

Personal and Professional Balance among Senior Student Affairs Officers: Gender Differences in Approaches and Expectations

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This study examined the approaches and expectations about personal and professional balance among senior student affairs officers. Demographic variables were also examined to determine how they affected the relationships between the main variables.

Rapid and relentless organizational and technological changes in the late 20th-century workplace, coupled with major sociological changes, such as the entry of more women into the work force, the rise in single-parent households, and the assumption of more child-rearing duties by men, are enough to explain why people find it increasingly hard to appropriately balance the competing demands of the workplace and home. Professionals are expected to spend long hours away from home, leaving them with less time and energy to care for family and friends, let alone themselves. It is little wonder that despite both increased affluence and their intelligence, education, skill, and commitment, many professionals feel unfulfilled and helpless, beset by stress, frustration, and guilt. (Markel, 2000, p. 36)

Although an extensive literature exists on balancing personal and professional demands, little has been written nor has significant research been conducted on this issue from the perspective of the student affairs profession. However, the issue of balance is a recurring theme at conference programs and workshops focusing on the role of the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) and is a frequent topic of informal discussion among SSAOs. As Reisser (2002) noted, "Our world presents us with more challenges, opportunities, and demands than we can handle, even with our emerging skill at multitasking" (p. 49). Finding time for family and/or friends, personal renewal, wellness, and other priorities while juggling the demands of a job that requires a 24/7 commitment is more of a goal than an achievement. Some SSAOs have responded by allowing their professional lives to dominate, while others have allowed their personal lives to take center stage; still others have simply given up. However,

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few feel that personal fulfillment will be achieved by focusing solely on their professional role. Carpenter (2003) emphasized,

Professional identity is important, even critical, but it is only one part of life. Professions are more than jobs, but they are no substitute for family, for friends, for community, for health, and spiritual concerns. Balance is required to be a good person and a better person will be a more valuable professional. (pp. 584-585)

Although balance is often portrayed as an either/or proposition, personal and professional lives are interdependent, according to Toma and Grady (2002). Friedman and Greenhaus further asserted that “success in one area enhances the other, and the reverse is true as well” (as cited in Toma & Grady, p. 99). The need to have an integrated view of life and a life congruent with one’s values is further stressed by Quinn, O’Neill, and Debebe (as cited in Toma & Grady). Ultimately, Toma and Grady concluded, the issue of balance boils down to “making choices based on values” (p. 98.) These ideas are synthesized in Kofodimos’ (1993) definition of balance—“finding the allocation of time and energy that fits your values and needs, making conscious choices about how to structure your life, and integrating inner needs and outer demands” (p. 8).

In Reisser (2002), several current and former SSAOs discussed how they have approached the issue of balancing personal and professional demands. Some common strategies emerge among those interviewed, including the need for (a) focusing on the big picture and the long term rather than the immediate crisis or the day-to-day ups and downs of the institution; (b) knowing thyself and living a life congruent with values; (c) focusing on family first, (d) taking time for mental, physical, and spiritual wellness; and (e) seeking and accepting challenges. These strategies do not detract from professional commitments, but benefit them instead. Roper noted that he has been able to do more by focusing on less: “I learned to narrow and deepen my commitments and interests, and this has served me well over many years” (as cited in Reisser, p. 56). All of these elements have one thing in common. In each case, the individual has taken charge of his or her own life and destiny. In some cases, this requires adaptability, change, or learning new skills in order to meet today’s challenges (Markel, 2000).

Markel (2000) suggested using a complicated “human performance system model” to balance personal and professional demands. He suggested analyzing one’s personal life using a system that identifies inputs and outputs that are part of a processing and receiving system. In each case, feedback and consequences are identified. Some other components of this system include examining whether values, demands, goals and past consequences are

compatible; comparing behaviors to values; identifying the positive and negative consequences of achieving or failing to achieve goals; determining what sacrifices are required to achieve goals and what the price will be and for whom; setting priorities and developing a timeline for the completion of goals; developing action plans; monitoring feedback and progress; selecting self-management strategies; and choosing mentors and resources. Identifying core values can be problematic for new professionals, but the SSAO is more likely to have more life experience upon which to develop values and priorities.

Some believe that the key to balance lies in greater efficiency. However, Jackson (1996) asserted that this is a fallacy:

Searching for more and better ways to work efficiently is, I think, a strategy built on the implicit assumption that accomplishing more will lead to more recognition from others and, therefore, more personal satisfaction. ... This logic is flawed. ... There are, after all, human limits to how much one can accomplish—incremental gains in efficiency and its associated reward (internal as well as external ones) become harder to achieve as one becomes more efficient and productive. (as cited in Toma and Grady, 2002, p. 100)

Some researchers have suggested that issues of balance do impact and affect the genders differently. Spain and Bianchi (1996) found that while taking work home benefits a man's career, it has the opposite impact on a woman's career (as cited in Toma & Grady, 2002). Nobbe and Manning (1997) suggested that women in student affairs gave up things and changed career goals when they added children to their lives, sometimes opting for slower career ascents by putting off advancement until their families were more stable. These authors noted that there were few role models in student affairs for these women. Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998) found women student affairs administrators were less satisfied than their male colleagues with both their positions and the student affairs profession. They found that women tended to leave the student affairs profession at higher rates than men. The extent to which issues of balance play into this phenomenon is largely unexplored.

Methodology

This study was a quantitative investigation of perceived balance between personal and work commitments among senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) at U.S. and foreign/international colleges and universities that are members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The study also examined SSAOs' attitudes about balance; how SSAOs model or do not model balance; their perceptions of the influence of their supervisors on their sense of balance; and whether the SSAOs'

perceptions of balance and time spent on work commitments are more internally or externally determined.

Based upon an initial literature review, the authors conducted a quantitative survey to examine the issues related to balancing personal and work commitments among senior student affairs officers at colleges and universities. As no preexisting instrument exists for measuring these constructs in the student affairs field, the authors used a locally developed survey based upon constructs from the literature in student affairs and related fields. The study was an attempt to answer several questions, including these: Can senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) live a balanced life? Are they role models for subordinates? Do they encourage subordinates to balance personal and work commitments? How do the supervisors of SSAOs support or discourage balance? Are the supervisors of SSAOs role models for balance? What intrinsic and external factors influence whether a SSAO lives a balanced or imbalanced life? What changes must occur in the student affairs profession to encourage greater balance and satisfaction?

Study Design

Participants were asked to complete an 89-item, locally developed, web-based survey using a Likert-type scale that was piloted prior to administration with 10 senior student affairs officers. Participants accessed the survey via a link from an email message that explained the purpose of the research and asked for their participation. All 1,115 current voting delegates (SSAOs) who are members of the NASPA were surveyed. This association was chosen as it is the professional association of choice for many SSAOs and provides the most comprehensive list of SSAOs available. The NASPA office provided the names and email addresses of their voting delegate members. Voting delegates are vice presidents for student affairs or senior student affairs officers at their respective institutions. The study population ranged in age from approximately 25 to 70 years of age and included males, females, ethnic minorities, and persons living and working internationally who may be of U.S. or foreign descent. Of the total 1,115 SSAOs, five had no email addresses and 23 emails were returned as undeliverable, which resulted in a total of 1087 surveys sent.

Confidentiality was accomplished by emailing the participants a link to the web page where the survey was located. Study participants were not asked to identify themselves on the survey and steps were taken to ensure that the participant's email or ITP address was not visible on the returned survey. All respondents were directed to the same web page and no data concerning identity were captured. For this type of survey, encryption of the data was not required. No deception was involved in this study and consent was sought and obtained by an informed consent statement at the beginning of the survey.

Data Analysis

In addition to descriptive statistics, the survey data were analyzed utilizing independent samples *t*-tests to compare the means by gender. Levene's test for equality of variances (Levene, 1960) guided the interpretation of the results. Levene's test is used to determine homogeneity of variance. Additional analyses performed are beyond the scope of what can be reported in this initial article.

There were 374 surveys completed which resulted in a 34% return rate. Of the respondents, 162 (46%) were female and 188 (54%) were male. Among the group 282 (80%) were married/partnered, 52 (15%) were single with a partner, and 17 (5%) were single without a partner. Additionally, 206 (59%) had children under the age of 18 living at home, and 144 (41%) did not have children living at home. While 230 (66%) were in a dual career relationship, 120 (34%) were not. The ethnicity breakdown was as follows: African-American 27 (8%), Asian-American 2 (1%), Caucasian 305 (87%), Hispanic 10 (3%), and Other 6 (2%). NASPA members have the option not to report demographic information when they join JASPA, and many choose not to do so. Therefore, there is no comprehensive and accurate demographic information on all NASPA members, so no comparison between the demographics of the survey respondents and the NASPA institutional members (SSAOs) is available.

There were 135 (39%) participants from large public institutions, 174 (50%) from large private institutions and 41 (11%) from two-year public or private institutions. The student headcount for the institutions was as follows: 179 (51%) participants were from institutions with fewer than 5,000 students, 74 (21%) were from institutions with 5,000-10,000 students, 34 (10%) were from institutions with 10,000 – 15,000 students, 25 (7%) were from institutions with 20,000-25,000 students, and 13 (4%) were from institutions with over 25,000 students.

The respondents were asked to indicate their prior role before assuming their SSAO position. Respondents reported their previous roles as follows: 273 (78%) were student affairs administrators, 22 (6%) were faculty members, 36 (10%) were administrators in other fields, and 20 (6%) came from other professions.

Results

The survey included a total of 89 questions pertaining to issues of balance with regard to personal and work commitments of SSAOs. While statistically significant gender differences existed on 16 of the questions posed, it is also worth noting the remaining questions on which male and female SSAOs perceptions did not vary. Below is a review of the most relevant findings

regardless of gender and then a closer look at those questions where perceptions of balance did, in fact, vary by gender.

The words and phrases most frequently selected to describe what “balancing personal and work commitments” meant to the respondents were these: *being personally satisfied with the amount of time I am spending on personal and professional demands* (79%); *living a life congruent with my values regarding what’s important* (72%); *juggling multiple demands without dropping any balls*, (68%); and *multi-tasking* (62%);. Only a small number of participants (4%) selected *impossible* when asked what balance meant to them.

Overall Results

Time as a resource. It is impossible to ignore the resource of time when discussing balance between personal and work commitments. More than half of the respondents (55%) did not agree that student affairs professionals needed to work more than 40 hours a week to be doing enough, yet the vast majority of respondents (81%) defined a reasonable work week as something more than 45 hours per week (46-50 = 41%; 51-55 = 24%; 56 or more = 16%). In terms of their own work schedules, 48% of SSAOs reported working between 51 and 60 hours, though 35% indicated working less (40 – 50 hours) and 13% reported working more (61 – 70 hours).

Feelings of balance and control. In spite of the demands placed on the time of SSAOs, the vast majority (80%) of respondents are confident that they can set limits and appropriate boundaries regarding personal and professional balance and (72%) reported feeling control over the amount of balance/imbalance in their personal and professional lives. If, in fact, SSAOs feel in control of balancing their lives, then is it surprising that only a little more than half the participants (53%) rated their current level of balance as better than average? The mean level of stress reported by SSAOs was 6.64, on a scale where 1 indicated none and 10 indicated the highest level of stress. Additionally, more than half the respondents (57%) agreed that they try to hide stress that accompanies balancing personal and professional commitments.

Perceived expectations. Perhaps the expectations of subordinate staff and superiors help explain the disconnect between the SSAOs’ perceived level of control over their schedules and their reported levels of stress. Respondents generally agreed (80%) that subordinates expected them to attend evening and weekend events and that if they did not attend these events, others would think they did not care about students. Even more participants (85%) reported that their supervisors expected them to attend evening and weekend events. When respondents were asked whether the traditional model of success in student affairs is to devote one’s entire being to the profession, 42% disagreed, while 35%, more than one third, agreed.

Satisfaction and retention. Nonetheless, hours worked and stress do not appear to have a negative impact on personal or job satisfaction for SSAOs. More than three-quarters (85%) of respondents still reported satisfaction in their current positions and even more (92%) would not make a different career choice knowing what they do now about required work hours. It is conceivable, however, that the brunt of the imbalance is being felt by student affairs professionals at other levels of the organization, as 67% of respondents indicated knowing at least one person who has left student affairs because of the inability to balance personal and work commitments.

There does not seem to be consensus about the implication that work schedules have on future recruitment of professionals. Slightly more than half (51%) disagreed that the profession will have difficulty in the near future recruiting for professional positions if expectations of the number of hours staff should work do not change, while more than a third (35%) agreed with this statement.

Role modeling. Role modeling and setting work expectations are two ways in which SSAOs can create an ethos of balance. More than a third (43%) agreed they were role models for balancing personal and work commitments. This number is more promising than the 47% of SSAOs who reported having no mentor who encouraged balance. One way in which role modeling and mentorship occurs is in the form of discussion between SSAOs and subordinates. Almost all (98%) respondents agreed that they provide verbal encouragement about balancing personal and professional commitments. However, fewer respondents (82%) actively address the issue by having formal discussions with their subordinates.

Life circumstance. SSAOs' expectations of their employees did not seem to vary based on the employees' life circumstance. Practically all (96%) respondents reported that they do not expect a single person to work more hours than a person with a partner. On the flip side, 68% of respondents also said that they did not expect the number of hours worked to decline once subordinates have a child or children. While expectations did not vary based on life circumstance, 93% of SSAOs did acknowledge that inherent differences between services and programs provided by departments in student affairs make it more difficult for some student affairs professionals to balance their personal and professional time.

Flexibility of schedule. SSAOs cited *flex time* as one of the more valued services or programs provided by their institutions to promote a balanced lifestyle. Based on survey results, SSAOs seem also willing to extend flex time to their subordinates. More than half (52%) of respondents reported no concern over subordinates arranging their schedules to accommodate their personal

commitments. Similarly, 68% of respondents reported that they are not concerned about a subordinate's fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities when work is missed at least three days in a row because of family illness or personal responsibility.

Gender Differences

Based on survey results, issues of personal and professional balance are not created completely equal when it comes to male versus female SSAOs. Statistically significant differences by gender were present when it came to *feelings of balance, perceived expectations, issues of control, and satisfaction and retention.*

Feelings of balance. While it was noted earlier that 53% of SSAOs rated their current level of balance as better than average, male SSAOs were more likely than the women to make such a claim ($t = -2.08, df = 346, p < .05$). If more men than women are rating their current level of balance as better than average, then it is not surprising that men are also more satisfied than women with their current levels of personal and work balance ($t = 3.71, df = 347, p < .000$).

Perhaps one of the reasons women feel less balanced than male SSAOs is because of the expectations placed on women at home. Not only did more women report that their partners often comment that they work too many hours, but they were also more likely to report that their children had commented that they do not see them much because of long work hours ($t = 5.89, df = 344, p = .000$). The competing expectations that women feel in the home and in the work place are exacerbated by the fact that those female SSAOs surveyed were more inclined than their male counterparts to hide the stress that accompanies trying to balance their personal and professional commitments ($t = 2.22, df = 346, p < .05$).

Perceived expectations. Female SSAOs were more than males likely to agree that the traditional model of success in student affairs is to devote one's "entire being" to the profession ($t = 2.15, df = 347, p < .05$). Interestingly, male SSAOs were more likely to agree with the statement that if people are doing their job in 40 hours a week, then they are not doing enough ($t = -2.48, df = 348, p < .05$).

Issues of control. Perhaps the most interesting differences between male and female SSAOs relate to control. Women reported higher levels of multitasking as a strategy for achieving balance ($t = 3.36, df = 347, p < .001$), yet ultimately men enjoy a greater sense of balance between their personal and professional lives. Driving such differences might very well be a basic belief among men that they can control the factors that foster a sense of balance. Men, for instance, were more likely to report feeling capable and confident setting limits and boundaries in order to achieve balance ($t = -2.25, df = 347, p < .05$). Men

were also more likely than women to report a feeling of control over the amount of balance or imbalance in their personal and professional lives ($t = -2.09$, $df = 347$, $p < .05$).

Men's beliefs that the number of their work commitments can in fact be controlled, coupled with their self confidence in setting boundaries, manifests in differences in professional practice. Men were more likely to report that they would cancel an important meeting in order to fulfill a commitment to their family or significant other ($t = -2.78$, $df = 345$, $p < .05$). Men also reported more frequently than women that they would arrange professional schedules around their personal commitments ($t = -2.53$, $df = 348$, $p < .05$).

Satisfaction and retention. Perhaps it is not then surprising that female SSAOs were more likely than males to report that they were actively seeking employment in another field ($t = 2.53$, $df = 344$, $p < .05$). Concerns about professional balance also influenced women's projections about staffing in the future. Women were more likely than men to believe that the profession of student affairs will have difficulty recruiting for professional positions if the expectations for hours worked by staff does not change ($t = 2.38$, $df = 347$, $p < .05$).

Open-Ended Responses

Participants were invited to share any comments or observations about balance in a final open-ended question on the survey. Eighty-seven of the respondents provided comments. Although the constraints of this article do not permit a lengthy analysis of these responses, a short overview follows.

A number of the open-ended comments focused on the cyclic nature of demands in the field. It "depends on the time of year," noted one professional; another contrasted the summer months with the academic year. Several respondents emphasized that the timing of the survey (late spring/early summer) had a bearing on their answers: "My answers above refer to the academic year. Summer and breaks have a different pace, fewer hours, and much more balance."

While some respondents focused on the "many legitimate demands" on the SSAO, such as external expectations of performance by supervisors, institutional factors and workplace culture, tight budgets, and staff reductions, other respondents noted that there was a great deal of "personally imposed pressure." One participant stated, "My experience is that individuals bear much of the responsibility for 'imbalance' in their lives." Another respondent admitted, "It is a very difficult balancing act with most of the pressure self induced."

A number of respondents compared the student affairs profession with other professions. Balance “is a challenge regardless of your profession,” noted one respondent. Another responded, “Most successful professionals work long hours, not just student affairs professionals. I’m not sure that they achieve ‘balance’ any better than we do, but those who are happy are passionate about their work and enjoy doing it.” A respondent asserted, “No matter what the profession one is in, one who rises to a senior level will have some evening and weekend commitments that are work related.” Another concluded, “Our whole society expects everyone to work more hours than is healthy.”

Several responses focused on perceptions of change over time. Balance was seen as “an age-old concern that I believe has improved at least somewhat since I entered the field 28 years ago.” In a similar vein, a participant noted, “The tide is changing but not very fast.” Another commented on a “noticeable shift in terms of these issues” and emphasized that “entry level staff have a different commitment to balance—they have one!” In agreement, a respondent noted, “I do notice that new professionals today are far more concerned about ‘balance’ than I ever was.”

Figure 1 displays several contrasting comments that illustrated how differently the issue of balance is viewed.

In summary, we offer a particularly powerful observation from a participant who stated,

Balance is the elephant in the room that student affairs has been trying to work around for many years. We must help people understand that long hours do not necessarily equate to effectiveness. ... Lack of balance negatively affects everyone involved in the equation. It is a risky behavior. We caution people about risky behaviors all the time. We need to include imbalance on our list.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Further Study

A number of conclusions and the resulting implications are discussed below. Finally, recommendations for further study are suggested. We offer the following implications:

1. Based upon the results of this study, “balance” clearly seems to be in the eye of the beholder—three fourths of the SSAOs who participated in the study defined balance as being personally satisfied with the amount of time they spend on personal and professional demands and cited living a life congruent with their values as the epitome of balance.

<p>I feel I have an integrated life in which job, lifestyle, and personal needs always seem fairly balanced because they often overlap. Student affairs has actually supported an <i>integrated</i> life as opposed to preventing it.</p>	<p>I live to work, but also live to participate fully in non-work activities. I <i>compartmentalize</i> extremely well. (<i>emphasis added</i>)</p>
<p>Senior student affairs officers realize that it's not about US. It's about STUDENTS. It's about what they want, need, expect, and deserve. The decision to become an SSAO is one which carries with it expectations for involvement and leadership. It's a commitment to MAKE A DIFFERENCE! It is your passion, your joy, your fulfillment. You marry the institution.</p>	<p>Each of us MUST figure out how to find a setting that allows us then to figure out how to balance, or we're not healthy, and the college where we work is the loser.</p>
<p>I wish people would quit whining about this and simply do their jobs. (I know that sounds harsh, but it's what I feel). We have difficult work but it is important. ... We are privileged and lucky to be able to do this work. If we are so wrapped up in feeling sorry for ourselves that we are working too hard or whatever, we should simply step aside and let someone else in who would give up a limb to have our jobs.</p>	<p>The issue deserves attention, perhaps even more today than in the past.</p>

Figure 1. Contrasting Comments – Views of Balance

2. SSAOs do not necessarily “walk their talk.” More than half thought that student affairs professionals do not need to work more than 40 hours a week to be effective, yet 48% reported working more than 51 hours a week themselves. About half of SSAOs believed they were role models for balance, but half acknowledged that they do not provide an example of balance for students and staff. In turn, only half of the SSAOs surveyed reporting having a mentor who encouraged them toward balance. In addition, though SSAOs confirmed that they provide verbal encouragement to subordinates regarding balance, they are much less likely to actively address the issue by having formal discussions with staff on the topic. SSAOs appear to be almost equally divided regarding whether they believe the traditional model of success in student affairs is to “devote your entire being to the profession.” To what degree are their actions modeling this “traditional model” even though they might verbalize support for a more balanced approach? If the verbal message and the statement made by their actions are inconsistent, how do staff and students perceive the message and expectations?

3. Paradoxically, only half of the SSAOs rated their current level of balance as better than average yet almost three fourths felt in control over the amount of balance or imbalance in their lives. SSAOs reported a high level of job satisfaction in spite of their level of imbalance and the need to try to hide stress that comes from balancing personal and professional commitments.

4. Both subordinates and supervisors of SSAOs expect them to attend evening and weekend events. There also appears to be a good deal of self-imposed expectation in this area.

5. In reflecting on how issues of balance impact the profession, two thirds of SSAOs reported that they know at least one person who has left the profession because of their inability to balance personal and professional commitments. Additionally, about a third of SSAOs anticipated the profession will have some difficulty recruiting in the near future if expectations for the number of hours staff should work do not change.

Although there are some significant differences in the way male and female SSAOs view issues related to balance, there are many more dimensions of the concept that are viewed similarly by both. Therefore, balance is an issue with many shared conceptions, yet several significant gendered distinctions. These are as follows:

1. Since women SSAOs reported that they were less likely to report feeling balanced than their male colleagues and more likely to try to hide their stress, it is important that adequate resources and supports be available to female senior student affairs officers. This issue is potentially exacerbated by the current

downsizing environment and budget cuts in higher education, making resources and supports even more critical in these challenging times.

2. Female SSAOs reported less of a sense of being able to control the amount of balance or imbalance in their lives. They may need to take steps to assert greater control of their schedules and obligations in order to better balance their personal and professional spheres. Like their male counterparts, they should be encouraged to occasionally cancel an important meeting in order to fulfill commitments in their personal lives. In addition, female SSAOs should consider discussing their need for balance with the staff assistants who manage their schedules in order to enlist an ally in this process.

3. Women in the study reported feeling less balanced than male SSAOs and perceived a higher level of expectation from others. They were also more likely to see the traditional model of success in student affairs as devoting your "entire being" to the profession. Perhaps women in the field would experience an increased sense of balance and satisfaction with their levels of balance from greater reflection on the level of expectation (from self as well as others) under which they operate and developing ways to center their efforts on bringing their lives into greater concert with their personal beliefs and values.

In addition, the following implications and recommendations were indicated for senior student affairs officers across the board.

1. SSAOs need to make conscious choices to be stronger role models for balance and advocate balance with their subordinates through their verbal messages and, even more importantly, through their actions.

2. The student affairs profession needs to develop and explore more models for promoting balance. These findings suggest that the models need to be focused on self-exploration, questions rather than answers, and individual action plans rather than one-size-fits-all strategies.

3. It is unclear whether SSAOs' beliefs that their supervisors expect them to attend evening and weekend events are based on perception or reality. These data suggest that some of the expectations may be self imposed. If SSAOs have not had formal conversations with their supervisors about their supervisors' expectations, they should be encouraged to do so. In turn, SSAOs should clarify their policies and stances on the use of flex time and expectations for their staff who work in departments where there is an abundance of evening and weekend programming.

4. It is particularly important that during the recruitment and interviewing phases for new student affairs staff, the SSAO should ensure that reasonable expectations about balance, work ethic, and attending evening and weekend

events are accurately communicated to candidates and followed up in writing. These expectations should be revisited during the orientation period and in regular supervision meetings. Self-reflection and conversation on the topic of balance should occur regularly.

5. SSAOs should attempt to balance responsibilities and assignments evenly across staff members. Simply because a specific program is planned in student activities or during orientation does not mean that other staff members cannot attend and assist with these events and give staff members in those departments time to attend to other aspects of their lives.

Although this research gives additional insights into issues of personal and professional balance, more research is needed to better understand the models that are working and why. Follow-up research is needed with the SSAOs who reported higher levels of balance to identify what strategies they employ to sustain balance. In addition, the subordinates of these SSAOs should be surveyed to determine if and how their subordinates are influenced by their supervisor's higher level of balance. Lastly, the impact of institutional type and partnered status on personal and professional balance should be examined.

The student affairs profession needs to promote additional research on personal and professional balance for several reasons. First, seeking a professional work environment that recognizes the importance and need for personal time contributes to a healthy life style where stress, if not completely absent, is kept at a manageable level. Second, senior student affairs administrators must be role models for students and staff members. We must practice what we believe. Third, the families of senior student affairs administrators must not take a back seat to the demands of the profession. Engaged and involved parents and partners enhance the well-being of their children and their partners and, by extension, the society as a whole.

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