FACULTY AND STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS AND COLLABORATION IMPACT

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Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs is necessary to ensure student success (Nesheim et al., 2007; Whitt et al., 2008). This quantitative study sought to evaluate perceptions of 68 university faculty and staff to determine if those perceptions shape the value placed on collaborative partnerships. Additionally, the study examined the perceived impact faculty and staff believe collaboration has on increasing their willingness to collaborate and improving student success. Findings and recommendations are also included.

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Within institutions of higher education, the call for collaboration between academic and student affairs is often viewed as a means of providing a more seamless education that brings into play the importance of learning in the classroom and outside of the classroom (Dale & Drake, 2005; Kezar, 2001; Nesheim et al., 2007; Streit, 1993; Whitt et al., 2008). Common examples of collaborations within higher education often include intervention programs, academic advising, housing and learning communities, academic bridge programs, and career programming (Dale & Drake, 2005). These efforts have brought about improvements in student success by increasing retention rates, increasing student critical thinking skills, and improving institutional engagement within colleges (Kezar, 2001). Difficulties in providing such collaborative programs often arise as individuals see the classroom as the faculty domain and staff are viewed as support for students and faculty. Additionally, the lack of opportunities for collaboration, organizational structures that further separate faculty and staff members, differing cultures, lack of incentives for faculty to participate and promote involvement, and lack of respect between units are commonly cited barriers to collaboration (Dale & Drake, 2005; Jackson & Ebbers, 1999; Kuh & Banta, 1998; Streit, 1993).

Allen-Collinson (2006) indicated that "shared values are at the center of organizational work cultures" (p. 276). Faculty are rewarded for scholarly research and contributions to their fields of study, which is often done in isolation or with limited collaboration (LePeau, 2015). As a result, little additional time is available to participate in truly collaborative efforts and little importance is placed on collaboration in faculty culture. It is also important to recognize that different units on campus, often referred to as functional areas, have different cultural identities. In fact, Philpott and Strange (2003) stated in their case study that "collaboration required the introduction and re-acquaintance of campus faculty and student affairs cultures" (p. 80).

The perceived value difference between faculty and staff in higher education and more specifically between academic affairs and student affairs is well reported in higher education (Allen Collinson, 2006; Kuh & Banta, 2000; Streit, 1993; Szekeres, 2004). According to LePeau (2015), student affairs is viewed as secondary to academic affairs. In Young, Anderson, and Stewart's (2014) study on microaggressions in higher education, they identified micro-aggression from faculty to staff as a significant and common theme and noted staff were seen as less capable because they were assumed to have less education. This lack of perceived impact results in discouragement from participation on collaborative efforts with outside units (Lau & Williams, 2015). Small (2008) indicated that "questions of power and authority were significant in shaping relationships" (p. 183).

Microaggressions, also known as microinequities (Fuller & Gerloff, 2008), were first defined in the 1970s as subtle and ambiguous racial insults (Sue et al., 2007) and as such, much of the literature has focused on racism. However, as the research in this area has grown, the definition of microaggressions has expanded to include "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which lie beneath visibility or consciousness and which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward targeted groups, persons, and or systems" (Nadal et al., 2015, p. 147).

According to Fuller and Gerloff (2008), microaggressions are based upon a person's rank. He posited, that all ism from racism to sexism fall under the broader heading of rankism in which a group or individual has more power than another based upon a given trait or characteristic. While a variety of forms of rankism between faculty and staff exist on college campuses, most of those differences fall in the areas of role, rank (or level within the institutional hierarchy), and

perceived value to the institution. A person's role within an institution often defines his or her identity and value within the institution (Young, Anderson, & Steward, 2015). If a person's role then dictates the way he or she view his or her own identity on campus, trust can be difficult to build upon because individuals may perceive them as less important and less valuable in collaborative efforts (Young, et al., 2015).

Perceptions of rank can influence ideas of project ownership, thus limiting the types of partnerships to lower-level ones in which responsibility is not equally shared between groups (Socket, 1998). This can be perceived rank or actual rank based upon role. According to Kuh & Banta (2000), faculty historically have been seen as "first class because they focus on the core academic tasks" (p. 5). In contrast, Brown (1989) indicated that student affairs staff often see themselves as more qualified than faculty as they have completed extensive study in college student development and therefore know better how to assist students. Again, this view of better preparation and superior rank by student affairs professionals can lead to an unwillingness to share responsibilities in collaboration. Relinquishing ownership and sharing it with one seen as less valuable or less capable will continue to prevent successful collaboration.

Tension between faculty and staff was blamed upon a lack of understanding of roles, a lacking sense of value, and what was perceived as unfair benefits attributed to the other party (Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012). Small (2008) indicated that staff felt that their contributions to the university and to the smooth running of institutional business were not valued or seen; despite these challenges, both faculty and staff were hopeful that this tension could change and improve over time.

With calls for collaboration spreading across higher education, administrators are tasked with effectively developing and implementing collaborative efforts in attempt to improve student success rates, such as retention rates and graduation rates (Kezar, 2001, 2003). Studies of barriers to collaboration between faculty and staff commonly cite poor faculty and staff relations (Allen Collinson, 2006; Banta & Kuh, 1998; Cho & Sriram, 2016; Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012; Streit, 1993; Szekeres, 2004) often stemming from cultural differences (Kuh & Banta, 2000; Kezar & Eckels, 2002; LePeau, 2015; Whitt et. al, 2008, Cho & Sriram, 2016) and poor communication (Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012; Kezar, 2003; Philpott & Strange, 2003). Despite this, little empirical research has been done to evaluate the status of faculty and staff relations and how those often tenuous relationships relate to collaborative efforts on college campuses and thus, the focus of this study. As such, this quantitative study was driven by three equally valued research questions:

1. What difference, if any, exists between faculty and staff with regard to the perceived impact of faculty/staff collaboration on student success?
2. What relationship, if any, exists between faculty and staff willingness to participate in collaborative efforts and perceived impact of that collaboration on student success?
3. What relationship, if any, exists between willingness of faculty and staff to collaborate and the perception faculty and staff have of each other?

Procedures

This study was conducted within one academic college (College of Health and Human Sciences) at a large, rural comprehensive university in the Southeastern United States. Additional organizational units were identified for participation in this study based upon common collaborations found in the literature that included academic advising, career services, tutoring and success centers, and student housing. The selection of faculty in this particular college led to the selection of the advisement team located within that same college as those units would be the likely advisement and faculty

team to collaborate since they mostly work with the same student population. In all, a total of 50 staff members and 91 faculty members were sent requests to participate in the survey (N=141).

Instrument

With no published survey available for collecting the desired data, the researchers developed a quantitative survey, which was administered via Qualtrics. Relevance was proven through alignment of questions to research outlined in the literature review and tied to research questions. Likert scale questions were adapted to a four-point scale to avoid data clustering and force participants to make a commitment in their opinion (Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, & Tysinger, 2002) with the exception of the impact collaboration has on student success as individuals were able to provide a fifth response indicating a no impact response. Additionally, stems for the Likert Scale questions were all worded in a positive manner to avoid confusion of participants (Frary, 1996). Four open-ended questions were included in the survey to assist in future study. Participants were provided no definitions in any communication or within the survey instrument for student success, collaboration, faculty, or staff as the researcher wanted participants to provide perceptions and responses based upon their individual definitions and understandings of these terms.

Results

Data collected from the online survey required input into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. As quantitative differences between two identified categorical groups (faculty and staff) were vital to answer the first established research question, the researchers conducted an independent sample t-test to determine if a difference exists between position type (faculty or staff) and value of collaboration (scale of 1-5). Additionally, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to establish any correlations between willingness to participate in collaborative efforts, value placed on collaboration, and perceived impact of collaboration on student success. A series of independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine if there were any differences between how faculty and staff responded to perception questions about faculty and staff, while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to find correlations between faculty and staff responses for those same questions.

Of the 141 surveys sent out, a total of 68 (38 faculty and 30 staff) eligible participants completed the process for a response rate of 48.2%. Faculty respondents included Full Professors (21.1%), Associate Professors (34.2%), Assistant Professors (34.2%), Lecturers (5.3%), and Instructors (5.3%). Of those who responded, 53.8% were tenured. Five participants (12.8%) work primarily with graduate students, while the remaining (87.2%) primarily work with undergraduate students. With regard to educational background, 86.8% of faculty respondents indicated doctoral degrees as the highest degree earned, while the remaining 13.2% have earned master's degree. Seven faculty respondents indicated they worked at the institution for more than 15 years. The highest number of respondents fell within the 0-4 year mark, with 5-9 years, and 10-14 years falling closely behind.

Staff member respondents were represented across four campus units; 30% University Housing, 26.7% College of Health and Human Sciences Student Services Center, 26.7% Career Services, and 16.7% Academic Success Center. Supervisors of benefited staff members made up 33.3% of staff respondents. Staff members reported a variety of educational backgrounds with a doctorate (3.3%), a specialist degree (3.3%), a master's degree (70%), a bachelor's degree(13.3%), an associate degrees (6.7%), and a high school diploma (3.3%). Similarly, time within the institution varied greatly among staff members with 56.7% at the institution four or fewer years, 16.7% employed at the institution five to nine years and 16.7% employed at the institution 10-

15 years. Only 10% were employed at the institution for 15 or more years.

Collectively faculty and staff perceived collaboration between faculty and staff units to have a positive impact on student success with a mean score of 4.4 out of a possible five points (SD=.78). An independent t-test was conducted to compare faculty and staff perceptions of collaborative efforts on student success and, as shown in Table 1; there was no significant mean difference between the impact faculty perceived on student success (M=4.29, SD= .84) and the impact staff perceived on student success (M=4.53, SD=.68).

Table 1
Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics Impact, Value, and Willingness to Participate

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean Difference	T	df
	Faculty			Staff					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Impact	4.29	.84	38	4.53	.68	30	-0.62, 0.13	-1.29	66
Value	3.58	.64	38	3.63	.62	30	-0.36, 0.25	-3.53	66
Willingness	3.76	.43	38	3.83	.46	30	-0.28, 0.15	-.65	66

* $p < .05$

In comparing faculty and staff answers to the value of collaboration between faculty and staff and the willingness to participate with the other unit, an independent t-test was run (Table 1). As with the perceived impact of collaboration, there was no significant mean difference between the two groups in these areas.

Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, as summarized in Table 2, significant positive correlations between impact of collaboration, value of collaboration, and willingness to collaborate were found among the combined data group of faculty and staff. A p-value below .05 indicated that Pearsons' coefficient (r) is significant, although scores showing significance at the higher confidence level were reported if they had a p value of less than .01. The higher the r value, with a maximum value of one, the stronger the correlation. When data were split to analyze by roles, faculty showed significant correlation among all three areas (Table 3, on next page) indicating that as perceived impact and value of collaboration increased faculty willingness to collaborate also increased. Of note, faculty demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the willingness to collaborate and the perceived value of collaboration (r=.61, p=<.01, n=38). Alternatively, staff members only showed significant correlation between perceived impact and value of collaboration (r=.483, p=<.01, n=30). As perceived impact of collaboration increased, so too did the staff perceived value of said collaborative effort.

Pearson's coefficient correlation was run to determine relationships between faculty willingness to collaborate with staff members the faculty perceptions of staff members (Table 4, on next page). No significant correlations were found between faculty willingness and any of the faculty perceptions of staff members indicating that fac-

Table 2
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Impact, Value, and Willingness to Collaborate

	1	2	3
1. Impact of Collaboration	---		
2. Value of Collaboration	.45**	---	
3. Willingness to Collaborate	.29*	.40**	---
M	4.40	3.60	3.79
SD	.78	.63	.44
Scale Min/Max Values	1 to 5	1 to 4	1 to 4

Note. n = 68.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 3
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Faculty Perceptions of Impact, Value, and Willingness to Collaborate by Role

	Faculty			Staff		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Impact of Collaboration	---			---		
2. Value of Collaboration	.44**	---		.48**	---	
3. Willingness to Collaborate	.42**	.61**	---	.07	.14	---
M	4.29	3.58	3.76	4.53	3.63	3.83
SD	.84	.64	.43	.68	.62	.46
Scale Min/Max Values	1 to 5	1 to 4	1 to 4	1 to 5	1 to 4	1 to 4

Note. n_{fac} = 38, n_{sta} =30
* p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 4
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Faculty Willingness to Collaborate and Perceptions

	of Staff			of Faculty			Scale Min/Max Values
	1	M	SD	1	M	SD	
1. Willing to Collaborate	---	3.76	.431	---	3.76	.431	1 to 5
2. Care	-.013	3.49	.559	-.010	3.66	.481	1 to 4
3. Educate Students	.031	2.43	.948	-.028	3.76	.435	1 to 4
4. Influence Policy	-.156	2.49	.901	.014	2.58	.919	1 to 4
5. Incentive	-.135	2.41	.865	.075	2.68	.915	1 to 4
6. Highly Educated	.037	2.92	.640	-.219	3.71	.460	1 to 4
7. Contribute Prestige	.170	3.32	.626	-.156	3.5	.604	1 to 4
8. Respect Faculty	-.082	3.37	.794	-.299	3.32	.662	1 to 4
9. Respect Staff	-.016	3.56	.504	-.343*	3.37	.675	1 to 4
10. Influence Graduation	-.040	2.81	.845	-.044	3.39	.638	1 to 4
11. Influence Retention	.037	2.81	.877	-.092	3.34	.627	1 to 4
12. Support Services	.052	3.57	.689	-.022	3.08	.795	1 to 4
13. Commend	-.322	2.51	.804	.104	2.47	.762	1 to 4
14. Governance	.282	3.00	.707	-.041	3.63	.489	1 to 4
15. Supported	-.039	3.08	.595	.029	2.92	.632	1 to 4

Note. n = 38
* p < .05; ** p < .01

ulty perception of staff is not a factor in a faculty member's willingness to participate in collaborative efforts with staff members. However, many correlations were found between faculty perceptions of staff members, which may be of interest in further studies of faculty and staff perceptions of one another.

Correlations between staff willingness to participate in collaborative efforts with faculty were examined using Pearson's coefficient correlation as well (Table 5). The only significant correlation discovered was a positive correlation between staff willingness to collaborate with faculty and the incentives as perceived by staff that faculty have to collaborate (r=.39, p=<.05, n=30). These results indicated that the more incentives staff perceive faculty receive for collaborating, the more willing staff are to participate in collaborative efforts with faculty.

Pearson's coefficient correlation was used to determine if any correlation exists between staff willingness to collaborate with faculty and staff perceptions of staff (Table 4). No significant correlations were found in this area; however, correlations were found between faculty willingness to collaborate and faculty perceptions of faculty (Table 5), specifically in faculty perceived respect of faculty toward staff members (r=-.34, p=<.05, n=38). A moderate negative correlation was found between these two areas suggesting that as the perceived level of faculty respect toward staff decreases, the willingness of faculty to collaborate increases.

To better understand faculty and staff perceptions, independent t-tests (Table 6, on next page) were conducted to discover significant differences between how faculty and staff answered questions regarding the perceptions of faculty and staff. A maximum score of four points was possible with these questions. Significant differences resulted in the areas of faculty caring for

Table 5
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Staff Willingness to Collaborate and Perceptions

	of Staff			of Faculty			Scale Min/Max Values
	1	M	SD	1	M	SD	
1. Willing to Collaborate	---	3.83	.461	---	3.83	.461	1 to 5
2. Care	.184	3.80	.407	-.052	3.33	.479	1 to 4
3. Educate Students	.022	3.23	.568	-.191	3.79	.412	1 to 4
4. Influence Policy	-.232	2.60	.968	-.210	3.3	.535	1 to 4
5. Incentive	.165	2.76	.830	.385*	2.54	.744	1 to 4
6. Highly Educated	-.194	3.07	.651	-.184	3.8	.407	1 to 4
7. Contribute Prestige	.075	3.33	.661	-.025	3.57	.504	1 to 4
8. Respect Faculty	.198	3.13	.629	-.182	3.33	.547	1 to 4
9. Respect Staff	.044	3.47	.571	-.020	2.57	.626	1 to 4
10. Influence Graduation	.222	3.40	.675	-.063	3.3	.596	1 to 4
11. Influence Retention	.000	3.40	.621	.043	3.27	.583	1 to 4
12. Support Services	-.144	3.87	.346	.230	2.83	.711	1 to 4
13. Commend	-.015	2.57	.817	.037	2.87	.681	1 to 4
14. Governance	.120	3.40	.621	.332	3.17	.658	1 to 4
15. Supported	-.068	3.10	.548	.000	3.4	.563	1 to 4

Note. n = 30
* p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 6
Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics Faculty and Staff Perceptions of Faculty

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Faculty			Staff					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Care	3.66	.48	38	3.33	.48	30	.090,.559	2.77*	66
Educate	3.76	.44	37	3.79	.41	29	-.247, .174	-0.35	64
Influence	2.58	.92	38	3.30	.54	30	-1.077,-.365	-4.05*	61.19
Incentive	2.68	.92	37	2.54	.74	28	-.283, .563	0.68	63
Highly Educated	3.71	.46	38	3.80	.41	30	-.303, .124	-0.84	66
Prestige	3.50	.60	38	3.57	.50	30	-.341, .208	-0.49	66
Respect Faculty	3.32	.66	38	3.33	.55	30	-.317, .282	-0.12	66
Respect Staff	3.37	.68	38	2.57	.63	30	.483, 1.121	5.02*	66
Graduation	3.39	.64	38	3.30	.60	30	-.208, .397	0.63	66
Retention	3.34	.63	38	3.27	.58	30	-.221, .372	0.51	66
Support Services	3.08	.80	37	2.83	.71	29	-.123, .630	1.35	64
Commended	2.47	.76	38	2.87	.68	30	-7.48, -.038	-2.21*	66
Govern	3.63	.49	38	3.17	.66	29	.179, .739	3.28*	65
Supported	2.92	.63	38	3.40	.56	30	-.773, -.185	-3.26*	66

* $p < .05$

students, faculty influence on policy, faculty respect toward staff members, commendation for faculty, faculty involvement in shared governance, and institutional support for faculty. Faculty reported a higher perception of caring for students (M=3.66, SD=.48) than staff perceived of faculty (M=3.33, SD=.48). Staff perceived faculty to have more influence on institutional policy (M=3.30, SD=.54) than faculty felt they had (M=2.58, SD=.92) as faculty disagreed that they had influence on institutional policy. Faculty collectively felt they respected staff (M=3.37, SD=.68) at higher level than staff felt respected by faculty (M=2.57, SD=.63). In fact, the mean score for staff perceptions of faculty respect toward staff indicated that staff members slightly disagreed with the statement that faculty respect staff members. Both faculty and staff perceived that staff believed faculty were not commended for a job well done, but staff rated that faculty were acknowledged for good work (M=2.89, SD=.68) at a higher level than faculty (M=2.47, SD=.76). Similarly, staff scores indicated perceptions that faculty were supported by the institution (M=3.40, SD= .54), but faculty perceived that support at much lower levels than staff (M=2.92, SD=.63). Finally, faculty were more likely than staff to indicate that faculty should be involved in shared governance of the institution.

When evaluating perceptions toward staff (Table 7, on next page), significant differences were found between faculty and staff in the areas of staff caring for students, staff as educators of students, the influence staff have on graduation and retention rates, staff members providing support services, and staff involvement in shared governance of the institution. While both units agreed that staff care about students, staff perceived themselves as more caring toward students (M=3.80, SD=.41) than faculty perceived them (M=3.49, SD=.56). Additionally, staff slightly perceived themselves as educators of students (M=3.32,

Table 7
Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics Faculty and Staff Perceptions of Staff

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Faculty			Staff					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Care	3.49	.56	37	3.80	.41	30	-.550, -.070	-2.65*	64.33
Educate	2.43	.95	35	3.32	.57	30	-1.187, -.422	-4.22*	56.78
Influence	2.49	.90	37	2.60	.97	30	-.571, .344	-.50	65
Incentive	2.41	.87	37	2.76	.83	29	-.774, .068	-1.68	64
Highly Educated	2.92	.64	37	3.07	.65	29	-.470, .169	-.938	64
Prestige	3.32	.67	37	3.33	.66	30	-3.24, 306	-.057	65
Respect Faculty	3.38	.79	37	3.13	.63	30	-.102, .592	1.41	64.97
Respect Staff	3.56	.50	36	3.47	.57	30	-.176, .353	.67	64
Graduation	2.81	.85	37	3.40	.68	30	-.939, -.210	-3.10*	65
Retention	2.81	.88	37	3.40	.62	30	-.969, -.210	-3.10*	65
Support Services	3.57	.69	37	3.87	.35	30	-.559, -.039	-2.31*	55.23
Commended	2.51	.80	37	2.57	.82	30	-.450, .344	-.267	65
Govern	3.00	.71	37	3.40	.62	30	-.729, -.071	-2.43*	65
Supported	3.08	.60	37	3.10	.55	30	-.301, .263	-.13	65

* $p < .05$

SD=.57), whereas faculty slightly disagreed that staff members educate students (M=2.43, SD=.95). Similarly, staff members felt they influenced student graduation rates (M=3.40, SD=.68) and student retention rates (M=3.40, SD=.62) while faculty slightly disagreed that staff members impacted graduation (M=2.81, SD=.85) and retention rates (M=2.81, SD=.88) within the institution. Evaluations of staff members as providers of support services indicated that both agree this is a function of staff members; however faculty (M=3.57, SD=.69) perceived staff in this role at a lower level than staff (M=3.87, SD=.35) did. Finally, while faculty slightly agreed that staff members should be involved in shared governance (M=3.00, SD=.71), staff members agreed with this statement at a higher level (M=3.40, SD=.62).

Discussion

Findings from this study show no significant difference based upon role on the perceived impact of faculty and staff collaborative efforts in student success. While the term student success was left vague to allow maximum interpretation, both faculty and staff members perceived a positive impact from faculty and staff collaboration upon student success. This finding should encourage administrators attempting to forge new collaborations among faculty and staff members as little additional effort is needed to convince participants of the impact collaborations have upon student success (Dale & Drake, 2005; Kezar, 2001; Nesheim, 2007; Streit, 1993; Whitt et al., 2008). Supervisors could further incentivize collaborative efforts by including collaborative efforts in evaluations of faculty and staff performance, as well as providing clear communication of the value of collaboration in the eyes of the institution and unit or functional area in terms of student success (retention rates and graduation rates).

Relationships between Willingness and Impact

Collectively, a weak positive correlation existed between faculty and staff willingness to collaborate and the perceived impact of collaboration, indicating that as perceived impact of collaboration increased, so too does the willingness to collaborate. However, when this finding is further analyzed, this relationship holds true for faculty, not staff. Additionally, there was a positive relationship between the value of collaboration and willingness to participate in collaborative efforts in faculty, not staff. Both of these findings support the call for purposeful collaboration (Green & Johnson, 2015; Small, 2008; Whitt et al., 2008) when working with faculty. Specifically, if faculty recognize that collaborative efforts are being made with a specific impact on student success in mind, faculty may be more willing participate in collaborative efforts with staff members.

It is interesting that staff members do not have that same connection between impact and willingness, nor did a relationship between perceived value of collaboration and willingness to participate exist. One could expect that a high level of impact or value would help contribute to the willingness to partake in collaborative efforts, while a low level of impact would hinder willingness to participate. Additional study should be done in this area to further determine motivating factors for staff collaboration.

Relationships between Willingness and Perceptions

Staff members continued to show no relationship between their own willingness to participate in collaborative efforts and the perceptions staff members have of the role of staff. However, staff were more willing to participate in collaborative efforts the more they perceived faculty as having incentive to collaborate. This could be a result of staff feeling faculty will have more of a desire to work with staff members if faculty are being rewarded. With the additional finding that staff perceive faculty as not respecting staff members, faculty incentive could in fact provide staff members with a feeling that they will be better respected if faculty are receiving some motivation to participate effectively within collaborative efforts. As studies show respect to be a key component of collaboration (Jackson & Ebbers, 1999; Osberg, 2016) this provides a linkage between the findings of this study. As noted before, further investigation should be done into the factors influencing staff willingness to participate in faculty and staff collaborations.

Faculty perceptions of staff had no bearing on willingness to collaborate. This challenges the findings of Kuh and Banta (2000) in which a negative perception of staff indicated a decreased willingness to share responsibility in collaborative efforts. It is possible that the lack of definition in collaboration in this study created a false high score of faculty willingness to collaborate. If faculty were considering lower level collaboration, such as service or exchange relationships (Sockett, 1998), findings may better align with those of previous studies. However, it is also possible that this finding is an early indicator that faculty perceptions are changing. Additional research should continue in this area to better understand these results.

Faculty perceptions of faculty respect for staff had a negative correlation with willingness to collaborate. This suggested that the less faculty respect staff, the more willing they are to collaborate with staff. This finding could result from faculty with low opinions of staff feeling that they need to teach staff how to do a particular task or potentially complete the staff member's task in order to get things done correctly. While possible, the concept seems out of line with the open-ended responses in which faculty indicated that time to invest in additional responsibilities prevents collaboration. The researchers were unable to find studies to support this connection between faculty respect toward staff and willingness to collaborate. Further inquiry is recommended in

this area.

Implications for Practice

Based upon these findings, administrators interested in implementing collaborative efforts would be well suited to begin addressing the divide among perceptions between faculty and staff members. Involving both parties in meetings to explain the purpose of collaborative efforts will assist in increasing faculty buy-in and willingness to participate, but also assist staff members in feeling more involved. Providing opportunities for both parties to interact will allow for better communication between units and help bridge perceived gaps and provide opportunities for staff members to work with faculty in respectful environment (Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012).

As Florenthal and Tolstikov-Mast (2012) reported, negative perceptions lead to tension between faculty and staff. These negative perceptions must be addressed in order to improve relationship and thus, lead to be better collaborative efforts between faculty and staff. The findings from this study support previous findings that staff perceive faculty as disrespectful toward staff members (Allen Collinson, 2006; Banta & Kuh, 2000; Dobson, 2000; Streit, 1993; Szekeres, 2004) and may be a result of the perception that faculty are of higher rank or value than staff. Institutional leaders should be mindful of this perception from staff and look for microaggressions between the two units as feelings of rankism will hinder collaboration between units. Trainings on microaggressions within the workplace may help both faculty and staff members better identify and avoid potential microaggressions and also understand how these interactions impact relationships (Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015).

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies in this area should consider providing definitions or guidelines of the types of collaboration being studied. Additionally, multiple participants reached out to the researchers indicating that they desired definitions of staff members. As such, further study may benefit from defining specific populations of staff members to better determine specific perceptions of groups. Researchers may also consider looking at the area in which a staff member works as compared to other staff members to identify if the unit in which a staff member is employed is relevant. As staff are very diverse in function, different units are likely subject to different perceptions. This could also be expanded to look at faculty across different content areas. As mentioned in the findings, study should be done on factors impacting staff willingness to collaborate with faculty. This study found limited information to contribute to the current body of literature in this area.

Those interested in furthering study in the area of collaboration and faculty/staff relationships may wish to consider using a qualitative approach. Responses to open ended questions indicated that there may be some disconnect between survey responses and actual thoughts of participants. Additional qualitative analysis could be done to better understand faculty and staff relations. Areas of suggested study include discussion of barriers to collaboration, effective incentive for collaboration, and general faculty and staff relationships.

While this study attempted to evaluate the relationships between faculty and staff perceptions, the study does not effectively evaluate the concept of microaggressions within faculty and staff interactions. While the significant difference between perceived respect given to staff from faculty may allude to the existence of microaggressions, further evaluation is needed to determine if microaggressions factor into this difference.

Finally, this study did not specifically include the perceptions of administrators regarding collaboration. Further research could be done to learn of administrator views about faculty/staff collaboration. Additional study in this area may provide valuable insight on how collaborative efforts are

supported and incentivized within units.

In conclusion, this study was intended to impact professional practice for leadership to support the strengthening of collaborative efforts between faculty and staff members within units and functional areas at institutions of higher education. Both faculty and staff indicated that collaborative efforts positively impacted student success. Additionally, the units noted a positive perception of the value of collaboration, as well as willingness to collaborate. Administrators interested in collaborative efforts can use these findings to support development of collaborative efforts among different institutional units. Lastly, this study sought to help identify the perceptions of faculty and staff members that may hinder positive working relationships between units and through knowledge of this existence, collaborations can be developed with intentional monitoring to ensure that these perceptions do not hinder efficiency and effectiveness of the collaboration in professional practice.

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