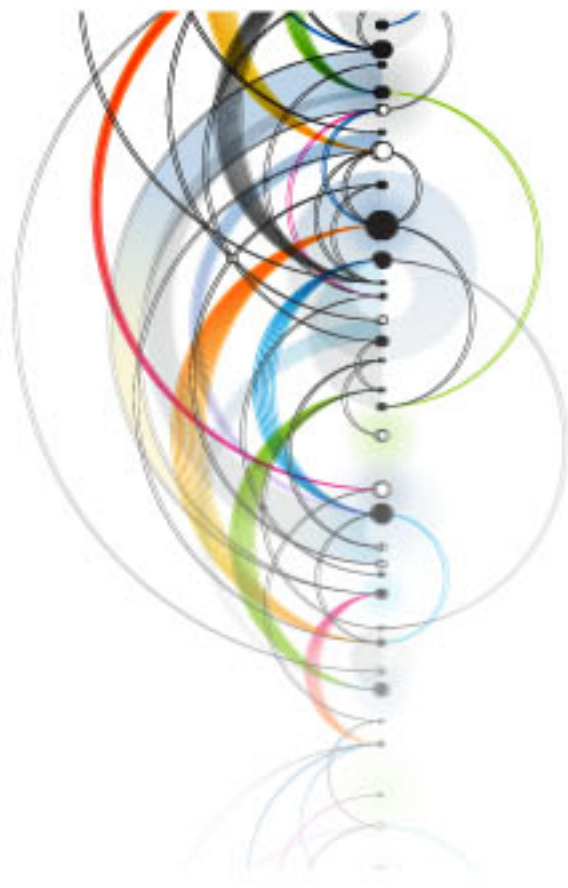


**Abstract**

Employment within student affairs divisions offers environments in which students can apply the knowledge they have gained, as well as acquire new competencies, helping them to build solid foundations for their futures. Researchers used an online survey to assess the outcomes associated with part-time student employment within the student affairs division at a large Midwest university. Results show duration of employment, rank, sense of community, civic engagement, and cultural awareness to be strong predictors of student development in preparation for their futures.

**AUTHORS**

Christina Athas, M.P.H.  
*The Ohio State University*

D'Arcy John Oaks, Ph.D.  
*The Ohio State University*

Lance Kennedy-Phillips,  
Ph.D.  
*The Ohio State University*

## Student Employee Development in Student Affairs

**R**esearch about college student development suggests that cognitive, moral, and psychosocial development takes place largely within the academic and social arenas of the institution (Pascarella, 1985). Astin's (1984) student involvement theory illustrates the many connections between student involvement (e.g., studying, time on campus, participation in student organizations) and outcomes, and stresses the importance of focusing pedagogy on the intended outcomes of specific disciplines or programs. Astin proposed two types of college student outcomes: cognitive (e.g., knowledge, decision-making, or critical thinking) and affective (e.g., attitudes, values, or self-concept; Astin, 1984). Outcomes vary, depending upon the type of involvement.

As holistic and life-long learning ideologies are emphasized more strongly in higher education (American College Personnel Association, 1996; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Dirkxs, 1998; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators & American College Personnel Association, 2004), outcomes associated with college students must encompass a greater breadth of learning and developmental competencies that include not only skills, but personal qualities and attributes that enhance employability, such as those related to self-regulation, critical thinking, and global awareness (Barnett, 2004; Bridgstock, 2009; Brungardt, 2011; Harvey, 2000; Fallows & Steven, 2000; Muldoon, 2009; Pitman & Broomhall, 2009). The university under study refers to these broad skills as *transferable* skills.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

*Email*  
athas.1@osu.edu

Student affairs divisions are well-positioned to align with such a direction, as they have both a learning-orientation and physical practice spaces. The potential for learning within student affairs divisions can take many different forms; the overarching goal is to provide students with learning opportunities that prepare them for their futures. Thus, an intentional focus on co-curricular learning is important (ACPA, 1996; Kuh, 2009).

**As holistic and life-long learning ideologies are emphasized more strongly in higher education, outcomes associated with college students must encompass a greater breadth of learning and developmental competencies that include not only skills, but personal qualities and attributes that enhance employability, such as those related to self-regulation, critical thinking, and global awareness.**

The student affairs division at the university under study is committed to engaging in co-curricular learning, encouraging the acquisition of twenty-first century transferable skills and competencies, and continuing a direct and symbiotic relationship with the academic side of the university. Employment within student affairs divisions is a logical setting in which to apply lessons learned in the classroom and foster students' sense of efficacy related to transferable skills. Yet, there remains much to be explored regarding what types of skills and competencies student affairs may help to develop or foster in its student employees. Conceptually, this study of student employees was developed to understand how the work environment created by student affairs professionals influenced student outcomes, namely in the form of transferable skills.

Many studies highlight positive associations between part-time student employment and social and academic outcomes, suggesting that keeping students connected to the university through employment opportunities may in fact improve their performance academically (Brint & Cantwell, 2010; Cheng & Alcántara, 2007; Dundes & Marx, 2006; Fjortoft, 1995; Kulm & Cramer, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), as well as provide opportunities for increased engagement that bridge both academic and "real world" preparation (Fjortoft, 1995; Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Shaw & Ogilvie, 2010). In one study, students felt inclined to take on more hours to make their work more meaningful or complete, and felt their work fostered motivation as a result of on-the-job learning, access to a world beyond the immediate campus, and opportunities to interact and network; students also felt that they gained real world experiences and confidence in working with others, as well as insight into the job market (Cheng & Alcántara, 2007). This is in contrast to research regarding off-campus part-time work, which may negatively affect students' connection to campus and their academic success, especially when hours reach or exceed 20 hours per week (Dundes & Marx, 2006; Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987; Furr & Elling, 2000; Lundberg, 2004). Off-campus employment may also fall short in terms of student growth and development in comparison to on-campus work (Brint & Cantwell, 2010; Kuh, 2009).

Employment within student affairs divisions offers environments in which students can apply the knowledge they have gained, as well as acquire new information, skills, and competencies, helping them to build solid foundations for their futures. University courses are oriented toward particular content; these may not provide clear connections to day-to-day life experiences, while student employment that is external to the university may not provide intentional learning through practical application of previously-acquired classroom knowledge.

The student affairs division within the large, Midwest public university under study employs roughly 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students as student employees during the regular school year. During their tenure as employees, students develop valuable twenty-first century transferable skills and competencies. Those emphasized by the division range from critical thinking, to oral and written communication, time management, and dependability.

In 2007, the student affairs division at this university began a learner initiative, which continues today. The initiative describes common goals for co-curricular student learning; among them are holistic learning for holistic learners, increased intentionality in programming, teaching twenty-first century transferable skills and competencies, and providing transformative experiences to learners. The preferred pedagogy of teaching and learning in the student affairs division often takes the form of constructivism, the idea that learning takes place both individually and socially and is constructed by the meaning attributed to a certain experience (Hein, 1991). The learner initiative incorporates holistic learning, real-world problem solving, and individual contextualized meaning-making, adapted from aspects of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Astin & Astin, 1996). Constructs such as "consciousness of self" and "congruence" relate to students' ability to contextualize their experiences, while "commitment" [to leadership], "collaboration," recognition of "common purpose," and "controversy with civility" speak to development of problem-solving skills and competencies. The holistic view of learning incorporates these ideas and seeks to support the notion of "citizenship" within the model through constructivist methods. The phrase, "challenge and support," describes a scaffolded learning environment that incorporates instructional support through resources and appropriate professionals.

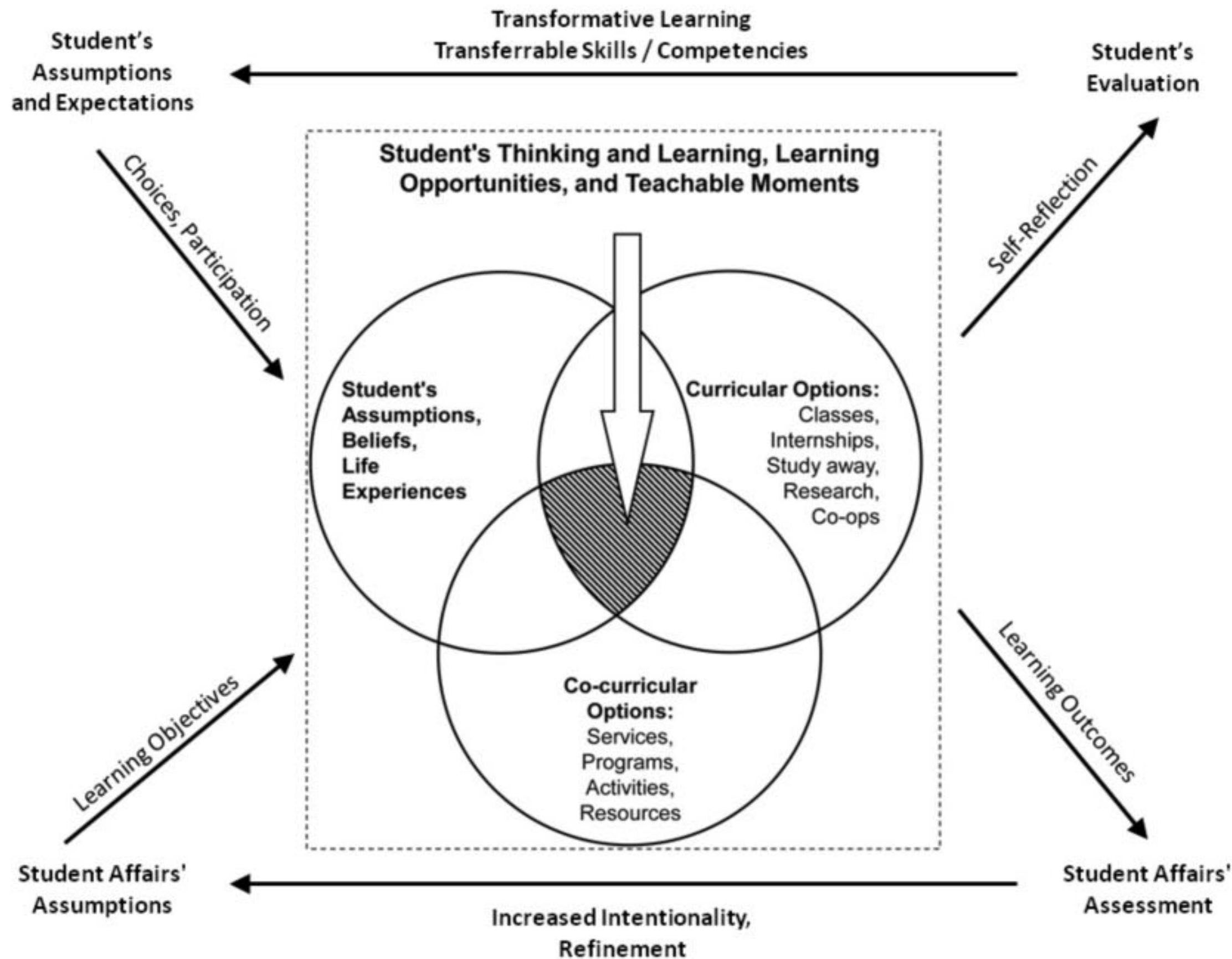


Figure 1. Learning System Map. Adapted from *Learner model & learning system: Concept maps informing practice*, by L.K. Brendon & D.J. Oaks, 2010. Copyright 2010 by the Center for the Study of Student Life.

The Student Employee Outcomes Survey explored the learning environment that the university's student affairs division has created for its student employees. The data and analyses assist the division to leverage its position within students' lives of learning. The current study focuses on the following research questions:

- RQ 1:** How does the student employee experience provided by the student affairs division foster student development?
- RQ 2:** What sorts of transferable skills and competencies predict student success related to preparation for the future?

## Method

### Instrument Development

At the university under study, the student affairs divisional approach to learning is grounded in a holistic learner model that integrates learning outcomes, wellness dimensions, and social domains (Brendon & Oaks, 2010). Eleven *learner dimensions* represent the aspects of the "whole learner," while four *learner domains* illustrate the areas in which a learner operates (self, others, community, change/society). Double-sided arrows (Figure 2) on each of the eleven dimensions represent development, and the movement between the domains demonstrates the interconnectedness of a particular learning area and the learning dimensions. These dimensions and domains are placed within larger *contexts of learning*, specifically university general education outcomes and student affairs learning outcomes. Two "environments" for learning, curricular and co-curricular initiatives, exist within the institutional context (Brendon & Oaks, 2010).

The Student Employee Outcomes Survey was premised on the merging of two "environments" for learning, the curricular and co-curricular environments. This merging

**Keeping students connected to the university through employment opportunities may in fact improve their performance academically, as well as provide opportunities for increased engagement that bridge both academic and "real world" preparation.**

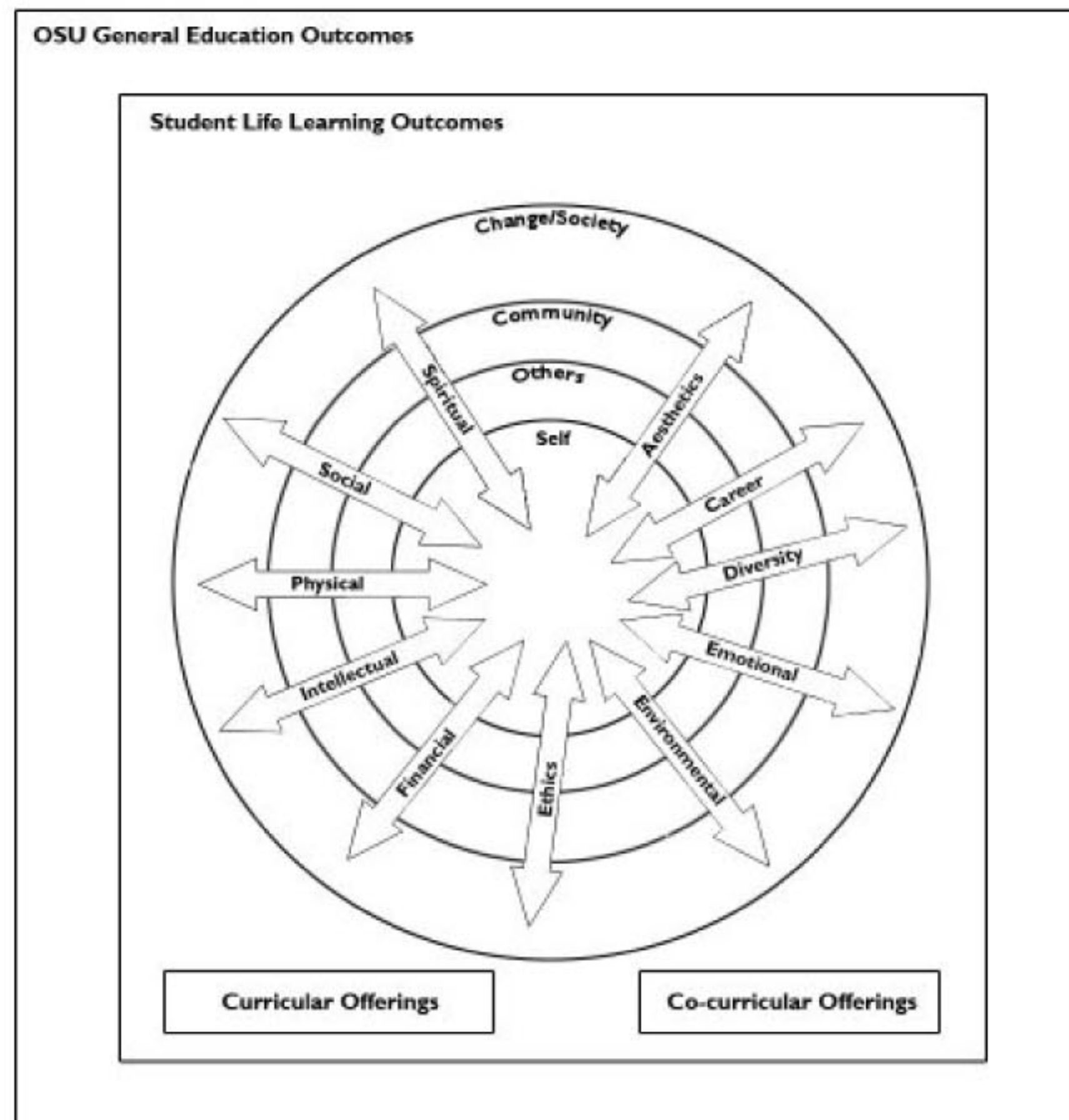


Figure 2. Holistic Learner Model. Adapted from *Learner model & learning system: Concept maps informing practice*, by L.K. Brendon & D.J. Oaks, 2010. Copyright 2010 by the Center for the Study of Student Life.

**The initiative describes common goals for co-curricular student learning; among them are holistic learning for holistic learners, increased intentionality in programming, teaching twenty-first century transferable skills and competencies, and providing transformative experiences to learners.**

implies that certain kinds of learning take place in the academic (curricular) realm, and certain kinds of learning take place in the co-curricular realm (with overlap). Knowledge and skills acquired from the curriculum can then be applied and practiced through interaction/involvement with the (co-curricular) student affairs realm. In a co-curricular environment, students may apply what was learned in a classroom, cultivate those skills, and may acquire and practice new skills and competencies in a practical setting.

We used two conceptual frameworks to guide the survey items: the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education’s *Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education* (2003), and a set of transferable skills developed by the university’s student affairs career office. The Council for the Advancement of Standards is comprised of professional organizations consisting of practitioners in higher education student affairs. The council develops and promotes standards that serve as guidelines for student affairs programming and services, and are designed to enhance student development through intentional program improvement. The transferable skills developed by the university’s student affairs career office were grounded in the CAS standards and in career services literature. The survey assessed student employees’ perceived influence of their employment experience on various skills and attributes. Items were intended to reflect core aspects of higher education learning, as evidenced by the CAS standards and the division’s transferable skills of focus, and were reviewed to ensure that the instrument met its intended goal. Survey items related to intrinsic/personal development, self-regulation, leadership/career skills, and career exploration. Each item was measured on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 6 in order to assess perceived influence using the stem “my experience as a student employee has...” to keep responses specific to the experience and minimize the possibility of confounding by maturation. The six-point scale (*Not at All to Greatly*) was used to assess the extent to which working as a student employee influenced the development of attributes and the acquisition of certain transferable skills.

The survey, consisting of 65 items, was reviewed for face validity by an expert panel, which included professionals in career exploration and preparation, higher education research, counseling, student wellness, and human resources.

## Participants and Procedure

All full-time undergraduate and graduate students who were employed within student affairs (N=4,092) were invited to take the Student Employee Outcomes Survey; this group of students accounts for approximately 10% of the university population and included part-time paid student employees, work-study employees, paid interns, and unpaid interns. No exclusions were made beyond employment within the student affairs division. The survey was administered through a secure, web-based server. Students were identified via a computer-generated list from the human resources database and were invited to participate via e-mail. To bolster the response rate during online data collection, participants were offered the chance to be one of six winners of a \$50.00 student ID card cash deposit.

Data were collected over a four-week period, during which students received an invitation e-mail and up to three reminders (sent once per week to students who had not completed the survey). By the close of the survey, 1,415 students responded, yielding a 34.5% response rate. The authors found the sample to be representative of the overall university population. Data were analyzed using Statistical Software for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0.

## Analysis

The authors followed a two-step analysis advocated by Wang and Kennedy-Phillips (2013). A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted with the intention of reducing the data into manageable summated scales. The PCA analyzed 65 items on the survey that addressed student perception of growth in each area as a result of the work environment. According to Cudeck and MacCallum (2007), "An eigenvalue is the variance explained by the components in a PCA" (p. 190). Using the Kaiser criterion, only components with an eigenvalue greater than 1 were retained (Appendix A). A Varimax rotation was used in the development of the component structure. The components that emerged became the five scales chosen to represent the constructs of the measured dependent variables: interpersonal skills, personal wellness awareness, practical skill acquisition, academic self-efficacy, and self-awareness, and three predictors: community involvement, civic engagement, and cultural competencies. Scale means based on these components were then included in the regression models predicting the outcome measures of student growth in the work environment.

Five separate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models were developed through a non-iterative approach to predict how a student's personal and academic growth were affected by the work environment. The five OLS models represented a test of the five independent variables resulting from the PCA. In general, a student's growth in the areas was assumed to be a function of background characteristics (gender, rank, residence, hours worked, and duration of employment) and civic involvement (community involvement, civic engagement, and cultural competencies). Models were tested to assess the relevant importance of each set of independent variables in predicting students' perception of growth in the student affairs work environment.

## Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variables consisted of five summated scales (interpersonal skills, personal wellness awareness, practical skill acquisition, academic self-efficacy, and self-awareness) that represented the learning environment fostered by student employment within the division of student affairs. All dependent variables were derived from a PCA explained in the analytical approach section. The independent variables included the following background variables: gender (dummy variable coded in male = 0 and female = 1), rank (dummy variable coded into under-class = 0 and upper-class = 1), hours worked (dummy variable coded >10 hours = 0 and < 10 hours = 1), duration of employment in the division (dummy variable coded >3 quarters = 0 and < 3 quarters = 1), and finally, residence (dummy variable coded on-campus = 0 and off-campus = 1). In addition to the background variables, the independent variables included three measures of civic involvement: community involvement, civic engagement and cultural competencies. These, similar to the dependent variables, were mean scales derived

**In a co-curricular environment, students may apply what was learned in a classroom, cultivate those skills, and may acquire and practice new skills and competencies in a practical setting.**

from a PCA. The model hypothesized that students' perceptions of community involvement, civic engagement, and cultural competence were predictors of the five summated dependent variables. Definitions of each component were derived from the individual items (see Appendix A). All independent and dependent variables were self-reported. Descriptive statistics on each variable are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Sample*

Variable	Percentage
Female	61
Upper Class	52
Hours worked <10 hours	44
Duration >3 quarters	55
Off Campus	50

Note. N=1,415

Table 2  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Student Employee Outcomes Survey Scaled Items*

Variable	Mean	SD
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Community Involvement	4.7	1.1
Cultural Competencies	4.7	1.1
Civic Engagement	3.6	1.4
<u>Dependent Variables</u>		
Interpersonal Skills	4.6	1.0
Personal Wellness Awareness	4.6	1.0
Practical Skill Acquisition	4.5	1.0
Academic Self-Efficacy	4.1	1.4
Self-Awareness	4.3	1.1

Note. Variables are measured on a scale of 1-6 with higher values indicating a greater degree

## Results

The following summarizes the results of the regression analyses. All models accounted for at least 40% of the variance in students' perception of growth within the five areas of development (Appendix B). Component labels were developed based upon the individual items that informed the emergence of the component.

### Interpersonal Skills

Model 1 summarizes the predictors of student employees' perceived growth in their interpersonal skills as a result of employment in the division of student affairs ( $R^2 = .68, p < .05$ ). When considering the background variables, rank was the only significant background predictor of interpersonal skill growth in the work environment. Under-class students reported greater development of interpersonal skills than upper-class students. All three civic-involvement variables were significant predictors of growth in interpersonal skills in the student affairs work environment. The more students positively identified with community involvement, cultural competencies and civic engagement, the more growth they perceived in their interpersonal skills. Community involvement was the strongest predictor.

### Personal Wellness Awareness

In model 2 ( $R^2 = .53, p < .05$ ), two background measures, rank and residence, significantly predicted students' perceived growth in personal wellness. As in model 1, under-class students

**Under-class students reported greater development of interpersonal skills than upper-class students.**

reported developing a higher level of personal wellness awareness in the work environment than did upper-class students. Students who lived off campus reported a higher growth of personal wellness awareness than did students who lived on campus. All three civic-involvement variables were significant predictors of growth in personal wellness awareness in the student affairs work environment. The more students perceived the work place to develop their community involvement, the higher their perceived personal wellness awareness.

### Practical Skill Acquisition

In model 3 ( $R^2 = .57, p < .05$ ), gender was a significant predictor of practical skill acquisition. Female students reported that they gained greater practical skill acquisition in comparison to male students. Additionally, the more students positively identified with community involvement, cultural competencies and civic engagement, the more growth they perceived in their practical skill acquisition. Civic engagement was the strongest predictor of a student's perception of skill acquisition.

### Academic Self-Efficacy

In model 4 ( $R^2 = .49, p < .05$ ), rank and duration of employment, two of the five background characteristics, were significant predictors of academic self-efficacy. The longer students were employed within the student affairs division, the more academically self-efficacious they reported that they were. Under-class students reported that they were more academically self-efficacious as a result of the work environment than did upper-class students. All three civic-involvement scales were significant predictors of academic self-efficacy. Civic engagement was the strongest predictor. The more socially engaged students were, the higher their perception of academic self-efficacy.

### Self-Awareness

In model 5 ( $R^2 = .58, p < .05$ ), none of the background characteristics significantly predicted self-awareness. As with the other four models, community involvement, cultural competencies and civic engagement were significant predictors of self-awareness. Civic engagement was the greatest predictor.

## Discussion

The data suggest that students perceive their student employee experiences in this university's student affairs division to be instrumental in their skill development in a variety of areas. Rank was a predictor of interpersonal skills, personal wellness awareness, and academic self-efficacy. Regarding interpersonal skills, under-class students reported greater perceived growth than upper-class students. One reason may be that many under-class students typically participate in an on-campus lifestyle, which includes a strong climate for social engagement (Astin, 1984). This environment, coupled with engagement within the student employee experience, may help students develop a variety of interpersonal skills useful in a future career (Harvey, 2000; Muldoon, 2009). These skills can include understanding repercussions of actions, admitting mistakes, resolving conflict respectfully, communicating effectively, working as part of a team, providing constructive criticism, fostering integrity, learning patience, and becoming a more tolerant person.

Rank was also a predictor of students' perceived growth in personal wellness awareness. Under-class students reported greater perceived growth than did upper-class students. Personal wellness awareness includes skills and competencies such as time management, productive lifestyle, self-sufficiency, work-life balance, responsibility, dependability, organization, money management and timely decisions. Findings such as those of Watts and Pickering (2000) indicate that undergraduate students expressed a great deal of importance on organization when balancing part-time work with their academic and social lives, though it is unknown whether this holds true across different undergraduate ranks. Other studies also share findings that suggest that part-time student employment fosters aspects of personal wellness, such as self-reliance, responsibility, and dependability (Curtis & Shani, 2002; Curtis & Williams, 2002).

As a predictor of perceived growth in academic self-efficacy (confidence in academic and career goals, motivation to pursue further academic endeavors), perceived gain was higher

**The longer students were employed within the student affairs division, the more academically self-efficacious they reported that they were.**

**Students reported that, as they maintained longevity in working in student affairs departments, they had higher levels of motivation to pursue education, increased motivation to work on their academic pursuits, and were better able to clarify their academic goals and solidify their career goals. The findings suggest that relationships exist between the curricular and the co-curricular realms of the university, and that students perceive a strong link between their employee experience and their academic endeavors.**

for under-class students. This may be in part because for under-class students, the student employee experience helps to clarify skills and interests, and allows for the exploration of different career possibilities, as expressed in Chang and Alcántara's (2007) study.

While maturity has been cited as an outcome of part-time paid student employment (Dustmann et al., 1996), it is difficult within the context of our study to ascertain to what extent maturation or the maturation of particular skills was/were a direct result of employment as opposed to natural growth and development, over the course of students' time at the university. Though we did try to control for this phenomenon to some extent by using the stem, "My experience as a student employee has..." we can only suggest an association between the student employee experience and such development.

Duration of employment also predicted academic self-efficacy. The longer that students remained employed within the student affairs division, the greater their perceived growth related to areas of academic self-efficacy. This is in accordance with Kulm and Cramer's (2006) findings regarding the relationship between the length of employment and persistence toward a degree. Students reported that, as they maintained longevity working in student affairs departments, they had higher levels of motivation to pursue education, increased motivation to work on their academic pursuits, and were better able to clarify their academic goals and solidify their career goals. The findings suggest that relationships exist between the curricular and the co-curricular realms of the university, and that students perceive a strong link between their employee experience and their academic endeavors. These findings, supported by the literature (Brint & Cantwell, 2010; Cheng & Alcántara, 2007; Dundes & Marx, 2006; Fjortoft, 1995; Kulm & Cramer, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini 2005), further suggest that students benefit when they choose jobs within student affairs, since these positions are tied closely to the university, and thus help keep students academically and socially engaged.

The finding that students' employment experiences helped them to solidify career goals suggests that jobs within student affairs divisions may be instrumental in helping students make decisions that affect their futures. Studies, such as that reported by Cheng and Alcántara (2007), indicate that on-campus work may play an important role in helping students shape their academic interests and career choices. This suggests that student affairs divisions should strengthen relationships with academic affairs divisions in order to intentionally create opportunities within student employee positions that connect to academic endeavors.

Residence was a predictor of personal wellness awareness. Students who reported living off campus indicated greater perceived growth than did those who lived on campus. At the university under study, first-year students reside on campus, while upper-class students tend to move off-campus. According to the data, approximately 3% of first-year, 37.4% of second-year, 64.5% of third-year, 75.1% of fourth-year, and 88.7% of fifth-year or more students lived off campus. Other options included on campus or with parent(s)/guardian(s). It may be that students who live off campus perceive greater benefit from on-campus employment due to interaction with campus that they might not normally experience as part of the off-campus lifestyle. Student development literature (e.g., Astin, 1984; Pascarella, 1985) consistently cites the learning and developmental benefits associated with on-campus interactions, and thus, greater gains might be realized as a result of the lack of this interaction. Further research is needed to fully understand this phenomenon.

Another predictor of students' perceived growth was gender as it related to skill acquisition. Females reported greater perceived growth in skill acquisition as compared to males, which could be explained by further research that explores gender differences related to perception of growth in this area. Baxter Magolda (2004) suggests that there are gender differences in intellectual development. Specifically, females tend to listen and absorb information, while males more often practice and master information, though it remains unclear how exactly this might translate to greater perceived growth.

A fourth predictor of reported growth was sense of community. Students who felt a greater sense of community (e.g., meaningful friendships, sense of belonging) reported higher levels in interpersonal skills, self-awareness, personal wellness awareness, skill acquisition, and academic self-efficacy. These findings suggest that when students feel as though their student employment experience has fostered a sense of community, this helps them feel connected to the university and provides them with a comfortable environment within which



they can exercise interpersonal skills, learn new skills, focus their academic and career goals, and improve personal wellness, which falls in line with previous research (Cheng & Alcántara, 2007; Fjortoft, 1995; Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Shaw & Ogilvie, 2010), and mirrors work by Astin (1984) that documents the many developmental benefits of on-campus community. Studies such as Swanson, Broadbridge, and Karatzias' (2006) suggest that on-campus employment facilitates adjustment to the university, and cites student self-reported benefits such as perceived long-term employment benefits and the enhancement of personal development and social involvement.

Cultural competencies predicted students' perceived growth in multiple areas; the more exposed students were to other cultures, the greater their reported growth in interpersonal skills, self-awareness, personal wellness awareness, skill acquisition, and self-efficacy as a result of their student employment. Students who believed that their employment experience expanded their interactions with people of diverse backgrounds and increased their awareness of other cultures seemed to gain a greater benefit in other areas; students who reported that they dealt with individuals from different cultures reported that they perceived greater personal gains in developing a better understanding of themselves and their values than did students who did not report that they dealt with different types of people, which builds upon the findings of Cheng and Alcántara (2007), who suggest that students feel their horizons are broadened beyond the university scope as a result of on-campus employment.

The final predictor of students' perceived growth related to civic engagement. Students who felt that their employment experience exposed them to national and global issues and motivated them to be involved in their community reported greater perceived growth in interpersonal skills, self-awareness, personal wellness awareness, skill acquisition, and academic self-efficacy. Intertwining social and civic awareness into the student employee experience provides opportunities to bridge academic areas with co-curricular areas to provide structured, multi-dimensional learning experiences.

Perceived growth in the aforementioned areas indicates that student development takes place within the student affairs student employment experience. The regression analyses suggest that there are a number of variables that predict development and preparation for the future, indicating aspects which student affairs may be able to foster through intentional student employment practices.

### Future Research

The topic of student development as it relates to university employment is an area of growing research, and there are a number of aspects still to be addressed. More research is needed to assess gender as a predictor of perceived growth throughout the student employment experience. Males and females reported varying degrees of skill acquisition (e.g., learning new skills, realizing a greater potential in oneself), and more research is required to examine these differences. It is also important to further explore the needs and interests of first- and second-year students, as they relate to employment. Rank was associated with a number of components related to interpersonal skills, academics, and personal wellness. Such associations require further investigation to determine the differences among ranks, as well as the aspects of development that are attributable to employment experiences rather than general maturation. Further research is also needed in regard to civic engagement and its relation to student development within the context of student employment. Knowledge in this area would help to clarify the benefits of this form of engagement, and inform potential programming designed to bridge curricular and co-curricular civic engagement experiences.

There are some larger questions that this study did not address. First, we did not address the ways in which the five components (interpersonal skills, personal wellness awareness, practical skill acquisition, academic self-efficacy, and self-awareness) interacted with each other. It is likely that there are important connections to be noted, and further analysis is necessary to delineate these associations. Second, this study did not examine development according to the type of job the student employee held. Development may vary depending upon the job type, and further study would help to illuminate differences and inform training and programming efforts to ensure that all student employment opportunities achieve well-rounded student development.

**The finding that students' employment experiences helped them to solidify career goals suggests that jobs within student affairs divisions may be instrumental in helping students make decisions that affect their futures.**

**When students feel as though their student employment experience has fostered a sense of community, this helps them feel connected to the university and provides them with a comfortable environment within which they can exercise interpersonal skills, learn new skills, focus their academic and career goals, and improve personal wellness.**

## Conclusion

This study measured outcomes related to employment within student affairs at a large Midwestern university. Further research might expand beyond student affairs to include other employment opportunities both within the university and outside of the university. Such research would be an opportunity to compare learning experiences of other employment experiences to those within student affairs. This study examined a number of developmental factors related to college student development within the context of university employment. While many implications for practice can be drawn from the associations found in this study, more research is necessary to fully understand the ways in which student employment benefits students during their time at the university, as well as beyond.

Student affairs units offer places to apply lessons learned in the classroom and to acquire new skills and competencies both through programming and employment. This analysis suggests that student affairs divisions bridge curricular and co-curricular learning and shows that the variables of duration of employment, rank, community involvement, civic engagement, and cultural competencies are strong predictors of personal development within the student employee experience.

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## Appendix A

### *Student Employee Outcomes Survey Instrument Scales and Constructs*

<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	$R^2 = .68$	<b>Eigenvalue = 3.15</b>
Ability to admit mistakes	Made more approachable	
Consider repercussions of actions	Ability to take initiative	
Ability to think before acting	Ability to take direction/follow instructions	
Ability to communicate effectively	Improved critical thinking skills	
Ability to resolve conflict respectfully	Made more tolerant person	
Ability to express thoughts/opinions clearly	Ability to remain focused on individual tasks	
Ability to weigh different perspectives	Ability to provide constructive criticism	
Ability to comfortably interact with others	Increased attention to detail	
Ability to work as part of a team	Helped to learn patience	
<b>Personal Wellness Awareness</b>	$R^2 = .53$	<b>Eigenvalue = 2.97</b>
Ability to make timely decisions	Improved time management skills	
Transitioned into more productive lifestyle	Made more responsible in everyday actions	
Helped better manage money	More dependable person	
Made more self-sufficient	Improved organizational skills	
Improved work-life balance		
<b>Practical Skill Acquisition</b>	$R^2 = .57$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.72</b>
Allowed to acquire new skills	Introduced to skills didn't know I had	
Helped to realize greater potential in self	Pushed me beyond what I thought to be my capabilities	
<b>Academic Self-Efficacy</b>	$R^2 = .49$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.41</b>
Motivated pursuit of a higher level of education	Increased motivation to work on academics	
Solidify career goals	Clarify academic goals	
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	$R^2 = .58$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.26</b>
Helped to solidify values	Helped add value to life	
Helped to develop a better understanding of self	Gave greater sense of purpose	
<b>Cultural Competences</b>	$R^2 = .62$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.21</b>
Expanded my interactions with people of diverse backgrounds		
Increased my awareness of other cultures		
<b>Civic Engagement</b>	$R^2 = .52$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.12</b>
Opened my eyes to national issues	Opened my eyes to global issues	
<b>Community Involvement</b>	$R^2 = .79$	<b>Eigenvalue = 1.01</b>
Motivated me to become more involved with my community		
Brought me closer to my community		

Appendix B

Summary of OLS Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Students' Perception of Growth in the Student Affairs Work Environment

Independent Variable	Interpersonal Skills		Personal Wellness Awareness		Practical Skill Acquisition		Academic Self-Efficacy		Self-Awareness	
	B (SE)	$\beta$	B (SE)	$\beta$	B (SE)	$\beta$	B (SE)	$\beta$	B (SE)	$\beta$
Female	.020 (.034)		.044 (.040)		.145 (.048)	.056**	.038 (.058)		-.007 (.044)	
Upper Class	-.087 (.039)	.043**	-.176 (.046)	.087**	-.052 (.055)		-.127 (.066)	-.045**	.079 (.050)	
Hours worked (< 10 hrs)	-.016 (.033)		-.033 (.039)		.024 (.047)		.060 (.057)		.017 (.043)	
Duration (> 3 quarters)	-.003 (.035)		-.019 (.042)		-.018 (.050)		-.123 (.060)	-.044**	-.034 (.045)	
Off-campus	.047 (.037)		.081 (.044)	.040*	.033 (.053)		.067 (.064)		-.052 (.048)	
Community Involvement	.282 (.017)	.317**	.306 (.021)	.338**	.242 (.025)	.215**	.144 (.030)	.115**	.430 (.022)	.412**
Cultural Competencies	.258 (.017)	.316**	.230 (.020)	.280**	.216 (.024)	.211**	.167 (.029)	.147**	.154 (.022)	.162**
Civic Engagement	.261 (.015)	.363**	.195 (.018)	.270**	.420 (.021)	.465**	.537 (.026)	.537**	.287 (.019)	.342**
Model summary	$R^2 = .68 F = 3.2, p < .05$		$R^2 = .53 F = 1.8, p < .05$		$R^2 = .57 F = 2.1, p < .05$		$R^2 = .49 F = 1.5, p < .05$		$R^2 = .58 F = 2.2, p < .05$	

Note. N=1,415. Betas are reported for statistically significant coefficients only.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .10$