

DISTANCE BETWEEN SILOS: FAMILIARITY WITH CAS STANDARDS AMONG LAW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

The CAS Standards are commonly used in undergraduate-facing student affairs practice but rarely discussed in legal education. This study explores law student affairs professionals' awareness and use of the CAS Standards, finding a significant divergence from the rest of the field and suggesting that (in the current era of increased scrutiny) law student affairs may be a functional area ripe for greater engagement with these strong assessment and benchmarking tools.

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Since their introduction in 1986, the general and functional-area-specific standards published and regularly updated by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) have become a cornerstone of student affairs preparation and practice. Paterson and Carpenter (1989) described them as “a major step forward in the efforts toward [student affairs] becoming a profession” (p. 125) distinct from other types of educators and helping professionals. Bryan and Mullendore (1991) noted that, with the creation of professional standards, “[s]tudent affairs clearly announced its determination to control its own destiny” (p. 29).

Departmental self-study projects often use the CAS Standards as essential guides, and prospective Higher Education Administration graduate students would be hard-pressed to find a program that does not explicitly include the CAS Standards somewhere in its curriculum. In an era of increased scrutiny and reduced access to resources (Blimling, 2013; Wegner, 2018), the CAS Standards provide a common benchmark to evaluate student affairs programs and a model to articulate program needs when they arise.

In contrast with their undergraduate-facing counterparts, student affairs offices that serve law students rarely display outward signs of engagement with the CAS Standards. In 2019, more than 100,000 students attended ABA-accredited law schools in the United States (American Bar Association, 2019). McGuire and Phye (2006) noted that law students must be socialized into the norms and values of the legal profession, while researchers from Shanfield and Benjamin (1985) to Organ et al. (2016) described significant developmental and mental-health-related needs in the same student population. Both Polson (2003) and Pontius and Harper (2006) roundly rejected the myth that graduate and professional students are developmentally final (even apart from professional socialization) and do not benefit from services to address their unique needs.

Specialized law school student affairs offic-

es have been created to meet those needs, often staffed by law school graduates, responsible for a wide range of traditional student affairs functions, and reporting to the academic dean of their law school rather than the chief student affairs officer (CSAO) of their parent university. Describing the creation of the field in the 1970s, Van Zandt (2005) opined:

The standard approach was to hire a dean of students to handle all the student problems and complaints in the hope that this would keep the dean’s office more serene. Often the new dean of students was a faculty member of a particularly pleasant demeanor who tried to empathize with the students and respond to their self-identified problems but had little or no professional training. (p.172)

In 1992, Hazen wrote to an audience of increasingly specialized law student affairs professionals, specifically addressing those “with titles such as Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Assistant Dean for Student Services, and Director of Student Services” (p. 332). While seconded faculty are no longer the norm, McGuire and Phye (2006) briefly described a 2004 informal review showing that law student affairs professionals almost uniformly possessed a Juris Doctor degree and that “only about half had any formal training beyond that degree, whether student affairs or not” (p. 60).

This approach to selection and training mirrors (and extends) the sequestration that Baird (1990) noted as distinct to professional education, isolating professional students from their counterparts across the campus and contributing to the departmental “silo effect” that Pontius and Harper (2006) described as limiting the effectiveness of graduate and professional student services programs. That difference in training, socialization, and reporting may also explain why, despite their widely-held value among other student affairs professionals, no peer-reviewed research has been published addressing the use of the CAS Standards

in legal education or law student affairs practice. This exploratory study seeks to determine how much awareness law student affairs professionals have about the CAS Standards and how often the CAS Standards are used in law student affairs work in the hopes that they may be a valuable tool when translated from undergraduate- and graduate-facing student affairs work to the specialized programs and services offered to 100,000+ law students each year.

Literature Review

Overview of the CAS Standards

Standards in Higher Education, initially named the Council on the Advancement of Standards in Student Services/Development Programs, was formed in 1979 as a joint project by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and nine other professional groups (CAS, n.d.-a). Today it has grown to include 41 member associations, each focused on some area of educational leadership and administration (CAS, n.d.-b). The CAS's mission is to "promote [...] the use of its professional standards for the development, assessment, and improvement of quality student learning, programs, and services" (CAS, n.d.-c).

Published in 1986, the first edition of the CAS Standards promulgates standards for 16 functional areas within student affairs practice (CAS, 1986). In May 1986, the American College Testing Program provided grant funding to support publication of the CAS Standards and sent copies to the chief executive officer at every US college and university (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991). CAS Self-Assessment Guides were first published in 1988, giving administrators a concrete process to determine whether their respective programs meet the relevant CAS Standards (CAS, n.d.-a). While the original Self-Assessment Guides articulate a process that relies heavily on documentary evidence and granular rating of individual elements within

each Standard, the University of North Carolina Wilmington developed a more holistic approach to CAS self-study between 1986 and 1988 (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991). In 2017, Gulley et al. published *Using the CAS Professional Standards: Diverse Examples from Practice* to highlight the application of the CAS Standards across different functional areas and institution types, demonstrating that local adaptation and contextualization is a wholly valid and supported use of the Standards. By 2019, the 10th edition of the Standards had expanded to include 45 functional areas and significantly changed the self-assessment process but retained the overall Standards structure (Wells & Henry-Darwish, 2019).

Previous Research on Awareness and Use of the CAS Standards

In 1989, only three years after the first edition of the CAS Standards was completed, Marron's dissertation finalized the first study on administrators' awareness and utilization of the CAS Standards, reporting on a survey of 436 CSAOs at four-year undergraduate institutions. Marron found that over 70% of CSAOs were aware of the CAS Standards, but that possession of the Standards document and awareness about the Standards varied considerably by institution size and public/private affiliation. Of CSAOs who owned a copy of the CAS Standards, 82% reported using it as a reference document. For higher levels of possible engagement (e.g., initiating self-study, implementing changes based on the Standards), however, Marron noted that "the overall lack of utilization of the CAS Standards is emerging as the dominant trend in the study" (p. 64).

Two years later, Mann (1991) reported the results of a similar research effort involving 130 CSAOs at four-year undergraduate institutions. Only 16% of participants were unaware of the CAS Standards, halving the ~30% figure Marron reported two years earlier. Over half of the participants reported at least some use of the CAS Standards, while the remaining third were aware

of the Standards but did not use them in practice. Most participants perceived little or no change in student affairs practice resulting from introducing the CAS Standards five years earlier. To explain the awareness-action-change gap, Mann speculated, “[p]erhaps the values expressed in the concrete, measurable format presented in the CAS Standards are the articulation of values already internalized by student affairs professionals” (p. 7). Mann theorized that CSAOs who joined the field between 1986 and 1991 or who were not members of the professional associations promoting the CAS Standards might receive less exposure to them, reducing both awareness and utilization.

Cooper and Saunders (2000) asked 109 members of the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) to rate the importance of 64 items adapted from the CAS Standards. Using a five-point Likert scale, the average rating for even the least popular item was 3.38, signaling agreement that the CAS Standards contained useful guidance for essential elements of relevant programs. Ethical behavior and avoiding harassment were rated as the most important items, while knowledge of professional insurance options and assessment/research activities were rated as the least important. Participants were also asked to rate their confidence in their ability to address each item, but the responses did not produce significant variation in confidence ratings. In light of the murky relationship between differentiated importance ratings and highly-similar confidence ratings, Cooper and Saunders explicitly left open the question of how the CAS Standards were used on participants’ respective campuses.

Arminio and Gochenauer (2004) evaluated the reach of the CAS Standards 16 years after their initial publication. Affirmatively noting criticism about access to the Standards and the Standards’ focus on inputs rather than outputs, Arminio and Gochenauer analyzed data from 1,481 individual members of CAS-member organizations, including faculty and administrators outside the usual sphere of student affairs work (e.g., members

of the College Reading & Learning Association). Nearly 40% of participants had not heard of the CAS Standards, though awareness increased across reported levels of seniority. Participants noted that the CAS Standards were used in assessment, evaluation, and accreditation review; as a reference guide or resource; for professional/staff development; and to increase institutional support. Participants who reported using the Standards noted that they were most often used as a “Program Guide” rather than formal self-study material or unstructured reading material. Arminio and Gochenauer (2004) noted that the percentage of CSAOs who were aware of the CAS Standards (~85%) did not significantly change between Mann’s work in 1991 and their data collection in the early 2000s. However, CSAO participants in Arminio and Gochenauer’s (2004) study who were aware of the CAS Standards were more likely than Mann’s participants to report that the CAS Standards positively influenced programs and services.

Importance and Application of Standards in Student Affairs Practice

Reflecting on over 30 years of experience with the CAS Standards, Komives and Arminio (2011) noted their individual, programmatic, and profession-wide importance. Professional standards guide new professionals and professionals accepting new responsibilities as they determine both a minimum level of competence in otherwise vaguely defined areas and an aspirational level of excellence in refining their practices. At the programmatic level, professional standards facilitate the creation and improvement of programs through benchmarking against established norms and more nuanced perspectives on the practices of other institutions. This, in turn, allows for greater self-regulation within the student affairs profession and ensures the integrity and soundness of professional practices that stakeholders invest in.

In discussing the application of CAS Standards in student affairs units outside cam-

pus-wide, four-year institution models, Hornak (2014) noted, “[t]he importance of self-study cannot be underscored. Student affairs and services are often seen as disposable elements in higher education; therefore having data to provide validity to the services being offered can give a unit credibility” (p. 45). In 2004, Pooch and the Council of Graduate Schools used a modified version of the CAS Standards to collect data and make evaluations of graduate orientation programs among 191 member schools. Focusing specifically on academic advisors, Keeling (2010) documented the way CAS Standards influenced decisions, and Donnelly (2004) documented a positive relationship between fitting standards (including the CAS Standards) and job satisfaction. Particularly important for Donnelly’s (2004) participants were the standards’ role in producing a stronger sense of professionalism and integrity in their work and reducing stress from ambiguity and uncertainty.

More Research Needed

Creamer (2003) addressed the continuing need for research around the use of the CAS Standards, noting that they have received wide acceptance, selling hundreds of copies each year and being incorporated into graduate student affairs programs regularly. Their acceptance is attributed to the core reminder “to be sure that the educational programs and services over which [student affairs professionals] preside promote student learning and development in some meaningful way” (p. 110). Creamer also outlined a possible path for further research, moving from overall awareness and use to variation based on geographic region and functional area to qualitative questions on the degree to which the CAS Standards shape practice and their ultimate impact on the student experience.

Ten years later, CAS President Laura Dean (2013) reiterated the need for more research using the CAS Standards, arguing that the use of professional standards fills a similar role to cross-institution benchmarking studies used in many func-

tional areas of student affairs practice (e.g., the Law School Survey of Student Engagement). Dean did not outline a prospective research path, leaving all previously identified directions unimpeded and unresolved.

Despite this steady stream of research in other higher education settings, the parallels between law student affairs work and other student affairs practice, and the existence (and regular updating) of functional-area-specific CAS Standards for Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services, no peer-reviewed research has yet been published addressing the use of the CAS Standards in legal education or law student affairs practice.

Methodology

Instrument

As part of this study’s exploratory quantitative approach, an idiosyncratic survey instrument was developed to gather information from law student affairs professionals about their respective law school employers (including a common position in rankings, enrollment, and affiliation), their education and experience working in student affairs, their membership in relevant professional associations, the scope of their professional portfolio, and their prior awareness and use of those CAS Standards relevant to their work. Items about the participant’s experience were deliberately divided between experience in student affairs working with law students and experience in student affairs working with non-law student populations. Professional portfolio items were divided by functional area, drawing individual functional areas from the CAS Standards and excluding those that refer to age- or enrollment-based populations unlikely to be coherent to law student affairs professionals (e.g., “Undergraduate Research”).

Prior awareness and use of the CAS Standards were operationalized as separate closed-ended ratings on a five-point Likert scale (“Prior to this survey, how aware of the Council for the Advance-

ment of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and the CAS Standards were you?" and "Prior to this survey, how often had you used the CAS Standards in your work?") with a sixth option of "no prior awareness" or "no prior use." The sole item on access to the CAS Standards ("Do you currently possess or have immediate access to the CAS Standards relevant to your portfolio?") allowed participants to confirm possession or access to the most recent edition of the Standards, a previous edition of the Standards, no edition of the Standards, or uncertainty about their possession or access to the Standards.

Study Population

A summary of the study and an invitation to participate was sent to the email listservs of the National Association of Law Student Affairs Professionals (NALSAP) and the Student Services Section of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). While neither organization is a CAS member association (and should not be evaluated as such), they represent the most extensive professional bodies specific to law student affairs professionals. At the time of survey distribution, the AALS group had 348 members, while NALSAP reported 405 members on their email listserv. Based on the recent emergence of NALSAP from AALS (NALSAP, "History," n.d.), it is assumed that all or almost all AALS members are also NALSAP members. With 204 ABA-accredited US law schools at the time of survey distribution and anecdotal reports that most US law schools employ only one to two law student affairs professionals, the NALSAP membership of 405 individuals taken was the population cap for this study.

A total of 80 participants completed the online survey form. Based on the population estimate established at the outset of the study, responses were received from 19.75% of the total population, giving inferences drawn from this study's sample a margin of error of +/- 9.83%. As partial confirmation of the premise that guided the population estimate process, only six participants (7.5%) re-

ported membership in AALS but not NALSAP.

Results

Participant Employer Information

The majority of participants (n=72, 90%) reported employment at law schools affiliated with a larger university. Reported full-time enrollment skewed toward larger schools, with 46.25% (n=37) of participants employed at law schools that enroll 590 or more students. Of the 73 participants who indicated that their employer is usually ranked in US law school rankings, 23.29% (n=17) reported being employed at one of the 12.5% of US law schools that are usually ranked within the top 25 schools. Information about law school affiliation, enrollment, and common ranking is summarized in Table 1.

Participant Education, Experience, and Professional Affiliation Information

The majority of participants (n=59, 73.75%) reported earning a Juris Doctor (JD) degree; 12.5% (n=10) reported earning a Master's degree in higher education administration, college student personnel, or a related field; and 3.75% (n=3) reported earning a Doctorate in that subject cluster. Only five participants (6.25%) reported possessing both a Juris Doctor and a Master's or doctoral degree in the higher education administration subject cluster.

When asked about their work in law student affairs, 37.5% (n=30) reported 11 or more years of professional experience. Two participants (2.5%) reported not working in law student affairs (despite positive individual responses for law school employment and membership in one of the sampled professional associations), potentially signaling that not all professionals identify with the "law student affairs" label. The majority of participants (n=42, 52.5%) reported never working in student affairs outside the law school context, including 15 of those 30 participants (50% of the subgroup) who reported 11 or more years of experience in law

student affairs. Statistical analysis did not produce any clear relationship between experience in law student affairs and experience in non-law student affairs. Information about participants' education and experience is summarized in Table 2.

When asked about their affiliation with relevant professional associations, 16.25% ($n=13$) reported membership in NASPA, including 78.57% ($n=11$) of the subgroup who reported holding a graduate degree in the higher education administration subject cluster. Three participants (3.75%) reported being current members of ACPA. Three participants (3.75%) reported membership in the National Network of Law School Officers, and one other reported membership in its parent organization, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Among the 37.5% of participants who reported 11 or more years of professional experience in law student affairs, only three (10% of the subgroup) reported membership in either NASPA or ACPA.

Finally, participants were asked about their professional portfolio vis-a-vis functional areas that have relevant CAS Standards packages. The functional areas most commonly identified in the participants' respective portfolios were Orientation ($n=61$, 76.25%), Academic Advising ($n=52$, 65%), Student Leadership Programs ($n=50$, 62.5%), Student Conduct Programs ($n=46$, 57.5%), and Disability Services ($n=45$, 56.25%). The frequency that each functional area was reported to be in a participant's portfolio is reported in Table 3. Participants reported an average of 9.76 functional areas in their respective portfolios, suggesting a strong bent toward generalist positions in law student affairs. Self-reported years of experience in law student affairs were not associated with the number of functional areas in participants' portfolios.

CAS Standards

On the whole, participants reported limited awareness of, use of, and access to the CAS Standards. Thirty-two participants (40%) reported no

awareness of CAS or the CAS Standards before participation in the current study. In comparison, 22 participants (27.5%) reported minimal awareness of CAS or the CAS Standards, rating their awareness at only one on a five-point Likert scale. Only nine participants (11.25%) rated their prior awareness as five on a five-point Likert scale, representing the highest degree of awareness. When asked about prior use of the CAS Standards, 40 participants (50%) reported zero prior use, and 26 participants (32.5%) reported minimal use. Table 4 reports the frequency of prior awareness and prior use ratings.

Only 11 participants reported having access to either the current edition of the CAS Standards ($n=3$, 3.75%) or a previous version of the CAS Standards ($n=8$, 10%). However, 26 participants (35%) reported not knowing whether they currently possessed or had access to the CAS Standards. Of those 11 participants with access to the CAS Standards, nine reported holding a graduate degree in the higher education administration subject cluster (81.81% of subgroup by access and 64.28% of subgroup by education), five reported having 11 or more years of experience in non-law student affairs (45.45% of subgroup by access and 25% of subgroup by experience), and nine reported having between one and five years of experience in law student affairs (81.81% of subgroup by access and 28.12% of subgroup by experience). All 11 reported current membership in NASPA, ACPA, or both organizations. Participants who reported possessing or having access to the CAS Standards also reported a much higher level of prior awareness of the CAS Standards ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.25$) when compared with their non-possessing peers using an independent samples t-test ($M = 1.09$, $SD = 1.432$), $t(78) = 6.760$, $p = .000$. No participant who reported possessing or having access to some edition of the CAS Standards reported that they had no prior use of the CAS Standards.

The correlation between prior awareness of the CAS Standards and prior use of the CAS Standards was high ($r = .811$, $p < .001$, with an $R^2 =$

.657). Based on that correlation and the higher skew of awareness overuse, prior awareness was used to test group differences by education, experience level, affiliation with relevant professional associations, and professional portfolio size.

Correlates of Prior Awareness of the CAS Standards

Analysis of the relationship between prior awareness of the CAS Standards and education, experience, affiliation with relevant professional associations, and portfolio size uncovered multiple weak to moderate correlates. Differences based on education and experience are summarized in Table 5. Participants with a Juris Doctor degree showed lower prior awareness of CAS and the CAS Standards ($M = 1.14$, $SD = 1.514$) when compared with non-JD holders using independent samples t-tests ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 2.14$), $t(28.454) = 2.981$, $p = .006$. By contrast, possession of a Master's degree in the higher education administration subject cluster was associated with higher prior awareness of CAS and the CAS Standards ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.841$ for MA holders, $M = 1.23$, $SD = 1.571$ for non-MA holders, $t(78) = -4.187$, $p = .000$) as was membership in NASPA, ACPA, or both organizations ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.912$ for members, $M = 1.09$, $SD = 1.422$ for non-members, $t(16.187) = -4.461$, $p = .000$).

Possessing one or more years of experience in non-law student affairs was also positively associated with prior awareness of CAS and the CAS Standards. Participants with one or more years of non-law student affairs experience reported moderate prior awareness ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.965$), while participants with zero years of non-law student affairs experience reported low prior awareness ($M = 0.74$, $SD = 1.106$), $t(57.014) = 4.510$, $p = .000$. Additional years of experience in law student affairs (when analyzed using nonparametric correlation techniques) did not produce significant results.

The number of functional areas in a participant's professional portfolio showed a non-signif-

icant, weak negative correlation ($r(45) = -.213$, $p = .058$) with prior awareness of CAS and the CAS Standards. While no conclusions can be drawn at this time, the observed skew toward generalist positions in law student affairs suggests that this possible relationship may be worth re-examining in the future. Professionals operating with a certain functional area focus may be more aware of professional standards in those areas, including the CAS Standards.

Finally, no measure of institutional characteristics (including enrollment, position in US law school rankings, and law school affiliation) produced a significant relationship with prior awareness or use of the CAS Standards.

Discussion and Implications

The results of this exploratory study suggest that the CAS Standards may be an under-utilized resource among student affairs professionals who work primarily with US law students. Such professionals are often independent generalists, extending their individual work across a large number of functional areas within student affairs practice but reporting to their academic dean rather than their university's CSAO. While survey results showed a high correlation between awareness of the CAS Standards and their use, overall awareness among law student affairs professionals was low, with 40% of participants reporting no awareness of the Standards before participating in this study. Prior awareness was, however, positively associated with both professional experiences in student affairs outside of legal education and participation in professional associations such as NASPA and ACPA.

Limitations

While this study is the first to examine awareness and use of the CAS Standards among law student affairs professionals, some limitations are worth noting. First, ratings of awareness and use of the CAS Standards were not tied to specific behavioral

or attitudinal benchmarks. We may expect some Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) variation where participants who know more about the CAS Standards may judge their awareness against a higher standard than those who know less and assume their knowledge represents a larger proportion of what is possible.

Also notable is the difficulty in determining the representativeness of the sample. Comparing participants' descriptions of their law school employers to the overall field suggests possible over-representation by private, more prestigious, and larger law schools. The survey item on enrollment drew quartile boundaries from the U.S. News & World Report's (2018) ranking of law schools, which excludes LLM, SJD, and other full-time non-JD students. This incomplete benchmarking reference may have produced the observed (but unexpected) upward skew. Alternatively, affiliation, prestige, or size may lead law schools to employ more student affairs professionals, particularly when an analysis of Fall 2018 full-time JD enrollment (American Bar Association, 2019) and position in the U.S. News & World Report (2018) ranking of US law schools shows a moderate to the large correlation between enrollment and (inverse) ranking ($r(201) = .484, p = .000$). Finally, the robust tenures documented in this sample suggest a marked contrast with the low in-profession retention rate reported for student affairs overall (Lorden, 1998).

Implications for Practice and Future Research

In addition to clarifying the limitations noted above, this study offers other implications for practice and for future research. Throughout their education, work experience, and ongoing professional relationships, law student affairs professionals are socialized differently than their undergraduate-facing colleagues are. The distance between those groups appears to produce lower awareness and use of key professional standards and guiding documents, beginning with the CAS

Standards but potentially extending to the Learning Reconsidered series (see Keeling, 2004), the Okanagan Charter (International Conference on Health Promoting Universities & Colleges, 2015), and other paradigm-influencing texts. This, in turn, may leave law student affairs professionals without the resources that drive advancement in student affairs practice and may produce missed opportunities to better serve both law students and law schools.

In addition to their core insights, greater use of the CAS Standards to guide internal decision-making may produce an enhanced sense of professional autonomy and professional identity within law student affairs offices. Legal education scholars have written extensively about professional identity formation among law students (see Hamilton, 2018). However, law student affairs professionals may find themselves unmoored in a hierarchical academic setting that treats them as neither faculty with shared governance nor attorneys with professional standards focused on the practice of law (American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility, 2016). In that context, the sequestration of legal education (and the resulting isolation of law student affairs professionals from their colleagues in other parts of the campus) may be both the cause of this diminished awareness and a cultural impediment to explicit, formal adoption of the CAS Standards in accreditation or association-wide work. Still, while it may not be the singular key to law student affairs "controlling its own destiny," as Bryan and Mullendore (1991) posited about student affairs more generally, strategic deployment of professional standards consistent with the use Arminio and Gochenauer noted in 2004 may help law student affairs professionals request resources, justify decisions, and better pursue their departmental missions in times of uncertainty.

Finally, the distance between law student affairs professionals and colleagues who work with other student populations may present an opportunity for professional associations. Gener-

al student affairs associations such as NASPA and ACPA may find a largely untapped audience while specialized associations such as AALS and NAL-SAP may wish to create or solicit specialized tools, including a set of CAS Standards or a cross-functional framework responsive to the broad responsibilities of law student affairs generalists.

With regard to future research, the follow-up lines described by Creamer (2003) can be adapted and completed with law student affairs professionals. While this study did not locate differences in awareness or use by institution type, better mapping of law student affairs offices' relationships may establish new forms of distinction or commonality to test awareness and use against. Creamer's proposed qualitative pivot may also fit the apparent opportunity to introduce a large proportion of the field to the CAS Standards and explore how their use might align with the incentives that those professionals experience. The marked lack of awareness among senior law student affairs professionals suggests that using the CAS Standards has not previously been a requirement for advancement or career longevity. As law school enrollment and budget conditions change (Polden, 2016), the possibility that the CAS Standards may play some role in the resulting assessment (Cunningham, 2018) or strategic planning processes may be worth exploring.

Finally, the seniority of participants and the possible skew in their law school employers present small mysteries in and of themselves. Non-law student affairs professionals have reported relatively short tenures in the field, with 50-60% of new professionals departing the field in five years or less (Lorden, 1998). Approximately 44% of participants in this study reported five or fewer years of experience in law student affairs. However, over 36% reported more than ten years of experience in the field, suggesting little, if any, narrowing over time. Private, larger, and more prestigious law schools also contributed more participants than would be expected from an equal distribution of staff across US law schools. A wider investigation

of the distribution and career trajectories of law student affairs professionals may inform future research on their experiences, attitudes, and relationships.

Conclusion

As expected, law student affairs professionals showed significant variation with regard to their awareness and use of the CAS Standards, both within the sample and when compared with their non-law-specific student affairs counterparts described in prior literature. The proportion of law student affairs professionals reporting no prior awareness of the CAS Standards in 2018 was over twice that reported by SACSA members in 2000 and CSAOs in 2004. Indeed, a larger proportion of CSAOs was aware of the CAS Standards three years after the Standards were first published than law student affairs professionals are after 32 years of continuing use and development. Awareness and use of the CAS Standards were significantly higher among those law student affairs professionals who hold a graduate degree in the higher education administration subject cluster; professionals with at least one year of work experience in student affairs not serving law students; and professionals who reported current membership in NASPA, ACPA, or both professional associations. This suggests that law student affairs professionals are not commonly exposed to the CAS Standards outside of training for, experience as, or collegial interaction with non-law student affairs professionals.

By understanding law student affairs professionals' awareness and use of the CAS Standards, scholars and practitioners can more clearly see and shape the development of the student affairs profession within legal education. Their utility has made some level of engagement nearly universal in the undergraduate-facing student affairs context. Their adoption in law student affairs may hasten the development from sequestration to faculty secondment to professional self-determination.

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Table 1***Participant Employer Information***

	n	Proportion of Sample
Enrollment		
Fewer than 300 students	4	5.0%
300-424 students	19	23.8%
425-589 students	19	23.8%
590+ students	37	46.3%
Affiliation		
Affiliated with a larger private university	47	58.8%
Affiliated with a larger public university	25	31.3%
An independent, private law school	8	10%
An independent, public law school	0	0%
Ranking		
Top 25 US law schools	17	21.3%
Top 50 US law schools	9	11.3%
Top 100 US law schools	29	36.3%
Top 204 US law schools	18	22.5%
Non-US law school rankings	4	5%
I do not know	3	3.8%

Table 2***Participant Education and Experience***

	n	Proportion of Sample
Education		
Master's degree in Higher Education Administration, College Student Personnel, or another related field	10	12.5%
Master's degree in Counseling	7	8.8%
Master's degree in another field	10	12.5%
Juris Doctor degree	59	73.8%
Doctorate in Higher Education Administration, College Student Personnel, or another related field	4	5.0%
Doctorate in Counseling	1	1.3%
Doctorate in another field	3	3.8%
Other Graduate/Professional Degree	3	3.8%
Experience working in law student affairs		
No experience	2	2.5%
1-2 years	13	16.3%
3-5 years	19	23.8%
6-10 years	16	20.0%
11+ years	30	37.5%
Experience working in non-law student affairs		
No experience	42	52.5%
1-2 years	4	5.0%
3-5 years	7	8.8%
6-10 years	7	8.8%
11+ years	20	25.0%

Table 3*Functional Areas in Participants' Professional Portfolios*

	n	Proportion of Sample
Academic Advising Programs	52	65.0%
Admissions Programs and Services	17	21.3%
Alcohol and Other Drug Programs	35	43.8%
Assessment Services	14	17.5%
Auxiliary Services Functional Areas	10	12.5%
Campus Activities Programs	40	50.0%
Campus Information and Visitor Services	9	11.3%
Campus Police and Security Programs	11	13.8%
Campus Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Programs	9	11.3%
Career Services	14	17.5%
Civic Engagement and Service-Learning Programs	16	20.0%
Clinical Health Services	5	6.3%
College Unions	1	1.3%
Collegiate Recreation Programs	7	8.8%
Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs	1	1.3%
Conference and Event Programs	21	26.3%
Counseling Services	29	36.3%
Dining Service Programs	2	2.5%
Disability Resources and Services	45	56.3%
Education Abroad Programs and Services	14	17.5%
Financial Aid Programs	18	22.5%
Health Promotion Services	25	31.3%
Housing and Residential Life Programs	4	5.0%
International Student Programs and Services	16	20.0%
Learning Assistance Programs	17	21.3%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services	24	30.0%
Multicultural Student Programs and Services	32	40.0%
Orientation Programs	61	76.3%
Registrar Programs and Services	28	35.0%
Sexual Violence-Related Programs and Services	32	40.0%
Student Conduct Programs	46	57.5%
Student Leadership Programs	50	62.5%
Student Media Programs	1	1.3%
Transfer Student Programs and Services	37	46.3%
Veterans and Military Programs and Services	18	22.5%
Women's and Gender Programs and Services	20	25.0%
None of the Above	1	1.3%

Table 4*Overall CAS Awareness, Prior Use, and Current Access*

	n	Proportion of Sample
Prior Awareness		
No awareness prior to this study	32	40%
1 (Minimally aware)	22	27.5%
2	4	5.0%
3	6	7.5%
4	7	8.8%
5 (Highly aware)	9	11.3%
Prior Use		
No use prior to this study	40	50.0%
1 (Minimal use)	26	32.5%
2	3	3.8%
3	5	6.3%
4	5	6.3%
5 (Heavy use)	1	1.3%
Possession/Immediate Access		
Possess/have access to the most recent edition of the CAS Standards	3	3.8%
Possess/have access to a previous version of the CAS Standards	8	10.0%
Do not possess/have access to the CAS Standards	41	51.3%
Do not know	28	35.0%