NAVIGATING EXPERTISE: EXPERIENCES OF NEW PROFESSIONALS IN FRATERNITY/SORORITY LIFE

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Fraternity/sorority life is a complex profession with a high turnover rate of professional staff members. In this qualitative study of 11 new fraternity/sorority professionals following their first year in their roles, we examine how new professionals perceive and navigate expertise. We then present implications for practice and research in fraternity/sorority life and student affairs more broadly.

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In 2018, a colleague started an online discussion in the NASPA Fraternity/Sorority Knowledge Community Facebook page, asking, "What makes someone an expert?" and, "How do we as a profession evaluate expertise?" Some individuals in the Facebook group debated the differences between "professional" and "expert," and others engaged in conversation about identifying experts (self and others). Recent research suggests campus-based fraternity/sorority life (FSL) professionals are expected to be an expert on all things related to fraternities and sororities, and to serve as the "public face" of the experience to all entities on campus (Karnes Hendricks & Whittier, 2019). And yet, some professionals in this dialogue questioned whether expertise was achievable at all.

Fraternities and sororities have a large presence in higher education as an active student involvement experience (Hevel & Bureau, 2014; Sasso et al., 2019). Supporters include undergraduate members, fundraising staff, alumni, trustees, and student affairs professionals who advise fraternal organizations (Hevel & Bureau, 2014). Professionals are responsible for maintaining and supporting these varied stakeholders (Karnes Hendricks & Whittier, 2019), yet the field is known for a high turnover among new professionals (Koepsell & Stillman, 2016). Understanding the role of professionals in the field, particularly new professionals who will direct and determine the future of the field, is therefore an important endeavor.

Within their job, many new professionals in FSL do the work of multiple student affairs functional areas (Goodman & Templeton, 2018). Because there is still very little known about new professionals in FSL - specifically at the intersection of their experience and expertise - we sought to understand how expertise is perceived and navigated by this group. In doing so, we aimed to understand whether expectations for expertise impact new professionals' experiences - an element that could contribute to the high turnover in the field. This study examines the relationship between expertise and new FSL professionals through the following research questions:

- How do new professionals in FSL perceive expectations of expertise?
- How do new professionals in FSL navigate expectations of expertise?

Literature Review

In student affairs, there is a postgraduate school transition associated with work as an early career professional (Anderson, et al., 2012; Ardoin, 2019; Schlossberg, 1984). Each individual experiences the postgraduate school journey in their own way (Ardoin, 2019). While there are expectations of graduate preparation programs to address entry-level knowledge and skill development, for many new professionals in student affairs, knowledge and skills are learned and enhanced on the job (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Some research suggests new professionals should focus on understanding their campus and their role, which includes being educated about institution mission, culture, reporting, policies, and accountability measures (Ardoin, 2019; Tull et al., 2009). The transition as a new professional may also include getting to know supervisors and colleagues, as well as maintaining relationships in and outside of the new environment (Carducci & Jaramillo, 2014; Tull et al., 2009). Carducci and Jaramillo (2014) suggested new professionals should listen more, and balance the answers they receive from more experienced professionals with their own insights.

How one is socialized in their first student affairs position has long-term effects (Tull et al., 2009). New professionals often are expected to staff late-night programs, conduct late-night rounds, serve on-call for major events, and provide a high level of service amidst sometimes decreased levels of staffing (Tull et al., 2009). At the same time, new professionals are expected to participate in local, regional, and national professional development opportunities,

and maintain a habit of reading education-related materials (Tull et al., 2009). New professionals in student affairs are often expected to offer novel programs and services that reflect cutting-edge and current thinking (Hirt, 2009), an expectation that likely applies to FSL as well. Student affairs practitioner work in FSL involves numerous responsibilities, including council and chapter advising, risk management, supervision, and understanding how participation affects student learning and development (Barber et al., 2015; Karnes Hendricks & Whittier, 2019). This work also involves dismantling individual, institutional, and system-level practices and behaviors that obstruct student engagement and learning (Barber et al., 2015). Deeg and colleagues (2019) contended there is a notion of higher expectations for FSL advisors that includes an expanding and sophisticated set of skills and knowledge.

Such a knowledge and skill set may require expertise on topics including alcohol and other drugs (Rhoads, 1995; Sasso, 2015; Wamboldt et al., 2019), hazing and risk management (McCreary et al., 2016; Salinas et al., 2018), sexual violence (Brosi et al., 2011; Franklin, 2015), and notions of masculinity/femininity (McCready, 2019). In more recent literature there is a stronger emphasis on FSL advisors responding to racism and bias within their communities, and centering their work in relation to racial justice (Beatty et al., 2019) or focusing on sense of belonging in fraternity/sorority communities, namely cultural interest organizations (Garcia, 2019). Thus the complexity of the role extends beyond managing many stakeholders and responsibilities, and includes focus in more personal and organizational development areas.

Defining Expertise

The concept of expertise has been studied and defined for decades in the psychology field, and "covers remarkably diverse domains" (Ericsson, 2005, p. 233). Student affairs is included in that list (Carducci & Jarmillo, 2014). In 2008, ACPA's Student Learning Imperative intended to foster discussion on how student affairs professionals could create conditions that enhance learning and development. The resource suggested, "The division of student affairs includes staff who are experts on students, their environments, and teaching and learning processes" (ACPA's Student Learning Imperative, 2008). More recently, the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) introduced an "individualized" competency, where "each professional develops expertise in a unique set of competencies" (Core Competencies Manual, 2018, p. 4). These documents exist as framing for all professionals in student affairs, or FSL professionals across rank. These notions of expertise illustrate an expectation that expertise is present, but do not clearly name how that expertise is established, accomplished, or defined.

Conceptual Framing

In order to understand the concept of expertise, we turn to Yielder's (2004) study on professional expertise. The author acknowledged that expertise is typically presented as a dichotomy in the literature as either an experimental, practice-based approach, or as a cognitive dimension (Yielder, 2004). In an effort to highlight a more comprehensive view of the concept, Yielder (2004) introduced an integrated model of professional expertise focused on five functions that work in concert to explain expertise: knowledge base, cognitive processes, professional practice, interpersonal relationships, and internal integrative processes.

While Yielder (2004) suggested that "the overall themes [of the model] can be advanced to other professions" (p. 62), we looked for additional framing in the context of student affairs. As a result, we also use findings from Renn and Hodges (2007) on the experiences of new professionals to shape our study. Renn and Hodges (2007) examined the experiences of new professionals in student affairs from their initial

hire to being "settled" nearly a year into the role. The authors found *fit*, *competence*, and *relationships* as overriding themes shaping these experiences. Participants prioritized fitting in and seeming competent over seeking balance in their jobs (Renn & Hodges, 2007). They looked to relationships with colleagues and supervisors for guidance or expectations, and most participants viewed their first job as a "training ground" for their career (Renn & Hodges, 2007). We employ Yielder's (2004) integrated model of professional expertise to ground our understanding of expertise and use the themes of fit, competence, and relationships from Renn and Hodge's (2007) work to conceptually frame our study in the context of student affairs.

Methodology

The data used for the current study are part of a larger qualitative study examining the experiences of 13 new professionals in FSL.

Participants

We defined "new professionals" as adults age 18 or older with a master's degree from an accredited, degree-granting institution. New professionals in this study had no more than one year and no less than 10 months post-masters on-campus employment as a FSL staff member, worked in FSL in a full-time capacity, and did not share explicit responsibilities with other functional areas (e.g., orientation, student activities/events). To recruit participants, we posted messages on AFA email listservs and the NASPA Fraternity/Sorority Knowledge Community Facebook page. Through these efforts, we recruited and interviewed 13 participants, all of whom possessed a master's degree in higher education, student affairs, and/or college student personnel. For the purpose of this study on expertise, we focused only on the data from 11 individuals who worked at higher education institutions. The sample consisted of four individuals who self-identified as male and seven individuals who self-identified as female. These are self-identified responses when participants were asked about gender, and we recognize they listed sex within this framing. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 27.

Limitations and Scope

We recognize that limitations to the scope of our work exist. First, seven of the 11 participants self-identified as white/caucasian and most identified as female. In their report about the membership of AFA, Koepsell and Stillman (2016) found that of the 600 AFA members who identified their race, 73% were White. Of the campus-based professionals who were members categorized as entry-level, 64.4% were women and 35.6% were men (Koepsell & Stillman, 2016). Further, while we excluded the two participants who were working at an organization headquarters, in the future it would be beneficial to examine experiences from an FSL organization headquarters-based perspective. While our sample is representative of the field by these metrics, we were not able to capture a full range of perspectives representing new professionals in the field of FSL, and thus voices and ideas of expertise are missing from this analysis. We see this imbalance of participant demographics as a limitation that should be addressed in future iterations.

Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews (90-120 minutes) about work experiences and environment were conducted with each participant (Patton, 2002). Interviews were selected as a way to "gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016, p. 98). Once all interviews were conducted and transcribed, all participants were given a pseudonym, and an iterative process for data analysis was employed (Creswell, 2013). We used a deductive and inductive coding process, using codes pre-generated based on the literature and allowing new codes to be developed throughout the analysis process (Creswell,

2013). Both researchers coded all data individually before coming together to discuss codes. After the first round of coding, we discussed any discrepancies and engaged in peer debriefing with a project advisor (Creswell & Poth, 2018). We then used the agreed upon coding schemes to group codes of similar topics and establish themes (Merriam, 1998).

Positionality and Trustworthiness

As members of fraternal organizations, we both carry biases into our research and writing that are ultimately rooted in our own lived experiences - the first author working as a campus-based advisor, and the second author as a traveling consultant for her sorority who also lived in a fraternity house as a House Director. We have both been new professionals in FSL, and hold varying levels of expertise expectations as a result of our roles. While we conducted this study with ideas of "good" or "effective" professional practice in FSL, we suspended any preconceived ideas of what it means to be an "expert." We recognize our positioning within the field of FSL, and question if expertise is attainable, especially in the changing landscape of FSL.

During interviews, we shared past experiences with participants and discussed biases as a research team. The ability to ask follow-up and probing questions to our participants (Galletta, 2013) came from multiple years of a connection to FSL. To establish trustworthiness (Glesne, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002), we engaged in methods of reflexivity and peer debriefing. Reflexivity recognizes that researchers shape the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015), and we practiced this by challenging our own values of expertise and reflecting on our positionality (Kralik, 2005). Reflexivity serves as an effort to enhance credibility and trustworthiness (Raskind et al., 2019). To assist with the authenticity of our findings, we engaged in peer debriefing with two colleagues, which allowed objective perspectives to challenge and/or affirm our interpretations as related to the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Spall, 1998). One individual was a fellow qualitative researcher, and the other was a director for FSL at a large research institution.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine new FSL professional's perceptions of expectations for expertise and the ways they navigated these expectations. New professionals in this study initially cited years of experience as a metric for expertise in FSL. Based on this measure, all 11 participants shared that they did not consider themselves experts. For example, Katrina shared, "Everybody comes to me with all the questions, you know like I am the token Greek person on the campus… unfortunately I'm looked at as an expert on the campus, but... I would not consider myself an expert by any means." Beyond time in role, several themes emerged that captured ways new professionals perceive expertise in FSL and navigate existing expectations including *Challenging Notions of "Expertise*," *Accepting Limitations of Self*, *Understanding Community, and Committing to Learning*.

Challenging Notions of "Expertise"

Every participant in this study reported that they did not feel like experts in FSL, yet some acknowledged elements of expertise in the FSL profession overall. Kristin mentioned the people she most admired in the field continue to ask questions and increase learning. She shared, "They've been in this field for years, and they're so well-accomplished and rewarded...but they are still asking questions, they still know there is more to learn." Alexis did not believe one could be an expert practitioner, and instead, noted that a person might achieve expertise in scholarship. For Mike, expertise involved engaging with colleagues and other professionals outside of FSL and "aligning the mission of [FSL] and not just our university

missions." While expertise is not something they had (yet) mastered, several participants drew on ways expertise could exist in practice.

Some participants challenged professionals who identified as experts. For example, Rick wondered about the dual-nature of being an expert in FSL while also having a full-time position in the field. Rick shared, "If you're going to be an expert on sexual assault prevention education, to a point where you're going to have fifteen or twenty professional speaking gigs, my hope is that you were leading education on your campus for sexual assault prevention education." Some also questioned how ego and elitism were involved with the identification of "expertise." DJ noted, "Quite frankly, if you think that you're that much of the shit then, yeah, you will think that you are the epitome, or you are the standard of what a good [FSL] professional is, and personally I read that [social media] group, there's plenty that think they are." Rick shared similar sentiments, and struggled with the way fraternity/sorority "experts" are paid large amounts of money as a result of their expert status.

While many could identify "experts" in the field, defining expertise was a challenge for our participants. Michelle struggled with the concept, asserting, "I think what is perceived as an expert by our field is not what I consider to be an expert." Rick felt strongly about the way some evaluated what it meant to be a good professional, and raised concerns about placing value in the type of school where someone works. Alexis noticed this while at national conferences, engaging with exhibitors who used large state schools as a benchmark for how all schools could execute something. She challenged this idea and shared, "Different factors will impact the way different communities run." Prestige seemed to be associated with expertise, but was not the primary factor that our participants used to understand the concept.

Many of the new professionals in our study did not think expertise was an achievable standard or valuable benchmark. They identified aspects of perceived expertise, like scholarship and networking, but also recognized the presence and overemphasis on expertise in the field. Participants highlighted this tension of not believing in expertise by challenging existing expectations. Yet, simultaneously, participants saw the field of FSL place value on the idea.

Accepting Limitations of Self

Despite the struggle to define expertise, participants were able to identify different elements contributing to expertise, including self-understanding. Katrina noted:

> "There's so much [...] of its essence about fraternity and sorority that you have to learn, on top of everything that goes with it, so I...think I could study fraternity and sorority until the day that I die and I would never consider myself an expert."

Recognizing areas of strength and accepting areas for improvement was at the core of self-understanding as it related to expertise. Kristin contended that owning and understanding different FSL contexts might in turn make someone an expert on something specific. For Alexis, self-understanding meant being well-versed and observant as opposed to being "an expert." She acknowledged that, on paper, an individual can have a lot of background in organizations and be well-read, however this does not necessarily translate to expertise. She also shared, "It could be me who comes in and... 'I think I'm an expert on Multicultural Greek Council,' when really... not the case, I just can tell you I know what I know about my experiences." In these examples, participants recognized that knowing oneself - both professional strengths and limitations - was important to claiming any level of expertise.

This sentiment was also reflected by Katrina who identified expertise as acceptance of not knowing it all. She posited:

> "I know that I have a lot to learn, but just looking at some of these topics, and

> these areas...I don't know how one person could do it, it just blows my mind about how much knowledge there is that you need to have about things like risk management, about mental health, about crisis, about just everything, and so I think to be an expert...you would need to have twice the size of a normal human brain because you just need to know so much."

The level of knowledge detailed here is not always achievable. Katrina went on to share - and caution - that FSL is unique because professionals touch many different functional areas. "There is a danger in that," she noted, arguing that some fall into the trap of trying to be an expert in all aspects of the work.

While some individuals were aware of limitations and capacity, there was also a strong acknowledgement around perceptions of self-worth. Most of our participants shared that they believed they were good at their job. Angela believed she did not give herself enough credit, and felt confident in her abilities. Kristin felt similarly: "The minute I hit that one year mark...I was like, I feel really good about what I'm doing, and my capabilities, and my skills of what I do every day." Having experience in the profession seemed to increase Kristin's sense of confidence and competence in her abilities. This aligns with the metric of time as an indicator of expertise, but seemed to provide participants with a feeling of confidence and relief from surviving their first year on the job, rather than a sense of expertise.

Understanding oneself meant knowing when to outsource problems or ask for help. Most of our participants talked about collaboration with other functional areas in higher education and student affairs. For Katrina, this involved referring students to other campus professionals whom she identified as experts in a particular arena. For example, she shared one experience working with a student who came to her about an incident of sexual assault. Katrina noted:

> "I'm here to listen to you, but I also need you to go to counseling because I am not a licensed counselor [...] and she had already been through the Title IX process, so she had already worked that side of it out, but I think she just really needed to process through her experience[...] I think in that moment I was like... I can't provide a lot of the things that she would need - I could come close, but I'm not an expert."

For Katrina, this acknowledgement was part of what she contributed to being a successful, and potentially expert, professional. In this case, expertise was, "having a little bit of knowledge of everything, but also knowing when to pass it along." Similarly, Michelle contended, "doing good work is doing good work by your students," which is not necessarily seen by others. She shared that expertise is more of an outward presence rather than an internal responsibility or focus on one's institution or "real" job. At times, this includes knowing one might not have the skills or the licensed expertise to assist a student fully.

Understanding Community

Understanding the complex community of FSL, both within and outside of a specific institutional context, was frequently mentioned in regards to expertise. Becca shared that the culture at her institution is different from how she viewed other institutions. "What is working/not working for them is not going to work for us," she shared. DJ noted, "You can't compare what one school's doing to yours, and [be] like 'oh, if it works over there it will work over here' – you can't do that." Others shared DJ's sentiments, and understood their positioning in the community as different from other institutions or organizations. Alexis talked about the differing realities at institutions, including NPHC chapters bringing on two to sixty members in a single group, and how culturally-based groups' presence may vary by institutional type and geographic region. She shared that while some schools might have an MGC, they might be missing

Latino-based or Armenian-based groups, as examples. Alexis also shared, "When [students] go through Panhellenic recruitment, we don't have a lot of legacies...our groups don't require letters of [recommendation]. That's not something that's normal here." As a result of differences such as these, she did not feel one could be an expert on FSL "as a whole."

Participants were also aware of the changing dynamics of communities, including governing and oversight organizations ("umbrella groups") and councils, as limitations to expertise. For example, Mike shared that one can be an expert for a few years, however that will change when an umbrella group implements new policies and expectations, or when hazing laws come into effect in different capacities. Caroline highlighted the multiple stakeholders working in FSL. She shared, "You also have not all student affairs professionals working in [FSL] as an industry. You have all of the headquarters ...all of the national/international organizations...vendors..., consultants now." The boundaries of communities and work environments seemed to serve as a barrier for some, but learning to navigate them was a pathway to attaining expertise.

While our participants did not define diversity and inclusion as associated with expertise, they made references and connections to in/congruences in FSL. DJ talked about the way experts participate in conversations around best practices. He shared that he sees people posting online about creating policies and minimum requirements that negatively impact culturally-based organizations. He asserted, "I also think understanding that the same thing that you do for IFC and Panhellenic is something that, although they're very similar, you can't do the same thing for culturally-based groups." In this way, DJ articulated the need to understand the diversity within the field of FSL, and to create practices that include or address the needs of all students, not just those who tend to be in the majority within a community.

Several participants named the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) recruitment process as a community where expertise is changing. At Alexis' institution, she felt Panhellenic recruitment differed on paper than in reality. She talked about the presence of first-generation college students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Caroline argued that conversations about recruitment have been happening for several years, and that the process is outdated. She posited, "To be an expert in [FSL] moving forward calls for someone to evaluate all of those issues very critically and be able to get other people on board for evaluating those issues." In this way, expertise required being a spokesperson and advocate for the FSL field as a whole, with caution to not prioritize or exclude certain sub-communities in the process.

Committing to Learning

Many participants interpreted expertise as an active commitment to learning. Angela and Brandon approached learning as a lifelong and continuous process. Caroline saw commitment to learning in a holistic sense. She shared, "I think to be an expert in [FSL], one needs to be critical of [FSL], and be willing to recognize when something is not working, when something needs to change, being open-minded to new ideas." To her, expertise required taking a critical approach to existing practices, and being committed to learning new strategies. Mike similarly shared the importance of being aware of the top trends in the field and engaging with students, colleagues, and other professionals outside of FSL to inform practices. He shared, "And not just being reactive but proactively engaging with the students, with colleagues." Katrina noted that her perspective of learning was rooted in the fact that FSL involves a high risk population of students, and argued the importance of being aware of resources for wellness, mental health, and academics.

A commitment to learning was further demonstrated through avenues for profes-

sional development. Brandon and Angela spent time reading and looking for more information about fraternities/sororities, and Angela shared, "I'm always interested in learning more, and staying up to date on current events and things that are happening, and understanding policies, and taking the time to read different publications." Several participants also named professional development opportunities as integral to expertise, including programs, institutes, reading, and presenting at conferences.

For many, being an expert meant staying current on knowledge and learning about the ever-changing field and people within it - including students. Mike saw the field as "always changing and always evolving," and that a person's status as an expert on an area may change from year to year. Angela's commitment to learning led her to question expertise altogether:

> "What does being an expert even mean? There's always more to learn. There's always new things to do or new ways to try things, and what maybe works now is not gonna work in 20 years[...] I think we're always evaluating, and assessing, and striving for more. And so I think it's hard to ever be like, 'I'm an expert, I've learned all that I can learn, I know all the things.' I think there's people who have a lot of experience, and I feel better because I've learned from them, and they can share and pass on their wisdom, but I think there's never a point where you've learned all the things you can learn."

Angela illuminates the ongoing learning mindset she felt was needed as a new professional in FSL. She recognizes that committing to continuous learning might mean one can never truly know all there is to know about FSL - that with the changing field, there will always be a need for learning and growth within the profession.

Discussion

In this study, we sought to understand how new professionals in FSL perceived and navigated the expectations of their role related to expertise. Participants perceived expertise in ways that aligned with many elements of Yielder's (2004) integrated model of professional expertise and Renn and Hodges' (2007) concepts of fit, competence, and relationships. However, participants in our study challenged the notion and feasibility of expertise in FSL overall, as evident by their attempts to navigate expectations for expertise.

In line with Yielder's (2004) integrated model, participants most often perceived expertise as a knowledge base, internal integrative processes, and interpersonal relationships. In terms of knowledge base, Rick talked about the attention paid to certain professionals as a result of their public image or speaking commitments on "domain-specific knowledge" (Yielder, 2004, p. 71). Several participants highlighted the breadth of topics relevant to FSL professionals, and perceived expertise as having extensive knowledge in all areas. Yielder (2004) included elements of self-awareness, acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses, and an "open… attitude to learning and change" in the internal integrative processes dimension of expertise. This dimension directly aligns with the themes of *Accepting Limitations of Self* and *Committing to Learning* in our study, showing that participants had strong perceptions of expertise as related to understanding and improving oneself. Collaborating with other professionals, building relationships with students, and understanding the broader picture of FSL to include all communities were also cited as important elements for FSL professionals. In the interpersonal relationship dimension of expertise, Yielder (2004) included teamwork, "seeing the 'big picture,'" and engaging with stakeholders (p. 73), which connect to these findings. Few of the elements of the professional work and cognitive processes dimensions of expertise (Yielder, 2004) were mentioned by participants in our study, suggesting the perceptions of expertise were less related to individual skill and more to

expectations around knowledge, scope, and relationship-building.

Considering Renn and Hodges' (2007) findings as a conceptual framing, the themes of fit, competence, and relationships are prevalent in the data from this study as well. New professionals in this study viewed expertise as something valued by the field, and thus required to fit in. Developing competence across multiple subjects and developing the "right" relationships were identified as ways to achieve expertise. Yet these elements of expertise, like being constantly up-to-date on changing policies or knowledgeable on every organization and institutional type, seemed unattainable.

Instead, participants navigated expertise by trying to define their own elements of success to fit within; striving for competence in self-understanding while maintaining a desire for continual learning; and building relationships with students and colleagues across the FSL community. For example, Caroline highlighted the importance of being a critical consumer of FSL. Rather than accepting all expectations, she found value in questioning the way things are done and paving her own path in the field. Similarly, Kristin found it important to establish her own praise and recognition despite any standards for expertise, and to use personal goals as standards for success instead. Alexis navigated expectations for expertise by acknowledging that so much about the field of FSL is unique to specific campuses. She found it difficult to believe that expertise could be achieved due to these nuances, and thus navigated expectations by dispelling them. Angela spent time expanding her own knowledge through research and practice in the field. This allowed her to navigate expertise using data. Overall, most participants navigated expectations for expertise by focusing more on individual development and growth.

Perhaps most noteworthy is the uncovering of a strong tension between expectations for expertise and the reality of the new professional experience. The new professionals in our study did not hold a clear definition of what it means to be an expert, but shared a perception that expertise is valued by the field. While expertise was frequently mentioned as something signaled through conferences, social media, and expectations from campus partners, and perceived as a "gold standard" of professional success, participants questioned and dismantled some of these assumptions. This feeling of contradiction between expectations of expertise and the reality of achieving, or even believing in, expertise was consistent across participants. Many participants illustrated that, for new professionals, there is always something new to learn, and that growth is happening at a rapid pace, whether or not campus partners understand that development. Further, there is a reality for many of our participants that they are "the only one" on their campus, with the expectation that they are, in fact, *the* expert. In the AFA Institutional Survey (2019), 49% of member respondents noted their campus has just one fraternity/sorority advisor, and that 50% do not employ graduate assistants. Academic entities, other student affairs functional areas, and community partners look to these professionals as the individuals who can assist in all FSL-related endeavors, even when they may not have the capacity, knowledge - or expertise - to assist. Thus while we found participants' perceptions of expertise to align with Yielder's (2004) integrated model and Renn and Hodges' (2007) work on new professionals, these studies assume expertise is attainable; the new FSL professionals in our study found ways to navigate expectations, thus challenging the feasibility of expertise altogether.

Implications

Implications for Practice

As several participants mentioned, it is unreasonable to expect new professionals - or any professional for that matter - to be an "expert" on the entirety of FSL. Unfortunately for many, there is an expecta-

tion to be an expert - *the* expert - on their campus or in their organization. For those supervising new professionals in FSL, this is an opportunity to engage with individuals about expectations and growth. Supervisors can give FSL professionals permission to be okay with not knowing it all. Further, resources should be provided for new professionals to enhance their knowledge - engage around current literature, conference attendance, webinars, and local programs to discuss and evaluate the current landscape of FSL. This could include attending conferences and programs that do not solely focus on FSL (e.g., ACPA, ASCA, or NASPA, where messages of FSL expertise may be transmitted differently).

Understanding community was another theme in our research, yet understanding all communities within FSL may be a challenge given one's capacity. In FSL and student affairs, experiences differ based on institution/organization type, position, and capacity. Student affairs preparation programs and associations should advise with this consideration when teaching about or programming for individuals with an interest in FSL. For example, an advisor experience on one campus may involve one council and multiple chapters, and on other campuses, it may contain multiple councils and multiple chapters. Providing more information about the depth of FSL and acknowledging the potential differences in future roles may provide graduate students with more realistic expectations as they make the transition to new professional.

Institutions or organizations that expect expertise from new professionals may be setting them up for failure. Job and position descriptions should be written carefully, and include specific needs a campus or organization has in reference to the hire. Campus partners and FSL stakeholders should be involved in hiring processes (e.g., on-campus interviews) to add context and perspective. Institutions and organizations should be transparent and open to what unique perspectives an individual might bring to a role. For example, not all new professionals come from higher education or student affairs programs, and even for some who do, not all worked in FSL as a graduate employee. Institutions and organizations should take an inventory of what is known during the interview process, but not penalize someone because of one specific gap in their knowledge.

Each participant expressed a need for continual learning, and questioned whether 'knowing it all' was possible. Koepsell and Stillman (2016) suggested the youthfulness and the short amount of time spent in positions leads to a "swift exodus" from the field (p. 8). Perhaps the pressure for expertise contributes to this rapid "exodus." When teaching about student affairs and field departure, faculty in graduate preparation programs and assistantship supervisors should address the ways this impacts specific functional areas (e.g., in FSL; professionals doing conduct work). Leaders in the field should also evaluate this trend and further study the impact of expectations for expertise on turnover through exit surveys.

Future Research

Several areas for future research stem from this work. We learned about the perceptions of expertise from new professionals in FSL, but how do these perceptions interplay with the expectations set for new professionals in general? Further understanding of how this alignment or misalignment affects work environment, satisfaction, and relationships is needed in order to better understand how expertise impacts the experiences of new professionals. Furthermore, research on the onboarding and training of new professionals is needed. If we believe there is value in the profession of FSL to enhance the experiences of college students, as suggested by the AFA competencies (2016, 2018), then efforts to understand and enhance the experiences of professionals at all career stages remains an important endeavor.

Conclusion

The field of FSL is ever-changing. While it is unreasonable to expect new professionals to be experts on FSL, the expectation is still implied. Participants in this study suggested that doing one's job, even if very well, and even if very knowledgeable, does not make one an expert. Regardless of implied or expected expertise, the individualized nature of one's work and a willingness to learn can affect their job and functionality. As we consider the expectations set for new professionals and the standards established for the field of FSL more broadly, perhaps the standard of expertise is one that should be reevaluated and exchanged for an emphasis on growth, learning, collaboration, and development - because we can never know it all.

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