the start

of the 21st century: patterns and paradoxes. *Journal of Business Ethics, 80*, 727-743.

Patton, M. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Penn, J. R. (1990). Mid-management role issues: Expectations, conflicts, an ambiguities. In R. B. Young (Ed.). *The Invisible Leaders: Student affairs mid managers*. Washington, D.C.: NASPA

Philipsen, M. I. (2008). *Challenges of the faculty career for women: Success and sacrifice.* San Francisco: Wiley and Sons.

Pillay, V. (2007). *Academic mothers*. Sterling, VA: Trentham Books Limited.

Quinn, K., Lange, S., and Olswang, S. G. (2004). Family-friendly policies and the research university. *Academe, 90* (6), p. 32-34. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

Renn, K. A. and Hughes, C. (Eds.). (2004). *Roads taken: Women in student affairs at midcareer*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Rossman, G. B. and Rallis, S. F. (2003). *Learning in the field.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Sandeen, A. (1991). *The chief student affairs officer: Leader, manager, mediator, educator.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schreiber, P. J. (1998). Women's career development patterns. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* (80), p. 5-13.

Schwartz, R. A. (1997). Reconceptualizing the leadership roles of women in higher education: A brief history on the importance of deans of women. *The Journal of Higher Education, 68*, 502-522.

Scott, R. A. (1980). Lords, squires, and yeomen: Collegiate middle-managers in the U.S. *Higher Education, 9*, 385-398.

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

Shapiro, M., Ingols, C., and Blake-Beard, S. (2008). Confronting career double binds: Implications for women, organizations, and career practioners. *Journal of CareerDevelopment, 34* (3), 309-333.

Silver, C. (2000). Being there: The time dual-earner couples spend with their children. Canadian Social Trends, 11-008, 26-29.

Smola, K. W. & Sutton, C.D. (2002). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23* (4), 363-382.

Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology.* New York: Routledge Press.

Thelin, J. R. (1990). Rudolph rediscovered. In F. Rudolph. *The American college and university: A history* (pp. i-xiii). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Thelin, J. R. (2004). A history of American higher education. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tinsley, A. (1985). Upward mobility for women administrators. *Journal of NAWDAC, 49* (1), 3-11.

Twale, D. J. (1995). Gender comparison of NASPA membership. *NASPA Journal, 32* (4), 293-301.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Villadesen, A. W. (1979). *A study of the interactions between family responsibilities and careers of women administrators at selected southern institutions of higher education.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama.

Ward, K. and Wolf-Wendel, L. (2004a). Fear factor: How safe is it to make time for family? *Academe, 90* (6), p. 28-31. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

Ward, K. and Wolf-Wendel, L. (2004b). Academic motherhood: Managing complex roles in research universities. *The Review of Higher Education, 27* (2), 233-257.

Ward, L. (1995). Role stress and propensity to leave among new student affairs professionals. *NASPA Journal, 33* (1), 35-44.

Whelan-Berry, K. S. and Gordon, J. R. (2000). Strengthening human resource

strategies: Insights from the experiences of midcareer professional women. *Human Resource Planning, 23* (1), 26-37.

Whitmarsh, L., Brown, D., Cooper, J., Hawkins-Rodgers, Y., and Wentworth, D. K. (2007). Choices and challenges: A qualitative exploration of professional women's career patterns. *The Career Development Quarterly, 55*, 225-236.

Williams, J. C. (2004). Hitting the maternal wall. *Academe, 90* (6), p. 16-20. Retrieved November 30, 2005 from www.aaup.org.

Wilson, R. (2009, June 30). Is having more than two children an unspoken taboo? *The Chronicle.* Retrieved from www.chronicle.com.

Wood, L., Winston, Jr., R. B., and Polkosnik, M. C. (1985). Career orientations and professional development of young student affairs professionals. *Journal of College Student Personnel 26* (6), 532-539.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods.* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Young, R. B. (1990). Defining student affairs mid-management. In R. B. Young (ed.). *The Invisible Leaders: Student affairs mid-managers.* Washington, D.C.: NASPA.

Young, R. B. (1990). Making the most of mid-management. In R. B. Young (ed.). *The Invisible Leaders: Student affairs mid-managers.* Washington, D.C.: NASPA