DISSERTATION

STUDENT CONDUCT PROGRAMS' UTILIZATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES TO MEASURE EDUCATIONAL SANCTIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

STUDENT CONDUCT PROGRAMS' UTILIZATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES TO MEASURE EDUCATIONAL SANCTIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This phenomenological study explored the experiences of student conduct administrators who measure student learning when educational sanctions are assigned. The lived experiences of the participants were explored through the following research questions: (1) What educational sanctions do student conduct administrators assign in the student conduct process? (2) What learning outcomes do student conduct administrators utilize for educational sanctions? (3) How do student conduct administrators measure learning for students who participate in educational sanctions? (4) What challenges do student conduct administrators face when measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions? (5) How do student conduct administrators communicate the results of student learning to their campus community? The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven student conduct administrators representing large public research institutions in the United States. Using the interpretative phenomenological approach, four themes emerged during the analysis of the data. The lived-experience of the participants was characterized by: (1) culture of assessment, (2) measuring learning, (3) alcohol education, and (4) external factors. The data suggested that the essence of the lived experience for student conduct administrators is that measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions is challenging.

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DEDICATION

While I had known for a while that I wanted to pursue a doctoral degree, I had no idea the personal sacrifice that it would take. I have spent all of my married life and all of my motherhood being a doctoral student. There are no two greater people to dedicate this dissertation than my husband Ted and daughter Maddy.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Slager and Oaks (2013) shared that in the past decade there has been encouragement for "student affairs practitioners to assess the outcomes of their programs and services in order to better demonstrate that they are contributing to student learning and development" (p. 25). Livingston and Zerulik (2013) explained, "Assessment is an essential element of any successful student affairs division" (p. 15). Schroeder (2013) discussed the notion that improving student learning outcomes should be a goal of student interactions in and out of the classroom.

Integrating assessment efforts into student affairs practice is not only encouraged but also necessary. Unfortunately, there are many challenges associated with utilizing assessment practices effectively. The main challenge is explained by Slager and Oaks (2013) who shared, "Although the need for outcomes-based assessment has been broadcasted clearly to student affairs professionals, many practitioners may feel they have inadequate skills to engage in it and may fail to engage in the practice regularly" (p. 25).

This chapter explores the background of assessment in student affairs and introduces the challenges associated with integrating assessment practices into student conduct programs. The purpose of the study, research questions explored, definitions of terms, delimitations, limitations, will establish a foundation for the significance of the study. This chapter concludes with discussing the researcher's perspective in relation to the study.

Statement of Research Problem

Student conduct programs today are experiencing pressure to assess their programs and services in a measureable manner. This includes utilizing and measuring learning outcomes. Schuh and Upcraft (2001) explained that "assessing [learning] outcomes is the most important of all assessment efforts – and the most difficult" (p. 153). With student conduct programs residing in institutions of higher education, there is generally an expectation that students will learn both in and out of the classroom, including with the services and programs in which they interact. Student conduct administrators have an obligation to show that the experiences students have with their unit affect these students' overall learning.

Student conduct administrators regularly assign educational sanctions to encourage student growth and development around personal decision making and responsibility. These educational sanctions need to be assessed, including using measurable learning outcomes, so student conduct administrators can demonstrate that the sanction is doing what it is intended to do to encourage student learning.

Student conduct administrators are faced with numerous challenges when measuring the learning that is intended to result from participating in educational sanctions. One of these challenges is when to measure learning. Is it most effective to measure learning as soon as the sanction is completed, or is it better to wait a period of time to see if students actually notice a change in their development and future actions as a result? Another challenge is how to measure learning when students are frustrated and annoyed at having to participate in an adjudicative process. Students who receive punitive sanctions in addition to educational sanctions may not want to cooperate with future assessments to measure their potential for learning from the process. Additionally, another challenge surrounds the problem that even if learning did occur and the student grew as a result, was it because of the process, the student's own reflection and commitment to change, or the sanction itself?

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of student conduct administrators who measure student learning when educational sanctions are assigned.

1. What educational sanctions do student conduct administrators assign in the student conduct process?
2. What learning outcomes do student conduct administrators utilize for educational sanctions?
3. How do student conduct administrators measure learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

    3b. Who is measuring learning for educational sanctions? Is that a shared responsibility with other University units?

4. What challenges do student conduct administrators face when measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

    4b. What approach is utilized both for sanctioning and measuring learning if a student is struggling with substance abuse?

5. How do student conduct administrators communicate the results of student learning to their campus community?

Definitions of Terms

To achieve a common understanding the following definitions were used.

1. *Educational sanctions* – Ardailo and Walker (1987) explained that educational sanctions must have a purpose behind them that uphold the educational nature of the institution. Educational sanctions were defined here as required opportunities that students engage in that encourage personal growth and development.

2. *Student learning outcomes* – Schuh and Upcraft (2001) explained that assessment utilizing learning outcomes allow practitioners to demonstrate that a program or service has contributed to the growth and development of students. Student learning outcomes were defined here as measurable objectives utilized for assessment of programs and services.
3. *Student conduct* – Lancaster and Waryold (2008) explained that student conduct protects the interests of the university community, while promoting the growth and development of students. Student conduct programs and judicial programs were used interchangeably to mean the overarching area within an institution that provides structure and oversight for the student behavior process.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to student conduct administrators who work at large public research universities. Using the Carnegie Classifications (2014), these institutions fell into the doctoral/research university category and the large four-year university category. The student conduct administrators provided leadership for the student conduct program at their institution and worked closely with assessment efforts for their program. Additionally, the student conduct administrators' programs assigned educational sanctions and utilized and measured learning outcomes.

Limitations

The main limitation with this study is related to the population being studied. Since only student conduct administrators who work at large public research institutions were included in the study, the application of results is limited to a certain population of higher education. Additionally, typical of qualitative research, the results are not generalizable beyond the populations that were interviewed in the study. While that limits the application of the results, it still allows for an understanding to be achieved for the field as a whole and could add to future research on the topic for other populations not included in this study.

Significance of the Study

Today's culture of assessment is strong across the profession of student affairs, especially related to utilizing and measuring learning outcomes. While student conduct administrators generally embrace the expectation of assessment, there is little in terms of guidance or best practices in how to effectively utilize and measure learning that may result from participation in educational sanctions. Asher (2008) explained that student affairs administrators value the role of education within student conduct programs. Additionally, as student conduct administrators work to integrate educational components into their programs, "they must be purposeful about the content and intended outcomes" (p. 2).

This study is significant because it allowed student conduct administrators who worked at large public institutions to share the successes and challenges they faced when utilizing and measuring student learning outcomes related to educational sanctions. This research aims to share resources with student conduct administrators who aspire to measure student learning so that they can develop appropriate assessment plans for their own institutions. This study is intended to fill a much needed gap by giving student conduct administrators some strategies to meet the demand of assessment.

Researcher's Perspective

I have worked in student affairs in a professional capacity for ten years. In all of my roles over the years, I have always had responsibilities serving as a hearing officer adjudicating policy violations with students. While I initially worked in residence life, I then transitioned to working exclusively within a student conduct office doing entirely student conduct work. While I always knew that I liked the student conduct aspects of my work, my true passion emerged once I became entrenched in student conduct work. I was motivated to work with students who are going through challenging personal times, who are trying to make meaning of the experiences they have encountered, and who are trying to grow and develop with new levels of freedom and curiosity. I strongly believed in the educational nature of the student conduct process, which is importantly set within the larger educational structure of the institution. I constantly looked for new ways to connect with students and to challenge them to grow and develop and learn from their choices.

I learned early on, in my work at large public research institutions, that student affairs professionals are required to defend the work that they do in order to gain the respect that is needed to be effective at the institution. The best way for student affairs professionals to accomplish this is through assessment. Effective assessment gives the support and rationale for why a program or service is needed. It can also show others during financial considerations that the staff are accomplishing what they have set out to accomplish in regards to student development. Additionally, effective assessment can help leaders strengthen and enhance programs and services to best meet the needs of the constituents being served. During my career, I have taken an active role in assessment efforts and I have experienced how challenging it can be to effectively measure student learning in the student conduct process. I looked to best practices and to colleagues in the field to try to gather strategies to implement and while there was some information available, it was limited and not widely shared as a whole with the profession.

I held my own bias about the types of educational sanctions that were best utilized as well as how they should be assigned to students. Specific to this study, this bias existed as it related to the intentionality of assigning certain sanctions and the measurability of student learning. While there are a variety of educational sanctions that student conduct administrators have chosen to use, I believed strongly that educational sanctions should be intentional and focused on student learning. Educational sanctions should not be a means to generally hold students accountable and appear as though student conduct is addressing behavior, without backing that up with focused assessment efforts. Educational sanctions should be reviewed regularly to make sure they still meet best practices in the field, as well as fit the student population being addressed.

I serve as the Assistant Director of Community Standards and Student Conduct at a large urban public research institution in the Northwestern United States. In this role, I adjudicate violations of the student conduct code, develop and assign educational sanctions to encourage student growth and development around decision making, and oversee assessment efforts for the department, which included developing and measuring student learning outcomes. I am a member of the Association of Student Conduct Administrators and was part of their assessment committee. I hold a strong passion for student conduct and the opportunity that exists to expand best practices related to learning outcomes and assessment.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Student affairs units have experienced an increased demand for assessing programs and measuring student learning within their programs. Blimling (2013) explained that student affairs units today see the importance of assessment and are constantly looking for ways to ingrate these practices into their work. Through collecting and analyzing information, student affairs units can improve "student life, student learning, or the quality and efficiency of services and programs provided for students" (p. 5). Student conduct administrators are faced with additional challenges when implementing assessment practices, especially related to student learning, due to the nature of the work. Lancaster and Waryold (2008) explained that conduct administrators have had to shift from thinking that assessment is only measuring the number of students adjudicated and the types of sanctions assigned. Today's conduct administrators are faced with not only developing and implementing educational sanctions, but also with measuring the learning that students experience as a result of vthose sanctions. A comprehensive assessment program in student conduct needs to include the ways that the program intentionally strives to effect student learning, through the development and measurement of intentional student learning outcomes.

History of Student Conduct Programs

Dannells (1997) wrote about the history of student conduct and explained that the history of student conduct mirrors the historical developments within higher education itself. By understanding the events and forces that have influenced changes within student conduct, a better understanding of today's student judicial systems can be grasped. Student conduct unofficially existed as early as the eighteenth century and strongly held an *in loco parentis* model, while present day systems are much more legalistic, although typically educational in nature. More recently, higher education saw the final collapse of *in loco parentis*. By definition, *in loco parentis*, is a Latin term meaning "in the place of the parent." This term is used to explain an approach that consumed higher education in its earliest periods. Lake (2013) explained that *in loco parentis* allowed institutions to discipline and regulate students in a deliberate way without the fear of outside legal review. Hoekema (1994) explained that the *in loco parentis* model has long since passed, "a victim both of student demands for greater autonomy and of institutional reluctance to meddle in students' private affairs" (p. 4). The change from an *in loco parentis* model was due to, in part, a changing student body that was more mature and diverse than previously.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Philosophies

In the colonial colleges, the purpose of student conduct centered on "shaping the moral character and social manners of their students through long and detailed codes of conduct and rigid scheduling. No portion of the day was unaccounted for, and no misbehavior was too small to go unrecognized and unpunished" (Dannells, 1997, p. 3). Toward the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, "punishments became generally milder, and persuasion and counseling emerged as a more common response to minor forms of student misconduct" (p. 6). In addition, during this time period, faculty were appointed to work specifically with students who had disciplinary issues, utilizing primarily counseling techniques.

In the period that followed, a major transition changed the approach to student discipline. Dannells (1997) wrote, "Many forces conspired to reshape colleges' expectations and treatment of their students towards a more positive view of students as young adults capable of making decisions about their education and their conduct" (p. 7). In the late nineteenth century, responsibility for student conduct moved away from faculty, and instead, presidents often appointed individuals with strong rapport with students, which is often considered the original Dean of Students positions. During these centuries, student conduct systems looked very different from what is found today, and that difference typically stemmed from the original purpose and structure of institutions during that time period.

20th Century Philosophy

The G.I. Bill brought an entirely different population of students to college who did not need the traditional approach to student discipline that previously existed. This time period is "generally regarded as the calm before the storm of the 1960s" (Dannells, 1997, p. 10). The student revolution in the 1960s and 1970s changed student conduct programs forever; "campus disruptions became common and sometimes violent as students demonstrated for peace, freedom from conscription, freedom from parietal rules, and for greater involvement in campus governance" (p. 10). This time period also brought the final collapse of *in loco parentis.* This was due to "less control-oriented methods of parenting and a rapidly changing, more worldly, diverse, and mature student body" (p. 10). In addition, from a legal standpoint, the ratification of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment, which lowered the voting age to 18, also informed how students were viewed at that age in the eyes of higher education. This, according to Dannells, "substantially contributed to the movement away from viewing the student-institutional relationship as *in loco parentis* to a more contractual and consumerist view" (p. 10).

Modern Universities

Lake (2009) wrote about the modern university and explained that while in the past student conduct matters were handled by deans who oversaw informal processes, it is more common in the modern university to have that process be overseen by administrators who are appropriately trained. Every campus has "someone whose job it is to be a conduct or hearing officer, or investigator, or the like" (p. 14). The modern university operates with rules and legalisms, but more importantly, employs other strategies and methods. Lake (2009) explained that the "key for the modern university is to strike the right balance in approaches to managing an educational environment" (p. 218).

The Legal Systems' Influence

One of the most important historical landmark cases to have an impact on campus judicial systems was the 1961 ruling of *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education.* The decision requires to this day that campus judicial systems use due process as it relates to student conduct processes (Hoekema, 1994). Lowery (1998) cited this Supreme Court ruling in his belief that campus judicial systems have become very legalistic over the years. He stated, "Although the changes brought about by *Dixon* and the cases that followed were needed to rectify constitutional inadequacies in campus judicial systems, there is some evidence that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of legalism" (p. 15). While campus judicial systems may strive to be educational and developmental, they are also challenged with following the law and sometimes strict student conduct codes that are not always capable of being educational and developmental. The challenge is further explained by Lake (2009), who argued that campus discipline systems have a focus on "fairness and litigation avoidance" instead of establishing a student-centered educational environment (p. 217).

Purpose of Student Conduct Programs

Much has been written about the purpose of student conduct programs on college campuses. For the most part, there is consistent agreement of the main purposes to be achieved by institutions striving to have effective conduct processes. Howell (2005) wrote that the purpose of campus judicial systems is to "promote and protect an academic community where learning is valued and encouraged, and to promote citizenship education and moral and ethical development for those who are involved in the judicial process, either by way of violation or implementation" (p. 374). Gehring (2001) explained, "Many authorities in the field of campus discipline have agreed that the primary purpose of student discipline should be teaching in furtherance of the lawful missions of higher education" (p. 467). Pontious (2008) stated, "Moral learning should occur as a result of involvement in the student judicial process, and encouraging students to understand and act according to moral principles is one of the many goals of the judicial system" (p. 1). Dannells (1997) wrote, "Colleges and universities and their students would benefit by thinking about student discipline in less adversarial and more developmental ways" (p. v). While each of these individuals takes a slightly different approach – using terms such as morals, academic community, teaching, and development – the core philosophy of what they are proposing is very similar and centers on student conduct processes being educational in nature.

The Association for Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA) is an organization created to provide structure and guidance to student conduct administrators. Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) argued that student conduct administrators should develop a disciplinary process reflecting the position of ASCA, especially related to having an educational focus. Professional associations like ASCA allow student conduct administrators to intentionally approach their work with students and to find support and guidance in developing and upholding educational systems.

Emmanuel and Miser (1987) explained, "Any judicial system reflects community values of the college or university, and judicial actions taken or omitted give clear messages to students, faculty, and other constituent groups as to which behavior pattern is valued, tolerated, discouraged, or banned" (p. 87). It is important that a student conduct process be clear and cogent so that the campus community that utilizes it understands how it allows for accountability, as well as personal decision making.

Learning

Lake (2009) explained that while student conduct programs strive to be educational, administrators also need to remember that students cannot be forced to learn from their experiences as a participant in the student conduct process. If learning is to occur, students must be actively engaged and willing to participate in the student conduct process. Also, administrators need to remember that learning does not happen at the same rate for all who participate in the student conduct process. Lake (2009) added, "Indeed, in most instances in higher education, a learner is the one most in control of the pace of learning outcomes" (p. 218).

Assessment in Student Affairs

Schuh (2013) explained that assessment is an essential element of professional practice in student affairs. A culture of assessment must be established within student affairs units where administrators "recognize that they must collect evidence systematically to demonstrate accountability to their stakeholders, and that they must use that evidence to improve" (p. 89). Schuh (2013) explained that student affairs administrators should not proceed with new ideas or initiatives based on hunches, intuition, or trends, they should rely on assessment and be data driven. Shutt, Garrett, Lynch, and Dean (2012) explained that assessment in student affairs needs to be intentional. Assessment should define, measure, and report a program's effectiveness. Student affairs needs to work toward best practices related to assessment in order to support the claims that most administrators assert about the effectiveness of their programs. One way to assess programs is to “collect information about the learning and development outcomes students experience as a result of the program” (Shutt et al., 2012, p. 70).

Student affairs administrators have consistently declared that the co-curricular experiences students engage in encourages and supports learning. Dean (2013) explained, “Students learn and develop as a result of their interactions with the total collegiate environment, including the programs and services with which they engage” (p. 28). By understanding students, as well as the programs and services they engage with, a more comprehensive understanding of how learning and development takes place can be gained. By assessing those programs and services, data can be gathered to support the work being done by student affairs overall.

Utilizing learning outcomes has become relatively common in student affairs units today. Schuh (2013) explained that learning outcomes need to be identified and then measured. In regard to assessment, what is most valuable “is to know what students have learned from the experiences and programs in which they participated” (p. 94). Schuh further explained that The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) (Dean, 2012) has developed learning outcomes for most programs in student affairs, including student conduct programs, and can be helpful in identifying learning outcomes. CAS standards allow administrators to improve their programs through evaluation and benchmarking. Cooper and Saunders (2000) stated that student affairs units are encouraged to utilize credible standards, such as CAS standards, to justify their accomplishments. In addition, Mable (2005) stated that CAS standards “furnish a context for raising questions, determining answers, exploring evidence, implementing changes, and measuring the effects of these changes” (p. 13).

One of the challenges in establishing a culture of assessment in student affairs is finding the time and motivation to do the work. Blimling (2013) explained that due to the nature of the work, student affairs administrators are bogged down with bureaucratic tasks and reporting requirements. This heavy workload often makes it difficult to undertake significant assessment efforts, which take away from the productivity of their daily work. Student affairs administrators may understand the demands of assessing their programs, but finding the time to actually develop assessment practices can be challenging.

Learning Outcomes

Even though there is support and encouragement for using learning outcomes, there is little written specifically about how student conduct administrators develop and measure students' learning outcomes in their work when assessing their programs. By examining the role of learning within student conduct assessment, more specific learning outcomes can be utilized to improve programs and the student experience.

Asher (2008) explained that student affairs administrators value the role of education within student conduct programs. Additionally, as student conduct administrators work to integrate educational components into their programs, "they must be purposeful about the content and intended outcomes" (p. 2). Furthermore, as an emphasis on assessment within higher education has become expected, student conduct administrators need to be focused on gaining information about the effectiveness of their programs and the educational gains that students experience through their participation. Similarly, Blimling (2013) explained that many accrediting agencies are focused on learning outcomes and expect that assessment efforts will support the learning that is intended for students participating in programs. Student conduct administrators need to develop ways to encourage the aspects of their programs that enhance student learning.

Schuh (2009) explained that assessing learning outcomes can be challenging, but doing so is essential to supporting the programs and services. Student affairs units have claimed for decades that co-curricular programs challenge students to learn, but data is needed to support that claim. For example, Asher (2008) explained that students participate in an educative model when engaging with student conduct programs. Students are able to "gain valuable information that impacts their subsequent decision-making processes," as well as "engage in reflective exercises that provide insight about past behaviors and patterns of thinking" (p. 5). Focusing on students' ability to learn from the student conduct process should allow them to think differently about how they approach situations in the future. These changes in thinking could result in a decrease in recidivism rates for individual students who learned how to approach situations differently.

According to Bowman (2013), one of the easiest ways to ascertain what a student has learned after participating in an educational opportunity is by asking them. By exploring what students have learned or gained by their participation, student affairs administrators are able to examine the learning and development that may have taken place as a result of their program. Additionally, Bowman explained that even when students do not perceive college experiences as having an impact on their learning, they still contribute to positive student learning and development. Student conduct administrators need to look for intentional and unintentional learning that may occur as a result of students participating in student conduct programs. Learning outcomes should work to measure both types of learning and the potential results that may exist.

Educational Sanctions

Research has shown the importance of student conduct programs having an educational focus. Howell (2005) explained that the purpose of student conduct programs is to promote and protect the university community, while encouraging learning and citizenship among the students involved. Pontious (2008) explained that student conduct programs should encourage moral learning with the students who participate, and in doing so encourage students to act according to their moral principles. Dannells (1997) explained that universities should think about student conduct programs from a less adversarial philosophy and instead look at developmental approaches to working with students. By synthesizing the research, it becomes evident that while each of these researchers takes a slightly different approach, the core philosophy of what they are proposing is very similar and centers on student conduct programs being educational in nature.

Institutions utilize sanctions when students violate policies, in conjunction with their student conduct processes. Some institutions choose to use a more punitive sanction model while others use a more educational model. According to research about sanctions, it seems to be a shared philosophy that institutions should have an educational focus when assigning sanctions to students. Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) explained, "Individuals who deal with student conduct are primarily concerned with establishing and enforcing sanctions which will be valuable to the student in terms of both education and behavior modification" (p. 225). Pontious (2008) stated, "Assisting students to reflect on the morality of decisions that led them to violate their institutions' code of conduct is a primary goal of sanctions," as well as "judicial officers should promote sanctions that not only attend to the specific behavior, but also encourage the outcomes in three areas of perceived learning; empathy, understanding the judicial process, and thinking through their actions" (p. 2). Howell (2005) stated, "Judicial affairs officers should develop sanctions that not only address the behaviors in question, but also attend to other developmental or behavioral issues surrounding the behavior" (p. 389). Ardailo and Walker (1987) explained, “Sanctions imposed on students judged to have violated institutional or community standards must have a purpose behind them in order to preserve the educational mission of the whole code of conduct” (p. 52). Also, sanctions serve two main purposes: “to protect the campus community from behaviors that are detrimental to the educational process of the community and to assist students in identifying acceptable parameters of their activities and consequences of future behaviors” (p. 52).

The educational sanctioning process poses some unique challenges because it is multi-faceted and may span a significant length of time while a student is in college. Howell (2005) explained, “It is difficult to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of judicial interventions. Not only is the intervention typically brief in duration, but also there are several stages to the intervention” (p. 374). When students are sanctioned and asked to participate in an educational opportunity, their learning may take place during the opportunity, but most likely will also be challenged in future decision making opportunities. Because of this, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of a sanction.

Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) explained, in relation to educational sanctions assigned to students for policy violations, “Regardless of the sanction, students were less likely to repeat a similar violation. This is particularly clear for those assigned to educational/reflective papers and community service” (p. 227). Similarly, as Howell (2005) explained in his research study, “Several students related to the researcher that their experience with the judicial process would encourage them to think about the potential consequences of their actions and help them make better behavior choices in the future” (p. 382).

Alcohol Education

Reis, Riley, Lokman and Baer (2000) explained that the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act requires institutions to develop and implement policies and strategies to address alcohol abuse by students. Institutions are permitted to address this mandate in the manner best suiting their culture and population. Reis et al. added, “However, an institution may find itself open to liability if it fails to enforce its own rules and regulations regarding serving, sales, distribution, or use of alcohol” (p. 400). As institutions look for ways to uphold the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, they need to explore the student drinking culture at their institution as well identify and implement educational sanctions as a tool to meet the requirements.

One of the most researched policy violations that practitioners assign educational sanctions for is alcohol consumption. Asher (2008) noted that administrators must focus on developing effective programs that seek to positively impact students’ behaviors regarding alcohol. Asher (2008) explained that one of the common judicial sanctions assigned for alcohol related incidents is having students participate in alcohol education classes.

Oswalt, Shutt, English and Little’s (2007) research examined the effectiveness of educational sanctions for alcohol violations and centered on the idea that “universities often conduct alcohol interventions for individuals who have violated institutional, local, or state laws” (p. 543). Oswalt et al. explained that the a major challenge with educational sanctions was that while institutions intervene with these types of violations, there is little research to show what types of sanctions worked and how and why they may be successful. Their research found that alcohol interventions had immediate effects on drinking behavior as well as the perceptions surrounding alcohol consumption, which is equally important to address when trying to change an institution's culture around alcohol.

Recidivism Rates

Student conduct administrators typically track information about students who go through conduct processes. One area that is consistently tracked is recidivism rates, which typically is a student being found responsible for violating the student conduct code on more than one occasion. Institutions hope to have a conduct process, as well as educational sanctions, that produce low recidivism rates. Institutions achieving low recidivism rates can then begin to argue that their process helped students make better choices and not violate policies in the future.

Institutions face many challenges when working to track recidivism rates. Howell (2005) explained that student conduct programs "can track students who go through the process and look at rates of recidivism, undoubtedly it is also the case that a great many students repeat behaviors but simply don't get referred into the system again" (p. 386). Institutions may, therefore, not really know how or why rates are lower, or whether or not their program or educational sanctions had a direct effect, since all behavior cannot be documented nor are all students being caught for their behavior.

Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) explained, "While it is difficult to prove a causal relationship between a type of judicial sanction and a particular outcome, there is some evidence that certain types of sanctions may impact recidivism" (p. 224). This should encourage institutions to utilize educational sanctions, but to be open to a multitude of options that might best meet the students' needs or learning style. In Howell's (2005) study, he noted that students "indicated that they would either not repeat the specific behavior that violated the code of conduct or would be more careful" (p. 383).

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of student conduct administrators who measure learning of students' participation in educational sanctions. The study explores the following research questions:

1. What educational sanctions do student conduct administrators assign in the student conduct process?
2. What learning outcomes do student conduct administrators utilize for educational sanctions?
3. How do student conduct administrators measure learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

    3b. Who is measuring learning for educational sanctions? Is that a shared responsibility with other University units?

4. What challenges do student conduct administrators face when measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

    4b. What approach is utilized both for sanctioning and measuring learning if a student is struggling with substance abuse?

5. How do student conduct administrators communicate the results of student learning to their campus community?

Social Constructivist Paradigm

Willis (2007) explained that a paradigm is a "comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field" (p. 8). In order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon that student conduct administrators' experience measuring student learning, the social constructivist paradigm was used in this study. This allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, thus answering the research questions posed.

Creswell (2014) explained that researchers who use a constructivist paradigm seek to understand the world in which they live. The goal of constructivist research is to rely on the views of the participants being studied. Researchers ask participants broad questions to allow them to construct their own meaning. Creswell (2014) further explained that the role of the researcher is to interpret the meanings that the participants have about the topic being studied, recognizing the personal bias that shapes their interpretation. Creswell (2007) explained that the constructivist paradigm is well suited for phenomenological studies, like this study, where the researcher asks the participant to share their perspective on the phenomenon.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, and then studies research problems by collecting data, and establishing patterns and themes (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research is conducted in order to gain a complex understanding of an issue. To gain an understanding, researchers must talk directly to people, "allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature" (p. 40). The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover the individual experience of student conduct administrators who measure learning of students' who participate in educational sanctions within a student conduct program at large public research institutions.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

One of the benefits of using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research approach is that the experience itself is “expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 32). IPA allows participants to be examined in their own contexts while exploring their personal perspectives related to the topic being explored.

Smith et al. (2009) explained that phenomenological research relies entirely on the researcher to conduct interviews of participants who have experienced the phenomenon being explored. The interviewer serves as an active listener who is flexible and allows the participant to set the path of the interview, since the participants are the experts on the topic. While there is typically a set of questions that the researcher plans to explore, the format is semi-structured, in that the specific sequence of questioning does not have to be followed, nor does every question have to be asked.

Participants and Site

Phenomenological studies are conducted on small sample sizes that are relatively homogenous. Creswell (2007) explained that all participants must have experienced the phenomenon being researched. Researchers examine the similarities and differences within the sample and assess the commonalities between the experiences of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). A phenomenological research approach is best suited when it is important for the researcher to understand the shared experiences of several individuals, as well as gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon itself (Creswell, 2007).

The participants for this study were limited to student conduct administrators who were employed at large public research institutions of higher education in the United States. As a responsibility of their position, the student conduct administrators needed to provide leadership over the student conduct program at their institution, as well as worked closely with assessment efforts for their program. The student conduct program must have intentionally measured learning for students who participated in educational sanctions at the institution. Only one student conduct administrator from any one institution was permitted to participate in the study.

In order to identify student conduct administrators who worked at large public research institutions, the Carnegie Classifications were used (2014). Both the size and setting classification and the basic classification were used to identify the institutions that made up the overall sample. The size and setting classification described an institution's size and residential character. All institutions that made up the large four-year category were included, ranging from primarily non-residential to highly residential. All institutions in this category had a FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students. Additionally, the basic classification described the types of degrees that an institution granted and the overall purpose of the institution. All institutions that made up the doctoral-granting research universities category were included, ranging from research universities to very high research activity. All institutions in this category awarded at least twenty research doctoral degrees each year.

By using the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education website, a search was conducted which selected all institutions that met the size and setting classification and the basic classification for large four-year and doctoral-granting research universities. The search originally identified 184 public and private institutions. Since the study focused on public institutions only, the private institutions were removed, which resulted in 143 public institutions. Additionally, since the researcher conducted a similar pilot study during 2013, the four institutions which were part of that study were removed, resulting in 139 institutions as the possible sample.

Contact information for the student conduct administrators representing the 139 institutions was obtained from their own institutional websites. The 139 student conduct administrators were contacted by email and asked about their willingness to participate in the study (Appendix A). Twenty student conduct administrators completed the Electronic Information Form (Appendix B) and the researcher applied the participant criteria to respondents to identify sixteen individuals who met the parameters of the study. All sixteen participants were sent the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C) and twelve individuals completed it and returned it to the researcher. Eleven individuals scheduled interviews with the researcher by email, making up the sample. Confirmation emails were sent to all participants approximately one week before the interview was scheduled to take place.

Data Collection

Smith et al. (2009) explained that a qualitative interview is “a conversation with a purpose,” where the researcher focuses on a research question to guide the conversation (p. 57). For the most part, the researcher listens and the participants talk, sharing their own experiences with the topic being explored. The researcher should not focus on directly asking the research question, and should instead allow the participant to share relevant experiences related to the topic. The conversation can then be synthesized and analyzed at a later point to more directly answer the research question.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a similar pilot study during the summer of 2013. The study was conducted with three student conduct administrators who oversaw student conduct programs at large public urban research institutions in the western United States. The pilot study was helpful in learning more about the research topic in relation to the participants' experiences, which encouraged a narrowing of the topic. It was also helpful to learn more about the available sample of participants, which encouraged the expansion of the available population for this study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The data collection method used for this study was semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted by using Skype and were recorded, which allowed the researcher to ensure that all responses were collected accurately. All participants were originally scheduled to use Skype, but technological challenges arose during the interview for two of the participants, so the researcher used the telephone as a secondary method of conducting the interviews. Interviews were approximately forty-five minutes in length. Participants were assigned a pseudonym for the study. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the study and explained confidentiality and consent for each participant. The researcher asked the participants if the interviews could be recorded so that a transcription could be developed for further analysis. The researcher used a secondary audio recording device to protect from technological challenges that could have arisen.

The researcher shared the format of the semi-structured interview with the participants. The researcher utilized prepared questions (Appendix D) to guide the interviews, although the researcher was flexible and let the interview flow depending on the participants' experiences related to the themes explored. The researcher adjusted the questions as needed to fully explore the participants' experiences and account for areas that the participants may have had more or less knowledge or experience.

The researcher concluded the interview by thanking the participants and letting them know that the interview would be transcribed in approximately 30-45 days and shared with the participant for review. The participants then had 5-10 days to review the transcript and make any changes or comments about their interview. Participants who chose not to offer feedback on the interview were assumed to be comfortable with the transcription moving forward (Appendix E).

Measures

Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher explored questions with the participants to grasp an understanding of their experiences utilizing and measuring student learning outcomes for educational sanctions assigned in their student conduct programs. Appendix D shows the interview questions that were utilized to guide the conversation.

Participants were asked a series of background questions to gain a better understanding of their role as student conduct administrators at their institutions, as well as their role with assessment and student learning outcomes. The types of conduct violations that are adjudicated, as well as the type of educational sanctions that are assigned, were also explored. The second part of the interview explored how student conduct administrators measured student learning and the challenges that they have faced in doing so related to educational sanctions. Finally, participants were asked to reflect on how student learning was shared with constituents at their institution.

Data Analysis

Shin, Kim, and Chung (2009) explained that qualitative data analysis is a "process wherein researchers systematically organize data on particular topics and discover and interpret certain meanings, themes, and rules from that data" (p. 857). This allows the researcher to share the information with interested individuals. The data analysis for this study followed this path, with the researcher aiming to identify themes that allowed for discovery of certain meanings regarding student learning through participating in educational sanctions assigned as part of a student conduct program.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Smith et al. (2009) explained that while the primary concern of IPA is the way in which the participant lives the experience being studied, the final result is an account of how the researcher perceives that lived experience and the meaning the participant gains from their experience. A phenomenological analysis "is a joint product of the participant and the analyst" (p. 80).

Smith et al. (2009) recommended following six steps in order to analyze the data collected through an IPA qualitative method. These six steps are: (1) reading and re-reading, (2) initial noting, (3) developing emergent themes, (4) searching for connections across emergent themes, (5) moving to the next case, and (6) looking for patterns across cases.

Shortly after the interviews took place, they were transcribed and reviewed by the participant, which produced a final transcription of each interview. The researcher read and re-read the transcriptions, becoming familiar with the material. Smith et al. (2009) explained that most people are used to moving through tasks like this quickly and need to become comfortable slowing down and really immersing themselves in the data.

By reading and re-reading the transcripts, a more complete understanding of the data was gained. The researcher then began noting things of interest within the transcript. Smith et al. (2009) explained that the purpose of the initial noting step is to "produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data" (p. 83). The researcher then moves into interpretive noting, where the researcher begins to understand why and how a participant has a specific lived experience related to the phenomenon.

Smith et al. (2009) explained that the researcher then needs to move into developing emergent themes. As the researcher looks for emergent themes, “the task of managing the data changes as the analyst simultaneously attempts to reduce the volume of detail, whilst maintaining complexity” (p. 91). The researcher explored the notations from the previous step to begin identifying themes, while keeping the chronology of the interview itself intact. As the analysis moved into the next step, the themes were charted and mapped to fit together more seamlessly. Smith et al. (2009) explained that as the analyst explores themes connected to the research questions, some themes will be discarded that do not answer those foundational questions.

As the researcher moved to the next case, or interview, it was important to begin steps one through four again, being true to the new interview and letting themes emerge without forcing themes from previous interviews. Smith et al. (2009) warned that researchers will be influenced by what they have learned in previous analysis, but should be intentional about letting new themes emerge with each transcription that is analyzed. Finally, the researcher looked for patterns across all cases. In this study, eleven student conduct administrators were interviewed and the final step of analysis involved identifying patterns among those participants. Smith et al. (2009) explained that the researcher should identify the connections across the cases and the themes that are the most powerful overall.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is more concerned with trustworthiness than reliability and validity. Specifically with phenomenology, Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that it is useful to follow four criteria to achieve trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study aimed to meet all four aspects in order to establish trustworthiness while exploring the research questions.

In relation to credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the researcher should be concerned with how closely the findings match up with the reality of the phenomenon being studied. Shenton (2004) recommended that the researcher employ strategies to ensure honesty from the participants. In this study, this included assigning pseudonyms for the participants as well as not identifying their institution. Also, it involves the researcher making sure the participants know that there are no right answers to the interview questions, and the participant should therefore feel comfortable sharing their experience and perspective in relation to the phenomenon. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended utilizing member checks. The researcher should have participants review transcriptions of their interviews to ensure accuracy. This study employed this tactic by having participants review their transcribed interviews and submit feedback as necessary.

Shenton (2004) explained that transferability is achieved when the researcher communicates the environment that the research was conducted. In this study, transferability was achieved by explaining that the eleven student conduct administrators were interviewed who represented their own individual institutions. Additionally, the participants could only be student conduct administrators who oversaw conduct programs at large urban research institutions in the United States. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the summer of 2014 and each interview took approximately 45 minutes. By explaining the context in which the data was collected, transferability can be achieved for some populations within higher education.

Dependability is the third factor that Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained would ensure trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) explained that the researcher must include a detailed report of how the study was conducted, so that another researcher could repeat the study with similar results. In this study, the detailed report included how the participants were selected, the interview questions that were used to guide the semi-structured interviews, and the manner in which the data was analyzed to identify themes.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the final factor for researchers to employ to ensure trustworthiness is confirmability. Shenton (2004) explained that to gain confirmability, the researcher should admit their own beliefs and assumptions about the study and the phenomenon being studied. In Chapter 1, the researcher explained her personal experiences as a student conduct administrator who assigned educational sanctions and assessed learning. The researcher admitted the biases that this brought to the study.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

This study explored the lived experiences of student conduct administrators who measure learning of students' participation in educational sanctions. The researcher used the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology, which allowed the participants to share their personal experiences as student conduct administrators during semi-structured interviews. The researcher engaged in a thorough analysis of the narratives produced by the interviews and common themes were identified.

This chapter presents the four main themes that emerged through interviews with eleven student conduct administrators. The eleven participants are introduced first with a participant and institution table and then by a brief biography. The participant's experiences will then be shared as the themes are explored.

Participants

Eleven participants, nine men and two women, were interviewed for this research study. Each participant served as a student conduct administrator at a large public research institution. Each participant provided leadership for the student conduct program at their institution and worked closely with assessment efforts for their student conduct program. Additionally, each of the participant's student conduct programs assigned educational sanctions and measured the learning of students who participated through the use of learning outcomes.

While common themes were identified in the lived experiences of the eleven student conduct administrators, each participant shared different approaches to measuring learning and utilizing assessment techniques within their individual programs. Each participant shared a common understanding of the importance of assessment in the educational approach to student conduct work with college students but held a different reality in how to measure learning within their own institutional settings.

Table 1: Participant and Institution Demographics

Name	Gender	Institution Location
Stewart	Male	Southwest
Daniel	Male	Southwest
Terry	Male	South
Pat	Male	Midwest
Maddy	Female	Midwest
Russell	Male	Northwest
Pete	Male	Midwest
Bailey	Male	West
Kendra	Female	South
Casey	Male	Midwest
Kelly	Male	South

Stewart

Stewart is the Associate Dean of Students at a large public research institution in the southwestern United States. He has been in this role at this institution for approximately four years. Stewart oversees the student conduct program at his institution and supervises a Director, two Assistant Directors and four Coordinators. Stewart has navigated a culture change with the student conduct program, changing the punitive perception to one that is now seen as educational and includes opportunities for learning.

Daniel

Daniel is the Assistant Director at a large public research institution in the southwestern United States. Daniel just finished his first full year in this role at this institution. Daniel serves on a team comprised of a Director/Assistant Dean of Students, two Associate Directors, two Assistant Directors and a graduate assistant. Daniel's student conduct responsibilities are primarily focused on off-campus behavior. Daniel is passionate about data collection and is always looking for opportunities to examine the work being done in his office in order to develop new strategies and opportunities to meet the needs of students.

Terry

Terry is the Program Coordinator at a large public research institution in the southern United States. Terry works with a team of student conduct administrators including his Director and Associate Director, as well as multiple graduate students. Terry oversees the assessment efforts for the student conduct program at his institution as well as trains the conduct board. Terry participated in an intentional effort to reshape the learning outcomes for various aspects of their student conduct program.

Pat

Pat is the Assistant Dean of Students and Director at a large public research institution in the midwestern United States. Pat leads a very small team of student conduct administrators including a ten-month staff member and two graduate students. Pat is responsible for all aspects of the student conduct program as well as works closely with the student conduct programs associated with multiple regional campuses that are affiliated with his institution. Pat oversees all assessment efforts for his student conduct program, which includes assessment and evaluation of programs and services. Pat is very connected with ASCA nationally and regionally and looks to this organization for guidance related to educational sanctions and assessment.

Maddy

Maddy is the Director at a large public research institution in the midwestern United States. Maddy leads a team of student conduct administrators and has been serving in this role for the past year. Maddy's staff almost entirely turned over recently which has allowed for new initiatives and approaches to student conduct at her institution. Maddy is responsible for all aspects of the student conduct program as well as oversees adjudication of some cases for multiple regional campuses that are affiliated with her institution. Maddy's student conduct program did not previously do much assessment of programs or services, and all current efforts are less than a year old based on Maddy's new leadership of the student conduct program at her institution.

Russell

Russell is the Assistant Dean of Students and Director at a large public research institution in the northwestern United States. Russell oversees a small student conduct program with only 1.5 staff including himself. Even though his institution does not require it, only encourages it, Russell has recently begun making a shift to utilizing learning outcomes within his student conduct program. Russell believes that assessment should be transparent and is very comfortable sharing the outcomes of his practices with constituents.

Pete

Pete is the Associate Dean of Students and the Director at a large public research institution in the midwestern United States. Pete has been in this role for approximately four years and leads a team of student conduct administrators as well as oversee the housing conduct process. When Pete began in this role, his division did not have a strong focus on assessment or learning outcomes but that has shifted due to a change in leadership. Pete has helped his office transition from one that was seen as primarily punitive to one with an educational focus where students are learning.

Bailey

Bailey is the Director at a large public research institution in the western United States. Bailey oversees a team of three professional staff and one graduate student who all serve as student conduct administrators. Bailey's campus is divided up by academic colleges, which adds a different dynamic to his work with student conduct and campus constituents. Bailey had some negative experiences with assessment at his previous institution but has felt that his current institution has a strong culture of assessment and he has really embraced assessment for his student conduct program. Bailey looks at assessment data on a regular basis in order to adjust or modify practices or programs as needed to best meet the needs of students.

Kendra

Kendra is the Associate Director at a large public research institution in the Southern United States. Kendra's student conduct program is comprised of five professional staff members and one graduate student who all serve as student conduct administrators. Kendra supervises three of the professional staff members, one of which has half of their responsibilities for assessment in the office. Kendra's program has a comprehensive assessment plan that includes approximately fourteen different initiatives and is aimed at collecting information in order to make improvements to programs and services. It is important that all staff in Kendra's student conduct program have responsibilities around assessment and are engaged in the practice.

Casey

Casey is the Director at a large public research institution in the midwestern United States. Casey oversees a small team of student conduct administrators including another professional staff member and a graduate assistant. Casey works very collaboratively with other campus departments to develop and provide educational sanctions and to collectively support retention efforts at the institution. Casey is very data driven and is intentional about how the regular assessment they conduct with students informs their programs and services. Casey believes that learning outcomes should not only exist but should be transparent and explicit in order to be effective.

Kelly

Kelly is the Senior Associate Dean of Students at a large public research institution in the southern United States. Kelly leads a team of student conduct administrators comprised of three Assistant Directors and one graduate assistant. Kelly recently started this position after working for many years at a small private institution. Much of Kelly's experience with assessment comes from his previous position at his former institution, but he feels like that has helped him establish a solid foundation for doing assessment within student conduct programs. In Kelly's current role he leads the assessment efforts not only for his student conduct program but also for the Dean of Student's Office.

Emergent Themes

Each participant shared their own personal experiences working as a student conduct administrator, especially related to their work with assessment and learning outcomes. The interviews moved freely depending on the participant's individual experiences. Some participants have well defined assessment plans that guide and support intentional student conduct programs. Other participants have a commitment to assessment but very little time and support to successfully implement efforts.

Four common themes emerged based on the participants' lived experiences as student conduct administrators at large public research institutions. First, the narratives suggested that one of the factors which either encouraged or limited student conduct administrator's success with assessment and learning outcomes was the role that a culture of assessment played. Second, the participants discussed a variety of strategies, tactics, and challenges associated with measuring student learning within their student conduct programs. Additionally, the participants felt that alcohol was one of the most prominent influencers on both their students and on their student conduct programs and that effective alcohol education was an important role in both preventing and responding to student alcohol use. Finally, the participants suggested that a variety of external factors, both within their local communities and within the national landscape, effects the work they do within their student conduct programs specific to assessment and learning.

Theme 1: Culture of Assessment

Each participant discussed how a culture of assessment informed their work with assessment within their individual student conduct programs. Divisional and institutional support played a role in how student conduct administrators approached assessment depending on the level of expectation and encouragement that existed at any given time. Aspirational efforts were consistently discussed with student conduct administrators striving to improve their assessment goals and objectives in the future. Recognizing and overcoming challenges is a crucial area that has the potential to stall assessment efforts, but if handled appropriately can allow for immense growth. Motivation behind assessment was different for each participant but critical in order to move assessment efforts forward. Informing practice with assessment presented itself differently for each participant but was consistently present as small successes to propel assessment efforts forward. Best practices for student conduct was seen as an absent area for the field currently, with many student conduct administrators striving to make improvements on a large scale. These aspects of a culture of assessment allowed participants to embrace and encourage assessment within their own student conduct programs.

Divisional and institutional support. Participants who had divisions and institutions that supported assessment expressed a commitment to assessment and a motivation to work towards embracing assessment within their programs. Bailey shared his division's expectation:

> We are required to do at least one assessment and we have to publish our reports in our annual divisional assessment report. They decided that they wanted to go big with it and I'm glad that they did because it really forced me to get my head and hands around it and I've been getting a lot of value around it since they require it.

Pete shared how changes in his division had an effect on how he approached assessment, "We started to get a little bit more coordinated with trying to develop learning outcomes and doing some baseline assessment measures."

Leadership from upper level administration also played a role in how the participants understood a culture of assessment. Kendra discussed how a new VP affected their efforts at her institution:

> He pulled together fairly quickly, a committee, to work on whether or not the learning outcomes and model that we had for the division were appropriate or if they needed to be redefined or completely a new model needed to be defined. So we went through that year-long process, I was on that committee, and I think about 2-3 weeks ago, we did decide a new model was needed. And that new model was adopted. So going into the next academic year we'll be doing a lot of training and educating about the model and then we'll start actually implementing the model about half way through the academic year.

From a different perspective, Pete shared the challenges that come from a change in leadership, "Unfortunately we're going to be a little stuck right now because the VP who was trying to push for the [assessment] change has left so now it's waiting to see where this is all going to fall now."

One of the main ways that institutions and divisions appeared to establish a culture of assessment was to support positions that oversee assessment efforts. Kendra shared that her office has a position that is half focused on conduct work and half focused on doing assessment.

Stewart was excited that his division was in the process of hiring an assessment staff member who he was planning to work with once they started. Russell was looking forward to working with the assessment coordinator for student affairs for assistance with planning his upcoming assessment efforts. Bailey felt motivated by the approach that the assessment coordinator at his institution used to encourage others within the division, "She is good at making it simple to understand and for a lot of us, that's really helpful to know that you're not reinventing the wheel."

Other participants who did not have staff specifically devoted to doing assessment work within their divisions felt supported because of committees or groups that engaged in the work. Bailey explained that since his division requires assessment, they also back it up by supporting it. He said, "We have an assessment committee called the Assessment Coalition, so folks that are really interested in assessment meet on a monthly basis to talk about different projects."

Kelly explained that his passion for assessment prompted him to take on that responsibility for his area, "Once people hear that you do assessment, they give it to you. Good, it's all yours now. So I lead our assessment efforts here for the Dean of Students Office for all of our functions." Terry is engaged in assessment efforts in his division by serving as a member of his division-wide assessment team where people who are working with assessment from different parts of the division come together.

Participants also relied heavily on institutional support to encourage a culture of assessment. Casey explained that he works with his office of institutional research and practice to obtain data that he can use to determine predictors to inform his assessment efforts. Stewart had a similar experience working with his institutional assessment office to strategize assessment efforts.

Participants had varying experiences with assessment at previous institutions or under previous leadership. Bailey specifically spoke to this and shared his perspective after moving to his current institution:

> I had a really negative experience with assessment at my previous institution, a lot of that was because it wasn't explained really well and we just had to do assessment. How do you do assessment? When I came to [my current institution], I said ok, I'll give it a shot but I don't see it being a great value. Well we have a lot of people on our campus, for whatever reason, who are very versed in assessment. We have a student research and information office that has an assessment coordinator and they really understand it. I went to session and it was like the light blinking on. Since then I have really been able to understand it better.

Pete shared a similar account from when he first arrived at his institution before new leadership emerged:

> It's been kind of hit and miss during the time I've been here. I would say our division didn't have a very well-coordinated assessment process when I arrived. So the first two years I was here, it was kind of left to the individual units decision of how much they wanted to wade into it, because it wasn't a conversation we were having in the division leadership or even at the institutional level.

Kelly shared that, from his experience, either someone really enjoys assessment and is therefore motivated to integrate it into their work or there's a mandate that comes down from others saying that it has to happen.

Aspirational efforts. The participants generally felt that assessment was important and something that they were intent on integrating into their student conduct programs. This allowed them to develop aspirational goals or outcomes in order to assess their programs or services in new or modified ways going forward.

The interviews centered on the topic of learning outcomes, which for some participants was already integrated in their work, and for others it was more of an aspiration. Russell is currently focused on expanding his use of learning outcomes within his program, "I can't say what it's going to be, but I hope that it will inform what it is that we do." Similarly, Terry discussed how a recent shift with learning outcomes has allowed his program to develop more general learning outcomes, which can apply to all different areas within their programs and services.

Participants also aspired to embrace assessment in new ways for their student conduct programs. This included Maddy looking for opportunities to get "some evidenced-based information to say that we know what we're doing is working or if it's not, we want to change it" in a way that is intentional and connected to everyday practice. Stewart, who is newer to his institution, admitted that while he aspires to implement more assessment he also knows that it will take some time.

Many participants had specific goals that they were aspiring to achieve in the near future. This included Stewart's plan:

> I think what we're going to try to do, at least this year, we are going to try to do a survey. We are going to use an online piece, a survey monkey or something, and then leave a piece where they could give us some feedback but not require that, it would be more quantitative data and then we can move to the next level.

As well as Kendra's intention to integrate the new divisional culture around assessment:

> We are going to need to look at the new model within the Division, and working within that framework, what are our overall outcomes for any student going through our process, and then looking at the specific educational sanctions, or just any sanction, to see if it helps us to achieve those outcomes and if it does, we need to find the outcomes for that specific sanction. So we are going to need to adapt to change going forward. We're going to be a little more holistic in how we're doing this.

Bailey is intent on a new structure for approaching assessment for his area by introducing a new assessment each year to gradually add efforts to his student conduct program. He said, "The intention would be that each assessment is evaluated each year to decide what needs to be kept and what can be ended."

Stewart discussed his intention to integrate assessment more day-to-day rather than just using anecdotal data and trends that emerge, and instead develop more intentional efforts. Finally, Daniel discussed the possibility of looking closer at recidivism rates for specific populations but with no direct plan to achieve this at the time of the interview:

> So we could look at their freshmen year, which is the majority of the students that we're seeing, has there been a behavior change over the last four years. But unfortunately we don't track individual students. We could if we got to a place where we're doing that.

Recognizing and overcoming challenges. Participants also discussed challenges that they were working to understand and overcome in order to encourage a culture of assessment within their student conduct programs. Some student conduct administrators discussed the fear of assessment held by their staff. Kelly shared:

> Some people are terrified of assessment and other people are just like, it will be on my plate when someone tells me it has to be on my plate. I kind of like to ease people in. Kind of like the frog in the boiling pot of water, you raise the temperature a couple of degrees at a time so the frog doesn't jump out, then before you know it they're in the boiling pot. I just don't tell them that it's like boiling a frog. It's probably not the right metaphor when you're trying to get staff excited about assessment.

Terry also shared that staff often times ask why they have to do assessment and are pushing back, "It's important to help staff members to understand why [assessment] is important and why [assessment] is there." Bailey shared a similar experience that getting staff on board with assessment was challenging, until he helped them understand that assessment helps them tell their story, and then there was more value.

Bailey also shared that it can be challenging the first year that you do assessment because there are no previous year's numbers to compare data to:

> I think the difficult thing is, we never did assessment in the past. So we don't have data to look at in previous years. Last year was the first year we had any numbers. So my annual report was basically reporting out, 83% said this and 70% got that. It's hard to compare years and see if there's a trend.

Kelly shared that he is challenged when he works with others who are beginning to do assessment:

> You put together a survey, you get some results, and you say, here we go, this is what we found, its' great, and we don't really think about what the limitations are around that. That's one of the challenges I find when educating people to do assessment.

Motivation behind assessment. Many participants discussed the basic motivations that they have as they embrace a culture of assessment. Although they might arrive at that culture differently, they are in a similar place in their work with assessment in student conduct. Terry shared, "As an office we've taken a stance of we're going to do learning outcomes, we're going to do assessment. We care about them, so we're going to do them." Russell also stated, "As far as the assessment, it's something that is not a requirement but something that is effective and we believe in within my area."

Bailey's fundamental approach is, "I don't want to do assessment just because we have to, I want to do it because it will help our program be better and tell us more about our students." Finally, Daniel shared that assessment "is something that's been important to [my student conduct program] in terms of making sure that we are assessing what we're doing.

Kendra shared that for her student conduct program assessment is at the core:

> We have comprehensive assessment plans, which includes about fourteen different initiatives. Assessment is any attempt to collect and gather information with the purposes of improvement. So it's not just around outcomes, it's also tracking and all of the other activities as described by Upcraft and Schuh. We have little initiatives in each of those areas.

Casey shared that he believes assessment should be apparent to others outside of the student conduct program, "I'm happy to share what our learning outcomes are, just like the University's mission, it should be explicit, transparent and out there."

Informing practice with assessment. The participants shared how they use a culture of assessment to inform their practice within their student conduct programs. Pat discussed how learning outcomes inform the work he does:

> I think related to learning outcomes, one of the things that we probably don't do a great job of is proving to our supervisors and therefore their bosses, why we need to be here. Learning outcomes is huge and if we can show that students are generating positive outcomes out of what we're doing, it would help the impression of our offices and would propel us with our level of importance and our job security, but it's hard.

Kelly discussed how assessment has to be multilayered and aimed at student learning:

> I work broadly to develop what our assessment plan is going to be and I think about that in a multi-year kind of way. So what are we going to assess over a period of time. What kind of learning outcomes are we looking at, to make sure that we aren't just assessing program utilization, satisfaction, but also how are we measuring and being able to talk about what students are leaving with while they participate in our programs.

Russell shared that learning outcomes are at the core of his work with assessment, "The start of using learning outcomes right now is trying to inform how we sanction, how we set-up our process, the communication, etc."

Bailey shared his intention for using an upcoming retreat to enhance assessment efforts within his student conduct program:

> We have our staff retreat coming up and so we're going to see if our mission, our goals, our learning outcomes are still fitting what we want to do and where we're at. We've grown a lot in the last four years so we're moving into a different phase. And then we're looking at each thing that we do and seeing if it's still answering the question and telling the story that it needs to tell.

By evaluating assessment efforts on an on-going basis, a culture of assessment can be integrated into the student conduct program in an intentional manner.

Participants also discussed how assessment has informed practice in specific ways. Russell shared that he was interested in how informed students are before they participate in a student conduct hearing, which lead to a pre-hearing assessment, which was impactful. Bailey discussed that he looks at his post-hearing assessment results monthly to identify any trends or issues and then he tweaks processes as necessary. Terry discussed both how they are exiting pilot stages of assessments with the hope that things will become more polished, and also that assessments have informed changes to curriculum regarding educational sanctions.

Best practices for student conduct. Participants commented that the field of student conduct was lacking when it came to having best practices and benchmarking in the area of assessment and could enhance its own culture of assessment within the profession. Terry commented on the work he did when he started in this position:

> I did a lot of research within our conduct field and found that there wasn't a lot of research into what learning was happening. There's a lot of research that says learning is happening, but not quantifying it as anything.

Kelly shared his motivation as a scholar-practitioner to explore this topic more and to "help facilitate for the profession because I think that we should have benchmarks so we can compare ourselves."

Theme 2: Measuring Learning

The participants discussed the various ways that they approach measuring student learning within their student conduct programs. Statistical data collection played a role in sharing information with constituents as well as having the numerical data to back-up practices. Limitations to getting data existed for many of the participants who faced challenges and struggles with measuring student learning for a variety of reasons. The participants had a variety of ways that they utilize learning outcomes in their work, whether to provide structure for the student conduct process itself, or more specifically to certain sanctions within their program. Many participants discussed how they gathered anecdotal information in relation to learning in informal ways. Finally, using data to improve programs and services was the main motivator for doing assessment in relation to measuring learning for student conduct administrators.

Statistical data collection. Many of the participants discussed the ways in which they collect statistical data to inform their practice. Maddy stated, “We do the measuring of statistics, so how many students are we suspending, how many students we see again, etc.” Stewart, who is in the beginning stages of utilizing learning outcomes at his institution, shared that at the time of the interview, “We do more of the assessment from the overall aggregate data” that is tracked in the student conduct program.

Terry reiterated the need for numerical data in order to have an understanding of the amount of cases being processed by a student conduct program as well as the types of violations, sanctions and recidivism, “Often times the biggest piece of assessment that is needed is the case numbers. So just give me how many cases you handle, give me what were the most prominent cases, but not necessarily the learning outcomes.” Pat explained that his student conduct program looks at statistics annually in order to understand trends. In terms of statistical data compared to measuring learning outcomes, Kelly stated, “we can measure utilization and how many people come into our office, that’s easy.”

Limitations to getting data. Participants described a variety of factors that limited their ability to get data and assess their programs and services in relation to learning. One of the limiting factors was related to the amount of time that data collection takes and the amount of time that is available. Kendra, who works at an institution with very established learning outcomes and measures for learning, commented that when utilizing reflection papers to measure learning:

> With [that sanction] comes a lot of time to collect the data. Every time I'm reading one of those papers, I'm having to go into a rubric and fill it out and copy and paste and all of those kinds of things can be really time consuming.

Kelly spoke to the challenge of having a lot of responsibilities and a need to respond to crisis and challenges on an on-going basis. In relation to doing assessment, "we're over here trying to find twenty minutes here, twenty minutes there to figure out this stuff, and it's complicated." Pat agreed with that sentiment regarding assessment and data collection, "When we talk about assessment, it's one of those things where you want to do it, but there's a limited amount of effort and time you can put into."

Maddy shared that the culture for student conduct administrators makes finding time for data collection difficult, "I think like everybody, it's an easy thing to shove to the back burner." Russell also said that while he wants to do assessment, having such a small student conduct staff working with him makes that challenging, "Being the person who is ultimately responsible for the program that also includes the assessment piece. It's never a requirement but it's something that we do and unfortunately I haven't had the capacity and the bandwidth."

Daniel spoke to being new and the feeling that he is able to make more time for assessment after learning the ropes of the position, "I think as I'm learning the role and my parts of the office, I become more efficient, which gives me a little bit more time to dive through some of those numbers." Daniel also shared that sometimes as a student conduct administrator you have to wait until less busy times of the year to tackle assessment projects, "I manage our database and create a lot of different reports. When there is time, sometimes in the summer, I go through some of those statistics."

Additionally, one of the limitations to getting data is directly connected to the students who participate in the student conduct processes. Many of the participants commented on the challenges associated with getting students to engage with sharing feedback about their experiences. Stewart said, “So that’s one of our biggest challenges, just getting feedback from our students.” Pat spoke to the post-hearing assessment they send out on a regular basis to students who participate in their process, “Our response rate is pitiful. It is really really low.”

Russell admitted that one of his challenges is encouraging students to engage in an assessment after they participate:

> Or not getting the N that I want. That is an anticipated thing that I see and I don’t really have a way of incentivizing. We’re limited in resources but I’ve thought about, do we buy something and enter them in a raffle, but I don’t know if that’s proper for this type of outreach and learning assessment. So that’s been the difficulty, how do I increase participation.

Stewart tried a different approach with his office but then questioned the effect it had on his data:

> The biggest one is we try to do feedback about the conduct process in general from our students but our response rate is very very low, and we’ve gone through ‘do we mandate it and make it part of our sanction process that you have to give us feedback in order to have this sanction completed?’ But then it becomes forced.

Participants also discussed the types of assessment they utilized and the impact that had on collecting data in a variety of ways. Daniel shared that his goal is to get as much data as he can from the students in order to inform their process, but knows that students will not always participate if there are a lot of open-ended questions. He said, “If it’s a Likert scale then they’re willing to do it and it gives us some information but it’s not as much as I would like. I think for me that’s the biggest challenge.”

Pat discussed the challenge with having lengthy surveys that could result in low participation for students, “I think it’s lengthy if it takes more than 15 minutes, that’s lengthy for a student. So ours probably takes a good half hour if you are going to really fill the whole thing out.”

Participants also discussed the negativity associated with students having to participate in a conduct process. Students may be disgruntled about being held accountable and about having to face consequences for their behavior. This poses a challenge when trying to collect accurate data from students. Russell shared:

> The anticipated difficulties for me is that for people who are found responsible, they may be frustrated about the issue, or may have not gotten the learning that we wanted them to and might just mark low for whatever reason. Oh man, they did this to me, and I'm going to mark it low.

Daniel shared the spectrum that is often gathered when collecting data from students, "When you have a section for additional comments, there's nothing. Unless at times they give you feedback that they're really happy and really connected with people or it's the opposite end and they're really pissed off."

Kendra explained that when her student conduct program utilizes authentic learning tools to measure the student's learning through participation in educational sanctions, they sometimes face challenges:

> When we're using those tools, students may be writing what they think we want to hear. They kind of know how to write to what that teacher wants or expects so we never really know if that's real authentic, even though we're trying to use an authentic learning tool, we don't know if it's authentic or they are just saying what we want to hear.

Pat had a similar experience at his institution when trying to assess learning, "When the student is [in the hearing], if they've made it clear to us that they are just going to go through the motions, that's hard."

Utilizing learning outcomes. Participants had a variety of experience with utilizing learning outcomes in their work with educational student conduct processes. Some participants used learning as a foundation for the program itself. Bailey shared, "So we use the learning outcomes to drive what we want the students to get out of the process."

Pat stated:

> Ultimately, what we want as a learning outcomes is for students to recognize and appreciate that they are part of a community. Good, bad and different, they have evaluated themselves and how they fit into the community, how they matter to the community, and how they can get involved in the community.

Other participants were starting from the beginning with developing and implementing learning outcomes. Kelly's process was:

> So I kind of use it in that top down, think first about what is the mission, what are the goals, and what are the programs. And then for the programs and services, what are the specific outcomes, and how do we measure those. And then we use that as we're conducting the assessments.

Pete talked about how his office has been engaged in conversations to develop learning outcomes for their student conduct board, as well as for specific educational sanctions. Terry discussed the institutional focus on critical thinking and how that has informed his office, "But overall what influenced a lot of the way we chose how to structure our outcomes and the rubrics that we used to measure our outcomes came down to a focus on critical thinking."

Two of the participants spoke specifically about the challenges in working towards learning as a goal of the student conduct process, especially if the students are not willing to engage. Pat shared:

> So I can have any learning outcome I desire, if they don't buy in, then I can do my best to bring a thirsty person to a cup of water, but I can't convince them they are thirsty, and I can't convince them that they need to drink. So the way that I see it is our goal is to provide them the opportunity, now if they choose not to take it, well then that's another choice that they made, good or bad, and who am I to judge them. I'm not here to judge them, they don't need that. That is the big challenge, you look across to that student, and in your heart you know, I've got such great intentions but they are never going to do this.

Maddy stated:

> As an educator very much appreciate learning outcomes, but the flip side of that, you can have all the knowledge in the world but if you choose not to use it, it's not as helpful. And so I think where I am struggling is trying to find the magic place in the middle where they are learning something, either about how they make decisions.

Additionally, participants had a variety of other approaches to utilizing learning outcomes in their work. Terry's student conduct program feels that a new model will help them work to meet their learning outcomes, "We are moving towards a model with a pre-test post-test where [students] will do a pre-assessment based on those learning outcomes before they meet with us and then a post-assessment to compare." Kendra's student conduct program is working to meet students where they are at and still look for opportunities for learning:

> I think to address the 'saying what they want us to hear' challenge, since we're shifting to this paradigm of learning in assessment, even if they are just writing what they want us to hear, that is still a form of learning. So they are still having to connect all those dots, so that's how we are trying to view that and trying to figure out what that means and how do we or don't we measure that then.

Conducting formalized assessments. Participants spoke in depth about the variety of tools that they are utilizing to measure learning. Some participants are utilizing, or are in the process of utilizing, pre and post tests. Terry shared that he uses a pre-test and post-test for both his student conduct board as well as their ethics workshop. Kendra discussed their focus on developing this type of assessment, "We're now currently working on identifying some better quantitative measures because we're anticipating expanding that greatly. Then also trying to identify or develop a pre and post-test for those who participate in the program."

Some participants are utilizing assessments to collect data and measure learning. Pat shared that:

> Right now what we do is, at the end of each semester we send out, anonymously, to the mass of people who have been through the conduct process, a long survey essentially, which includes everything from tell me about the hearing process itself, all the way through, measuring outcomes and what have you learned from this.

Additionally, Pat does an assessment of all trainings offered by his office:

> Whenever we train our hearing officers for student conduct or academic, we do assessments after all of them to see if they are getting what they need and do they feel like they are ready to go and are they comfortable running that process.

Daniel shared that his office uses an assessment tool to gather data about the hearing process, “That’s one of the areas where we have the most data from. After each hearing, we’ll offer students an opportunity to complete an assessment of that process.”

Bailey shared that they do an assessment of both their non-academic student conduct process as well as one of their educational sanctions. Bailey talked about the evolution of assessments that they’ve used to gather information from their students:

> We used to do just a general, what did you like, what didn’t you like? And we’ve gone into more of, were you able to identify two positive examples of ethical behavior. Or were you able to identify one rationalization in how it affected you and things like that. We’ve been able to target what we want to do more with it like that.

The topic of using rubrics came up quite often with the participants as a tool to measure learning for written assignments assigned as sanctions. Kelly shared that anytime “we do any type of reflective activity, there is always a rubric associated with it.” Terry spoke again about the focus at his institution on critical thinking and that this guided his student conduct office to develop their rubrics to focus on critical thinking for their students. Casey shared that his office assigns reflection papers to almost all sanctions applying a rubric when it’s reviewed, “In many ways it’s another huge quantitative assessment tool.”

Pete shared that while he has a rubric that is utilized by his staff, it is not always used:

> I have a rubric that we use for the writing assignments but I’ll be honest, it’s not one that we consult every time. We know what we’re looking for and we assign that enough that we’re able to know when a paper comes in, what category it falls into.

Kendra’s office uses rubrics that are completed with language directly from the writing assignments:

> And we have a rubric that rates based on what we're reading in the letter. We then also add in qualitative data to help put context to that quantitative rubric measure. So as we're reading through the letter we're identifying along the different prompts, where are they, and then we're copying and pasting out of the letter to provide justification as to why we selected that number on the rubric.

Maddy discussed how the first institution she worked at had a strong culture of assessment and set a solid foundation for her, "We actually had graded our reflection papers on rubrics which measured insight."

Anecdotal information. While many of the participants are conducting formalized assessments to gather data to measure learning with their students, some of the participants are doing so more anecdotally. Pat shared that the student conduct administrators at his institution gather data as they meet with students one-on-one, "We are there, we are on the front line right away, so it's more from that perspective, it's more anecdotal, it's more personal observation than it is sending a survey out."

Kelly, who is new to his institution, and has a strong assessment background but now works at a university that is less developed with their assessment practices, stated, "Most of the education in our process now is happening in the one-on-one conversations that our staff is having with students."

Casey commented that learning often takes place unintentionally and informally while staff meet with students. Stewart said feedback is gathered day-to-day by working directly with the students. Pete had similar accounts:

> We probably do it a little bit informally, it's very routine for us in our conversations with students to ask them, as part of their meeting with us, do you feel like you've gotten a chance to be heard, how do you think this meeting went, those little benchmarks.

Maddy shared that some feedback is gathered after the fact in an informal manner with her staff, “We try to do some informal debriefing of things, especially if they go poorly. What happened here, what can we learn.”

Pete had similar thoughts in his role as a supervisor:

> If I know a student has had some other contact with other staff in the office prior to getting to me. I ask, so I see that you met with [staff member] last week, how did that meeting go, did she answer your questions, I try to do some gauging that way.

Daniel spoke to the ability to become savvier in gathering data informally, the longer you are in the field doing this work:

> I think so much of what we do is anecdotal, which I think there is some value there. The longer you’re doing conduct the more your intuition is geared towards what is effective. The longer you’re at an institution you see certain people back and forth and you start to get a feel as to what’s working but at the same time it’s always helpful to supplement that with some tangible numbers.

Using data to improve programs and services. Participants had shared goals of gathering data in order to use it to improve programs and services within their student conduct programs. Some participants focused on satisfaction and whether or not students felt satisfied with their student conduct process experience. Pete shared, “We’ve always struggled with: is a student truly satisfied with their conduct experience?” Pete is planning to outsource some of his assessment efforts:

> I think by utilizing the off the shelf product will help us formalize it. We will be able to routinely build into our decision letters, here’s an opportunity to give us feedback and an opportunity to help us gage what we are doing. We will get a sense of that satisfaction piece.

Other participants were focused on the overall hearing process and whether or not the data was improving that aspect of the work. Pat shared that his staff member collects data focused on the hearing process for their office and is able to analyze it with him to identify areas for improvement or areas that are going well. Casey shared, “I put a lot of emphasis on student’s perception of the fairness and equity of the process. That’s really the cornerstone of what we’re trying to assess.”

Maddy shared a specific example of where focusing on the process has helped them improve outcomes in their office related to appeal rates:

> One of the really interesting things that we’ve found, we just finished our board of trustees statistics this past Friday. We’ve been getting a little bit of push back for this working in the gray, spending more time with students, that kind of thing. One of the things that I’ve been able to show…the number of students who requested a hearing, and then who appealed their decisions went down significantly. We had less hearings, 40% less appeals and 65% less Vice-President appeals. So we were able to say, that we think [students] are feeling heard and they might not have been feeling as heard before. People who at least feel like you’ve listened to them are a lot less likely to complain and seek redress other ways. That was a piece of information that I don’t think I had expected to get out of that, but it was very helpful.

Other participants looked at the way that data informed educational sanctions assigned within their student conduct programs. Daniel shared, “One of the ways with sanctions that we think about what is working the best, is at the end of each year, we’ll look at those assessment numbers.”

Stewart stated that his office starts with an assessment tool aimed at getting:

> Quantitative data and measurements form our students so we can integrate into the sanctions that we have, so that we’re getting a better understanding of what we’re doing so that we’re meeting the needs that we’re trying to do related to the student, the university and the community.

Casey focused on how the data informs his ability to develop educational sanctions with campus partners to meet learning outcomes:

> I think for us right now, what we are really trying to do is, like most institutions, I work with our office of institutional research and practice (OIRP), so they run a lot of data for me, so now it’s really getting into the nitty gritty and looking at what predictive information do we know. Based on that information how do we make better referrals, how do we better meet our learning outcomes, and all of those kinds of things.

Theme 3: Alcohol Education

All of the participants spoke to the role that they have in adjudicating policy violations involving alcohol. Culture of alcohol was an area that most participants discussed regarding how alcohol plays a role in their campus culture. Providing alcohol sanctions is a strategy that most of the student conduct administrators utilize to address alcohol use. Campus and community partners are collaborated with in order to provide alcohol sanctions in a thoughtful and intentional manner. Learning outcomes exist to help students engage in the educational nature of the process through alcohol education. Prevention efforts were a desire for many student conduct administrators at their institutions.

Culture of alcohol. Participants spoke about the role that alcohol plays at their large public institutions. Stewart stated, "As most colleges, we're probably upwards of 95% alcohol based violations…Almost every one of our violations have alcohol related somehow." Daniel stated, "The majority of our incidents involve drugs or alcohol." Terry shared a similar experience, "The majority are alcohol charges, so underage alcohol. That's the big bulk of it. The second one we see the most is marijuana, drug use, and paraphernalia. Those are our heavy hitters."

Maddy spoke the most about the culture of alcohol on her campus and the impact that has on her work with student conduct:

> Especially on our campus, our students' rates of high risk drinking are higher than at other institutions. We have had a party school image for a while. We were number one for years and years and years. Two years ago we were number three, we fell down to number seven. We'd love to fall out of the top 10. We were thinking about how we do that.

Providing alcohol sanctions. All student conduct administrators explained that they assign sanctions specific for alcohol violations. Some participants thought they currently employed more traditional educational sanctions for alcohol. Kendra said we have "typical educational sanctions around alcohol." Other participants had more specific sanctions related to outsourced initiatives. Bailey shared that they use Alcohol 101 for minor violations and Stewart shared that they use the online program Under the Influence, who they currently have a contract with. Alcohol 101 is an interactive website aimed at encouraging students to explore a "virtual campus" to learn more about making responsible choices with alcohol. Under the Influence is an online alcohol education course which integrates personalized information and feedback for each participant.

Some participants instead utilized programs conducted by their own campuses in collaboration with other departments and service providers. Maddy's institution utilizes Basics and Stewart's institution is hoping to begin using Basics in the near future, which Stewart is excited about because his previous institution used it. Basics stands for Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students. It is a prevention program focused on alcohol abuse for college students and is designed to help students make better choices around alcohol.

Casey shared that he has the option to assign two different alcohol classes, alcohol choices #1 and alcohol choices #2, depending on the severity of the violation or repeated behavior.

Bailey described their alcohol education course:

> We have a sanction called the CARS (Campus Assessment of Risk and Reduction Seminar) program. It's a 90-minute session where students go and get practical information and activities on drinking. We've seen significant reduction and recidivism for students who go through that program. So that's one of the big ones that we use for alcohol cases.

Other participants have developed more unique sanctions to address alcohol education.

Maddy shared:

> We started two initiatives last year looking at the alcohol piece. One was to integrate outdoor education and challenge course with alcohol education. And the other one was to integrate an outdoor challenge with the students who come back from suspension. We've worked with our outdoor rec folks, our counseling staff, faculty, counseling education and our office, to come up with some learning outcomes and a project map for that.

Russell employed a sanction to help students understand the potential reality of their choices around alcohol:

> So we send to students to court to go and observe a court proceeding for at least an hour. We have all of the court cases for the week and they have to make time and pick one in the three week period they have and write a reflection on which one they chose and why and their experience. I'm a big believer in they need to understand the consequences. It's kind of Disneyland when they're here. Many students will respond simply to others with "I had to do an online alcohol assessment". I spend time to let them know you could have gotten an MIP and had your license taken away for a year. And they go and they witness a DUI case for an hour and a half and say whoa, this guy just got six years in jail. That's been one of our most effective.

Casey utilizes community restitution to sanction students for alcohol violations:

> Our biggest referral for community restitution services, we have a partnership with our office of sustainability and our office of athletics. They're trying to go to a zero waste tailgating. So every football game there are four hour shifts, a maximum of eight hours. So for things like vandalism, alcohol, some of that petty stuff, we make a lot of referrals for students to give hours back during those home football games. And obviously it also means they will not be consuming alcohol which helps.

Campus and community partners. The participants described the formal alcohol education interventions that they used as sanctioning tools as being provided by other entities on their campuses or within their local communities. Kelly shared that all substance abuse referrals on his campus are made to the Substance Abuse Referral Center. Pete said his student conduct administrators refer students to the University Counseling Center for alcohol violations. Kendra explained that the University Health Center provides interventions for alcohol violations on their campus. Daniel shared that there is an office on campus that provides alcohol and drug treatment programming and offers a variety of substance abuse sanctions. Pat shared that the University

Health Services on his campus provided several alcohol and other drug awareness workshops. Terry explained that the University Health Center has a Smart Choices Awareness workshop that they provide for students who have been found responsible for alcohol violations. Casey explained that they utilize the Center for Psychological Services who do their alcohol assessments.

Some participants discussed relationships they have with external entities in their local community to provide alcohol interventions. Pat explained, “Our local court has workshops that they require for drug and alcohol offenders, so there are times that we will say that the student has to provide documentation that they completed that.”

Maddy shared that when she started at her institution last year, they were using “two main types of interventions, neither of which at that time was conducted by our office.” There was a thought that one of the interventions was not effective, “One of them we had outsourced to this group off campus and they were supposed to be doing Prime for Life curriculum and they were not doing that.” She added:

> We were paying them $50 a head to do these meetings with our students and overwhelmingly we were getting feedback that what we had asked them to do had been watered down pretty significantly and the students didn’t find it helpful and it was kind of insulting in terms of their intelligence.

Maddy and her staff conducted an assessment of the effectiveness of this alcohol education intervention and they were able to analyze the data to determine whether they wanted to continue using that service provider:

> It gave us that information and then we could sit down with the Dean of Students and VP for Student Affairs. This is what we found and not only is this not effective but the behaviors we are concerned about have increased after this interaction. That was really helpful.

Learning outcomes. Learning outcomes were a tool that student conduct administrators utilized in an effort to enhance the educational nature of the alcohol sanctions being assigned. Maddy talked about how their goal is to help with decision making as it relates to alcohol use for students:

> I think a lot of students have information that they are not accessing or choosing to use in the moment that they are making decisions. So really helping them, measuring learning outcomes that are more about actions and decisions and choices for me is more helpful but that's also a lot harder to assess.

Casey's institution is focused on how alcohol use impacts the greater community:

> For instance, our in-person alcohol class, things that we really want them to understand is things like, the behavioral impact on others in the community. One of the questions on there is a future plan of action that involves making safe choices. Again, we're having students with pretty high alcohol situations getting referred.

Kendra's student conduct program has three outcomes for alcohol or other drug education:

> So for the alcohol or other drug education, we say that students enrolled in mandated alcohol and other drug education will be able to articulate a vision for a full and balanced life for themselves five years into the future. That they will be able to identify how personal choices related to alcohol or other drugs may be positively or negatively contributing to the vision of their future self. And that they will be able to identify personal commitments related to alcohol and drugs in order to achieve their vision for their future.

Prevention efforts. Some of the participants discussed the role that the student conduct program plays in prevention related to alcohol use on their campuses. Pete shared:

> We participate in the core messages that come out about make good choices, alcohol and drug decisions, and all of that. But we don't have a real good way to evaluate whether that message is resonating in the actual decision point when the student is making it.

Maddy shared her experience as a new staff member and the lack of participation that student conduct had at her institution related to prevention:

> I'm very passionate about student conduct's role in shaping students who are not going through our process. I really think a lot of times that's not how we are perceived even

> within our institutions. I actually have a distinct memory of when I came here for a house hunting trip, after I accepted the job last spring. I got invited to a Divisional meeting where they were talking about different things that we could do to engage first-year students. I just kind of sat back and observed and a lot of it was really about ethics and character education and some leadership stuff, and never once was [student conduct] brought up as a place or an outlet to do that.

Casey discussed his institution's use of Alcohol 101 as a prevention tool, "All incoming and transfer students below the age of 21 are required to take the online course."

Theme 4: External Factors

The participants discussed the role that a variety of factors play on their ability to assess learning within their student conduct programs. Impact of law enforcement affected many of the student conduct administrators in their roles adjudicating off campus student conduct and sanctioning students for their behavior. Impact of accreditation resulted for some of the student conduct administrators as they worked to develop and measure learning outcomes and prove the educational nature of their student conduct programs. Professional organizations and resources provided a wide variety of influences on the participants as resources for assessment assistance to professional standards. Finally, the national landscape regarding Title IX greatly impacted the participants in their work with their student conduct programs and with the potential development of educational sanctions surrounding sexual assault.

Impact of law enforcement. Participants discussed the role that local law enforcement plays in the adjudication of off-campus student conduct violations. Depending on the institution, the student conduct administrator had varying levels of responsibility for student behavior off campus. There were some commonalities in the experiences of participants regarding working with law enforcement.

Maddy explained that recent turnover, both in her office and with the police department, posed challenges with how reports were shared. She said, "We weren't getting reports until three months after things happened." Maddy explained that this affected how cases were adjudicated in a timely manner as well as the implementation of educational sanctions to encourage students' growth and development. The lapse in time affected her office's ability to measure learning in an effective manner when comparing violations to those occurring on campus, which were being adjudicated more efficiently.

Stewart had a similar experience with his local law enforcement and the sharing of reports involving university students:

> We had a weird anomaly last year because the year before we had a strong relationship with the city, so we got almost every report from the police that they got. Then after a little bit of time, there was some political infighting between upper administration and city leaders and they cut off all city reports to us other than large reports. So now we're starting to manage that back into a place where we may start seeing the reports again, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but the impact is bad for us because it increases our case load.

Stewart's situation not only places challenges on consistently holding students accountable for their off-campus behavior, but also poses challenges for the workload of his student conduct administrators on an inconsistent basis.

Daniel shared two unique perspectives regarding working with local law enforcement in his role, which is primarily to oversee off-campus student conduct for his institution. Daniel shared that a recent change in how he works with local law enforcement has helped his practice:

> We've taken on a lot more responsibility this year in working with some of our local law enforcement. Every morning I get a report of every citation that's written in the city and then we cross that with our student database. We used to only get a synthesized report for only students, but we made a switch to this model.

Additionally, Daniel shared that this new practice has changed the demographic group of students who were typically adjudicated for off-campus behavior. He said, "The assumptions that had been made by law enforcement in the past were for traditional-aged college students, so this year we've gotten an increase of non-traditionally aged students." Daniel spoke about how in the past when local law enforcement only sent them citations for people they assumed, or who had self-admitted that they had an affiliation with his institution, that they missed a significant number of students, especially those who were not traditionally-aged students.

Additionally, participants described that the relationship with local law enforcement played a role both in assessment and in educational sanctions. Daniel shared that his local law enforcement is very supportive of the work his office is doing with students:

> If they work with us and our process, they are going to see more results on their end. They know we're going to get a student in, and have a hearing, and assign some sanctions within a week or two. Whereas with court it could be months to a year. They do prefer working with us and our process and for most students it is a learning opportunity. The reality of being behind bars and in hand cuffs and feeling the metal on their wrists is a wake-up call. But for many the thought of losing their college education is enough of a motivator and our process really gets to that behavior change.

Pete discussed conversations that he had with local law enforcement around learning outcomes. His office was working to develop overarching learning outcomes but was unsure of the role that prevention efforts play in deterring student behavior. This was largely because local law enforcement handled most off-campus behavior, and therefore, the student conduct office was unaware of the frequency of violations that do not happen within their jurisdiction.

Regarding assessment, Daniel shared that his strong relationship with local law enforcement has resulted in a push to prepare and analyze data in different ways. His institution's local law enforcement was asking questions about sanctioning and what was working well with students, which is encouraging Daniel to back that up. He said, "I'm pulling a lot of our numbers to figure out what's working, what we're using the most."

Impact of accreditation. While large public research institutions typically engage in an on-going accreditation process, only two participant's schools mentioned the role that learning and assessment played within this process. Both schools have strong cultures of assessment and staff who are very committed to the practice. Terry discussed how a recent accreditation process that focused on critical thinking affected the student conduct program at his institution. He said, "Overall, what influenced a lot of the way we chose how to structure our outcomes and the rubrics that we used to measure our outcomes came down to [our institution] went through an accreditation process this year."

Kelly also discussed the need for an established assessment plan when it came to accreditation:

> People come to us and say, what evidence do you have to show that students are learning who are participating your programs and services? We say, here's a whole map of what we've looked at, what we think students achieve and how it links back to our mission, and here are all of our specific assessment projects that we've done over the years attached to all of those different outcomes, and you see those relationships flowing backwards from the outcomes, to the programs and services, to the goals and to the mission. Which is also really nice when it's time for when accreditors come visit.

Kelly described how having a thorough assessment plan which stems from the mission is helpful in showing why the conduct office is doing the work that it does and also what the effect is on students' learning.

Professional organizations and resources. Participants described both their own involvement in professional organizations, as well as their use of professional resources, to develop more effective assessment practices within their student conduct programs. These external factors affected how these student conduct administrators approached measuring student learning as well as understanding best practices within the field of student conduct.

The majority of the participants talked about a recently created organization that offers support to institutions who are looking to assess their student conduct programs. NASCAP, the National Assessment of Student Conduct Adjudication Processes, is a fee-based service that institutions can hire which implements assessment efforts to gather data and feedback about the effect that the student conduct program is having on students. Some participants just mentioned the work that NASCAP has done. Terry knew that NASCAP had done a lot of work around assessment and was influencing the field; which was seconded by Casey, who knew that NASCAP had done some research around emphasizing the student conduct process and the role it plays. Maddy had utilized NASCAP at a previous institution she worked at and knew how it worked.

A few participants talked about their desire to utilize NASCAP in the near future. Pat shared, "There's a group called NASCAP who we are looking into purchasing, we haven't done so yet." Maddy stated, "We're also going to be NASCAP clients this year," which is something that she negotiated into her hiring package when she was hired recently at her current institution. Pete discussed his interest in NASCAP filling a gap in gauging students' perception of their student conduct program:

> We're going to do the NASCAP assessment project this year and use that as one of our foundational benchmarking tools…I think by utilizing the off the shelf product will help us formalize it. We will be able to routinely build into our decision letters, here's an opportunity to give us feedback and an opportunity to help us gauge what we are doing. We will get a sense of that satisfaction piece.

Additionally, participants discussed that NASCAP could give them data which they were not able to gain on their own. Pete stated, "With the NASCAP assessment…we'll have that hard line data." Maddy discussed that one of the benefits of NASCAP is related to benchmarking:

> We really don't have things that talk about how are students are compared to others and I think that's a helpful piece of information to have and there's ways to do that and I think NASCAP has captured a good bit of it.
>
> She added:
>
> So for me, I think it's really helpful, is looking at those questions on the NASCAP survey that deal with ethics, community, responsibility, understanding your role in the greater scheme of the world, citizenship, and really teasing those out and saying, our students,

> compared to other students, get that more, or get that less and here's how we can capitalize on that or improve that.

Kelly discussed what he believed is a downfall of NASCAP in discouraging student conduct administrators from doing assessment themselves:

> So in the one hand, I'm excited about things like the NASCAP, that it's out there and exists, but on the other hand it kind of makes me sad that that's something that people are paid to do, and I'm glad that those people are doing that work, and I'm glad that they are making an impact, and its benefitting people, but I think that we as a profession, and ASCA as a professional organization should be setting aside resources to be able to create these and the expertise to facilitate that. If we as a profession say that part of our ethical responsibility is to assess and to help each other as colleagues, I would prefer that we didn't have to pay $400-$600 a year to get access to learning outcomes and good questions to ask students. So I hope that we will be able to facilitate that and create a network of scholar practitioners that are interested in that and can make it publicly available for each other.

Participants also mentioned how they were members in and utilized ASCA, the Association of Student Conduct Administrators, in their ability to work to gain knowledge around assessment, learning outcomes and educational sanctions. Pat said he goes to the ASCA national conference every year in Florida, as well as participates in regional activities, but thinks that the organization is lacking when it comes to benchmarking. Related to educational sanctions, Pat stated that in terms of sessions at the national conference:

> What I like is that every year you're going to find at least a few sessions that talk about educational sanctions. It's not as big as it should be, but it's there. Just like diversity, people talk about it, but how do you apply it in conduct. We need to figure it out, but we don't do a good job at it.

Terry mentioned that he has used values rubrics created by ASCA as a way to measure learning with the educational sanctions that his institution assigned to students found responsible for policy violations and has appreciated that resource.

There were varying opinions about the role that the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) could play in assisting student conduct administrators with their ability to benchmark and assess their student conduct programs. Pat stated that the “CAS Standards for conduct are old,” and therefore not useful to assisting him in his work. Whereas, Pete discussed the role that doing a CAS study within his division “propelled us forward” allowing his organization to have a better picture of where they were starting from and where they wanted to go moving forward.

National landscape regarding Title IX. One of the areas that came up repeatedly with many of the participants was Title IX. Title IX is a federal law that has been in existence since the 1970s but recently has been a focus area of legislation and federal leaders, especially due to the Dear Colleague Letter that was released by the Department of Education in 2011. The resurgence of Title IX has changed the landscape of higher education in the expectations that now exist to handle sexual misconduct on college campuses in a more efficient and equitable manner. Student conduct administrators, specifically, are feeling the impact of Title IX on their work. Not only adjudicating policy violations around sexual misconduct, but also with developing educational sanctions that allow students who have been found responsible for things such as sexual harassment, stalking and sexual misconduct to develop the skills they need to be successful in the college environment going forward.

For some participants, how they adjudicated Title IX cases within their student conduct program was dictated by institutional pressures. Pat stated his frustration with federal mandates about who should hear these types of cases, specifically related to panels:

> It sort of cracks me up when I see all this stuff about the White House and student conduct panels shouldn’t handle sexual assault cases, we handle everything, why would we not handle that case, it doesn’t make sense to me because of what we focus on. It is just clear that the folks are not getting the message of what our job is.

Similarly, Kendra shared that her institution has made the decision to have varying parts of the institution investigate and adjudicate Title IX violations depending on the parties involved, although she admitted that there was still work to be done to finalize this process going forward:

> The other nuanced piece in this past year in a half has been related to sexual assault. We will adjudicate cases where it's a university student who has been alleged to have assaulted someone who is not a member of the university community. If it's a student and the victim is any member of the university community, whether student, faculty or staff, then our equal opportunities office handles that. We're working towards defining what that's going to mean in terms of the new prevision regarding dating violence and all the other terms that need to be defined and thought about.

In relation to benchmarking and the potential for student conduct administrators to share information with peer institutions or more broadly with the field of student conduct, Maddy shared her struggle with doing so in the current national landscape surrounding Title IX especially related to the potential for being investigated by the Office of Civil Rights:

> I think one of the things that's hard right now, that we're all struggling with, is the Title IX and sexual misconduct stuff. Nobody, including me, wants to say, here's what we're doing, isn't this great. Nobody wants to draw attention. You just want to fly under the radar and do the best you can. In terms of that benchmarking, we've done a lot of policy benchmarking around sexual misconduct and around hazing. It's really interesting.

Pat also stated that one of the challenges with benchmarking and best practices in student conduct today is that "with all of the Title IX, Campus Save, VAWA, we have so much changing that it's hard to nail down a standard. It's constantly changing."

Daniel shared a significant amount about the role that Title IX played on the work that his office did around sexual misconduct, especially related to educational sanctions. Specifically, since much adjudication for Title IX violations results in suspension from an institution for the student involved, Daniel discussed the challenges that this poses:

> Even if we do suspend someone, if they are supposed to come back in a year, then we have to put conditions on that return. How do we really accomplish anything other than that person not being a part of the campus community for that year if we don't have some

> sort of educational sanction attached to that suspension? Particularly with all of the Title IX stuff going on, the need is there.

Daniel went on to discuss one approach that his office was in the process of developing and expanding to handle some of the Title IX cases that they see on their campus. Daniel's student conduct office was looking for ways to work with students who might need more developmental education and guidance to develop the skills necessary to have healthy relationships, but he knew there were significant challenges in doing this level of work, especially in light of the current national landscape:

> We're actually moving in that direction in some of our sexual misconduct stuff, which I figure is probably not done very often. This year we started outsourcing it to private counselors who work mostly with the court systems who are doing an assessment. So if [a student is] found responsible for sexual misconduct, so not every level, it's got to be fairly moderate, not like your flashers/streaker type things, we're having them do that assessment and then from there they're getting referred to different workshop series. So there's either one that is a boundaries workshop which is 12 weeks on boundaries and communication skills and social cues and gender roles or they're getting funneled into what is sort of the court mandated sexual offender treatment programs. What we're looking at doing now, which is probably a year or two out is actually doing that on campus, having those assessments done on campus and see what resources we can provide to students based on that assessment. It feels very much like our hands are tied right now, if you're found responsible for sexual misconduct, the go to response is we have to remove you from campus and some of that behavior I think is really developmental skill based where the impact is horrific and significant and the student who is responsible for that behavior sometimes has developmental deficits, so those students, we want to try to capture how they're asking for consent, how they're having healthy relationships, and really work on those boundaries and skills instead of just saying we're done with you and good luck trying to get in anywhere with a finding of responsibility for sexual misconduct on your record.

Research Question Answers

This study aimed to answer five main research questions using a phenomenological methodology. This section focuses on the answers to those research questions found within the participant data. The answers come from both the emergent themes identified previously and often times outside of those themes.

1. What educational sanctions do student conduct administrators assign in the student conduct process?

The participants were all asked questions during the semi-structured interviews regarding the types of educational sanctions that they assigned within their student conduct programs. For the most part, there were commonalities between the traditional types of educational sanctions that were assigned. Additionally, many of the participants mentioned the utilization of more punitive sanctions such as probation or suspension that could be utilized individually or in tandem with educational sanctions.

Maddy explained that she thought her student conduct program was “employing a lot of the traditional research/reflection papers, targeted community service or restitution, and targeted interventions around alcohol and drug use.” Russell stated that his student conduct program assigned a wide variety of sanctions, “everything from reflection papers to experiential situations.” Pete shared that his student conduct program looked at each interaction with a student case by case utilizing typical sanctions such as written reflective papers, follow-up meetings with university staff, and referrals to the counseling center for alcohol and drugs. Kendra explained that her institution focused on “situational sanctioning,” which “takes into account the student and the institution and the opportunity for learning and growth.” She described that her hearing officers utilized “sanctions around alcohol and other drug education” as well as very unique sanctions for that “individual student, whether it’s an action plan or an awareness campaign or whatever is of interest to them.”

Additionally, many of the student conduct administrators discussed the interventions utilized around alcohol and other drugs, which was often administered by other offices and departments across their campuses. Daniel explained that his institution had an assessment-based model regarding alcohol and drug sanctioning. He said, "Almost always when drugs and alcohol are involved, particularly with abuse, we're having students do an assessment through [a partnering campus office]…Based on that assessment [the campus office] will sort students by low, moderate or high risk." Daniel explained that based on the determination of risk, students were funneled into varying levels of educational workshops and programs to address their needs.

Bailey shared that his institution had a seminar program focused on risk assessment for alcohol. He said, "It's a 90 minute session where students go and get practical information and activities on drinking." Terry discussed a workshop that his University Health Center provided that focuses on making smart choices around alcohol and drugs. Casey explained that students who are found responsible for alcohol are typically sanctioned with one of two alcohol workshops provided by the Center for Psychological Services. The determination of which workshop depended on the level of the alcohol use and the severity of the incident. He shared that the higher level of the two workshops has a thirty day follow-up to check in with the students.

Finally, many student conduct administrators discussed the more unique sanctions employed at their institutions. Kelly shared that his student conduct program created and implemented an online ethical decision-making workshop that they frequently assigned and was "fun and cool." Kendra described the pilot program her office implemented focused on a mentoring program for students. It was well received and would be expanded as a sanction going forward. Stewart talked about a robust sanctioning option that his office created in collaboration with the career services office to work with students who were struggling with figuring out what they want to do in terms of their major and career aspirations.

2. What learning outcomes do student conduct administrators utilize for educational sanctions?

The researcher asked the participants questions intended to explore the learning outcomes that the student conduct administrators' utilized within their student conduct programs. Each participant engaged with learning outcomes in a different way depending on their program. Some participants developed and utilized learning outcomes specific to their educational sanctions. Others created more broad learning outcomes for their program which focused on student growth more generally. They applied the broad learning outcomes more unilaterally to all sanctions as well as the student conduct process itself.

Maddy explained that the learning outcomes utilized by her student conduct program were specific to some of the sanctions that they assigned and were not connected to a larger program learning outcome at the time of the interview. Kendra shared specific learning outcomes for the alcohol and other drug education program which were: (1) Students enrolled in mandated alcohol and other drug education will be able to articulate a vision for a full and balanced life for themselves five years into the future. (2) Students will be able to identify how personal choices related to alcohol or other drugs may be positively or negatively contributing to the vision of their future self. (3) Students will be able to identify personal commitments related to alcohol and drugs in order to achieve their vision for their future.

Casey discussed that the learning outcomes for the alcohol workshop at his institution were focused on the behavioral impact on others within the community, as well as understanding the potential health consequences associated with the choices being made.

Stewart's student conduct program was more focused on broad learning outcomes for the overarching program, which has an influence on the sanctions as well. He said, "Our main goal is to impact their decision making…We go with the mantra, what's best for the individual, what's best for the University, what's best for the communities in which they are involved in." Stewart explained that the goal of their learning outcomes was to get the three areas back in alignment.

Daniel shared that his student conduct program had learning outcomes for all of the workshops provided by his office. Regarding student learning, he said, "The focus of [the learning outcomes] are really awareness of their behavior and the impact of their behavior, so whether that's on themselves, family, friends, or community, those are some of the big things we're looking at."

Terry explained that his student conduct program used to have learning outcomes specific to educational sanctions, but moved away from that because his director really wanted something that was more transferable. Russell shared the learning outcomes that his student conduct program used for their overall process, which he hoped all sanctions met in one way or another: (1) Better understanding of how behavior can impact others. (2) Better understanding of responsibility to the community. (3) Better understanding of the administrator concern around the particular behavior. (4) Less likely to engage in similar behavior. (5) Less likely to engage in other behaviors based on their conduct process. (6) Did the process offer an opportunity for reflection? (7) Do they believe the process is a positive influence on campus?

3. How do student conduct administrators measure learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

Student conduct administrators were asked about the learning outcomes that they had for various sanctions or aspects of their programs and then specifically how they measured that learning. Participants utilized a variety of approaches to measure learning that took place within their student conduct program, which included student surveys, pre-test and post-tests, and writing assignments and rubrics.

Three participants utilized surveys to assess students who participated in their student conduct programs. Stewart believed that his program received general information about the conduct process from students through their survey. Russell's student conduct program was preparing to launch a survey to assess their students. He said, "The measurement is a survey with a 1 to 5 scale and then looking at our progress this year compared to future years. This will be the baseline year."

Daniel shared that his institution had a hearing process assessment that they give to all students:

> We offer a paper copy whether it's in our office or in the residence halls after each hearing. We offer that to every student and then depending on whether or not they do that, we also in our follow-up letters have a link to the electronic version of the same assessment. Our response is significantly greater with the paper assessment. Students probably feel like there's some obligation to do it. In our office, part of our check-out process, after we've met with a student, we walk them to the front desk, and they explain it, so we're not a part of it. So the hearing officer isn't involved in that part. They don't have to do it and then they drop it into a sealed box. So they are very anonymous. I think that's really helped our response rate.

Two student conduct administrators discussed their institutions aspiration to move to a pre-test post-test model to assess their students learning. Terry explained, "We are moving towards a model with a pre-test post-test where they will do a pre-assessment based on those learning outcomes before they meet with us and then a post-test to compare." Kendra shared that her institution was "trying to identify or develop a pre-test and post-test for those who participate in our programs."

Three student conduct administrators discussed the role that writing assignments, and specifically utilizing rubrics as assessment tools, played in their work measuring learning. Pete shared that he had utilized rubrics and writing assignments at a previous institution, which he brought with him to his current position. He said, “I updated and modified it for use here.” Casey shared that the reflection letter assigned by his student conduct administrators was their best assessment tool “in terms of students actually articulating what they’ve learned from the process and their perspective, and being able to speak to that. Moreover speaking to how the sanctions have impacted them.”

Kendra utilized authentic learning tools to measure two different educational sanctions at her institution:

> With the [Alcohol and Other Drug] education, they have a letter to self that they have to write after they complete the program. So in that letter there are some prompts that help us get at the three [learning] outcomes. And we have a rubric that we rate based on what we’re reading in the letter. We then also add in qualitative data to help put context to that quantitative rubric measure. So as we’re reading through the letter we’re identifying along the different prompts, where are they, and then we’re copying and pasting out of the letter to provide justification as to why we selected that number on the rubric.

She added:

> For the mentor program, again we have an authentic learning tool that help us get at the learning outcomes, in that they have to create a core values mission statement. They have to develop an action plan and they have to write a reflection paper.

One participant, Maddy, was really focused on the role that NASCAP would play in measuring learning within her student conduct program. She said, “NASCAP is easy for us, we don’t have a lot of time, it’s not going to get to every single thing, but it gives us a baseline which is helpful.”

3b. Who is measuring learning for educational sanctions? Is that a shared responsibility with other University units?

Only one student conduct administrator talked about how assessment efforts played out with educational sanctions that are provided by other units outside of their student conduct program. Daniel explained that his student conduct colleagues worked collaboratively with a unit on campus that provided many of their sanctions, especially related to drugs and alcohol. He didn't believe that there was much focused effort to collaboratively assess the learning that was taking place. He did explain that he knew that a few times PhD students had assisted with assessment efforts with these types of programs, "Typically it's a PhD candidate who is interested in it, because we collect the data, it usually just sits there though until a PhD student is like, that's a great program, I will study it."

None of the other student conduct administrators discussed how learning was measured, or if it was measured, with sanctions that were administered by other offices. While many of the participants, especially related to drug and alcohol sanctions, explained that those were administered by counseling centers or other trained professionals, there was little discussion about the way in which learning was aspired or measured in a collaborative way with those units.

4. What challenges do student conduct administrators face when measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

All participants were asked questions during their semi-structured interviews focused on the challenges that they faced when measuring learning within their student conduct programs. Participants reported a variety of responses, including: the challenges with the rate and type of feedback they received from surveys, getting staff to buy-in to do assessment, students not being engaged with the process, assessment being time consuming and difficult.

Three participants discussed the challenges associated with collecting data directly from students through surveys. Stewart explained:

> Our response rate is very very low and we've gone through, do we mandate it and make it part of our sanction process that you have to give us feedback in order to have this sanction completed, but then it becomes forced. We've tried doing it right after the conduct hearing, but then we've noticed the people feel that if they give bad reviews that

> it will impact their sanctions overall. So that's one of our biggest challenge, is just getting feedback from our students.

Daniel discussed the challenges with getting qualitative data:

> I think the biggest challenge for me is I want a lot of data. I want to know as much as I can and I know students aren't going to fill it out, or there isn't a ton of open ended information that they'll provide…With a Likert question, when you have a section for additional comments, there's nothing.

Both Daniel and Russell shared their concerns with gathering data from students who were disgruntled with the process. Daniel shared that often times they only get feedback from students who were "really pissed off." Russell shared that sentiment:

> The anticipated difficulty for me is that for people who are found responsible, they may be frustrated about the issue, or may have not gotten the learning that we wanted them to and might just mark low for whatever reason. 'Oh man, they did this to me, and I'm going to mark it low.'

Two participants shared their experience that one of the challenges with measuring learning came from getting the student conduct staff to be engaged. Bailey explained, "It was a bit of a challenge getting people on board with it and understanding the value to it." Terry had a similar experience at his institution:

> That has been quite a challenge because it's a push on why do we have to do this. That is what it comes down to. The staff are pushing back. It's important to help staff members to understand why it's important and why it's there.

Three participants discussed the challenges associated when students were not engaged with the student conduct process and the educational nature of the interaction. Pete talked about the challenge of confirming the authenticity of the student's writing when completing educational sanctions. Pete's student conduct program often asked follow-up questions as part of the reflection paper sanctions to see if "there is some alignment between what they said verbally [in their hearing] and what they're writing a couple of weeks later."

Kendra discussed her institution's use of authentic learning tools and the challenge that:

> Students may be writing what they think we want to hear. They kind of know how to write to what that teacher wants or expects so we never really know if that's real authentic, even though we're trying to use an authentic learning tool, we don't know if it's authentic or they are just saying what we want to hear.

Pat shared his perspective that not all students wanted to engage with the student conduct process, and they could not be forced:

> So I can have any learning outcome I desire, if they don't buy in, then I can do my best to bring a thirsty person to a cup of water, but I can't convince them they are thirsty, and I can't convince them that they need to drink. So the way that I see it is our goal is to provide them the opportunity, now if they choose not to take it, well then that's another choice that they made, good or bad, and who am I to judge them. I'm not here to judge them, they don't need that. That is the big challenge, you look across to that student, and in your heart you know, I've got such great intentions but they are never going to do this.

Additionally, two participants explained that they faced challenges due to the amount of time it takes to properly assess learning as well as appropriately sharing the assessment results. Kendra shared that it would be less time consuming to have the students "fill out a bunch of questionnaires or other things" rather than using authentic learning tools. She also explained that one of the ways that her office approached time management as it relates to assessment was:

> We're really trying to work through a cycle and identifying some kind of cycle that we can go on and even though we're not measuring each sanction every year, there would be some way to do some staggering in terms of what we're collecting and when to ensure that we are not burning ourselves out in trying to collect the data.

Kelly was concerned with the challenge associated with collecting the data around learning. He said there was a:

> Tendency to oversimplify and rush to conclusions sometimes when you're collecting assessment data around learning. I think it is something to be wary of and something that happens a lot. You put together a survey, you get some results, and you say, here we go, this is what we found, it's great, and we don't really think about what the limitations are around that. That's one of the challenges I find when educating people to do assessment. I am not expecting you to be researchers, but you do have to think about, you only talked with twenty students and you had them fill out a five question survey instrument and how much can you really generalize from there to everybody. So I think that can be difficult.

Additionally, Kelly explained that assessing learning is a challenge in itself:

> I think the other thing is that it’s difficult to put some of this into a digestible format, to be able to assess, to be able to talk about, to be able to report on. Some of the things that we’re trying to measure are really hard to measure. That’s some of what makes it so difficult sometimes. We can measure utilization and how many people come into our office, that’s easy. And we can measure satisfaction, we can get that, we can ask questions about that. But some of these learning pieces are really challenging.

4b. What approach is utilized both for sanctioning and measuring learning if a student is struggling with substance abuse?

While most of the student conduct administrators discussed that students were assessed – sometimes informally through meetings with the student conduct administrator, and sometimes formally through assessments – to determine whether their relationship with drugs or alcohol was casual, requiring a low-level intervention, or significant, requiring a high level intervention, no one really talked about how that would affect assessments of learning. Specifically, even though most of the participants discussed the role of alcohol at their institution as being significant, none of them discussed the role of substance abuse as it related to a focused intervention with specific learning outcomes and assessments to measure that learning.

5. How do student conduct administrators communicate the results of student learning to their campus community?

The participants were asked how they shared information gleamed from their assessments regarding student learning with the constituents they work with. Some participants were very transparent and utilized methods that were far reaching, while others had targeted populations that they focused on in order to continue strengthening a partnership that was already established. Some participants had expectations from their divisions for how information was shared consistently on an annual basis, which they used as a foundation to disseminate that to a broad audience.

Daniel explained that his office did an annual report that was distributed to the overall division and also made available online so that anyone could access it. Also, Daniel discussed that every year beginning in late summer, staff from his office did presentations to the main constituent groups they work with to share information from the previous year and strengthen working relationships for the upcoming year. Terry discussed that his institution had a divisional and a departmental assessment team, which allowed people from various units to come together and "share what we are learning."

Bailey shared that, in addition to posting his annual report on his website, he also had regular workshops with all hearing officers and academic leaders at his institution. He said, "I go through our statistics and our assessment and the trends that we saw and what we've seen over the course of the year." Kendra explained that her division had an annual reporting process that was submitted to the Vice President of Student Affairs. She said, "We're reporting the data, analysis and recommendations, and actions taken in response." Casey's goal was to share information directly with students, "We put our numbers on our website so that students can see them so they get a sense of what we're trying to do. Some of that is our goal to demystify what student conduct is about."

A few participants used the data they collect in unique ways. Maddy discussed how she worked closely with students to share information about what her office was accomplishing in their work:

> There's a reporter at our student newspaper who's assigned to student affairs. So I'll email her now that the numbers are final and we'll talk about some of the trends and we'll talk about what we saw and what's different. She does a really good job of conveying that to the campus community. That will probably be one of the first things that will run when school starts back up.

Pat discussed how his office developed new educational sanctions when student need was identified in a certain area to help with learning, “When we had a lot of students who would routinely tell us, I did this because I was under a lot of stress, we talked to our counseling unit.” Together, they developed a stress management workshop that was a routine sanction that they use to help students who are struggling with managing their stress. Russell was in the process of creating a new assessment for all students who go through the student conduct process at his institution and was comfortable sharing the outcome of that assessment. He said, “We’re doing this in a transparent way, we’re going to put it out there in a transparent way and we’re going to be honest about whatever the results are good or bad.”

Essence of the Lived Experience

Patton (1990) explained that a phenomenological approach is different from other qualitative methods because it assumes that there is an essence to the shared experience. The essence is a mutual understanding through the phenomenon of a core meaning. He further shared, “A sense of connectedness develops between researcher and research participants in their mutual efforts to elucidate the nature, meaning, and essence of a significant human experience” (p. 72).

Data from this study suggested that the essence of the shared experience of the participants was that there are many challenges associated with measuring learning outcomes in a student conduct program. Despite these challenges, the student conduct administrators felt that there were many factors that make measuring learning outcomes an aspired and attainable practice. Perhaps the greatest factor in supporting the measuring of learning outcomes was a culture of assessment within the participants’ own institution. A strong culture of assessment not only has the potential to establish expectations and guidelines for how to measure learning of programs and services, but it has the potential to provide the resources and support to do so effectively. While student conduct administrators faced numerous challenges in effectively measuring student learning, the participants had a shared value of assessment and spoke of a desire to embrace assessment.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Smith et al. (2009) explained that in interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) the researcher "engages in a dialogue" between findings and the existing literature (p. 112). Staying true to the IPA method, this chapter summarized the research study, discussed the results of the research study within the context of the literature, offered suggestions for the field of student conduct related to assessment and utilizing learning outcomes, as well as shared suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Themes

As discussed in chapter four, an analysis of the participant interviews led to four main themes emerging. The researcher identified these themes as: (1) culture of assessment, (2) measuring learning, (3) alcohol education, and (4) external factors. These themes were explored through the context of the participant interviews. This section will move on to discuss the themes in the context of the literature as well as discuss the overall meaning that was ascertained.

Theme One: Culture of Assessment

The role that a culture of assessment played on student conduct administrators was key to their lived experience. Data gathered through the interviews showed that participants relied on divisional and institutional support. Participants who were encouraged through a culture of assessment were more likely to aspire to improve assessment efforts or to try new strategies to measure student learning within their student conduct programs. Participants discussed how they worked to recognize and overcome challenges associated with assessment efforts, which was made easier when a culture of assessment existed. The data also showed that participants had a variety of motivating factors encouraging their engagement in assessment, but felt that a culture of assessment was at the core. Additionally, participants shared their lived experience in the overarching field of student conduct and their dissatisfaction with best practices as it relates to the profession itself in terms of a culture of assessment.

The participants shared that a culture of assessment was evident within their divisions and institutions when the leadership for those areas had expectations about how assessment was done and communicated that appropriately. Participants who discussed clear requirements that could be anticipated regarding assessment were more able to work towards a culture of assessment within their own student conduct programs. Additionally, participants explained that divisions or institutions that supported a culture of assessment by providing staff that specifically worked to encourage assessment were valued. Student conduct administrators who had colleagues or resources to rely on as they engaged in a culture of assessment were more successful.

The idea of a culture of assessment being at the center of strong assessment work is reflected in the literature. Schuh (2013) explained that a culture of assessment must be established in order for student affairs administrators to develop practices to collect data and demonstrate the value of their programs to constituents. Similarly, Blimling (2013) recognized that most student affairs practitioners see the value of assessment in their work and are looking for ways to integrate assessment into their programs and services. A strong culture of assessment that is appreciated can encourage student conduct administrators to improve the student learning that they are aspiring to meet. New ideas or initiatives should rely heavily on assessment in order to appropriately meet the learning objectives that have been established (Schuh, 2013).

The literature also supports the premise that student affairs administrators need to work towards best practices (Shutt et al., 2012), an area that many participants believed was lacking in the field of student conduct. There needs to be an intentional effort not only to measure a program's effectiveness, but to be able to compare that within a larger context of individuals doing similar work. While there are guidelines and encouragement within the field of student conduct, the participants felt that tangible measures were missing, which was unfortunate.

Theme Two: Measuring Learning

Student conduct administrators shared their own lived experiences regarding how they measure learning within their own contexts. Participants shared the way that they utilize statistics to inform their work, as well as how they employ learning outcomes to focus the developmental approach of their programs. Additionally, participants shared the limitations and challenges associated with effectively measuring learning. The goal of collecting data directly from students was sometimes anecdotal and sometimes more focused, which provided a multi-tiered approach to inform programs and services.

The literature spoke heavily to the aspiration that student affairs practitioners have to measure learning within their programs and services, and the influence this has on student conduct administrators. Lancaster and Waryold (2008) discussed the transition that has happened in the field from student conduct administrators focusing solely on measuring statistics to moving towards utilizing and implementing learning outcomes as a measure. Schuh (2013) similarly discussed the need for learning outcomes to be identifiable and measurable with the goal of ascertaining what students have learned from the experiences and programs in which they interacted. Asher (2008) explained that student conduct administrators need to be purposeful in their aspiration of educational components and the intended outcomes of learning.

Participants discussed a variety of approaches to gathering data to measure how students were learning from their participation in the overall student conduct program, as well as specific educational sanctions. The literature presents a variety of methods to do this. Bowman (2013) encouraged student affairs practitioners to go straight to the source and ask students what they learned directly. Many participants utilized this approach by asking students to respond to surveys and assessments after meeting with student conduct administrators and after participating in educational sanctions.

Participants were very aligned with the literature when it came to recidivism rates. Some participants, similar to Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) felt that recidivism rates showed the effectiveness of the intervention or participation in the student conduct program, which resulted in student making better choices with the goal of not violating policies in the future. While other participants followed Howell's (2005) belief that recidivism rates may go down but the reason for the decline could be more connected to students not getting caught or not getting referred to the student conduct program, but they may not actually learn from the student conduct process and change their behavior and actions as a result.

Participants repeatedly discussed the challenge associated with encouraging students to learn as they engage with student conduct programs and services. Lake (2009) reinforced this challenge, noting that the learners themselves were in control of the learning. He further explained that while student conduct programs were typically educational in nature, students cannot be forced to learn from their experiences. As participants shared, it can be discouraging and frustrating, when as a student conduct administrator, their intentions were focused on helping that student learn and grow, and the students may not have the same investment or motivation to grasp that learning opportunity.

Theme Three: Alcohol Education

Participants consistently discussed the impact that alcohol had on both their students and on their approach to continued education as an intervention for alcohol use and abuse. Participants felt strongly that not only did a culture of alcohol play a direct role on their educational sanctioning efforts, but also on how they approached assessment and learning within those sanctions. Alcohol education was the area that participants most discussed as being a collaborative effort with on and off campus partners to provide the most effective and targeted educational interventions for students. Additionally, student conduct administrators felt that they played a role in prevention efforts aimed at challenging or redirecting a culture of alcohol at their institutions.

The literature approached alcohol education from many angles, beginning with the educational nature of student conduct in general. The literature also discussed federal guidelines requiring institutions to intervene. The result being focused alcohol education aimed at changing behavior and encouraging student learning.

The participants discussed the aspiration of promoting an educational opportunity where students can grow and develop because of their involvement with the student conduct program. The literature shared this aspiration. Asher (2008) described student conduct programs as educational in nature with the goal of giving students the resources to make future decisions based on past behaviors. Similarly, Howell (2005) explained that student conduct programs should encourage learning and citizenship among the students who participate.

Specific to sanctions, the literature spoke to the educational role that intentional opportunities played in influencing students' learning. Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) explained that student conduct administrators are primarily focused on developing sanctions which are educational and focused on changing future behavior. Howell (2005) believed that while sanctions may focus on the specific behavior which violated a policy, student conduct administrators should also concentrate on the developmental issues that influenced that behavior. Ardaiolo and Walker (1987) shared their belief that sanctions must have a purpose behind them that is connected to the educational nature of the institution itself, while aiming to help students understand the consequences of their future choices.

The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act was not specifically mentioned by any participants, but the spirit of that act was present in the work being done by the student conduct administrators. Reis, et al., (2000) explained the requirements of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act regarding institutions having policies specific to alcohol and strategies to address alcohol abuse among students.

Participants discussed the impact of alcohol on their campuses and on their approaches with upholding policies and laws pertaining to alcohol. Participants also discussed the ways in which they approach alcohol education through a variety of educational sanctions and opportunities specific to their individual institutions. Many participants discussed a tiered approach to identifying the level at which alcohol was affecting their students' lives and an intentional approach to have sanctions which meet students where they are, in order to have the best impact on future behavior. The literature mirrors this approach. Asher (2008) explained that a common approach utilized by student conduct administrators is to have students participate in alcohol education classes or workshops. Oswalt's et al. (2007) research focused on the effects of alcohol education sanctions. They found that alcohol interventions did result in students altering their drinking behavior, as well as influenced their knowledge about alcohol consumption.

Theme Four: External Factors

Participants shared a variety of experiences with external factors that influenced their work. For some participants, their relationship with local law enforcement was very prevalent. Other participants were involved in accreditation efforts at their institutions, which they responded to through the educational nature of their student conduct programs, as well as their informed assessment practices. Participants consistently discussed their personal involvements in professional organizations and other professional resources within the field of student conduct administration. Lastly, the ever-changing landscape pertaining to Title IX and how higher education approaches sexual misconduct was a prominent external factor affecting many participants' work within their student conduct programs.

The literature spoke to some of the external factors discussed by the participants. Dean (2013) discussed the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), which has developed learning outcomes for student affairs functions, including student conduct programs. Cooper and Saunders (2000) described CAS standards as being credible and a good resource for student affairs practitioners to justify their work. Participants had mixed feelings about utilizing CAS standards in their work, some stated that they were outdated and not informative and others relied on them to review the purpose and focus of their student conduct programs going forward.

Regarding accreditation, some participants discussed their role in the efforts on their campuses specifically related to learning outcomes and the educational nature of student conduct programs. Blimling (2013) explained that accrediting agencies have a strong focus on learning outcomes and an expectation that assessment efforts are aimed at student learning within programs and services.

Discussion of Research Question Answers

This study aimed to answer five main research questions using a phenomenological methodology. This section focuses on the answers to those research questions found within the literature and the participant data. The answers come from both the literature and the emergent themes discussed previously.

1. What educational sanctions do student conduct administrators assign in the student conduct process?

This research question was addressed in themes two and three pertaining to sanctioning more broadly. While the participants spoke to specific sanctions that they assigned – including: reflection papers, alcohol interventions, and decision making workshops – the literature was more focused on the educational nature of any sanctioning in general.

Asher (2008), Kompalla and McCarthy (2001), and Howell (2005) all spoke broadly about the educational nature of student conduct work and the role that educational sanctions play in encouraging students' learning, growth and development. There was a common belief that educational sanctions should encourage students to think about their future decision making and reflect upon previous experiences in an educational way.

In theme three, much of the literature discussed the educational nature of alcohol sanctions, which was referenced by both Asher (2008) and Oswalt, et al. (2007). Once again, the literature was not speaking to specific sanctions regarding alcohol education, and was instead approaching it more broadly as a necessary intervention strategy. The participants spoke to utilizing programs such as Alcohol 101, Basics, and Under the Influence, which were not specifically referenced in the literature.

2. What learning outcomes do student conduct administrators utilize for educational sanctions?

This research question was not specifically answered in the themes or the literature, although the premise of utilizing learning outcomes influences the answer and was discussed in the first theme. The literature spoke to a culture of assessment that included utilizing learning outcomes. Lake (2009) and Schuh (2009, 2013) both discussed the utilization of learning outcomes in assessment in student affairs. The literature encouraged student conduct administrators to develop learning outcomes and then measure them in order to encourage the educational nature of student conduct programs. The participants shared the specific learning outcomes that they had pertaining to either their overall student conduct program or to specific sanctions that they assigned to students.

3. How do student conduct administrators measure learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

This question was answered in the second theme pertaining to measuring learning. Participants spoke to a variety of methods in order to measure the learning that took place with students. This included student surveys, pre and post tests, writing assignments, and rubrics.

The literature broadly discussed the importance of measuring learning. Shutt et al. (2012), described the role of assessment in gathering information specific to learning outcomes and the need for student affairs practitioners to integrate this into their work. Bowman (2013) focused on being direct with efforts to measure learning and speaking to the students who participated about their experiences.

3b. Who is measuring learning for educational sanctions? Is that a shared responsibility with other University units?

This question was referenced in the third theme, when participants discussed how they worked with campus partners to provide alcohol education sanctions for students. Only one participant specifically discussed a collaborative effort to assessing learning at his institution. The literature did not discuss this outside of the general need for a culture of assessment. Schuh (2013) and Blimling (2013) discussed the need for student affairs practitioners to integrate assessment into their work and use assessment to inform new initiatives. This speaks to the need for student conduct administrators to be intentional about the collaborations they develop with campus partners when developing, implementing and assessing educational sanctions.

4. What challenges do student conduct administrators face when measuring learning for students who participate in educational sanctions?

This question was answered in the first and second themes pertaining to a culture of assessment and measuring learning. Participants spoke consistently about the challenges they experienced when effectively measuring learning within their student conduct programs and educational sanctions. These challenges included: the rate and type of feedback received from surveys, getting staff buy-in to do assessment, disengaged students, and assessment being time consuming and difficult.

Schuh (2009), Howell (2005), and Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) all discussed the challenges associated with measuring student learning. Since interventions vary, there were a variety of factors that made this challenging, from proving a causal relationship between sanctions and outcomes, to knowing when to assess the potential for learning. Participants discussed that assessment, especially pertaining to learning outcomes, was challenging; especially for those with minimal experience with assessment.

Blimling (2013) shared the sentiment of many of the participants that student affairs practitioners often have heavy workloads and it can, therefore, be difficult to take on significant assessment efforts. Participants felt similarly, especially those who had a small staff doing student conduct work on their campus. Participants felt pulled in multiple directions and were not always able to make assessment a priority, especially related to challenging types of assessment like measuring learning outcomes.

4b. What approach is utilized both for sanctioning and measuring learning if a student is struggling with substance abuse?

This research question was not specifically answered in the themes or in the literature, although a thorough discussion pertaining to alcohol education generally was addressed in the third theme. Data obtained through participant interviews discussed substance abuse as a factor for higher level alcohol interventions, but did not differentiate how learning would be measured for that population specifically. The literature, including Asher (2008) and Oswalt et al. (2007), focused on the educational nature of alcohol sanctioning but did not discuss substance abuse separately from other types of alcohol use by college students.

5. How do student conduct administrators communicate the results of student learning to their campus community?

This question was referenced in the first theme regarding a culture of assessment. Participants generally discussed a variety of methods that they utilized to share information with campus constituents. This included sharing information through websites, annual reports, and through informal conversations with campus partners.

Participants also discussed expectations from divisional or institutional leadership in requiring reporting on annual practices and assessment findings. The literature discussed this in regards to a culture of assessment. Schuh (2013) and Shutt et al. (2012) both discussed how a culture of assessment was important within the field of student affairs. Specifically, student affairs leadership should encourage assessment as a way to be accountable to stakeholders.

Implications for Practice

Several implications arose, based on the findings in this study, for student conduct administrators as they approach assessment, and specifically, learning outcomes in their work in higher education. The implications include a commitment to establish a culture of assessment, as well as encouraging partnerships with campus departments to develop and measure learning outcomes.

The findings suggested that student conduct administrators who worked at institutions or within divisions that had an established culture of assessment, more seamlessly integrated assessment into their work with student conduct. While changing a culture is not easy, the literature pertaining to student affairs assessment strongly suggested that practitioners be able to utilize assessment not only to inform new practice, but also to effectively measure learning. Student conduct administrators who are part of a division or institution that does not have an established culture of assessment should look for opportunities to encourage this. Some examples might include discussing ways to increase skills or knowledge around assessment and specifically learning outcomes into professional development opportunities. This could include participating in webinars or bringing in speakers to share strategies on how to integrate this into practice. Additionally, discussing the importance of assessment with divisional and institutional leadership can help them understand the need for staff to support this area and perhaps develop positions focused solely on assessment that can serve as a resource for multiple departments or units within the institution.

Another finding was that student conduct administrators often provided sanctions in collaboration with other campus departments. This was especially true related to alcohol interventions, but was also the case for other types of sanctions. Generally, higher education supports collaborative initiatives. One of the challenges with being collaborative is that oversight of things like assessment, become lost when multiple offices are managing aspects of the sanction. Participants discussed a lack of assessment in many of these areas outside of asking students to share feedback directly about the experience. If student conduct administrators are interested in developing learning outcomes for specific sanctions, it would be beneficial to work with those campus partners from the beginning. This would include collaboratively developing learning outcomes when establishing the sanction curriculum or goals, as well as having an established plan for regularly assessing the sanction and the students participating in the program or service.

Implications for Research

Multiple implications from these research findings could encourage future research. The implications include: (1) identifying best practices regarding alcohol education, (2) understanding the effects of outsourced assessment resources, (3) examining the impact of Title IX legislation on educational sanctioning, (4) gaining an understanding of the challenges associated with measuring learning when student mental health implications are involved, (5) examining the relationship between prevention efforts and educational sanctioning, and (6) understanding the role that parents can play in encouraging students to learn from participation in the student conduct process.

The participants in this study consistently explained the significant role that alcohol played with their students. Alcohol affected the work student conduct administrators do to uphold policies and to encourage learning through educational sanctions. Unfortunately, there were not consistent best practices in how to approach alcohol at these types of institutions, and future research could explore what types of alcohol education sanctions are most effective. Additionally, since most participants discussed a tiered approach to alcohol education where some level of assessment, sometimes very informally, was utilized to determine the student's experience and potential abuse of alcohol, it would be helpful to see future research focus on a variety of levels of alcohol interventions, especially related to substance abuse.

Many of the participants discussed the NASCAP program as a resource for assessment efforts at their institution. Additionally, NASCAP was looked to by some of the participants as a possibility for establishing benchmarking and best practices within the field of student conduct. Future research could look at institutions that utilize NASCAP and determine their effectiveness compared to institutions that manage their own assessment practices. As NASCAP becomes more established, specific services or programs that are more longitudinally implemented could be examined to determine the possibility for best practices for the field of student conduct around assessment, and specifically, learning outcomes.

Student conduct administrators who participated in this study discussed the challenges associated with the ever changing Title IX landscape and the expectations regarding higher education appropriately managing sexual assault. Participants expressed a possibility of looking to develop educational sanctions instead of only relying on punitive sanctions. Future research could work collaboratively with federal legislation to determine effective alternatives to punitive sanctions for students who would benefit from rehabilitation regarding their understanding of consent and healthy relationships.

College students are affected by additional factors have the potential to impact their ability to learn in and out of the classroom. One of these challenges is associated with managing and negotiating mental health. This mental health challenge can impact students who participate in the student conduct process. If student conduct administrators are working to develop and implement educational sanctions focused on encouraging the growth and development of college students, it would be especially important to understand how challenges with mental health may respond to these types of educational sanctions. Future research could examine the way that educational sanctions are developed and implemented when applied to students who may have less ability to be engaged and responsive to the sanction itself because they are facing mental health challenges.

Student conduct administrators in this study discussed the absence of their own participation in prevention efforts on their campuses. Future research could focus on how student conduct administrators build upon prevention efforts already taking place on their college campuses. For example, if an institution is implementing an alcohol education program to all incoming students, how could student conduct administrators build upon that prevention program when those same students are then referred for alcohol violations later in their college careers? A partnered approach may allow students to gain knowledge about important topics in a tiered method, where they are building upon information as they progress through their college careers. Future research could look at the connections between student conduct programs that are involved and already build upon prevention efforts, compared to student conduct programs that are more autonomous in their approach to educating students.

Finally, future research could focus on examining the role that parents can play in helping student conduct administrators encourage growth and development for students who participate in student conduct programs. Since there are federal exclusions that do allow institutions to notify parents when students have violated certain types of policies, especially related to drugs and alcohol, it could be beneficial to have parents be an active participant in developing strategies for future success. Student conduct administrators would need to balance the desire to want students to be treated like adults and make decisions congruent with students' independence, while also recognizing that parents are potentially strong advocates for an improved approach to behavior and decision making.

Conclusion

In this study, the data suggested that participants were most successful when they were a part of a culture of assessment at their institution. There were many factors that contributed to a culture of assessment. Overall, that culture supported the participants' work with learning outcomes and assessment. The data also suggested that participants viewed their work in student conduct as educational in nature and engaged in measuring learning in a variety of ways. Participants experienced challenges and successes in measuring learning, but still worked diligently to provide data to support the work that they did with students.

Student conduct administrators were part of educational environments that had a core mission of learning. In order to encourage that mission, student conduct administrators were encouraged to look for ways to integrate learning and education into their student conduct programs. This integration had the potential to benefit the students being served, as well as expressly showing the value that student conduct had in the holistic development of college students.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT COVER LETTER

Date

Dear Participant,

My name is Julie Draper Davis and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the School of Education. The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study is to explore the lived-experiences of student conduct administrators who utilize learning outcomes to measure educational sanctions assigned as part of the student conduct process. The title of the project is *Student Conduct Programs Utilization of Learning Outcomes to Measure Educational Sanctions: A Phenomenological Study*. I am serving as the Co-Principal Investigator under the supervision of my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Kuk, School of Education.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an Electronic Information Form: approximately 5 minutes
- Participate in an interview via Skype/phone: approximately 45-60 minutes
- Review a copy of the transcribed interview: approximately 15-30 minutes
- If needed, participate in a follow-up conversation if discrepancies arise during the transcript review: approximately 15 minutes

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

Participants will be assigned a pseudonym to be used throughout the study to protect confidentiality. Additionally, identifiable information regarding your institution will not be included in the study, outside of it being a large public research institution based on the Carnegie Classifications. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on the phenomenon of utilizing learning outcomes to measure educational sanctions in the student conduct process.

All interviews will consist of questions about student conduct practices regarding assessment and educational sanctions at your institution. No deception will be used and participants are able to decline from answering any question that makes them uncomfortable. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

If you are willing to participate in the study please fill out the Electronic Information Form. You will be contacted to let you know if you have been selected for the study. If you are selected Julie Draper Davis will email you to set up a 45-60 minute Skype/phone interview with you at your convenience.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Draper Davis at jadraper@uw.edu or 812-369-5069 or Dr. Linda Kuk at Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu or 970-491-7243.

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Kuk	Julie Draper Davis
Associate Professor	Ph.D. Candidate
School of Education	School of Education

APPENDIX B: ELECTRONIC INFORMATION FORM

Question 1: Name *(fill in response)*

Question 2: Current Institution Name *(fill in response)*

Question 3: I currently serve in a leadership capacity for the student conduct program at my institution *(Director, Associate/Assistant Director, Dean, Associate/Assistant Dean)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 5: I work closely with assessment efforts for the student conduct program at my institution.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 6: Student conduct administrators at my institution assign educational sanctions for students found responsible for violating policies.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 7: The assessment efforts for the student conduct program at my institution include utilizing learning outcomes.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 8: I am interested in participating in this research study and would be willing to set-up a Skype/phone interview with the researcher.

☐ Yes

☐ No

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Student Conduct Programs Utilization of Learning Outcomes to Measure Educational Sanctions: A Phenomenological Study

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Linda Kuk, School of Education, Associate Professor, Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu, 970-491-7243.

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Julie Draper Davis, School of Education, PhD Candidate, jadraper@uw.edu, 812-369-5069

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? You qualify for this study because you are a student conduct administrator at a large public research institution. You provide leadership to a student conduct program that assigns educational sanctions and utilizes learning outcomes.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? This research is being conducted by Ph.D. candidate Julie Draper Davis, as monitored by her dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Kuk and her dissertation committee.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study is to explore the lived-experiences of student conduct administrators who utilize learning outcomes to measure educational sanctions.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? Time commitment for participants:

- Participants will be asked to complete an Electronic Information Form: 5 minutes
- Participants will be interviewed via Skype/phone: 45-60 minutes
- Participants will be given a copy of the transcript to review: 15-30 minutes
- If needed, participants may be asked for a follow-up conversation if discrepancies arise during the transcript review: 15 minutes

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? To conduct this study, each participant will be asked a series of questions (see below) and given the opportunity to answer with as much detail as they feel comfortable providing.

Introduction

- What is your role within the student conduct program at your institution?
- What is your role with assessment within your student conduct program?
- How do you utilize student learning outcomes in your work with assessment within your student conduct program?
- What type of student conduct violations does your student conduct program adjudicate?

- How integrated is assessment and the measurement of student learning outcomes in the day-to-day work of your student conduct administrators?

Educational Sanctions

- What type of educational sanctions do your student conduct administrators assign?
- What are the learning outcomes that you have for the educational sanctions assigned?
- How were the learning outcomes developed and how often are they updated or revised?
- How is learning measured for educational sanctions that are assigned?
- How are learning outcomes for different educational sanctions measured similarly and/or differently?
- What challenges exist when measuring learning associated with educational sanctions?
- What strategies have been employed to overcome challenges in measuring learning outcomes associated with educational sanctions?
- If learning has been measured successfully, how has that learning been communicated to constituents within the organization and within the institution?

Conclusion

- How do learning outcomes need to be adapted or changed to be more measurable in the future?
- What opportunities exist for updating and modifying educational sanctions based on learning outcome assessment?
- Would knowing more about how peer institutions measure and report on learning outcomes related to educational sanctions inform your practice?

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? NA

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
No deception will be used and participants are able to decline from answering any question that makes them uncomfortable. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? No remuneration for participation will be granted. Participants will choose to be in the study for the intrinsic satisfaction of taking part in scholarly research to benefit the field of student conduct.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. In the dissertation a pseudonym will be assigned to protect your confidentiality. Additionally, identifiable information regarding your institution will not be included in the study, outside of it being a large public research institution based on the Carnegie Classifications.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Julie Draper Davis at jadraper@uw.edu 812-369-5069. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (Approval Date).

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing ___ pages.

____ ______________________

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

____ ______________________

Name of person providing information to participant Date

____

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

- What is your role within the student conduct program at your institution?
- What is your role with assessment within your student conduct program?
- How do you utilize student learning outcomes in your work with assessment within your student conduct program?
- What type of student conduct violations does your student conduct program adjudicate?
- How integrated is assessment and the measurement of student learning outcomes in the day-to-day work of your student conduct administrators?

Educational Sanctions

- What type of educational sanctions do your student conduct administrators assign?
- What oversight do you have for each of those educational sanctions in terms of assessment?
- What other University units do you share responsibility with for educational sanction assessment?
- What are the learning outcomes that you have for the educational sanctions assigned?
- How were the learning outcomes developed and how often are they updated or revised?
- How is learning measured for educational sanctions that are assigned?
- How are learning outcomes for different educational sanctions measured similarly and/or differently?
- What challenges exist when measuring learning associated with educational sanctions?
- How are sanctions assigned and learning outcomes measured for students who are determined to be struggling with substance abuse?
- What strategies have been employed to overcome challenges in measuring learning outcomes associated with educational sanctions?
- If learning has been measured successfully, how has that learning been communicated to constituents within the organization and within the institution?

Conclusion

- How do learning outcomes need to be adapted or changed to be more measurable in the future?
- What opportunities exist for updating and modifying educational sanctions based on learning outcome assessment?
- Would knowing more about how peer institutions measure and report on learning outcomes related to educational sanctions inform your practice?

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION REVIEW LETTER

Date

Dear (name):

As we discussed, attached is a copy of the transcript from our interview on (insert date).

Please review the transcript and contact me if you would like to clarify any of your responses.

If I do not hear from you by (insert date) I will assume that you believe the transcript is an accurate depiction of our conversation.

As mentioned in an early communication, once the study is complete I will forward you a summary of the findings.

Again, thank you for your participation and for your generosity with your time.

Regards,

Julie Draper Davis
School of Education
Ph.D. candidate
jadraper@uw.edu
812-369-5069