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Student Perceptions Of On-Campus Employment: Opportunities For High-Impact Practice

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT: OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE

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Dedication

For the students who make a choice every day to contribute to their university beyond its classroom walls; and to the practitioners whose unwavering support, passion, and advocacy for those students often goes unrecognized.

Acknowledgments

To my participants, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for sharing your stories with me. Your enthusiasm and authenticity came at a time when I most needed to be reminded why I joined this profession. And though arduous, this dissertation work has sparked a joy that will no doubt carry me through the second half of my career for that I am eternally grateful.

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To my husband, reconnecting with you halfway through this journey meant you never actually signed up for this, but you certainly made sure I never gave up on it. As you once told me, Rudalfs don't quit. WE got this.

Finally, to my tribe. Eight years is a long time. Whether I found you through class assignments, seminars, professional associations, writing groups, old friendships, and/or early morning workouts; in the beginning, middle, or you saved me at the end; there are no words adequate enough to express my immense gratitude for all the wine, whining, walks, writing sessions and writing clubs, early coffee, check-ins, pep talks, and talks off the ledge. You helped me celebrate each milestone – no matter how small – and because of each of you, I have been changed for good.

They say the dissertation process is lonely; and although there were many dark, quiet mornings and verbal processing sessions for one, I never once felt alone. I truly believe this degree is not of my own doing – it takes a village – and we did it y'all!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

As the public increasingly seeks evidence of the impact of the higher education experience on graduating students, high-impact practices (HIPs) provide colleges and universities with focused programs to direct appropriate use of resources and contribute to student persistence; however, many of these experiences remain inaccessible to various student populations. As such, universities must consider how to scale access to these practices for greater student participation. One such practice is student employment. The purpose of this study was to understand undergraduate, on-campus student employees' perceptions of their employment experience, specifically the educational elements characteristic of HIPs therein, and the connection of on-campus employment to academic learning. This single-case study was conducted at the College of William & Mary (W&M), a mid-size, more selective public institution located in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Interviews were conducted with a diverse population of 24 on-campus student employees in both paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional roles across four university units. Analysis of data occurred through the frameworks of the educational elements associated with HIPs and the tenets of experiential learning. The employment experience at W&M was found to contain six of the eight HIP elements. Considerable influence on learning also occurred but not always because of employment experience. By bolstering the employment experience at W&M with intentional design and specific, individual feedback, educators can strengthen students' ability to reflect and process learning, thereby aligning resources and priorities contributing to student success.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT: OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

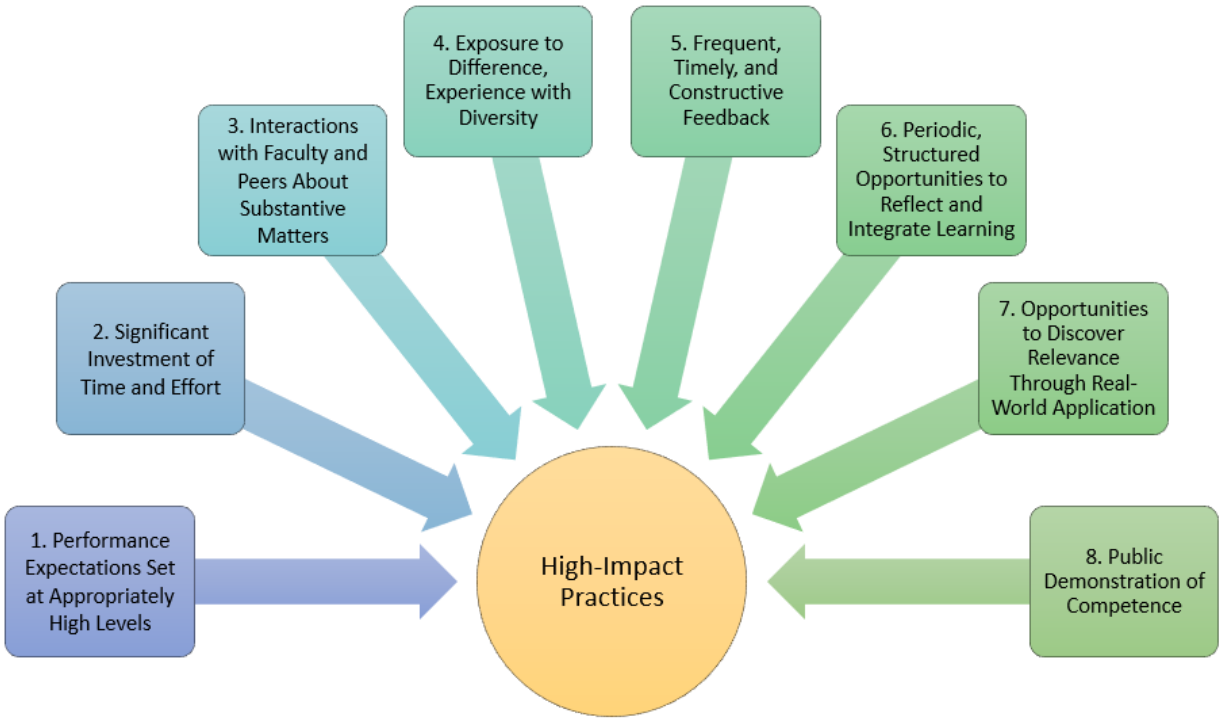
As public demands for return on investment from higher education institutions intensify, there exists a great obligation for colleges and universities to demonstrate their impact on the personal and professional development of students. Higher education can no longer rely solely on academic success; it must contribute significantly to all aspects of student growth so that graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the larger world. On-campus student employment is one way universities can foster the development of this broad base of skills in their students. Student employment is a ripe opportunity for growth and purposeful reinvention of what Kuh (2008) referred to as high-impact practices (HIPs). The infusion of intentionally constructed learning experiences within student employment can provide the backdrop needed to integrate student learning and holistically strengthen graduates.

Research repeatedly demonstrated that 10 on-campus experiences, classified as "high-impact practices," had "positive effect on student performance and leadership gains" (Kuh, 2008, p. 14). These activities included internships, collaborative assignments, core curriculum, writing intensive courses, capstone projects, research, global learning, first-year seminars, and learning communities (McClellan et al., 2018). Unfortunately, many activities classified as "high-impact," such as global learning through study abroad, internships, and research, are not accessible to all undergraduates given their specialization, exclusivity, and/or cost. The reason for the success of HIPs lies in the intentional facilitation of eight common educational *elements*

(see Figure 1) that together strengthen the opportunity for student learning within each experience (McClellan et al., 2018).

Figure 1

Eight Educational Elements of High-Impact Practices



Note. The graphic depicts the eight educational elements found within activities identified as High-Impact Practices.
Adapted from "Taking HIPs to the Next Level" by G. D. Kuh, 2013, in G. D. Kuh and K. O'Donnell, *Ensuring Quality &Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale* (p. 8), 2013, American Association of Colleges and Universities. Copyright 2013 by American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Arguably, student experiences deliberately structured with these elements central to their development and execution could serve as a HIP. By expanding the type of offerings connected to HIPs, institutions can create greater access to intentional learning and student success. Kuh (2013) indicated that other than going to class, working, regardless of location, is the most

common activity among undergraduates. Additional research links student employment to a myriad of positive outcomes including career readiness, personal development, and expanded leadership capacity (Gleason, 1993; McCormick et al., 2010; Salisbury et al., 2012). Moreover, on-campus employment is particularly beneficial because it links the student directly to the campus community. As Astin (1993) explained,

> Compared to students who spend an equivalent amount of time working off campus, students who are employed on campus are, almost by definition, in more frequent contact with other students and possibly with faculty… This greater degree of immersion in the collegiate environment and culture more than compensates, in terms of student outcomes, for the time that students must devote to a part-time job on campus. (pp. 388-389)

By creating accessibility to on-campus employment experiences for students and intentionally constructing the opportunity, administrators can strengthen the experience of the student while also benefiting sponsoring units and departments.

International research instruments exist to understand how higher education experiences influence student development and growth. One such instrument is the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (2020), an international study that examined students' "socially responsible leadership capacity and other leadership related outcomes (e.g. efficacy, cognitive skills, resiliency)" and supports the notion that employment positively influences student development and growth (para. 1). Through their findings in 2018, the authors reported that students who work, either on or off campus, experience larger gains in leadership capacity and skill development. These gains contributed to student success. As such, institutions that provide robust employment programs can connect students to the kinds of substantial personal development demanded in the current global marketplace. Additionally, because of the inherent

connection on-campus employment creates between the student and the university, employment experiences can also promote a sense of belonging within the campus community thereby leading to student retention and persistence to graduation.

Background

Over the past 30 years, researchers have demonstrated the correlation of HIPs to student development and learning, including examination of individual practices (Kuh, 2008; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Ying, 2010) and as an overall concept (Brownwell & Swanner, 2010; Kilgo et al., 2015). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2020) collected data annually to assess "how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college" and used this information to generate comparison reports between students at different institutions (para. 1). From the evidence of the value added of HIPs, it was recommended colleges and universities "make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high-impact activities during his or her undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one taken later in relation to the major field" (Kuh, 2008, p. 19). Because of their proven success with student engagement, learning, and persistence, institutions are compelled to follow this recommendation and provide resources and support for these intentionally constructed opportunities for students.

HIPs are effective because of the intentional use of key educational elements that integrate learning and facilitate student engagement in the student experience (Kuh, 2013). Scholars repeatedly referred to student employment as a practice ripe for the facilitation of integrated learning and engagement (Kuh, 2010, 2013; McClellan et al., 2018); however, research to support this notion was limited. More importantly, even though student employment used many educational elements of HIPs, scholars did not classify it as such, and it continues to remain severely understudied. Without additional research that supports the classification of

employment as a HIP, institutions may be less compelled to develop comprehensive student employment programs. To understand if or how on-campus employment acts in the same manner as other HIPs, we must first discover evidence of those educational elements within the student employment experience.

Case Description

The section that follows addresses the context in which I implemented this case study and provides a brief description of the study. This case study was an examination of student employment perceptions in connection to HIPs. An elite, mid-size university, with focus on the liberal arts, William & Mary (W&M) prides itself on contributing to the personal and academic growth of their students, providing experiences that allow students to be successful contributors during their time at the university and as global citizens. Given the broader accessibility of student employment, W&M should identify this experience as an approach to achieving these outcomes. However, little was known about student employment experiences at W&M. Individual units directed their own employment programs with varying outcomes and opportunities for student development. These offices may or may not have had measured outcomes and understanding of student perceptions, and so practitioners discerned the experiences of student employees through anecdotal information. Student employers did not systematically and consistently document the student employment experience, such as the number of employees, why students pursued employment, in what context, additional needs, etc., thus practitioners were ill-equipped to design training and programs that enhanced the student employee experience and created opportunities that correlated with HIPs and connection to the academic curriculum. Utilizing the educational elements of HIPs as a conceptual framework, this study aimed to discover possible links between students' perceptions of the educational elements

characteristic of HIPs and opportunities for the integration of learning within their on-campus employment experience.

Context

An accredited, public, comprehensive Doctoral University with high research activity and high undergraduate enrollment, W&M awarded baccalaureate, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees. W&M demonstrated its commitment to a liberal arts education through its focused mission, vision, and values, which guided the institution's strategic plans and practices. The W&M values of Belonging, Curiosity, Excellence, Flourishing, Integrity, Respect, and Service reflected the institution's desire for students to experience meaningful opportunities on and off campus so they might live lives of excellence and accomplishment throughout their lifespan (W&M, 2021b). These principles outlined the approach for university units when designing programs and educational experiences for students, including on-campus employment. Rather than drive students toward a specific pathway of learning, with a core liberal arts foundation for undergraduate students, W&M focused on integrated learning and commitment to holistic development. King et al. (2007) identified seven outcomes of liberal arts education to include integration of learning, inclination to inquire and lifelong learning, effective reasoning and problem-solving, moral character, intercultural effectiveness, leadership, and well-being. These outcomes contributed to the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development of students and permitted a multi-dimensional approach to program development and teaching, thereby facilitating integrated learning. The outcomes of liberal learning are a cornerstone of the idea of HIPs and the integration of learning.

W&M previously demonstrated its commitment to HIPs when, in 2015, it implemented the new College Curriculum that listed HIPs as "a central element to the undergraduate

experience," incorporating "as many as four HIPS" into the curriculum requirements (B. Boone, personal communication, October 7, 2020).

Employment is a functional experience in that it provides necessary income for students. However, the student population at W&M contained an interesting juxtaposition when viewing employment as necessary to affording college. Chetty et al. (2017) reported W&M students to be some of the most affluent students in Virginia with the second highest median parent income in the state of Virginia and less than 1% of students coming from poor families. W&M also issued the lowest percentage of Pell Grants in the state with only 12.7% of students receiving aid between 2019 and 2020 (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia [SCHEV], n.d.). As such, student perspectives on employment and desire to work may vary widely amongst undergraduates.

However, the employment experience can also reflect the values of liberal learning and commitment to student learning and leadership while also contributing to student success. With an undergraduate enrollment of just over 6,000, in 2020 the university employed approximately 20% of undergraduates on campus across 25 on-campus units. Aid provided to Federal Work-Study recipients did not meet students' full financial need for attending. W&M did not articulate a university-wide approach or desired outcomes for student employment. As stated on the W&M website, the Office of Financial Aid coordinated employment opportunities through student payroll processing and the Office of Career Development and Professional Engagement facilitated some job postings; however, students found and applied for jobs themselves. Moreover, the timing of this study was critical to providing a greater understanding of the on-campus employment experience at W&M. Recently, W&M received a grant from the State SCHEV for the purpose of transforming the experience of work-study positions by "recalibrating

the responsibilities and expectations" and training supervisors based on the NACE guidelines (Jay, 2023, para. 6). The transformation of these Federal Work-Study jobs included aligning them to serve as internship experiences (P. Heavilin, personal communication, November 2023). NACE defined internships as a "form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional workplace setting" (NACE, 2023, para 1). When implemented with intentional design and execution, student employment can also serve in this capacity.

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership demonstrated student learning through the lens of leadership. W&M administered the survey every 3 years and has participated continuously since 2012. Although the international data trends presented by the survey showed that students employed both on- and off-campus displayed significant gains in the areas of resiliency, controversy with civility, and leadership efficacy as compared to students who do not work, at W&M, the findings demonstrated no significant difference in leadership capacity between on-campus employment and no employment at all. Additionally, findings suggested that employment did contribute to the growth of W&M students, but only for those employed in off-campus areas. Understanding the W&M on-campus employment experience and the possible intersection of HIPs helps to inform university stakeholders, providing them with the tools necessary to shape the employment experiences they offer students, leading to greater retention and student success. Focused on the on-campus employment experience, this study aimed to understand employment through the lens of students, using their voices to identify how to create similar outcomes reported by students who work off-campus for students who work on-campus.

Through its institutional values and its commitment to a liberal arts education, W&M demonstrates its obligation to provide a holistic, integrated experience that supports students and

provides graduates with necessary professional skills; as such, their student employment outcomes should operate similarly. In this way, W&M can continue to support students in their journey through matriculation to post-graduate life while upholding liberal arts ideals.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I evaluated evidence of HIPs through student perceptions of their on-campus employment experience. Research demonstrated that student learning occurred through on-campus employment and the conceptual framework for this study introduced the eight elements of HIPs and situated them within the context of student employment. By examining the intersection of student perceptions of learning and development as a result of the on-campus student employment experience through the essential elements of HIPS, I sought to find evidence to support the classification of student employment as a HIP. Furthermore, positioning the HIP elements within the learning dimensions identified in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT; A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005) demonstrated the influence of on-campus student employment on student learning.

Overview of the Evaluation Approach

Through a pragmatic lens, my examination of on-campus student employment at W&M and evidence of HIPs focused on student perceptions of their experience. As described by Creswell (2014), the pragmatic worldview is action-oriented research that allows for multiple perspectives. Using a pragmatic approach, the study was rooted in real-world practice and the specific context of one institution. Through a single-case embedded study, I evaluated student perspectives of their experience within individual departmental units, making connections to describe the practice of on-campus employment for students working and learning at W&M. I

sought to provide stakeholders with additional knowledge to advance W&M student development through on-campus employment.

An embedded case study considers and evaluates each subunit within the case in the same manner (Yin, 2017). While W&M did not manage a cohesive student employment program, each university area that employed students was a subunit within the larger W&M employment program. In this way, this embedded case study allowed for the examination of employment at individual university unit levels to contribute to an understanding of on-campus employment at W&M as a whole. Through the lens of HIPs, I explored each student's interpretation of their own experience and evidence of the eight educational conditions of HIPs illustrated in Figure 1.

Purpose of the Evaluation

W&M demonstrated dedication to liberal learning outcomes and offered myriad opportunities for students to engage in HIPs. As an accredited member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), in 2016 W&M entered into "Reaffirmation," a process that "reflects and affirms the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to enhancing the quality of higher education in the region and to focusing attention on student learning" (B. Boone, personal communication, October 7, 2020). Their 2016 Quality Enhancement Plan outlined their commitment to engage students intentionally in experiences that enhance quality and focus attention on learning through HIPs.

Unfortunately, we know some HIPs are not accessible to all students. With 20% of students engaging in on-campus employment—an activity that is available to all students—the W&M on-campus employment program could benefit from an examination through the lens of HIPs so that the hours students invested in these experiences might more consistently emulate W&M's stated values. Although national data demonstrated significant gains for on-campus

student employees, at W&M those who worked on-campus reported little difference from their unemployed peers. Moreover, off-campus employees reported greater gains than their on-campus counterparts (Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, 2018).

This case study provides an understanding of student perceptions of their employment experience and evidence of HIPs. The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive investigation of the on-campus student employment experience for undergraduates so that employers may expand their workforce opportunities to create intentional, integrated learning experiences using the educational elements of HIPs and experiential learning. Additionally, administrators may use these findings to determine ways to incorporate discoveries into updated operational and financial practices, such as a more collaborative, intentionally designed employment experience.

Focus

As stated previously, this study assessed student employment within individual university units to combine findings into a singular awareness of the entire student employment experience at W&M. The study focused solely on undergraduate students, their responses to their employment as a component of their undergraduate learning experience, and their perception of the presence of the elements of HIPs. By understanding on-campus student employment as a whole, I sought to contribute to W&M's opportunity to operate employment as a HIP for students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of HIPs and their on-campus employment experiences?

a. How does students' employment type affect the use of the educational elements of HIPs?

2. What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

Definition of Terms

- Educational Elements – Not the specific activities identified by Kuh (2008) to be high-impact practices (e.g., study abroad, internships, undergraduate research) but rather the components of educational practices demonstrated in Figure 1 that "according to a growing array of research studies are correlated with positive education results for students from widely varying backgrounds" (Kuh, 2013, p. 10). to include:
    - Performance Expectations Set at Appropriately High Levels
    - Significant Investment of Time and Effort
    - Interactions with Faculty and Peers about Substantive Matters
    - Experience with Diversity, Exposure to Difference
    - Frequent, Timely, and Constructive Feedback
    - Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning
    - Opportunities to Discover Relevance Through Real-World Application
    - Public Demonstration of Competence
- Employment Program – all components related to work on-campus that contribute to the student employee experience.
- Employment Type – positional assignment or task related role. In this study, type is limited to paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees.

- Non-Paraprofessionals – any type of hourly employment for an undergraduate student who is not considered a paraprofessional supervised by an individual.
- On-campus Employment – paid work within a designated university department or unit. Students employed by non-university entities (such as dining services) will not be considered.
- Paraprofessional – an undergraduate student "without extended professional training who is specifically selected, trained, and given ongoing supervision to perform some designated portion of the tasks usually performed by the professional" supervised by an individual (Delworth et al., 1974, p. 12), for example, Resident Assistant, Orientation Leader, Teaching Assistant; generally paid by stipend.
- Student Employee – undergraduate enrolled full-time at the university paid at an hourly rate or stipend who works a minimum of 5 hours per week regardless of Federal Work-Study designation.
- Supervisor – individual, paid by the university for oversight of individual student employee tasks and experiences; supervisor university classification can be faculty or staff.
- University Unit – area, such as a department, office, or building, officially recognized as a part of the institution.

Summary

Through intentional design, HIPs contribute to student success and prepare students to lead robust and meaningful lives beyond their collegiate experience. Given their proven success, universities must strive to maximize student involvement in experiences that emulate the outcomes of HIPs and opportunities for student learning. One opportunity to do so exists within

on-campus student employment. Although on-campus student employment claims to offer several of the educational elements of HIPs (Kuh, 2008), there was limited empirical research about on-campus employment as a HIP itself.

Using student perceptions, I examined one university's employment practices for evidence of the educational elements of HIPs. Through a qualitative case study approach, I gathered rich, focused data through interviews and document analysis. As such, I aimed to provide the university and its practitioners with insights into an area of practice that was undefined and lacked in intentional execution, while also providing focused recommendations for future design and practice. Through a focus on students and their experiences, I hoped to provide current students the opportunity to reflect on their undergraduate experience to date while using findings to enrich the experience of future student employees.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explores the connection of student engagement to high-impact practices (HIPs) and the student employment experience. The review of the literature was divided into four main sections. The first examined the importance of student success in the current higher education landscape with a special focus on HIPs. The second explored the history and purpose of student employment at colleges and universities in the U.S. The next section presented evidence that positioned student employment as an opportunity for student success and identified a framework for the examination of HIPs in the field of on-campus student employment. Finally, a framework for understanding the student employment experience through experiential learning was provided.

The examination of the literature supported the following research questions that guided this study:

1. What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of HIPs and their on-campus employment experiences?
    a. How does students' employment type affect the use of the educational elements of HIPs?
2. What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

Student Success

Higher education is more than an academic practice intended to produce a degree; students should emerge from their university experience with the knowledge, skills, and personal qualities necessary to thrive in a global marketplace (Kuh, 2008). Expanding the experience beyond content mastery and degree completion also allows students to engage more significantly within the university, thereby ensuring persistence. As Kuh et al. (2005) identified, "everyone agrees that persistence and educational attainment rates, as well as the quality of student learning, must improve if postsecondary education is to meet the needs of our nation and our world" (p. 7). Student success occurs through experiences that go beyond academic experience to create connections to the university while providing opportunities for self-discovery, development, and integration of learning. One way to strengthen attainment rates and student learning outcomes is through student preparation. As Schneider and Humphreys (2008) explained,

> The long-term "college success" question encompasses not only whether students have earned a degree, but also whether graduates are in fact achieving the level of preparation—in terms of knowledge, capabilities, and personal qualities—that will enable them to both thrive and contribute in a fast-changing economy and in turbulent, highly demanding global, societal, and often personal contexts. (p. 3)

The literature surrounding student success was vast, spanning from graduation rates and metrics to measures of physical wellness. Significant research linked student success to career readiness, persistence and retention, student development, and engagement (Berger & Milem, 1999). For the purposes of this study, the discussion of student success was limited to the lens of student engagement and persistence.

Involvement & Engagement

Critical to student success is student investment in their college experience. This connection occurs through student engagement and involvement. Though used interchangeably, the two terms speak to different pieces of the student experience. Astin (1993) defined student involvement as the "amount of physical and psychological energy the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297), noting involvement as the way an individual experiences the pre-established environmental characteristics of a university such as curriculum, faculty, residence, and financial aid. Through his exploration of involvement in five general areas: academic, faculty, student peers, work, and other forms such as hobbies and volunteer work, he concluded that heavy involvement in these areas could enhance student learning, development, and academic performance.

Perhaps because of increasing public demands for demonstration of success by colleges and universities, research shifted from a focus on student involvement to the discovery of student engagement within the higher education experience. Student engagement goes beyond mere involvement and expands upon the notion of time spent to demonstrate the necessity of active contribution from both the individual and the university environment. As Kuh et al. (2005) explained,

> Student engagement has two components that contribute to student success. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success. The second component is the ways the institution allocates resources and organizes learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities. (p. 9)

While involvement is how students experience their collegiate environment, engagement requires both the student and the university to actively connect. In this way, engagement enforced the university's accountability to a robust student experience (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Although understanding the difference between involvement and engagement is important in highlighting student success as the responsibility of the institution and the student, because of the conflation of the terms, the review of the literature combined the two.

In his analysis of recent literature related to student engagement, Kuh (2009) summarized the research supporting various desired outcomes of college to include (a) cognitive development; (b) psychosocial development, self-esteem, and locus of control; (c) moral and ethical development; and (d) persistence. Although all students generally benefited from engagement, full-time traditional-age and residential students tended to benefit more than historically underserved groups (Kuh, 2009). Kuh (2009) also determined an additional body of research connected to engagement that explores how universities allocate resources, learning opportunities, and support services to encourage students to participate in "activities positively associated with persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation" (p. 685). Engagement, therefore, was more than just an interaction between students and the institution; the term accounted for all the meaningful ways the students and the institution were linked to produce desired outcomes that result in student success.

Berger and Milem (1999) combined student survey responses to understand persistence through behavioral and perceptual components. They determined that students who are most likely to persist are "those who have values, norms, and established patterns of behavior that are congruent with the dominant values, norms, and established behavior that are already in existence on campus" (p. 661). Unlike previous research, the findings suggested that students do

not integrate despite their pre-college characteristics, such as high school grades and higher family incomes, but because of them (Berger & Milem, 1999). As such, to enhance the likelihood of success for students whose backgrounds may not align closely with an institution's culture, institutions must offer opportunities that address essential success-related characteristics. Involvement and engagement opportunities connect students beyond the classroom in deep ways that align their values and contribute to personal growth and development. In essence, experiences that contribute to student engagement and involvement, and thereby completion, are essential to persistence within the collegiate experience.

Persistence

Only 64% of students entering a bachelor's degree-granting four-year institution earned a degree within 6 years (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022). This is detrimental to both the individual and the condition of U.S. higher education as a whole. By providing opportunities and encouraging student participation in experiences that promote engagement, institutions positively contribute to student persistence and retention. The idea of persistence and retention is explained by student continuation from enrollment to degree attainment. Similar to the concepts of involvement and engagement explained above, educators often used these terms interchangeably and the difference between the two relied on who was responsible for continuation. Berger and Lyon (2012) offered the following definitions:

- Persistence - refers to the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning year through degree
- Retention - refers to the ability of an institution to retain a student from admission to the university through graduation (p. 7)

Researchers considered Tinto's theory of integration to be the seminal theory in explaining the process of persistence to degree completion (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Tinto (1993) found students who academically and socially integrated into the campus community were more likely to graduate (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). As such, pre-college characteristics were pivotal in determining college success, a finding later supported by Berger and Milem (1999). Some criticized Tinto's theory because of the implications for underrepresented students and the onus on them to assimilate into the dominant culture (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). However, Tinto argued that rather than assimilation, student persistence was the result of student social and academic connection to, or a sense of belonging, within the campus community and noted the responsibility of the university in creating opportunities for this connection thereby reinforcing the importance of student engagement (Tinto, 1993).

Drawing on Tinto's work, Braxton (2000) empirically tested Tinto's theoretical model and determined social integration, as opposed to academic integration, was pivotal in understanding student departure. Additional research supported the prioritization of social integration over academics. Researchers with the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2019) examined the experience of first-year students to determine what factors contributed positively to students returning for a second year. They identified 14 factors, including Quality of Interactions, Belongingness and Safety, and Supportive Environment. Although the degree of influence amongst these varied, the findings demonstrated the importance of the student experience in willingness to return (NSSE, 2019). Similarly, through a national survey, Beal and Noel (1980) identified the top four contributing factors to be caring attitude of faculty and staff, high quality teaching, adequate financial aid, and student involvement on campus. Therefore, academic outcomes did not exclusively contribute to student success but rather the development

of relationships, support for essential needs, and connection to the environment contributed to persistence.

Experiences that bolster student success create engagement with the university's values and environment. Engagement that contributes to persistence and eventual completion of degree encompasses the student's relationship with all aspects of the university environment. The social component of this process brings to life the academic experience and contributes to a holistic student experience. By offering experiences that intentionally focus university resources on experiences that enhance the academic mission and contribute to student engagement, universities can produce graduates who are more prepared for life beyond graduation.

HIPs

Research confirmed some student experiences have more influence on student learning, engagement, and development than others. Coined by Kuh (2008) as "high-impact," these experiences repeatedly demonstrated student growth and persistence. Through examination of NSSE data, Kuh (2008) identified 10 HIPs as (a) capstone projects, (b) collaborative assignments, (c) common intellectual experiences, (d) diversity/global learning, (e) first-year seminars, (f) internships, (g) learning communities, (h) service learning, (i) undergraduate research, and (j) writing intensive courses.

Because of the use of essential educational elements and their demonstrated positive influence on students from a wide variety of backgrounds, researchers encouraged colleges and universities to create opportunities for each student to participate in at least two HIPs, one in the first year and another later in connection to their field of study. As Kuh (2008) stated, "the results of participating in these high-impact practices…are especially striking for students who start further behind in terms of their entering academic test scores. The benefits were similarly

positive for students from communities that historically have been underserved" (p. 1). Unfortunately, not all college students had access to these practices. Although 60% of college seniors participated in two or more HIPs, participation for minority students was limited (NSSE, 2019). For example, in 2019 the percentage of White students who participated in internships was 51%, compared to 39% of Black or African American students; additionally, students of color were less likely to participate in undergraduate research, study abroad, or internships (NSSE, 2019). The general trends for those who participated in HIPs included little variation by sex and participation was much more common among full-time, traditionally aged students and less common for first-generation and transfer students. Although college seniors at Liberal Arts institutions experienced HIPs at considerably higher rates, variation by major field category existed with students participating in those activities more aligned with their studies, such as faculty research for biological and physical sciences majors and service learning for social service professionals (NSSE, 2019, p. 12).

The research demonstrating the success of HIPs is divided largely into two areas. The first included those studies that used small-scale examinations such as the approach of specific institutions or the influence of individual or small groups of HIPs on the student experience (Conefrey, 2021/2018; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Ying, 2010). The other area included broad examinations of participation, mostly through analysis of national survey responses (Finley & McNair, 2013; Johnson & Stage, 2018; McDaniel & Jura, 2020; Zilvinkis, 2019). In general, these studies found that participation in HIPs was universally beneficial; however, many factors including student characteristics, research design, and quality affected the impact of demonstrated outcomes and resulted in inequities for student participants.

Research Design

Much of the research about HIPs included the use of national datasets for quantitative comparison of participation. For example, in their longitudinal examination of data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education for first-year students, Kilgo et al. (2015) found that HIPs strengthen liberal arts educational outcomes, in particular undergraduate research, and active and collaborative learning. While those types of studies demonstrated self-reported gains for those students who participated, they often only examined correlation between participation in one or more practice without considering the quality of the experience. It is important to note that researchers who used quantitative data from national datasets found mixed results. As Finley and McNair (2013) wrote, surveys "fail to reflect the rich detail that is present when students articulate, in their own voices, what these experiences mean to them in the context of their lives, their learning, and their hopes for obtaining a degree" (p. 2). Although large datasets were helpful because they account for larger populations and applicability of findings, relying on survey data to count participation or self-reported responses to a defined list of options did not account for the additional factors that influenced the student experience. As such, research that considers the lived experiences of individual students is crucial in understanding the impact of deliberately designed opportunities on student engagement and success.

This lack of distinction threatened the demonstrated success of HIPs. Johnson and Stage (2018) examined the relationship between HIPs and graduation rates at four-year public institutions in the United States and asserted HIPs have limited relationship to graduation rates. This quantitative study compared the number of HIPs offered by institutions to the overall sum of graduation rates. Critics disapproved of the single factor investigation and argued that the study did little more than collate graduation rates with HIP participation rates without

considering other factors (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018). As research demonstrated, how institutions used and implemented HIPs mattered (Kinzie et al., 2020; Kuh, 2013; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018) yet Johnson and Stage (2018) concluded that only designating an activity and assigning it as an HIP does not automatically ensure the participants will benefit as described in existing literature.

Quality

As evidence that the quality of HIPs mattered when determining influence on desired outcomes, such as completion rates, researchers attributed the success associated with HIP participation to their use of eight educational elements. The positive effect of a HIP is connected to how the experience intentionally used these elements. However, research examining how the elements contained within these practices correlated to success was nascent. Kuh (2013) remarked that more research was needed to understand how much of each of these must be present for a HIP to be successful. Finley and McNair's (2013) qualitative study included 15 focus groups with participants from nine public institutions in an effort to "disentangle quantitative findings and gather instructive evidence about…campus cultures and educational contexts for different student groups" (p. 21). The focus group findings revealed that engaged learning could take place in multiple settings, whether designed specifically to support HIPs or more representative of typical classrooms; as they shared, "students described learning experiences by the qualities that make them effective, rather than by a particular name or label" (Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 29). As such, administrators are encouraged to focus more on the quality of the experiences and the educational elements rather than if the experience falls into a prescribed list of activities.

Recent research by Kinzie et al. (2020) examined evidence and quality of these educational elements to demonstrate effectiveness. In this study, researchers examined

foundational literature to determine which elements were emphasized within various HIPs and determined the majority of elements are emphasized in all HIPs but not all elements are emphasized in each HIP, confirming an HIP does not have to utilize all eight elements to be impactful. Moreover, students' reported experiences matched the patterns found in the foundational literature. For example, both the literature analysis and student response identified the culminating senior experience as having strong emphasis on all elements except "engaging across difference" (Kinzie et al., 2020). The findings suggested that only a combination of some of the elements were essential in ensuring quality, inclusion of all elements was not necessary. Therefore, development of deliberate experiences need not incorporate all eight elements but rather those most appropriate for the experience. Although their study followed previous research patterns in using large datasets to generalize across multiple institutions, it is unique because it granted insight into the elements that make HIPs effective.

Student Characteristics

The literature revealed that while the educational elements were important for desired outcomes, not all students experienced HIPs in the same way. The literature referred to this as a compensatory or conditional effect and suggested that HIPs may be especially beneficial for underserved students whose pre-college characteristics often put them at a disadvantage (Kuh, 2008; Pascarella & Blaich, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In particular, first-generation, transfer, Black, and Hispanic students benefitted more than other students. Finley and McNair (2013) examined the effects of participation in HIPs among underserved students. Through quantitative analysis of NSSE data from 38 campuses and qualitative data gathered from focus groups at nine of those institutions, they determined that for first-generation, transfer, and

students from underrepresented racial groups, gains in engagement and deep learning increased with the number of HIPs in which students participated (Finley & McNair, 2013).

Conefrey (2021/2018) found similar outcomes for first-generation students participating in learning communities. They determined HIP participation increased student self-efficacy and engagement and therefore better academic outcomes. In their examination of NSSE data for first-year students, Ribera et al. (2017) found participation in HIPs reduced the gap in sense of belonging for historically underrepresented populations. The researchers assessed participation as dichotomous and therefore did not account for variation in HIP experience; moreover, researchers could not determine causal relationship between participation and sense of belonging, only that they were associated. Although findings supported the positive gains discovered in other research, additional research with deeper examination could illuminate the differences for these populations and allow educators to develop richer experiences for underrepresented students.

Unlike research related to participation, when accounting for HIP educational elements, the gains for underrepresented students were not clear. In their study examining the relationship between the characteristics of HIPs related to desired levels of academic performance (grade point average [GPA]), engagement, and satisfaction, Zilvinskis (2019) determined that transfer, first-year, and students of color generally experienced increased outcomes when increases of HIP characteristics were present, except for faculty interaction for Black/African American students. As Patton et al. (2015) explained, without knowledge of the type of interaction it is impossible to know if the interaction was connected to negative experiences such as racist microaggressions or absence of interaction altogether. Kilgo et al. (2019) sought to understand how participation in HIPs might predict academic success for LGBTQ+ students. Using quantitative data from the

National Study of LGBTQ Student Success, they examined the influence of participation in HIPs and environmental factors such as student relations, overall student support, and social acceptance by peers (Kilgo et al., 2019). Of the five HIPs examined, only undergraduate research positively influenced academic success for this population.

Inequities in HIPs

Research demonstrated that student participation in multiple HIPs resulted in more significant gains (Finley & McNair, 2013). As such, colleges and universities have looked for ways to ensure each student can participate in as many HIPs as possible. However, research showed that certain populations did not join in HIPs as frequently. Controlling for pre-college factors, McDaniel and Van Jura (2022/2020) analyzed Educational Longitudinal Study data from undergraduate students between 2004 and 2012 and determined HIPs positively contribute to college completion rates. However, contrary to previous research, their data did not reveal a larger influence on any particular group (such as men, first-generation, or students of color). The researchers examined four HIPs and did not account for the quality of those experiences. They discovered that first-generation students participated much less frequently in study abroad, and students of color, first-generation, and men were less likely to participate in general. The authors argued these student populations were also less likely to graduate in 6 years (McDaniel & Van Jura, 2022/2020). Kuh (2013) reported similar findings. Except for service learning, student participation in HIPs remained largely flat and certain groups (first-generation, Black, Hispanic, and transfer students) remained underrepresented in some of these practices, in particular research with faculty, study abroad, internships, and senior culminating experience (p. 3). Without a critical mass of participants from these populations, research that compares large

datasets without additional knowledge of effects, may not adequately describe the student experience.

Ensuring students have access to multiple HIPs is beneficial to all students but research demonstrated it was especially important for those from historically underrepresented groups (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008). With pressure for universities to implement pervasive access to HIPs, it is tempting for administrators to create widespread experiences with a standardized approach for all students. However, the literature revealed the importance of designing HIP experiences that consider the unique characteristics of various student populations (Finley & McNair, 2013) as such, educators should be careful in designing HIPs as universally applicable.

Patton et al. (2015), questioned the framework of student development models in general and HIPs specifically, and also supported this notion. They asserted engagement research is problematic because it lacked consideration of race and other distinguishing characteristics of student populations; moreover, decades of research permitted the development of these theories based largely on the experiences of White students, through a White majority lens, by White researchers. As Zilvinkis (2019) wrote,

> HIPs are selected by scholars of privileged backgrounds, and their essential elements are listed from a similar perspective, then there is a need for research that examines if these characteristics do in fact work for all students participating in these experiences. (p. 692)

If HIPs are to be experiences for all, educators must consider the unique experience of underrepresented students to understand fully the outcomes of participation within their collegiate experience.

In fact, there existed a growing source of literature that commented on the circumstances and framework in which HIPs were historically studied. In addition to centering research on the needs and perspective of majority students, thereby excluding the unique needs of underrepresented populations, survey data collection did not account for the varied identities and characteristics students possess. For example, although BrckaLorenz et al. (2017) determined that gender-variant and cisgender students participated in HIPs at the same rate, they argued these conclusions were difficult to assert because survey design only accounted for binary participants. Similar to previous research, BrckaLorenz et al. (2017) discovered faculty interaction was a significant indicator for gender-variant student participation in HIPs. Certainly, interactions with others are a significant predictor for the success of underrepresented students, and understanding the quality of those interactions, as well as what occurs within the HIP experience, is crucial to ensure inclusivity and access for all students.

Recent Trends

The shift in attention to the quality of an experience permitted a focus on the aspects that make HIPs unique to emerge; and with this, the acceptance of other experiences not on the curated list as potential for high impact. While students may be able to identify participation in certain activities labeled as HIPs, the elements of HIPs existed in a myriad of experiences across campus (Finley & McNair, 2013). As such, educators may use intentional design to incorporate the characteristics of HIPs in many student experiences.

Felten et al. (2016) argued that with the inclusion of the appropriate educational elements, practically any university initiative could have the desired outcomes of HIPs, "all institutions can enhance student learning by focusing more on the qualities that make any experience or pedagogy high impact rather than concentrating solely on a

circumscribed list of practices" (p. 22). Such was the case with electronic portfolios (ePortfolios). These organized learning frameworks required:

> active learner engagement and responsibility in their learning, along with learner reflection, upon not only the artifacts or instances of learning assembled in the ePortfolio, but also upon their process of learning that exhibits the desired outcomes at required levels of competence (Watson et al., 2016, p. 65).

While ePortfolios were often paired with other HIPs (Conefrey, 2021/2018; Watson et al., 2016), research demonstrating the success of ePortfolios as a stand-alone experience on student learning and desired outcomes was so significant that the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) named this experience an 11th HIP, provided that proper implementation and integration occurred (Watson et al., 2016).

The expansion of HIPs to include ePortfolios was just one example of how using the HIP educational elements creatively and with intention could expand HIP offerings and create meaningful experiences for students. The University of Michigan expanded its undergraduate research offerings to include campus-wide, project-based opportunities, not tied to academic majors, to give students more access to research with faculty (Felten et al., 2016). Regardless of whether students are aware of the labels associated with those practices marked as HIPs (Finley & McNair, 2013), institutions are well positioned to offer experiences like these that incorporate educational elements tailored to their students and the needs and values of their university environment. One such experience is student employment.

Student Employment

Student employment has long been a part of the landscape of the U.S. higher education system. In 2020, 53% of full-time undergraduates were employed while enrolled in school, and

an even larger population of part-time students worked while attending class (NCES, 2020a). Students work on- and off-campus; however, because of the conflation of the two in data collection and diffused responsibilities or oversight on college campuses, it was difficult to determine how many students worked in each area. It was estimated that one-fifth of all undergraduates work more than 20 hours per week (Perna, 2010). This widely shared student activity accounted for a significant portion of the undergraduate experience. As such, higher education practitioners must understand student employment on their campuses and its impact on student success and learning. This section examines the literature related to student employment beginning with an understanding of who works and why, then identifies current trends, and concludes with a focus on employment as a HIP for student learning and success.

What is Student Employment?

With over sixteen million students enrolled in undergraduate colleges and universities across the U.S. and 85% of part-time and 53% of full-time students working while enrolled, the characteristics of student employees are vast and diverse (NCES, 2020a). Students work for a myriad of reasons and in a multitude of locations. With such a significant portion of time within the higher education experience spent working, it is imperative institutions understand and support the needs of student workers. Additionally, students are working more. Except for full-time students who work 35 hours or more, "the percentages for all other categories of hours worked per week were lower in 2018 than 2020" (NCES, 2020a, p. 2). Therefore, understanding the student employment experience is complex.

Evidence of student work exists throughout the history of higher education in the United States. In colonial times, students tutored children of local families or apprenticed at local businesses (McClellan et al., 2018). The development of programs and new models of funding

higher education, such as the Land Grant Act and the College Work Program (now called Federal Work-Study) connected student work to the academic mission (Kincaid, 1996). Expanded student services, such as dining and facilities, created demand for workers on-campus in these areas (Kincaid, 1996; McCellan et al., 2018).

Working to support the costs associated with education has long been the major influence of why students work (Mulugetta & Chavez, 1996). Although for many decades students could spend summers working to cover the cost of higher education, as tuition rates continued to increase, students were forced to work throughout the year to afford their degree attainment (Carnevale et al., 2015). In the 1960s, the United States created a federally funded work-study program that permitted subsidization of costs through work on-campus (McClellan et al., 2018). Students who participate in Federal Work-Study are classified as "work-study," although their work rarely differs from non-work-study students. In 2018, the total U.S. enrollment in degree granting post-secondary education was 19.8 million with the average cost of tuition of $24,623 (USDOE, 2021). From 2017-2018, approximately 612,000 recipients were awarded Federal Work-Study grants with an average sum of $1,794 (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 2020), or 13.7% of total costs. With costs rising and limited support to compensate for those costs, students had no choice but to work while enrolled.

Scope of Work

Researchers often used work as a control factor to examine other research questions (Mayhew et al., 2016). As such, understanding the influence of work as its own entity was not robust. We know students work for a variety of reasons and the impact on this work can differ according to the definition of their employment status. Perna (2010) explained, "given differences in financial resources, family responsibilities, and other circumstances, work is likely

to play a different role in the college enrollment of a student who enrolls full time in the fall after graduating from high school than it does for adult or non-traditional students" (p. xv). More specifically, McClellan et al. (2018) identified the difference between "students who work versus workers who are students" (p. 9) asserting that for students who worked, the role of student was central to their identity whereas workers who were students centralized their role as employee. In 2019, 42% of full-time students (enrolled in 12 hours of coursework) ages 16-24 were employed (NCES, 2020b). Students who viewed themselves as a student who worked (attending full-time and working part-time) were considered traditional student workers and for this type of student, employment was positively associated with retention (Kincaid, 1996).

We know students work on-campus for a stipend or hourly wage, in paraprofessional or non-paraprofessional roles. However, the type of work provided by on-campus employers can vary widely both in tasks performed and influence on student development. Unfortunately, the type and number of campus employers remained largely understudied. As Kincaid (1996) explained, "Most jobs are not directly and formally tied to the academic experience. The employment of students is not the province of any government agency, and, on the campus, the duty may be shared by several offices" (p. 3). As such, information regarding student employment came from a multitude of sources, preventing examination in the same way as other common student experiences. Some studies examined how type and sponsoring university unit influenced the student worker experience either because of specific job tasks and connection to physical environment (Duhon, 2011) or integration of more advanced training such as leadership theory (Hernandez & Smith, 2019; McClellan, et al., 2018). In short, we know students work but little formal knowledge as to where and how job site and type of experience may or may not influence student outcomes existed.

Connection of Employment to Student Success

As demonstrated above, student success through engagement is critical to the student experience. However, the literature provided mixed reviews about the value and influence of employment on student success. Through examination of empirical literature related to student employment, Riggert et al. (2006) found the research to be "marked with diversity and contradiction," linking inconsistencies to a lack of synthesized understanding and "theoretical conceptualization of the relationship between student employment and higher education" (p. 69). Generally, employment studies focused on academic achievement, retention, and financial implications rather than the effect on student development and growth (Kincaid, 1996). Moreover, the influence of employment participation differed depending on which lens the study used to examine employment. In the instance of academic achievement, persistence, and retention, on-campus employment was generally a positive influencer (Astin, 1993; Dundes & Marx, 2006; Noel, 2006; Pike et al., 2008). In their empirical study of cognitive and intellectual influences on college student development, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded work during college, whether on or off campus had minimal influence unless related to the student's field of study or intended career (p. 197). However, in the same investigation, when examining employment research as it related to retention, persistence, and completion, they found success only under certain circumstances (on-campus and limited hours; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Because information about influence on cognitive and personal development was limited, research discovered minimal influence in these areas.

Underrepresented students were likely to work more frequently and for more hours. In 2020, the USDOE reported some statistical differences in working among various racial groups. Underrepresented students averaged more hours per week (see Table 1 for comparison).

Table 1

Percentage of Full-Time U.S. Undergraduates Who Work

Race/Ethnicity	%	Hours Per Week	
		< 10	35+
White	46.0	4.4	9.7
Black	39.9	1.4	18.5
Hispanic	47.7	3.2	13.6
Asian	34.7	5.6	4.4
Two or more races	48.0	5.7	11.1

Note. Percentage of undergraduate college students who worked while enrolled full-time (at least 12 hours of coursework) in 2019.
Data are from "Percentage of 16- to 64-year-old undergraduate students who were employed, by attendance status, hours worked per week, and selected characteristics: 2000, 2010, and 2019" by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2020, (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_503.40.asp). In the public domain.

Pike et al. (2008) determined first-generation students were more likely to work on campus. Several studies reported the value of employment in providing access and contributing to the success of distinctive and underrepresented students such as international and students of color (Nunex & Sansone, 2016; Su, 2018). In their phenomenological qualitative study, Su (2018) discovered several positive indicators for international students who work, in particular, improvement in their English skills, exposure to diversity issues, and increased connection to native students. Nunex and Sansone (2016) found positive gains in intrinsic satisfaction with work and developing skills and community for first-generation Latino students. These small, qualitative studies provided rich descriptions of the student employment experience and

demonstrated employment to be a "supplementary educational space for cross-cultural academic and social learning in the university" (Su, 2018, p. 1382).

Jach and Trolian (2020) examined findings from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education and determined on-campus employment during the first year of college had negative effects on student academic motivation. These findings were troublesome and demonstrated the benefit of reducing the need for students to work while attending college, particularly during their first year. However, the study did not account for the nature of employment, so it was difficult to determine how employment affected academic motivation and contradicted other studies that found positive academic and retention impacts for on-campus employment (Jach & Trolian, 2020). Regardless, the study demonstrated the importance of constructing intentional experiences that link employment to academic outcomes and learning.

Location

Employment opportunities for undergraduate students existed across, around, and beyond campus. Research once again demonstrated mixed reviews regarding the impact of location of employment on student outcomes. Mayhew et al. (2016) pointed to study design as responsible for this lack of clarity, noting research often conflates on- and off-campus employment. Another possible explanation related to research outcomes as identified above. This conflation was problematic as various researchers linked on-campus employment to retention and persistence (Astin, 1993; Dundes & Marx, 2006) while others discovered negative impacts for those students who worked off-campus (Elling & Elling, 2020; Salisbury et al., 2012). Further studies that

distinctly account for these differences would aid in developing a clearer understanding of the role of location on student employment outcomes.

Although some inconsistencies existed, research generally supported on-campus work as contributing positively to student success (Astin, 1993; McCormick et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In their examination of NSSE, McCormick et al. (2010) discovered positive correlation for students, particularly those who attended full-time, to several dimensions of student engagement. On-campus employees generally benefited more than their non-working counterparts did, and off-campus workers were most likely to have negative associations with the campus environment (McCormick et al., 2010). As supported by literature, on-campus employment not only supports student financial need, but also inherently connects the student to their institution in meaningful ways. As Noel (1996) stated,

> With campus jobs, students automatically become involved with the campus. Student employees don't have to seek out affinity groups. Their student employment provides them with an easy way of belonging, a natural 'tie-in" to at least one office on campus (p. 32).

Moreover, off-campus employment, even in small amounts, detracted from the undergraduate experience, resulting in poor grade point average and academic achievement, presenting "uniformly negative effects on every aspect of satisfaction" in a similar manner to working full-time (Astin, 1993, p. 388). In short, providing work for students on campus increased their likelihood of success because it gave them a sense of belonging and contributed to their persistence; as such, universities must find more ways to employ students on-campus for the sake of student success.

Time Spent

Students' level of success and desired outcomes connected to time spent working. One obvious reason for this correlation was the direct connection to the campus experience provided by working on site, which more than compensated for the time the student invested in working as opposed to experiences (Astin, 1993). For many decades, research reported a direct correlation between hours spent working and academic success and purported the critical mass of working hours to be under 20 hours per week (Horn & Berktold, 1998). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) shared that early research determined "the critical point may be closer to 15 hours than to 20" (p. 414) and any work beyond this point detracted from the student's academic experience. Recently, research demonstrated the relationship between persistence and employment to be curvilinear or U-shaped and more broadly connected to the totality of the experience whereby working too little or not working at all was as detrimental to completion as working too much (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perna, 2010).

In its most simplistic form, employment can contribute to student persistence by helping finance the experience and providing a connection to campus. However, much like degree completion, student success and simply the ability to finance one's education is not enough. Employers must elevate student employment to enhance the undergraduate experience.

Employment as High Impact

Foundational to HIPs was the opportunity for out-of-classroom learning that facilitated the obtainment of transferrable skills and exposure to diverse people and thoughts. This development of transferrable skills across multiple contexts, in particular work and education, can be explained through the concept of *experiential* or *applied learning* experiences (McClellan et al., 2018). Some HIPs, such as global learning, research, internships, and service learning are

inherently experiential (McClellan et al., 2018), as are work experiences like student employment. Significant research examined the role experiential learning played in developing intentional employment programs that aligned with the educational principles of HIPs and facilitated student success and learning.

Experiential Learning

A. Y. Kolb and Kolb (2005) developed the theory of Experiential Learning with the assumption that learning occurred through interaction with the environment and those past experiences influenced learning. The model included four parts that interacted continuously in a cyclical cycle. Active Experimentation and Reflective Observation were identified as ways of perceiving information, and Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization were ways of processing information (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Through acting, reflecting, experiencing, and thinking, this model provides a strong framework for constructing and evaluating the on-campus student employment experience (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Fede et al. (2018) surveyed former student employees for an "on- off-campus" job where they were able to experience both the flexibility, financial support, and interactions of on-campus work while interacting with community members in real-life scenarios. Although focused on a limited sample, the study demonstrated the opportunity to construct intentional employment opportunities that contributed to civic engagement, academic success, and lifelong learning. Because on-campus employment offers the ability to learn across various contexts, experiential learning provides an excellent framework for understanding the influences of employment on student learning.

Emerging Trends

The conceptualization of HIPs has existed for over a decade. During this time, institutions increasingly sought to incorporate these opportunities for focused resource distribution and accountability. Recognizing the need to expand resources that contributed to student engagement and success, many universities began to look to employment as an opportunity to incorporate the proven success of the intentional design and focus on educational elements within HIPs. These emerging trends provided strong examples for administrators to consider for enriching the out of classroom experience. Fortunately, institutions can implement such opportunities with little financial investment.

University of Iowa (2021) implemented a program where supervisors conducted purposeful conversations using four reflection questions. This simple exercise permitted student employees to "reflect on their learning and connect their learning within and beyond the classroom" (para 1). Participants reported positive gains in work and career related skills, relationships, time management, and communication. Employees who did not participate in the program were more likely to identify income as the greatest benefit of working (University of Iowa, 2021). Halper et al. (2020) also determined the practice of incorporating reflection into employment bolstered outcomes. They found student employees who participated in the Student Employment Experience, which included "structured learning competencies, supervisor training, and cocurricular development workshops" (p. 517), had greater gains in learning and personal development. Although these programs did not incorporate all the education elements of HIPs, the use of those elements that were the most appropriate to the activity are consistent with the findings offered by Kinzie et al. (2020) and demonstrated the ways the employment experience can be leveraged to enhance student learning and success.

In their study, Hansen and Hoag (2018) examined the employment program frameworks provided by two student employment initiatives. They offered several learning centered goals for supervisors to promote employment as HIP including (a) use learning language throughout employment, (b) set learning goals, (c) help students experience the institution as interconnected, (d) provide support for supervisors, and (e) understand the change process and celebrate success. Their study demonstrated the importance of new initiatives that used added structure and centered learning and connection across the university.

Savoca (2016) analyzed archival employment datasets from two institutions to determine the impact of on-campus jobs for sophomore first-generation students. They compared GPA and persistence between students employed in jobs configured as HIP and non-HIP and found that type of job was not a significant predictor of GPA or persistence. However, this study was limited to a small dataset over one academic year, thereby limiting application and control for extenuating circumstances such as the quality of training for supervisors (Savoca, 2016). Additionally, the researchers did not control for elements of HIP that may have been included in jobs not designated as such. Although this study did not demonstrate positive predictors for underrepresented students, it did identify several elements of HIPs present in student employment and demonstrated the need for additional research, particularly research that examines the individual's experience and type of employment separately and more deeply.

Conclusion

Through a focus on HIPs, this chapter provided an overview of the literature as it related to student success and learning in the form of engagement and persistence, the prevalence and experience of student employment on college campuses, and the ways in which student employment connected elevated learning experiences and student success. The literature

demonstrated significant support for the use of student employment to enrich student success, and in particular, the enduring ability of HIPs to contribute to this endeavor.

The 11 experiences identified as HIP are co-curricular in nature, occurring inside and outside of the classroom. Mixed findings on the success of HIPs existed, in part because most research design did not consider the unique characteristics of students or the implementation of quality within the experience. Studies also demonstrated the need to expand HIP offerings to more students, especially those historically underrepresented. While HIPs provided a compensatory effect for these student populations, flaws in research design, access, and inconsistencies in quality contributed to inequities for student subgroups. Additional research that considers individual student experiences through the gathering of rich, qualitative data could create additional understanding of the quality of HIPs, as well as how educational elements contribute to their success while also granting insight to the phenomenon for distinct student populations. Over the past several decades, researchers widely tested and proved the success and importance of the positive influences of HIPs. As such, experts cited the need for additional opportunities for engagement in HIPs, especially those that were large scale in nature and accessible to a diverse student population (Kuh, 2008, 2013; McClellan et al., 2018). When considering the features that define HIPs, one such experience is student employment.

Student employment was found to be prevalent across the undergraduate experience; however, the literature revealed little about the influence of working beyond time spent and academic implications, such as influence on GPA. Moreover, mixed findings over the critical mass of hours and the conflation of on- vs off-campus made it difficult to ascertain the contextual influences of employment on student success. Regardless, there exists a need for more

research that seeks to understand the employment experience more fully, particularly considering the proven benefits of intentionally designed opportunities for student persistence and learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Using a pragmatic worldview, I sought to examine undergraduate employment at W&M through students' perceptions of the role their on-campus employment played in their undergraduate experience and examine its intersection with educational components of high-impact practices (HIPs). Through interviews and document analysis, this case study aimed to provide information for university stakeholders so they may expand workforce opportunities to create intentional, integrated learning experiences.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of HIPs and their on-campus employment experiences?
    a. How does students' employment type affect the use of HIPs?
2. What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

Program Evaluation Approach or Model

I used a qualitative approach with case study methodology to examine the research questions. Case study research permits an in-depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2017). In this study, I sought to understand student participants' perceptions of evidence of HIPs and their individual undergraduate learning experiences. In addition to the exploration of a contemporary phenomenon, Yin (2017) identified further features of a case study to include (a) multiple sources of evidence and (b) deliberate triangulation (p.

15). Furthermore, the pragmatic framework enables researchers to use whatever methods are necessary to provide the best understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2014). For this study, qualitative research permitted an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of student employees. This single-case embedded case study examined student employee insights into their on-campus employment experiences. The following sections provide a detailed description of the study's participants, data sources, data collection, and analysis. The chapter concludes with the ethical considerations of the study, including limitations, delimitations, and assumptions.

Description of the Evaluation

The case in this study was W&M's on-campus undergraduate employment experience, specifically students' perceptions of its connection to the educational elements characteristic of HIPs and the integration of learning. An embedded case study considers and evaluates each individual subunit within the case in the same manner (Yin, 2017). In this study, embedded subunits were those university areas that employed students.

At W&M, a multitude of departments from across the university employed undergraduate students. These positions existed in a variety of forms, from operating the front desk at the student union to serving as a paraprofessional employee within Campus Living. The Office of Financial Aid provided oversight for student employment through the lens of student payment and did not disclose Federal Work-Study status to employers. Departments could advertise on-campus job opportunities independently or through the career center. Positions were available for full-time students regardless of financial need or Federal Work-Study status. W&M permitted students to work in multiple positions but the total time worked in both could not exceed 29 hours per week during academic periods and 40 hours per week during breaks (W&M, 2021a).

Role of the Researcher

One of the hallmarks of qualitative research is the inextricable connection of the researcher to the study (Merriam, 1998); therefore, researchers must thoroughly examine the contribution of their values, beliefs, and perceptions on the study (Creswell, 2014) to protect the integrity of the study. The following section outlines the parameters of the study and identifies related assumptions and biases that influenced the research.

As a practitioner committed to the development of students and their experiences, I remained aware of my biases in viewing employment as a relevant and significant contributor to student success. I viewed the value of student employment from the perspective of a student employee during my own undergraduate experience, as well as in my current role as a staff member. As an undergraduate, I worked as a resident assistant for three of my four years and briefly in our campus convenience store. In retrospect, I believe my experience as a resident assistant was crucial to both my undergraduate success and chosen career path. Although my work in the campus retail store was less influential to my personal development and persistence, it provided me with the opportunity to build relationships and connect to the institution more significantly. At the time of the study, I supervised graduate and undergraduate student employees as well as professional staff members who also supervised student employees working in the student union. I had responsible oversight for our departmental student employment program, including recruitment, training, evaluation, and staff development. Our student staff served in a variety of roles including oversight for building operations and facilitating community.

I believe student employee work is critical to daily university operations. Additionally, I viewed the employment experience as valuable to individual students and university units. As a

staff employee, I recognized certain limitations at the university level that undergraduates may not be aware of or understand. Because of these potential biases, I was careful to share the employment experience through the lens of the student employee insights rather than my own. As the researcher in this case study, I served as facilitator. Spickard (2017) described researcher centered analysis as that which "looks beneath [the] subjects' words to discover patterns of which the subjects themselves may not be aware" (p. 139). I assumed that undergraduate students were not aware of how employment can serve as a HIP; as such, my goal was to determine if their insights connected to this framework. I conducted all data collection and analysis and did not include close student employees with whom I worked.

My aim in conducting this research was to understand the on-campus student employment experience and the ways it connected significantly to student engagement and learning. In doing so, I hoped to strengthen the student on-campus employment experience so more students may benefit from the intentional integration of learning as is characteristic of HIPs. I maintained a researcher's journal to help bracket my assumptions about the employment process for students. Strong communication, including active listening, sensitivity, and careful restraint in applying personal assumptions, biases, and conclusions was necessary to strengthen my reliability as a researcher. I acknowledged my role as an instrument in research collection and analysis.

Participants

Research participants included undergraduate students employed on-campus through paid wages. To account for external influences, such as personal development and career readiness, the study focused specifically on students 18-22 years of age. To account for the pragmatic assumption that "diverse types of data best provide a more complete understanding of a research

problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone" (Creswell, 2014, p. 19), the selection of participants occurred through a two-level process (Merriam, 1998).

For the first level, the Office of Financial Aid sent an exploratory survey (Appendix A) to 1,080 undergraduate continuing students employed in any student employment position between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021. I received 134 responses. Twelve responses were eliminated based on failure to complete the survey, 10 responded "no" in willingness to participate, 15 did not include contact information, one selected "not an employee," and one was not between the ages of 18 and 22. Of the 95 completed survey responses, 21 respondents worked only 1 semester, five reported all remote work, and three were duplicate responses; leaving 66 respondents.

For the second level of selection, to represent a variety of understanding, I first identified university units with the largest number of responding employees from the 66 remaining. To increase consistency in students' perception of employing units, students employed by non-university entities, such as dining services, were not included in the study. The most frequently selected locations included (a) Campus Living, (b) Campus Recreation, (c) Student Unions & Engagement (SUE), and (d) University Libraries. In an effort to optimize multiple variation sampling and account for variation in perspectives connected to gender, race, and work experience, as well as the influence of type and location of employment, a broad representation within each embedded unit was necessary. As such, I invited, via email or text message, at least six participants employed in these four different university units under the following specific criteria: type of employment and demographics. Selection criteria are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Selection Criteria for Interview Participants

Level	Criteria	Definition
1	Class Standing	Only undergraduate students were selected.
2	Age	Students were traditionally aged, 18–22 years old.
3	Hours worked	Students worked in one unit for a minimum of 5 hours/week.
4	Duration of Employment	Students were employed on-campus for a minimum of 1 semester.
5	Employer	I sought to include 6 participants, across four university areas, for a minimum of 24 participants representative of both academic and student affairs units.
6	Employment Type	I sought a balance of participants working in paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional roles.
7	Race/Ethnicity	I sought to include participants from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds.
8	Gender	I sought participants from a broad representation of genders.
9	Work Experience	I sought students with a variety of experiences working in non-campus settings.

However, many respondents did not return my outreach and/or schedule an interview. As such, I contacted those student employees who already agreed to participate and supervisors in each unit and asked them to distribute my request to participate and/or refer individual employees. Individuals who referred others were entered to win a small gift card for their efforts. Final selection for interviews resulted in 24 traditionally aged (18-22) undergraduate students, employed no less than one semester and working a minimum of 5 hours a week, in four on-campus units: (a) Campus Recreation, (b) Campus Living, (c) Student Unions & Engagement, and (d) University Libraries. Table 3 provides additional demographic details of selected

participants. Participants who agreed to an interview were sent a consent form (Appendix B) that was returned to me before the interview began.

Table 3

Demographic Details for Interview Participants

Demographic	No.
Male	5
Female	18
Non-Binary	1
Multiracial	6
Black/African American	1
White	18
Federal Work-Study	10
First Generation	5
Transfer	1
Additional Work Experience	22

Note. $N = 24$. Additional work experience included working over the summer and/or in high school.

Data Sources

The pragmatic research paradigm advocates for data methods that best support the evaluation questions while operating from the assumption that reality is individually interpreted (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). As such, the pragmatic framework allowed me to use qualitative data to understand the lived experience of each student employee. Yin (2017) asserted one of the primary points of case study research is the use of multiple sources methods to strengthen reliability and validity. The data sources for this study included (a) a demographic survey, (b)

semi-structured interviews, and (c) documents such as position descriptions, student employee evaluations, and stated departmental goals.

Survey

All undergraduate employees employed for at least one semester, approximately 1,080 students, received a researcher developed Qualtrics survey. The focus of the survey was to gain a broad understanding of the undergraduate employees at W&M and to gather basic information such as demographics and employment type. Demographic questions included sex, race/ethnicity, age, major, duration of on-campus employment, time in current position, location and type of employment, class year, wage type, and whether employment was a part of their financial aid package/work-study. Survey questions are available in Appendix A. To protect the sample, the survey began with class standing and participant age, structured as branching questions to redirect those outside of the 18-22 age group to an ineligibility page. Six students employed on-campus but not a part of the sample for this study, were used as a field-test sample to ensure survey clarity.

Interviews

I invited selected participants (determined by criteria provided in Table 2) via email to participate in semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews permit in-depth analysis of unobservable data, such as a participant's inner thoughts (Merriam, 1998). I used Merriam's (1998) recommendations for conducting case study interviews to formulate interview questions (see Appendix C). Questions were open-ended, avoiding multiple-choice questions that provided a narrow range of options or focused yes/no questions that would not provide adequate insights. I used familiar language, and the questions did not lead the participant to respond in a particular way. The interview protocol guiding this study is presented in Appendix C. For each of the

primary interview questions, there were purposeful opportunities for follow-up questions, aiding in achieving a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences (Merriam, 1998). Questions centered on various themes that allowed for both the participant and researcher to voice their perceptions around the given subject (Merriam, 1998). The ultimate focus of the interviews was an in-depth understanding of individual experience, specifically the elements of HIPs practice and student learning as demonstrated in Appendix D. To account for accuracy and clarity of questions, I conducted pilot interviews with three employed undergraduate students working on-campus at another university and therefore not a part of the sample for this study. I did not use any information collected from the pilot interview in my data analysis for this study.

Documents

Merriam (1998) defined documents as an "umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand" (p. 112). I obtained and reviewed available documents such as (a) position descriptions, (b) hiring advertisements for student employees, (c) employee evaluation templates, (d) training manuals, (e) department/unit employee outcomes, and (f) mission statements from the four units whose student employees participated in the semi-structured interviews. As I gained greater understanding from participants, I contacted additional supervisors within Campus Recreation and University Libraries to gather additional documents as I learned these units had several smaller subsets of employees.

Data Collection

This section identifies the process of collection for both forms of data (interviews and document analysis). Inclusive, broad sampling identified appropriate subjects and established criteria narrowed the pool for participation qualitative analysis. First, the Office of Financial Aid

distributed the survey electronically to all undergraduate students employed on-campus. I also contacted individual employing units and asked them to distribute to their employee listservs. The survey was open until I received enough responses to conduct research. Although all undergraduate on-campus employees employed at least one full semester received a survey, only responses from participants ages 18-22 were included in the analyses. Initial analysis of survey results determined, via criteria stated above, the participants for the qualitative interviews.

Once I identified and confirmed interview participants, I gathered documents from the representative university units, including website reviews and a request for information from supervisors and/or department heads. Only primary source documents, grounded in the context of the study and existing independently of the research, were used (Merriam, 1998). Additional data collection occurred upon discovery from participants of additional supervisors.

I conducted all interviews via Zoom. Consent forms and statements of participation were provided before each interview. Participants had the opportunity to provide a pseudonym and I recorded interviews with their approval. I did not select for interviews participants I directly supervised or with whom I had a close relationship. Once I transcribed and summarized interviews, I provided summaries via email to participants for their review and approval as a form of member checking, participants had 30 days to respond. This process of member checking, as defined by Creswell (2014), contributes to the validity and reliability of the study by allowing participants to review the accuracy of recorded statements.

COVID-19 Considerations

In the spring of 2020, a global pandemic forced colleges and universities to close and/or modify university operations. This resulted in the displacement of on-campus student employees from their place of employment, requiring them to modify their positions or in some cases, stop

working altogether. W&M only guaranteed remote work opportunities to those students receiving Federal Work-Study funds (C. Stone, personal communication, March 2020).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, on-campus work is a critical component in reinforcing student engagement with the university community. Inability to work and more specifically, inability to work *on-campus*, was likely a compounding factor for many participants in this study. As such, I included in the interviews a question accounting for the possibility of remote work and how the pandemic affected their employment experience. To ensure I included students with a variety of experiences, I added additional measures in the selection process to guarantee the inclusion of participants with a minimum of one semester of experience in their position; because of this, students in their first year at W&M were ineligible to participate. Additionally, I did not include those students whose work experience consisted only of remote work.

Data Analysis

I analyzed data from the interviews and documents that I collected. I only used survey data for participant selection demographics. As the researcher, I coded both forms of data. In this section, I discuss the ways analysis occurred for both forms of data.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews used Zoom's transcription service. I checked these transcripts for errors and sent the transcript and summary of the interview to participants to verify accuracy. Analysis of qualitative data collected from interviews and documents used external and sub-coding. External coding is critical in researcher centered analysis as the researcher uses codes to answer the research questions rather than understand the respondent's ideas (Spickard, 2017). In this case, I examined the students' perceptions of their experiences in light of those pre-determined elements of HIPs that contribute to learning. Using Kuh's (2013, p. 10) HIPs as a framework, coding

incorporated themes related to the eight education components he identified as essential to HIPs as demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Coding Labels for Educational Elements

Elements of High-Impact Practices	Label
Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels	Performance
Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time	Time
Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters	Interactions
Experiences with diversity	Diversity
Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback	Feedback
Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning	Learning
Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications	Application
Public demonstration of competence	Demonstration

Note. From "Taking HIPs to the Next Level" by G. D. Kuh, 2013, in G. D. Kuh and K. O'Donnell, *Ensuring Quality &Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale* (p. 8), 2013, American Association of Colleges and Universities. Copyright 2013 by American Association of Colleges and Universities.

In addition to coding for evidence related to HIPs, to understand students' perceptions of learning, I also used coding for themes related to A. Y. Kolb & Kolb's (2005) Experiential Learning Theory, demonstrated in Table 5. Once I coded for pre-determined themes, I used sub-coding to identify themes and better understand the participants' experiences in connection to the HIP elements and experiential learning. I used Microsoft Word to separate interview responses and data analysis according to themes and subcodes. Data was further organized via Microsoft Excel to identify patterns in findings according to employ type and unit. Content analysis used

values coding and focused on information as it pertains to student understanding of exposure to HIPs.

Table 5

Coding Labels for Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning Practices	Label
Concrete experience	Experiencing
Reflective observation	Reflecting
Abstract conceptualization	Thinking
Active experimentation	Acting

Note. From "Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education" by A. Y. Kolb and D. A. Kolb, 2005 in *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 4*(2), p. 193-212. (https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2005.17268566). Copyright 2005 Academy of Management Learning and Education.

Documents

Document analysis used the same external codes listed above. Triangulation with data from multiple sources contributed to the reliability and accuracy of results by ensuring the same themes emerge throughout the study (Creswell, 2014). Lack of or missing information also provided insights into patterns and processes; as such, I also noted the absence of documentation, such as departmental student-employee outcomes.

Assumptions, Delimitations, Limitations

This research study was subject to the values and beliefs I held as the researcher. In this section, I outline the parameters and limitations of the study and clarify assumptions and biases that may have influenced outcomes.

Assumptions

Assumptions are those beliefs, or pre-conceived notions about the study that I, as the researcher, held (Bloomberg & Volp, 2019). Based on my background and experience working with student employees, several primary assumptions existed about this study. First, I assumed students shared their perspectives truthfully. Second, I assumed I would find some components of HIPs and learning in the experiences of varied participants. Third, I limited participants to traditional-age college students because I assumed these students differed developmentally from their older peers. Finally, I assumed student characteristics influenced their experience of the elements of HIPs and as such, interviewed a variety of participants.

Delimitations

Delimitations describe the intentional choices researchers make to optimize research design (Spickard, 2017). As an embedded case study, this study focused solely on the on-campus employment experiences of undergraduate students who worked at least 5 hours per week in a university department. Furthermore, to account for differences in student development and the influence of life experiences, only traditionally aged undergraduate students between the ages of 18–22 were included. Graduate and non-traditional students were not included. Finally, because an individual's perception of the value of work may not be limited to a singular experience, I collected information regarding participants' other work experiences.

As a study focused on student perceptions and evidence of HIPs at W&M, only student voice was considered. This study did not include an examination of supervisor experience, university structure, or other elements that may influence the student on-campus employment experience. I did this intentionally so I could examine the employment experience through the

student lens only, avoiding any narrative from the university administration that could cloud the true student experience.

Finally, to optimize my resources, I intentionally limited data collection. While student employers hired students annually, for an individual student, time spent in a position may be brief due to academic or personal constraints. By truncating the timeline of the study, I sought to speak with students after they had been in their positions for a minimum of four weeks and before leaving the job. Additionally, document analysis was limited to those university areas identified as employers of interview participants. This was purposeful to maximize resources and focus my qualitative analysis.

Limitations

Limitations are those uncontrollable factors that contribute to the constraints of the research (Spickard, 2017). Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study was its lack of transferability and application to other populations. As multiple scholars have explained, case studies are appropriately limited in their application because they rely on context (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2017). As such, findings from this study may be limited to small, liberal arts universities. Furthermore, the experiences of participants may be limited to the type of institution they choose to attend; therefore, institution location, campus culture, and general student body characteristics may further limit the relevance of this study to W&M's purposes only.

Additionally, researchers cannot control the rate at which subjects respond and participate and research that seeks elective participation does not account for the motive for student participation. Finally, self-reported research required that I trusted student responses to be truthful and an accurate representation of their own understanding of the sub-unit on-campus employment experience.

Ethical Considerations

In this section, I address ethical considerations. All research fell within the guidelines established by W&M's Education Institutional Review Board Committee (ED-IRC) and data collection did not occur until approved. Data was stored in password-protected files on my laptop and participant codes were stored separately from data. Destruction of data will occur within two years of the completion of the study. The safety and protection of subjects remained a top priority throughout the duration of the study. Participants provided informed consent and received notice that participation was confidential and in no way would affect their employment status. When conducting research, it is important to consider appropriate propriety, utility, feasibility, and accuracy standards (Yarbrough et al., 2011). The following standards maintained ethical treatment of participants and sound evaluation practices.

Propriety

Propriety is "the extent to which the evaluation has been conducted in a manner that evidences uncompromising adhered to the highest principles and ideas" (Yarbrough et al., 2011, p. 291). As described above, I conducted research in a manner that placed participant safety and privacy as the utmost priority. Pseudonyms and consent forms were provided. Participants had the opportunity to review data summaries relevant to their experience through member checking. I employed equal and respectful treatment of stakeholders. Apart from additional, clarifying questions, interview questions were consistent for all participants. Finally, I acknowledged my bias and committed to mitigating its effects to the highest degree possible.

Utility

Utility accounts for the relevancy and usefulness of the study as well as the incorporation of all stakeholders' needs (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Although stakeholder participation was

limited to students, findings assist the university in fulfilling its mission to provide HIPs for students. I will make available copies of the final report to participants and stakeholders at the university.

Feasibility

Feasibility includes resources and other factors, such as time and access that permit satisfactory execution of the study (Yarbrough et al., 2011). The timing of the data collection for the study was intentional and realistic. I acknowledged that time, place, and manner were critical to an accurate understanding of the student experience.

Accuracy

Accuracy addresses the validity and truthfulness of the research (Yarbrough et al., 2011). I incorporated all findings and represented diverging opinions and perceptions equally. Additionally, I took care to include participants who were representative of a variety of backgrounds.

Timeline

Data collection began in the fall of 2021 with the distribution of the survey. Preliminary analysis of survey results occurred in October and the identification and recruitment of interview participants began later that month. Interviews began in November 2021. To ensure a variety of perspectives, additional participants were needed from two departmental units. I offered incentives to previous participants within those units to recommend their coworkers. I concluded interviews in February 2022. Document collection occurred concurrently with interviews, once interview participants were selected and confirmed. However, document analysis did not begin until after the interviews were transcribed.

Summary

Case study research situates a particular case within its own robust context and is qualitative in nature. Through an exploratory, embedded, single-case approach, I gathered rich, focused qualitative examination through interviews and document analysis. As a result, I hoped to provide the university and its practitioners with insights into a functional area that is undefined and lacking in intentional execution, while also providing recommendations for future design. Through a focus on students and their experiences, I sought to enrich the experience of future student employees and provide current students the opportunity to reflect on their undergraduate experience to date. Finally, by remaining cognizant of my assumptions and biases and using standards of propriety, utility, and feasibility, I safeguarded for the ethical treatment of participants and sound research practices.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of the presence of the educational elements connected to high-impact practices (HIPs) within their on-campus employment experiences and how those experiences impact student learning. This chapter presents the data collected to address the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of high-impact practices and their on-campus employment experiences?
    a. How does students' employment type affect the use of the educational elements of high-impact practices?
2. What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

This chapter outlines research findings, beginning with exploration of participant responses as well as document analysis for findings connected to HIPs and concludes with examination of findings related to the influence of on-campus employment experiences on student learning.

Data Sources

I gathered data from document review and semi-structured interviews. Zoom interviews provided the most significant source of data to contextualize student perceptions of their experience. The document review provided details to support or negate participant responses. Twenty-four undergraduate students from four different employment areas participated in interviews for this study, representing a diverse group of participants. Table 6 lists

paraprofessional participants, separated by employing unit, and then listed alphabetically by pseudonyms with demographic attributes.

Table 6

Paraprofessional Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	First Generation	Year	Title	Semesters of Employment
Campus Living						
Heidi	Female	White	No	Sopho-more	Resident Assistant	1-2
Jo	Female	Multi-racial	Yes	Senior	Resident Assistant	4-6
Maize	Female	White	Yes	Junior	Resident Assistant	4-6
Mark	Female	White	No	Junior	Resident Assistant	4-6
Rebecca	Female	White	No	Junior	Head Resident	2-3
Wyatt	Male	Multi-racial	No	Senior	Orientation Aid Director	4-6
Campus Recreation						
Ashleigh	Female	White	No	Sopho-more	Facilities Supervisor	2-3
Abby	Female	White	No	Sopho-more	Trip Leader	2-3
Sarah	Female	White	No	Junior	Facilities Supervisor	2-3
Student Unions & Engagement (SUE)						
Maria	Female	White	No	Junior	Building Manager	2-3
Michael	Male	White	No	Senior	Building Manager	> 6
University Libraries						
Elizabeth*	Female	White	Yes	Junior	Public Service Assistant	4-6

* no previous work experience

Table 7 contains each non-paraprofessional participant, separated by employing unit, and then listed alphabetically by pseudonyms with demographic attributes.

Table 7

Non-Paraprofessional Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	First Generation	Year	Title	Semesters of Employment
Campus Recreation						
Caitlin	Female	White	No	Junior	Personal Trainer	2-3
Lucy	Female	White	No	Senior	Fitness Instructor	4-6
Samantha	Female	Multi-racial	No	Junior	Fitness Instructor	2-3
Student Unions & Engagement (SUE)						
Christopher	Non-Binary	AA/ Black	No	Senior	Games Desk Attendant	2-3
Jessica	Female	White	No	Senior	Information Desk Attendant	More than 6
Josh*	Male	Multi-racial	No	Junior	Information Desk Attendant	2-3
Susan	Female	White	No	Junior	Information Desk Attendant	2-3
University Libraries						
Carolyn	Female	White	No	Sopho-more	Student Assistant	2-3
James	Male	Multi-racial	No	Junior	Student Media Assistant	4-6
Jennifer	Female	White	Yes	Senior	Student Media Assistant	4-6
Joy	Female	White	No	Senior	Student Media Assistant	4-6
Lulu	Female	Multi-racial	No	Sopho-more	Student Media Assistant	2-3

Note. * = individual with no previous work experience. AA = African American

Framework

HIPs are classified as such because of their use of eight educational elements that strengthen students' learning (Figure 1 in Chapter 1). Research demonstrated that activities incorporating these characteristics, whether fully or in part, contribute to success for students.

A. Y. Kolb and Kolb (2005) determined experiential learning describes how students experience learning across contexts and identified (a) Concrete Experience, (b) Reflective Observation, (c) Active Experimentation, and/or (d) Abstract Conceptualization as ways in which students process information and strengthen their understanding. In this study, I found students do experience elements of HIP and experiential learning occurred throughout on-campus employment and influenced academic and non-academic experiences for students. Through use of the two frameworks in this study, I crafted questions to allow students to share their perceptions through interviews regarding where HIP elements existed within on-campus employment as well as ways in which learning may or may not occur both in and out of the classroom.

Research Question 1: What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of high-impact practices and their on-campus employment experiences?

As defined previously, Kuh (2013) identified eight educational elements connected to HIPs that elevate student learning; however, all eight elements do not need to be present for an activity to be labeled as a HIP. The following sections correspond to each of these elements to organize findings applicable to answering Research Question 1 (RQ1). The subheadings are further organized to support Research Question 1a: *How does students' employment type affect*

the use of the educational elements HIPs? with the distinction of results from students in paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional roles.

HIP Element 1: Performance Expectations

In this study, HIP Element 1 was exhibited through the sharing of job tasks, responsibilities, and/or expectations. However, Kuh's (2013) explanation of this element went beyond simply sharing knowledge to include expectations that are set "at appropriately high levels" (p. 10). As such, participants were asked how they felt about their job expectations and their ability to complete tasks. I found student employees were aware of the job expectations and employers readily shared required duties and expected requirements. Additionally, I found students were generally comfortable with their ability to perform required tasks and responsibilities. However, unclear and/or unorganized expectations created confusion for the individual employee. Responses about how expectations were experienced by participants varied according to employee type.

Communication of Expectations. When asked if they received communication of expectations, each participant answered yes. How expectations were communicated varied between units, with the most prevalent for both groups being training, often provided peer-to-peer. Expectations were also communicated during the hiring process, in handbooks or checklists, and through ongoing communication with supervisors via email or weekly meetings.

Unclear and Unorganized. Although participants reported receiving expectations, they also reported that oftentimes the communication was unclear or unorganized. Susan, a junior working as an information desk attendant for a third semester with Student Unions &

Engagement (SUE), described a time when new software was introduced last minute and without training,

> I expect a little bit more organizationally and, in terms of clarity of communications from a group like this. Sometimes I think things were kind of done last minute, not in a way that is going to be useful or clear. If [the software] is something we were going to do this semester, I feel like it could have been covered at training or something like that. I would have expected it to have been known in advance and kind of communicated a little better.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to unclear and/or shifting expectations. Michael, a senior who has worked with SUE as a building manager for four semesters, also found a lack of clarity among expectations in his paraprofessional work,

> I think the problem is…with the expectations shifting, was just that they were so irregular and part of that was the pandemic just made it a lot more difficult to figure out what I was actually expected to do when I first became a building manager.

The confusion resulting from shifting job expectations during and post-pandemic highlighted employers' use of peer-to-peer training and historical knowledge in sharing expectations and tasks. Sarah, a junior in her second semester working as a facilities supervisor in Campus Recreation shared,

> All of a sudden, we had a bunch of new responsibilities, and everyone had a steep learning curve. And [post-pandemic] it's mostly back to normal, I think the biggest effects are people still feeling just people learning what to do because there aren't that many people who were here before the pandemic started who know what it was like and

like how to do certain things that like we just didn't have to do last year. But yeah that was just a lot of learning for a little bit.

While expectations were shared between employer and employee, lack of clear, organized communication and employer reliance on the transfer of knowledge between employees created confusion.

Appropriate Level of Expectations. Setting expectations at appropriate levels is important so employees understand their responsibilities and feel they can accomplish the required tasks. All participants indicated they were comfortable with shared expectations. In some instances, particularly for paraprofessional employees, participants shared that expectations were different than the work required. Maria, a building manager in SUE, noted the unexpected increase in oversight as a result of the pandemic,

> I think it was a little bit harder, because it wasn't just clear-cut and dry, because we still had a lot of questions going into the school year of what things were going to look like. And I think partly that was just administration, not being super clear on their expectations and their rules. And so, it's interesting to see how our job was affected by that.

Further explanation on the findings about differences between employee types and discrepancies between appropriate levels of expectations are shared below.

Distinction Between Employment Types. Although both paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees experienced confusion in the communication of expectations, particularly because of the pandemic, paraprofessional employees more frequently expressed a gap between shared expectations and actual work. Maria, a paraprofessional building manager in SUE, shared,

> I think going into it I didn't realize how many events would be happening and how much attention I would have to pay to certain areas of the building. And so, I think that was overall the biggest thing that changed. I didn't realize how much physical work it would entail.

In addition to the increased workload, the work duties described by paraprofessionals included higher levels of responsibility or oversight. Ashleigh, a 1st-year Campus Recreation facility supervisor, with future goals to work as teacher, discussed how the higher accountability helped to prepare her for future work,

> For a 19-year-old to have the responsibility over a building is like they're putting a lot of trust in faith in me, and you know, especially for opening and closing in terms of the security of the building even, which sometimes feels scary. But I feel like I'm lucky to be in a position where they're putting a lot of trust and faith in us to make sure that things go well. And I think that's good preparation for a teacher. Just shows that we're getting a lot of responsibility early on.

Document Analysis. Document analysis confirmed all units provided employees with written expectations, though the approach and specificity varied. For example, some departments provided employees with detailed handbooks that outline processes and procedures, while others shared broader expectations and/or checklists. In Campus Living and Campus Recreation, training manuals acknowledged the significant responsibility required of their paraprofessional employees. Campus Recreation included the following in its 2021-2022 employee manual for Facilities Supervisors,

> You have a tough task with high expectations! We ask you to be vigilant, provide excellent customer service and employ critical thinking and problem-solving skills. You are expected to represent yourself, Campus Recreation and the University in a positive and effective manner. The campus community puts its collective trust in Campus Recreation to provide a safe, clean and wholesome environment in which to participate. Campus Recreation recruits, trains, and evaluates Facility Supervisors in an effort to live up to this trust. **You** are a vital part of this process. (p. 8)

However, for non-paraprofessional positions, document analysis did not reveal any information regarding performance levels.

HIP Element 1 Summary. Participant responses demonstrated the importance of clear expectations. While participants were rarely surprised by the level of work required, paraprofessionals reported more responsibility. Additionally, unclear, or poorly implemented expectations, resulted in confusion.

HIP Element 2: Significant Investment of Time and Effort

Kuh (2013) shared that investment of substantial time encourages high-quality work. To ensure participants spent adequate time in their on-campus position, initial participant selection for this study was dependent on the length of time worked in their current position, as well as hours worked weekly. Effort was determined by participants' responses to performance expectations and the value placed on the experience. Finally, returning employees expressed the ease associated with working in the same place, highlighting the connection between time spent and effort.

Perceived Effort. Although participant selection ensured participants had accrued a substantial amount of work experience, time spent does not equate to effort. Therefore, participants were asked about the quality of their work and their perceived impact of that work. About half of the participants reported feeling appropriately challenged by the work. Jennifer, a student assistant in the library shared,

> With special collections, you really don't know what you'll be asked to do normally…Front desk is fine. Paging things is fine. Digitization is fine. But sometimes [others will say] "we don't know who this book is, can you try hunting it down?" and okay, you know, challenging. Or there's this constant local, he's in some kind of local government, and he gave us a bunch of his stuff, but it wasn't organized, which is fine, because if you donate you don't have to organize it. But my boss was like "hey, can you just organize all this?" and it was just a mountain of paper. So, I'd say that's pretty challenging, but I still enjoy it, you know? As long as they're not asking something unreasonable, I enjoy being given something different.

While many students spoke about the simplicity of individual tasks, when combined with other aspects the work can become challenging. Ashleigh, a facility supervisor in Campus Recreation, acknowledged this challenge when having to execute multiple individual tasks at once,

> I often feel challenged because usually when one person needs something there are five different situations that I need to handle at once. So, four different teams will come in at once, looking for equipment storage to be unlocked. And that's also when someone comes in, to check out of a van and I have to go outside and do the whole [Department of Motor Vehicles] thing, where I ask them to turn on all the lights and tap the horn… So, I

> feel like it is challenging in terms of not having necessarily a lot of time to work out each different situation so I do have to think faster than maybe I normally would.

These responses revealed that the challenge or effort of the work existed not within the individual tasks but rather in the additional circumstances that affected task execution.

Value. Almost all participants believed the work they did was valuable because they were helping others or representing the university and/or department. This perceived value contributed to effort and one's desire to do well. Christopher, a senior working in his third semester at the Union Central games desk in SUE shared,

> As far as Union Central is concerned, I think that it definitely has a good reputation on campus. A lot of people are interested in working at Union Central because they know how good the culture is, how good the employees are, and that leads to a good point of pride for student employees who work at Union Central. And I see that also as a major part of being on this job, that you're carrying this good reputation.

This value was reinforced by many participants in their desire to maintain a professional appearance and provide excellent customer service.

Investment of Time. Several participants shared that returning for multiple years enhanced their ability to contribute at work, thereby supporting investment of physical time can influence effort and enhance the experience in question. However, too much time or not enough can be problematic. Participants shared experiences when they were working too many hours or not enough. For paraprofessional employees, too many hours created dissonance. For non-paraprofessional employees, not working enough hours was problematic because of lack of pay,

as a result some non-paraprofessional employees sought additional employment both on and off campus.

Distinction Between Employment Types. Equal numbers of paraprofessionals and non-paraprofessionals reported their work as simple or routine and included a variety of tasks. However, in addition to the difference in volume and work hours detailed above, the type of work varied between groups. For paraprofessionals, the high level of responsibility required them to take on more complicated tasks, such as responding to multiple requests at once and solving problems quickly. As such, these participants spoke more often about the conflict between the demands of work with personal or academic needs. Jo, a second-year resident assistant, shared how the demands of working contributed to changing her Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) major,

> When I started off in the school, my plan was to be a neuroscience biology STEM major…And when I was doing these classes, the [class] work was a lot, it was excessive, and it would take hours. You'd be in class doing it, you go to your dorm, and you'd be doing it all night. And then, when I had my jobs, I was like I can't put all this effort that other people are into it. I went to the people that were around me... at this point, I knew a lot of people in these classes, I'd be like "do you guys work a job, do you guys do stuff on campus?" And sometimes they'd be like "oh yeah I do I'm part of this club," but for the most part, no, they were putting all their energy into doing this STEM related field. So I felt as somebody who needs to work, it's gonna be so much harder for me to do this STEM stuff because I need to put my energy into doing other things as well, and you don't see that in the STEM. Most people that are doing these things, their parents are

> already like doctors too. And so they have everything that they want paid off. So they are allowed to put all the energy into it. And so, as time went on, I was like no I can't do it. I can't put energy into everything to do it. And sophomore year I was like I can't do it, I need to spend more time doing my job so unfortunately, I think I'm going to have to change my major. So, I did. I mean, I'm happy because I like sociology more than I liked neuroscience. I didn't know at the time, but now that I'm in [the major] it's definitely more for me. I care about it more. But I think it's interesting that needing to work a job can change your accessibility to do other things that you want to.

Three other paraprofessional participants also reported overwhelm. Wyatt, working as an orientation aide director in Campus Living shared, "I don't think I would do it; I definitely wouldn't do it twice. So, I wouldn't do it again because it was just so much." While the change in academic major was ultimately positive for Jo, these responses demonstrated the importance of a balanced workload to support student persistence. Non-paraprofessional responses did not suggest a sense of overwhelm; instead, these employees shared that the work was routine with the largest challenge connected to advocating for more hours.

Document Analysis. Document analysis revealed units advertised required work hours, mostly through position descriptions. Employee handbooks listed the expected time needed for shift coverage, staff meetings, and other time requirements. While these documents provided an outline of the responsibilities, the level of effort required to accomplish tasks was subjective and influenced by contextual factors.

HIP Element 2 Summary. Participant responses demonstrated a significant investment of time and effort. Document analysis supported participant recollection of time required;

however, effort was subjective and dependent on individual perception. Paraprofessional employees reported more effort required whereas non-paraprofessionals found minimal effort because of routine tasks and limited available work hours.

HIP Element 3: Interactions With Faculty and Peers Over Substantive Matters

Of all the HIP elements connected to on-campus employment, participants most frequently described the influence of others in their experience. As such, the hallmark of on-campus employment from this study appears to be HIP Element 3, interactions with peers and faculty. Participants described work environments that were fun, relaxed, and allowed them to build relationships and develop interpersonal skills. All participants reported interactions with peers whether as coworkers, supervisors, supervisees, or other students visiting or participating in their place of employment. Non-peer interactions occurred with faculty/staff supervisors, patrons or clients, and other coworkers. Kuh (2013) qualified that interactions should be shared over substantive matters. Some of the matters discussed by participants included helping, learning, and receiving support from others, building community, developing relationships, strengthening interpersonal skills, and representing the university.

Interactions With Peers. The most frequent interactions described by participants occurred between peers. One participant, Carolyn, a student assistant for the library, reported limited peer interactions but had heavy faculty/staff interaction. This lack of peer interaction was likely due to her role as a program assistant and the only student working in her area. Participants reported peer interactions occurring in a variety of ways and often resulted in friendship beyond the place of employment. James, a student media assistant in the library shared,

> Rarely, are you [working] alone so usually you have someone else. And then a lot of employees like to just hang out in the Media Center or do work so they are there a lot [of interactions]. Even if you're not working with someone there's a good chance you'll see them there at some point. And then I'm friends with a lot of my coworkers outside of work and I see them all over campus always.

However, although the participants reported the experience was highly interactive, for some student employees, the position was isolating because of the design of the experience. As Susan, a non-paraprofessional working for SUE shared,

> All the other jobs that I worked, when I was in restaurants, we'd all be in the exact same place at the same time. And that's obviously not really true with the Info Desk, because it's one person there at a time. And that's just kind of different and weird and it's not necessarily like a good or bad thing. Sometimes I kind of wish I were better friends with my coworkers.

On-campus employment provided a unique opportunity for employees to enforce policy amongst their peers and many participants spoke about this difference. Ashleigh, a Campus Recreation facilities attendant shared,

> It's difficult [enforcing rules] when it's people your own age or even older than you. And they don't take you seriously if it's like "I don't know. I'm doing my job. I'm sorry I know it's unpleasant for you, but it's going to be fine if you just leave."

These enforcement conversations were more heavily reported because of COVID-19 where students had the added responsibility of mask and social distancing enforcement. Further discussion of COVID-19 implications is included in the sections that follow.

Interactions With Faculty and Staff. Although not as frequent, participants described meaningful interactions with faculty and staff as supervisors. Participants also reported occasional interactions with faculty or staff who work in the same unit as coworkers. Jennifer described her close, "buddy-buddy" relationship with her supervisor in the library, which helped her to feel respected and trusted in the workplace. Maize, a resident assistant in Residence Life shared similar thoughts about her direct supervisor's ability to balance his own responsibilities in his work with students, "he knows about our families and what we do outside of being a [resident assistant] and really just sees us as a human." These close relationships where participants felt trusted and respected were also a great source of support for participants, both as students and employees. Elizabeth, a public service assistant in the library shared,

> I keep coming back just because I know that my employers care about me. I can text them and tell them things about my personal life and be like "Hey I'm having a really rough time" or "I have a test tomorrow; I would like to not come in today." They're really accommodating to the fact that I'm a student first and an employee second, or at least they try to compromise on that a lot of times. And they are actively there for me as a student and individual besides just somebody sits at the desk and does this task for them.

While interactions with peers were more frequent, the accounts from participants about faculty and staff interactions were deeper with more support and meaning.

COVID-19 Influence. Once again, the influence of COVID-19 highlighted the importance of this HIP element within the work experience. For some paraprofessional employees, the pandemic brought them closer to their peers. Mark described the change in interactions post-pandemic during his second year as a resident assistant,

> I would say things are cordial, I guess. It's on a varying degree of "oh we're both [resident assistants]." I'll say hi to you. We're in a class together, so we can talk about things. But if I wasn't in a class with any of them this year, I wouldn't be as close with them. Last year the duty office was sort of the only place where he could go to hang out because we couldn't go to other people's dorm rooms. So, there is sort of the workaround of, if we go to the duty office, we are allowed to be there. So last year, my whole area got a lot closer. This year, I'll stop in to say hi to people in the duty office, but I don't really stay to chat or play games or anything.

However, for front-line staff, not only was the pandemic isolating because they often worked alone or socially distanced, but it also resulted in changes in policy and enforcement. A returning employee in the library, Elizabeth described the difficulty of this challenge,

> Because now we do kind of have to be a bad guy on occasion and be like "you need to put a mask on, and if you don't, I'm going to have to get a guard involved or I'm gonna have to call the William & Mary police." And that's really unfortunate and there's a certain level of interaction limited between us and the patrons now in the beginning with COVID. I think it's really calmed back down. During COVID-19, we couldn't have community members come into the library, so we were doing a lot of digitalization for them, phone calls, emails. So, for a while it was like community members were doing research beforehand or had access for some reason to a specific thing. That community members normally have now, they can't come into the building. how can we make those materials accessible to them? Like there was a certain level of interaction that was lost.

In participant accounts of their responsibilities, the largest source of conflict arose in the enforcement of policies, such as mask mandates, and identified these interactions as particularly challenging because they occurred peer-to-peer.

Distinction Between Employment Types. The ability to interact with others was consistent across employment types particularly in getting to know and helping others. However, the type of interactions varied with paraprofessionals sharing more robust stories of their supervisors and therefore describing greater interaction with faculty and staff. The type of substantive matters also varied between employment types. Paraprofessionals reported a greater degree of interactions about support and learning from others and creating community. Non-paraprofessionals more often identified greater opportunities for interpersonal skill development and a fun work environment.

Document Analysis. Employer documents described connection with others as a part of the job experience through team development with coworkers, customer service interactions, and expected training outcomes. In some units, interactions were an expected outcome for the entire experience. For example, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2021) Career Readiness Competencies used by Campus Recreation included equity and inclusion, and teamwork. In these instances, the Employee Evaluation included evaluation of these skills. For Campus Recreation and Campus Living, employees were required to provide feedback to other employees and other students provided feedback via surveys and informal means, such as conversations with their instructor after a fitness class, thereby connecting peers directly in a substantive way.

HIP Element 3 Summary. Participants responded with excitement and appreciation regarding interactions with peers and faculty/staff. These connections were very clearly a highlight of the experience and for many, provided the greatest opportunities for learning through interpersonal skill development. The substantive matters found within interactions in the workplace centered around community development and helping, learning from, and supporting others. Document analysis confirmed interactions were an expected component of the on-campus experience.

HIP Element 4: Experiences With Diversity

Kuh (2013) described this element as those experiences "wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar" (p. 10). In this study, I found participants most prevalently illustrated exposure to differences through people. When asked how the experience introduces them to difference, participants described interactions with co-workers, visitors/clients, and/or other students. However, in this study, knowledge about the diversity of others is limited to information shared by participants. Participant identification of exposure to traditional forms of diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion was practically non-existent. Instead, peers, patrons, and/or older coworkers with different club involvements, academic pursuits, or personal interests and the ability to learn as a result of different backgrounds, new ideas, perspectives, or workstyles were most referenced by participants. Maize, a 2nd-year resident assistant, recognized differences between her fellow resident assistants and peers in her regular social and academic circles. She shared,

> Being in a staff with people from all different majors, all different grades, all different years, has introduced me to different types of people because, the people I'm friends with, a lot of them are in the elementary ed program or from my freshman dorm or just from the clubs I'm in. So, it's very niche whereas, my coworkers are from all walks of life. And the fact that your area director is a full-grown man. I think it's super awesome. And then I like making friends out of them too.

Jennifer, a junior working as a non-paraprofessional in two different locations in the library spoke about the different type of coworkers she interacts with regularly, noting that while the diversity is not profound, the interactions, particularly with older, non-student coworkers were noteworthy. She shared,

> I guess with the employees, they all do come from different walks of life, the upper staff, so I have learned a lot about them. We have this volunteer his name is Harry and he used to be like a surgeon but lived in a very interesting place. I don't remember. But now he handcrafts instruments. He's so interesting. So, I'm not meeting people that are significantly richer or poorer or are coming from a different walk of life but I'm meeting people that I wouldn't normally interact with…I learn a lot more about adult life.

Participants described these experiences as generally illuminating and interesting but Elizabeth, who worked in the library in a paraprofessional position, also shared how the exposure influenced her thinking and forced a bit of discomfort,

> There are things that you experience at the desk from individuals who think differently from you. And you are researching things that maybe you wouldn't think of and those aren't always comfortable topics. And I think that's what's really important, too, is

> educating yourself and researching, can be very uncomfortable. And learning how to broach those topics, or knowing when to step away for yourself, or knowing how to advocate for yourself.

This exposure to people with different backgrounds and new ideas transformed the individual experience of each employee and provided them with an opportunity to think differently. In the rare instances where participants shared more significant interactions about difference, such as with a patron from the local community who had an opposing political perspective, the participants shared they avoided the conversation and/or quickly shut it down. This suggests that participants were exposed to a greater range of diversity, but the employment experience did not compel them to engage with these topics.

Exposure to difference was also found in the workplace itself through access to resources and experiences. Participants described the opportunity to attend events and programs they learned about or participated in as a direct result of their employment. Maria, a building manager in SUE, shared,

> All of the various speaker-held events [with] emphasis on specific minority represented groups and having guest speakers come in from those groups and being able to sit in the booth and also listen while working. So, I think it's definitely exposed me to a lot of various, literally any possible thing. And in the formatting, those events have all been different types of events…performances, lectures, [thrift shop] sales…I've definitely learned a lot, and seeing the people who are attending those events is also big too. When you can see how people are involved in so many different things, it's really cool.

Working with others also exposed participants to new ideas and work styles. Participants identified their peers as introducing them to new ideas or different workstyles connected to their workplace. However, both types used their peers to inform their work. Heidi, working as a paraprofessional resident assistant shared,

> I guess just by nature of being responsible and in contact with a hall of freshman residents from diverse backgrounds and just having conversation with them…yeah and to some extent that also applies to working with my other [resident assistants] although I feel like we're generally less diverse than my group of residents is.

When I asked Heidi how she responds to these interactions, she shared, "Positively. I like being introduced to new ideas and being able to turn them over and feel what I think about them and how they integrate with what I already think." Wyatt, serving as an Orientation Aid Director, discussed working with coworkers with different work styles,

> People had very different personality types at getting things done and, I'm someone that just needs to sit down and work through the stuff and then other people were like "okay we're just going to talk about it and then we'll think about it and then we'll do something later" which was very interesting.

Exposure to ideas and different work styles helped students accomplish tasks and informed how they performed or accomplished necessary tasks.

Finally, the circumstance of being employed also influenced employees' perspectives. Josh, a 1st-year staff member for the front desk in SUE, connected the circumstance of being employed on-campus contributing to personal changes,

> I definitely feel like my job, I mean I feel like anyone's first-time job really does kind of mature you. Even if it's something as simple as this, you know, you understand what is like to work for a wage and you know meet expectations and make an impression."

Contributing to a professional workplace, exposed students to a new experience and provided the opportunity to think differently about their existing assumptions.

Distinctions Between Employment Types. Although there was minimal difference between how students were exposed to diversity, paraprofessional students spoke more deeply about the impact of those interactions on their thinking and learning. Mark, a junior working as a resident assistant in Campus Living, acknowledged the role and shared the deep influence of these interactions,

> Because I'm a [resident assistant], I seek out interactions with people and because of Initiatives (in the hall) I know the people more, so they're more willing to talk to me in the hall. And there are just different things that I see or hear them talk about that I think, that's not something that I've thought about or that's not something I would do. And so, it's a good opportunity to take a step outside of myself and say this is important to someone else or this is common practice for someone else but, for me, I wouldn't even think to do that, or I wouldn't value that. And so, I think that's interesting and comes along with the job. But I also think that it's important because just my high school environment and the community that is a majority of my friendship here is very homogenous, and so it's good to be forced to be outside of that.

Conversely, although non-paraprofessionals expressed excitement about learning about new things and experiences, they almost exclusively spoke of surface-level exposure to difference;

however, this exposure was still impactful in shaping their worldview. Jessica, a senior who worked in SUE at the information since her freshman year, shared.

> For the most part, I don't think it has exposed me to too many novel ideas. I do think one, and this is something that might sound trite, but one little thing that's been nice is you get familiar with some of the employees in positions that you might not recognize or interact with on a daily basis. So, for example, food service workers or janitorial staff, and get to know them a little bit better and recognize them. And I think that in its own little way is quite valuable just because I think there's like a shadow group that keeps this campus functioning…So, I guess that's one interaction, recognizing that not everyone on campus is a bunch of college students who are coming from an inherently privileged background.

Document Analysis. As shared above, Josh identified the circumstance of employment as exposure to difference. This acknowledgment was also evident in the document analysis, as the use or implementation of on-the-job training implied the need to acclimate employees to new circumstances or situations. Each employment unit provided training to staff members. Additionally, of the four units employing participants, two provided documents that included employee training sessions that referenced diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. These two units, Campus Recreation and Campus Living also included diversity statements in their employee hiring and training materials. The Campus Living Diversity Statement found in the 2021-2022 Student Staff Manual read as follows,

> As departments central to the social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development of students at William & Mary, the Residence Life and Student Transition and Engagement Programs offices in the Division of Student Affairs are committed to

> fostering an inclusive and diverse community enriched by the presence and participation of individuals of different races, nationalities, ethnicities, socioeconomic circumstances, abilities, ages, sexual orientations, political viewpoints, veteran status, religious/spiritual, and/or philosophical beliefs, or any other category protected by the Commonwealth or by federal law. This commitment goes beyond mere tolerance of differences by seeking to minimize attitudes and actions that have separated, excluded, marginalized, or oppressed people in the past, and facilitating understanding and recognition. In a meaningful way these aspirations complement the mission of the University, its curriculum, social life, fundamental commitment, consistent with the goals of an institution of higher learning. We actively demonstrate our commitment to the success of all community members through our programs, policies, and services. (p. 2)

These documents demonstrated the employers' commitment to hiring diverse staff, as well as creating an inclusive community. However, it was unknown from document analysis to what extent these values were implemented into practice.

HIP Element 4 Summary. Participant accounts indicated exposure to difference most often occurred through interactions with others because of the opportunity to learn about other life experiences and how to accomplish required job tasks. The employment experience itself also influenced participants, whether by the nature of working or providing access to resources and university events. Paraprofessional employees more frequently described those interactions as influencing their growth and learning. Document analysis revealed that most units acknowledged the importance of diversity and inclusion and therefore demonstrated commitment to exposing employees to diverse experiences.

HIP Element 5: Frequent, Timely, and Constructive Feedback

In this study, I defined feedback as formal or informal acknowledgment of the employee's work, as well as opinions or directives on performance shared verbally or in written form. Kuh (2013) specified feedback should be frequent, timely, and constructive. Half of the participants reported receiving feedback through formal and informal means. Formal feedback occurred infrequently through semesterly evaluation, surveys, and meetings with supervisors. Participants noted this type of feedback contained specific feedback for individual students and therefore felt more constructive. Informal feedback occurred more frequently through regular exchanges with supervisors, in email, and/or regular meetings. However, participants described this feedback as shallow or consisting of more general or group accolades. For example, a message to all employees congratulating them on a successful semester or thanking them for a job well done. Maria, a building manager in SUE shared,

> We're getting ready to have our self-evaluations, or evaluation meeting, which every time I've had those, the past two semesters, I've thought that they've been the coolest thing ever because I always leave thinking about something that I had not thought about before. But feedback in the week-to-week is a little less personal, it's more, broader. We'll have our [weekly] meeting and then professional staff will bring up something. Or in Slack, some professional staff member will send out an announcement saying "Hey we've noticed this. We need to fix this. We need to change this." So, I think the feedback is, as a whole, on building managers. I guess unless there's an issue that's specific to one and then it's addressed. But I think the personal feedback is later in the semester, at the end of the semester, when you can reflect on everything that you've done.

Overall, students were satisfied with the feedback received, particularly when it aligned with the nature of the role. For example, non-paraprofessional students more often indicated there was not much to their work and so there was not a great deal to comment on. However, participants shared a great interest in receiving constructive, individual feedback that helped their personal growth.

Distinction Between Employment Types. I found a marked difference between paraprofessionals and non-paraprofessionals about the way they experienced feedback. One non-paraprofessional, Josh, an information desk attendant in SUE, shared he received no feedback, "I've never received a complaint or warning, but no I've never been personally commented, no one has personally commented on my performance." However, while both paraprofessionals and non-paraprofessional employees reported the use of formal evaluations and surveys, half of the non-paraprofessionals did not identify formal evaluation opportunities and instead shared instances of inconsistent or informal feedback only. Moreover, the gap between employment types correlated to the unit where students were employed. For example, in Campus Recreation, all non-paraprofessionals reported receiving feedback formally and informally, whereas the same type of workers in University Libraries reported no formal evaluation was provided.

Document Analysis. Although many participants did not report the use of formal feedback, document analysis revealed all units did use formal feedback in the form of evaluations, surveys, checklists, and/or structured meetings with supervisors. As reported by participants, document analysis confirmed these meetings were infrequent and limited to annual check-ins, often only used once per semester. I did not find documented examples of informal feedback. As with the previous discussions of document analysis, it is unknown the extent to

which these documents were used, or the quality of feedback provided to employees. For example, the Campus Library evaluation was self-selected, and participants could opt-in to receive feedback based on their needs.

HIP Element 5 Summary. Only half of the participants in this study reported receiving feedback. When feedback was reported, it was often inconsistent, informal, and not constructive. The most effective feedback reported by participants was the use of formal evaluations where employees discussed insights with their supervisors. However, while document analysis indicated all units provided formal evaluation, a large portion of participants reported they only received informal feedback. This disconnect was expressed by non-paraprofessional employees working in SUE and the University Libraries, otherwise, there was little difference in feedback reported by paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees.

HIP Element 6: Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning

Kuh (2013) described this HIP element as "periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning" (p. 10). When asked about the influence of employment on their learning experience, all participants reported some degree of influence. Participants identified limited structured opportunities to integrate and reflect on their learning through professional development, training, and feedback but did not discuss reflection as an intentional component. Instead, they described instances when they evaluated their own experience and/or initiated opportunities to connect academic experience to employment. These instances of self-directed learning indicated the influence of this HIP element on the employment experience was reliant on the behavior of the individual employees. Responses from participants revealed little

difference in the opportunity to learn between paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees.

Self-Directed Learning. Although the employment experience provided little structured opportunities for reflecting and learning, participants gave multiple examples of how learning occurred in academic and personal settings, because of their self-direction. In these instances, participants assumed responsibility for connecting their employment to their curricular experience. For example, Abby, a paraprofessional in Campus Recreation, described the opportunity she had to use her passion for outdoor recreation in class. She stated:

> I'm taking this one credit class, Community Engagement on Campus, and so one of the things we had to do was exercise a skill of freedom for the semester and basically put time into learning about something to enhance your freedom, or the freedom of others And so, what I decided to look at was privilege and race and outdoor recreation, because I thought that would be pretty applicable to what I do. And so that's definitely been the connection that I haven't been the best at doing the learning part of, but I think it's a new perspective to put into the work that I do on campus.

Additionally, participants reflected on how their work experience contributed to personal growth and learning, such as through the development of time management, confidence, work ethic, and how to work with others. Mark, a paraprofessional in campus living stated:

> I think every semester, I try and take stock of things I learned about myself or skills I developed that aren't related to school. And being [resident assistant] has given me opportunities to learn or progress in areas like that. So, making sure that I'm

> communicating well with my supervisor or submitting things on time, or practicing report writing skills.

These reports from participants indicated that the work experience facilitated the development of skills that were transferrable to other contexts.

Structured Learning. While most reflection and learning reported by participants was the result of self-direction, participants reported employing units offered some organized, formal opportunities to learn. These structured, employer-directed learning experiences included training, professional development sessions, and feedback. Participants identified these experiences as an opportunity to learn and integrate separate contexts. Lucy, a fitness instructor in Campus Recreation, shared how all-staff training sessions allowed her to learn more about her coworkers and reframe her understanding of the influence of fitness. She shared,

> One of the people there, who I didn't know very well, opened up that they grew up in a military family. And just thinking about, again going back to the idea of fitness and how people think of it differently, and they talked about growing up in a toxic environment where fitness is about strength and muscle and less about wellness holistically. So that was interesting to hear about that because…exercise is just something that I like to do because it helped me distress and it was fun. So, to hear other people's experiences around fitness specifically and how they had to kind of retrain their minds with something that was interesting as well.

Additionally, Maria, a building manager in SUE, identified professional development sessions as beneficial in preparing employees for future work experiences. Feedback processes, such as evaluation, surveys, and meetings with supervisors to discuss feedback provided the opportunity

to reflect and integrate learning, however, in most cases these were infrequent, occurring once a semester.

Distinctions Between Employment Types. Both paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees reported instances of self-directed and employer-directed learning, though self-directed opportunities were more prevalent. Non-paraprofessional responses focused on interpersonal and task-related influences, such as creating exhibits, and developing functional skills, such as learning software or how to operate equipment. I found the paraprofessional examples of learning were more robust and included more integration of learning and problem-solving, similar to the earlier discussion of the HIP Element 4, *Exposure to Difference*.

Paraprofessional employees more often described learning and growth as a result of the experience. Reflecting on her experience as a building manager in SUE, Maria shared,

> One thing I really value is I don't feel like I've wasted my time. Sometimes working at my previous job at Chick-fil-A, I would feel I wasted my time because I'm like "Oh there went 10 hours of me standing here and pushing buttons onto a register." But I feel like every single shift [in SUE], I always learn something. Sometimes it's little life lessons. I'm like "Okay, I learned more patience today. I learned how to be patient." But I feel like I always learn something…like a meaningful interaction. So, I think that's what makes my job valuable is the fact that I'm always learning something.

Document Analysis. In general, documents can reveal formalized learning processes, such as reflection, that participants may be unable to identify within their current role as employees. I found limited evidence of learning integration and reflection in the document analysis. In Campus Recreation, reflective questions were used in the checklist for new fitness

instructors only. As detailed previously, document analysis revealed all departments used formal processes to collect feedback from employees through formal evaluation. However, while three units provided examples of their evaluation form, in University Libraries, the Media Center employee handbook only mentioned the use of an evaluation, and the Circulation Desk survey included one optional question that allowed employees to provide feedback and request to meet with a staff member for further discussion. Evaluations are often used in this way, whereby the employer provides feedback and sets goals in tandem with a reflective conversation; however, it is unclear if employers in this study used evaluations in this manner.

Additionally, regular reporting can facilitate reflection by asking the employee to recall or make sense of a specific time frame. Participant interviews revealed some departments, in particular SUE and Campus Living, required regular documentation through reporting, such as shift or weekly reports respectively; however, document analysis did not reveal additional information regarding this process and so the level at which reflection might be incorporated into report generation remained unclear.

HIP Element 6 Summary. Although participants reported that units provided some structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning, they also shared many ways in which they made sense of their own learning within the employment experience. I found no difference between the ways paraprofessionals and non-paraprofessionals experienced reflection and integration of learning. However, paraprofessional examples included richer descriptions and an understanding of the integration of learning. Documents analysis confirmed the use of formal, structured feedback but the extent to which these contribute to learning remained unknown.

HIP Element 7: Real-World Application of Learning

Whereas the previous section identified the possibility of integrating learning and/or the availability of structured opportunities to reflect, this section addresses how participants used what they learned or the relevance of their experience as on-campus employees through what Kuh (2013) termed "real-world application" (p. 10). For this study, evidence of the application of learning was found in participant identification of how their work experience applied to other contexts and vice versa, as well as anticipated use of learning in future endeavors, such as post-graduate employment.

Academic Pursuits. All participants identified ways in which the skills or learning obtained from their employment experience were relevant to other real-world contexts. Participants most often cited the development of soft skills. Surprisingly, very few participants saw a direct link between their academic pursuits and employment. Joy, a student media assistant shared,

> Since I'm not really related to film & media studies, they don't really intertwine that much, which I think is funny that I want to do this job so badly. I think it's just because it's so different from my studies, which is why I chose it.

However, while participants did not perceive a connection between their academics and on-campus employment, they often described the development of soft skills that were helpful in class for group work, communicating with professors, time management, and leadership development. Sarah, a facilities supervisor in Campus Recreation shared,

> A lot of skills from work that I can transfer are just competent leadership skills. Having a role where at work I'm the one who has to make the decisions and be in charge I feel has

> given me more confidence in my own abilities to make decisions and lead. And I can see transfer into the classroom because obviously there's projects and other stuff, like not being afraid to share my ideas in class because I know they could actually be something that I have the ability, the authority to share the ideas, that feeling transfers over. And then vice versa, on this learning in the classroom, I feel like a big part of it is just being able to take skills like paying attention and listening and absorbing information and using that at work. It's kind of easy to separate and be like "Oh I don't need to know that." But in (work) meetings, it's like "Okay, this is really useful information." It's the practice of paying attention and then implementing what you learned.

While most participants believed the work contributed to their academic learning experience, some participants noted limited application of skills because the work was not tied to their field of study or future career goals. Ashleigh, a junior working as a facility supervisor for Campus Recreation, debating leaving her job for something more connected to her future goals until the state mandated a minimum wage increase from $7.25 to $9.50 per hour:

> I was considering not coming back to work at [Campus Recreation] this year and looking for a different job. Maybe one that related more to things I want to do, or a future career, because this doesn't really tie into that into what I'm studying…And so I felt like I would have considered, if it stayed at that [pay] rate, I would have looked for a job that would build more skills that I'll be looking for in my career search or you know virtual internships and jobs, positions that would build more skills that might be applicable.

Post-Graduation Plans. The applicability of employment toward future work included the development of specific career-related goals, as well as skills believed to be generally

beneficial to future careers or to enhance their resume. For Jennifer, a junior working in Special Collections in the library, working in this area solidified her desire and interest to pursue a career in library management and/or archive work. She shared,

> It's great because I want to go into archive work, museum work, you know that kind of thing, and I didn't know that going into college. But now working at these jobs, I have been very inspired, and this is what I want to do. So, I'd say the quality of the work is great because I'm getting a lot of experience in a lot of different aspects of library management. I'd say I'm really glad to have this job because I know what I want to do.

Unlike Jennifer, many students did not work in areas on campus that were directly connected to future work. However, these participants still identified the work as generally aiding their ability to secure future work. Christopher acknowledged the influence of work at the games desk in SUE on his graduate school prospects. He shared,

> I'm applying to grad school right now and I've used a bit of what I've learned on the job when applying to grad school. Learning how to not only be but expect professionality, has been useful. And those are things I took from work and put into my grad application, for example, and that's been pretty helpful.

Other participants believed future employers would recognize their on-campus employment as contributing to their skill set and providing more opportunity for them in their future careers.

Other Contexts. Ultimately, because of their employment, students gained skills they saw as useful beyond their employment experience. Some participants reported minor ways they used their on-the-job training such as learning how to better use computers or understanding campus resources that are available for use. Other participants reported a larger influence of the

work experience on their development. When asked what factors contribute to her personal growth, Jennifer, in campus libraries identified the significance of work outside of the classroom because of its connection to the work of others:

> Adults treating you like an adult and there's not a power dynamic. Not necessarily [that] student teacher is a bad thing, but it's training in the real world, having that kind of experience. And also, just being given responsibilities of being like "I need to get this thing done," and not just for a grade, I need to get this thing done so that someone else can get their jobs done. And having, especially when there's conflicts…being able to mitigate that in a professional environment. I think all of those things kind of just make you more sure of yourself and able to stand up for yourself and also treat others with respect. And I just don't think you'd get that in a classroom necessarily. You can do group projects but you're not…it's just very different.

The application of the employment experience in other contexts contributed to a holistic learning experience for students.

Distinction Between Employment Types. All participants identified the development of soft skills connected to interpersonal skills and time management. About half of the participants identified the work as contributing to resume development and future work. Although an equal number of professionals and non-paraprofessionals identified transferrable skills and application to future work, paraprofessionals more often spoke about the transferrable skills connected to leadership and communication. Maria discussed how her employment experience as a building manager in SUE differed from her job in high school. She shared,

> I definitely learned how to communicate effectively. I've had a lot of group projects this year and so having to…writing a shift report at the end of every shift has really been somewhat challenging because a lot of stuff happens, but I know not everyone wants to read all of this. And so it's writing it effectively and presenting it in a way that makes it easy to understand, easy to read, but clearly says what happens. So, also that translates over to emailing professors or talking with a group project and you're texting people that you've never really talked to outside of the classroom and so it's been extremely helpful.

Though both groups identified the experience as helpful in academic work because of the soft skills needed such as public speaking and group projects, many participants noted a delineation between their academic pursuits and employment and asserted the two were separate because their academic major did not directly connect to the work. Although this idea was more frequently reported by non-paraprofessionals, a few paraprofessionals also shared this belief.

Document Analysis. Document analysis revealed a limited connection between employment and the application of learning. As shared previously, some employers used anticipated outcomes in their training materials and employee competencies. The Campus Recreation Facilities Supervisor Manual 2021-2022 outlined expected skill acquisition for facilities supervisors to include the development of time management and communication skills, teamwork, accountability, ethical leadership, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and emergency response and planning (p. 11). Campus Living identified anticipated outcomes for the residential experience, as well as execution of the orientation program as tangible outcomes because of the work of their employees. SUE employees spoke of professional development

sessions as an opportunity to apply skills, but evidence of these offerings was not identified in the document analysis.

HIP Element 7 Summary. Although participants distinguished their employment experience as separate from their academic learning, almost all participants reported the development of soft skills from their on-campus job as applicable to academic learning environments and other contexts. As in previous discussions, paraprofessional employees shared a more robust understanding of how they use skills gained through employment. Otherwise, I found very little difference between employment types, though more non-paraprofessional employees distinguished their academic coursework from their on-campus employment. Document analysis confirmed that employers expected employees to apply skills gained through employment in other contexts.

HIP Element 8: Public Demonstration of Competence.

Kuh's (2013) example of "demonstration of competence" (p. 10) included public sharing of knowledge coupled with evaluation by an expert or supervising faculty. The role of evaluation in HIPs was further detailed in the discussion of HIP Element 5; therefore, for this discussion, I define demonstration of competence as receiving recognition for workplace accomplishments, executing job responsibilities and/or problem-solving, and sharing knowledge with others. Participant perceptions of this element were consistent between employment types.

Recognition. About half of the participants acknowledged they were recognized for their work. Recognition was received in the form of staff-wide acknowledgment, such as Employee of the Month/Year, brief notes, and/or verbal affirmation. Participants shared examples of

recognition and appreciation from those whom they interacted with closely, such as supervisors and clients or patrons whom they assisted. Lulu, a student media assistant in the library shared,

> I think it's really nice when people say thank you; it makes me feel like I'm doing my job. It sounds so silly but sometimes I forget that I'm working and then someone will say thank you for helping and it feels nice.

However, overall, the recognition received was infrequent and often shallow. While little structured recognition occurred, for those employees who were recognized by their employers, the experience was profound. Samantha, a non-paraprofessional employee in Campus Recreation shared,

> At the end of the year, they do a recognition thing of people they feel have really gone above and beyond, for the year and stuff like that. and I actually did get one last semester, which was really exciting. So, it is nice to get that little bit of recognition, without it being a whole blown award ceremony, which is definitely more my vibe, I don't like something over the top. But it is always nice to be told that you're doing a good job.

Work Proficiency and Problem Solving. A quarter of all participants shared instances that demonstrated understanding and/or proficiency in work tasks. For Ashleigh, her work as a facilities attendant in Campus Recreation required her to be proficient in her work and always prepared to respond. She shared,

> I would definitely say that it forces me to take on a lot of responsibility. Just in terms of being aware of my environment, it feels like a big responsibility that anytime someone could ask me a question and I either have to know an answer or be able to figure out what the answer is and be able to help them.

Additionally, this proficiency provided an opportunity to develop expertise beyond what their peers receive. Elizabeth, a paraprofessional in the library shared,

> I understand how Google works and databases, how they work, how they want to search for things, and what is a good source. Those are things that other people are good at in college, yes. But they're probably only using that to write a paper, and they're probably writing maybe one or two papers a semester. I'm doing that every day. And I'm doing it on topics that I don't have any context to. I'll get chats to find a source for this biochemistry thing and figuring out keywords and asking questions to understand what people really want to know…it's a skill that I'm incredibly good at now and I'm incredibly grateful for that.

Additionally, 20% of participants provided examples of the ways they demonstrated problem-solving with this opportunity most often occurring when professional staff are unavailable. Lulu, a student media assistant in the library shared,

> The bosses usually leave at 5 o'clock on the weekdays so once they're not [there] we kind of have to figure it out ourselves. Or we'll tell the patron that maybe they should come in during the morning, so they can ask one of the supervisors. But sometimes I'll try messing around with stuff and then I'll end up solving it and it feels really good to do those sorts of things.

Sharing Knowledge With Others. The ability to teach or share information with others demonstrated understanding of the work. Several participants described ways they used their job proficiency to help coworkers. In Campus Recreation, returning students were asked to mentor

new instructors. Caitlin, a personal trainer, incorporated her job expertise to help others in her work with her clients,

> I used to just be like "okay we're just doing a workout and that's that." And I think I've kind of transitioned more to come see me as a time to educate them. The more I see these students come in with common attitudes and misconceptions, the more I feel the need to kind of educate them and maybe correct some of their misconceptions [of exercise]. So, the fitness series that I teach is called Women [in] the Weight Room so obviously a lot of young women in this group, a lot, a lot of body image stuff gets discussed. And definitely having to shut down a lot of negative body talk and just being like "you know, it's not okay to talk that way about yourself, you wouldn't say that to a friend."

Sharing knowledge with others also occurred in everyday interactions with others, working to solve problems, and asking questions. Several participants shared examples of asking coworkers, either in a group chat or in person, for clarification or ideas on how to execute tasks.

Distinction Between Employment Types. Participant feedback and data analysis revealed very little difference between employee type and display of competence. Recognition appeared to be provided in the same manner universally. Because Campus Recreation intentionally incorporated team training, this group of non-paraprofessional employees reported more opportunities to teach peers. Non-paraprofessional employees in other units reported the opportunity to problem-solve with peers rather than teach. Returning paraprofessionals acknowledged responsibility for sharing knowledge with others and noticed this builds confidence in their abilities. Michael, a SUE building manager shared, "Because I'm one of the

longest-tenured student workers, I feel like a lot of the questions end up being directed at me. Which I feel for the most part capable to answer."

Though individuals in both employee types described opportunities for problem-solving and independent work, paraprofessional employees did so more frequently, particularly those responsible for building management. Sarah, a facilities supervisor in Campus Recreation shared,

> We can't go over every single situation. What happens is a lot of on the job trying to use your judgment and figure out what the best opportunity or best thing is. Even the other day, we had a situation where I wasn't quite sure what to do, but luckily there was someone else, and we were talking it through, and then we came to a solution and implemented it, and it ended up working out just fine. So that part is challenging sometimes but also it is kind of exciting when we are able to come up with something.

Although the demonstration of competence is individually based, participants reported working with others as a substantial opportunity to demonstrate knowledge. This finding highlights the role of interactions with others in employment serving as a HIP.

Document Analysis. Document analysis revealed methods each unit used to train and prepare employees for their work, as well as the use of expectations and outcomes to delineate how employees should perform. Outcomes were often shared through Competencies. The use of competencies by units demonstrated the unit's commitment to tangible outcomes for students because of their employment. As mentioned previously, Campus Recreation referenced the NACE career readiness competencies as expected outcomes for individual employees. These competencies served as an example of what employees could learn through their jobs such as communication, leadership, professionalism, and technology (NACE, 2021). Universities

Libraries provided self-guided tours and individual checklists staff had to complete to demonstrate proficiency. Campus Recreation also used checklists to ensure new employees have received proper training. Additionally, Campus Recreation used an incentive program for employees. Within this program, students were encouraged to lead or present at in-house workshops to be eligible for additional prizes. Document analysis revealed limited reference to formal or informal recognition. Finally, document review also confirmed the use of team teaching and evaluation for fitness instructors and trainers in Campus Recreation. This is the only unit that appeared to have a formalized peer mentor/team teaching approach. Although document review confirmed unit support of development competence, execution existed as a responsibility of the employee.

HIP Element 8 Summary. Overall, participant accounts of their opportunities to demonstrate competence were not very profound. Recognition occurred infrequently and did not greatly influence the experience. Therefore, problem-solving and sharing with others served as the largest indicators of employee competence and document analysis revealed these are outcomes employers hoped their employees obtained.

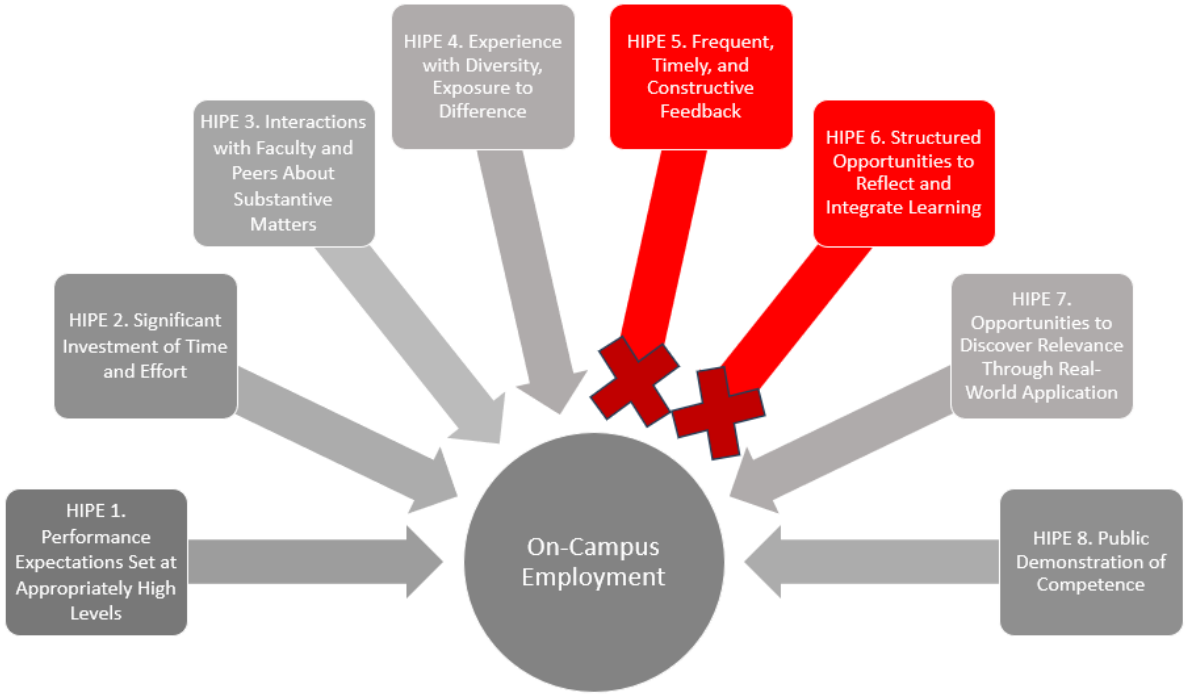
Summary of RQ1 Findings

Research Question 1 asked, *What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of HIPs and their on-campus employment experiences?* In conclusion, participant interviews provided robust data regarding student perceptions of the overlap of HIP education elements within their on-campus employment experience. Although I found evidence of all eight educational elements, some were perceived as more pervasive in the experience. My findings revealed very weak student perception of two HIP elements (a) *Timely, Frequent, and*

Constructive Feedback and (b) *Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning*; although participants provided examples of how these occur within their on-campus employment experience, they were not as prevalently described by participants as the other six elements and more importantly, were not directed by the employing unit. Therefore, I concluded there existed strong evidence for six of the essential HIP educational elements as defined by Kuh (2013). Figure 2 demonstrates these elements in connection to on-campus employment.

Figure 2

Educational Elements of High-Impact Practices Found in On-Campus Employment at William & Mary



Note. HIPE = Educational Elements of High-Impact Practice.
Adapted from "Taking HIPs to the Next Level" by G. D. Kuh, 2013, in G. D. Kuh and K. O'Donnell, *Ensuring Quality &Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale* (p. 8), 2013, American Association of Colleges and Universities. Copyright 2013 by American Association of Colleges and Universities.

The second part of RQI asked, *How does students' employment type affect the use of the educational elements of HIPs?* My findings did not reveal a difference between paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees regarding the use or evidence of HIP elements. Instead, differences between these employment types were connected to the increased effort and elevated expectations required of paraprofessional employees which resulted in stronger narratives regarding the overlap of the educational elements.

Research Question 2: What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

Examination of the eight HIP elements allows for an understanding of participants' perceptions of learning associated with structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning, demonstrate competence, and real-world application. Using A. Y. Kolb's (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005) framework, the subsequent section explores students' perceptions of the influence of the employment experience on experiential learning in and out of the classroom. Experiential learning is a process that allows for the connection of education, work, and personal development (D. A. Kolb, 2014). According to A. Y. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) model, effective learners use four kinds of abilities or dimensions, (a) Concrete Experience, (b) Reflective Observation, (c) Abstract Conceptualization, and (d) Active Experimentation (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The following sections correspond to each of these dimensions to organize findings from participant interviews applicable to answering Research Question 2 (RQ2).

Concrete Experience.

Any new experience, or experiencing an old experience in a new way, provides the opportunity to learn (D. A. Kolb, 2014). Through the employment experience, students were placed in a physical environment that exposed them to the opportunity to learn new skills and/or develop previously acquired skills. Student employees were given specific training and expected to perform tasks they may not have previously encountered. In this study, I defined Concrete Experience as those new experiences and hands-on involvement described by participants. Many of the following examples include evidence of additional learning dimensions of ELT, which demonstrated how participants process new experiences. Michael, a building manager in SUE, shared how some of the new tasks he experienced in his role informed his understanding of the audiovisual technical needs for his student organization involvement. Carolyn, a student assistant in the library, described navigating a new workplace,

> When I was new to the position…I felt like I wasn't getting enough feedback just because I hadn't really learned how the office works because in the job I'd held previous to that, my boss did not hesitate to reach out all hours of the day and provide feedback. But I think now that I've learned how my two supervisors operate and when their schedules are, I feel like I am receiving a sufficient amount of feedback. I just had to learn how that specific environment worked.

Rebecca, formerly a resident assistant, now serving as a head resident in Campus Living, highlighted a new opportunity to advise her peers and the challenge associated with the new role,

> It's really fun to watch and sitting in on council meetings as an advisor is a new fun thing too. Because I sit there and I can't say anything or I'm not supposed to insert my opinion

> ever really, I can advise… And so, it's that's been a little bit of a new thing kind of observing from above a little bit.

These examples highlighted the influence of new experiences in the work environment. As expectations and contexts changed, these foundational experiences evolved. For example, when participants received multiple requests at once or software updates, they had to determine the next steps for task accomplishment quickly and independently. In these instances, students employed the additional dimensions of experiential learning.

Reflective Observation.

D. A. Kolb (2014) noted the importance of reflecting on and observing an experience by gathering many perspectives. In this study, I defined Reflective Observation as participants considering new perspectives and concepts because of exposure to concrete experiences. As detailed in the exploration of RQ1, the employment experience at W&M provided limited structured opportunities for reflection. However, several participants provided examples of ways they reflected and made observations by watching or sharing their own experiences with others and active reflection.

Observation of and Learning From Others. In the previous section, Rebecca described the new experience of watching peers participate in council meetings. Through reflective observation, Rebecca formulated an additional perspective for that concrete experience. She shared,

> I think it's been fun. It's a good opportunity to kind of watch the people who might get employed or they might just move on and not do anything like that but…seeing what they

> choose to do with their time. And the effort that they put in and the connections they make with each other.

Working as a student media assistant in the library, Lulu described how she used observation to add knowledge and build confidence in a new environment,

> I know in the beginning, I kind of talked about how I was anxious to talk to people. So, when I started, I just watched the way the veterans communicated with patrons and kind of modeled my behavior after them, see how they would talk to them and ask for information.

Reflecting. In addition to the examples connected to self-initiated reflection shared in the previous discussion regarding HIP Element 6, *Structure Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning*, the nature of the interview required some level of reflection by participants. In contemplating the influence of employment on her learning experience, Joy identified that working in the library as a media assistant enhanced her entire college experience,

> Even aside from formal in-the-classroom learning, I feel like my time here is meant to learn who I am and stuff like that too. So yeah, hanging out with all those people, hearing about their experiences, going to their events, I feel like has also shaped my learning experience here and who and how I want to apply myself in the classroom. So, I think that's how it would apply to my learning experience.

Because of the lack of employer-directed structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning, participants provided few examples of structured reflection opportunities within the on-campus employment experience. However, the use of formal evaluation did include some

opportunities for participants to reflect on the experience and adjust their behavior. Michael, a building manager in SUE shared,

> When I first received that evaluation last year, I wasn't super happy. But also, I definitely learned a lot more about what the expectations were and how I had or hadn't met them. And so, in that sense, [the evaluations] were super helpful and I feel like I tried to adjust appropriately to them. So, I would say, the amount of actual tangible feedback, the helpful feedback beyond just a quick Thank You, it's very helpful.

Additionally, a few participants did identify using their on-campus job in structured classroom opportunities. Heidi, a resident assistant shared,

> [The job has] given me a wider range of experiences to think about when I do try to take a humanities/social science course. And so you know, some of those classes are thinking about how, [for example] I'm taking a sociology course, right now, and so being able to think about interactions or experiences that I've had through my work in the in the hall and thinking about how that might apply to a concept or phenomena we're talking about in that course.

Finally, reflection occurred through sharing new experiences with others. Michael, a SUE building manager, expanded on how he believed having knowledge of simple tasks was important when talking with his parents about his on-campus job,

> One of the first things I said to my parents after getting this job, just that I felt very useful. [The job] was very minor hands-on like skill requirements, so just can you plug something into a wall, and then tape it, and then set it up. But it did, it felt nice to know that I could do it, and I could do very basic troubleshooting if a lighting cue wasn't

> happening the way it was supposed to. Or if there was a table that was missing or we needed like six more chairs, I would know what closet [to find them]. So that that sort of a jack-of-all-trades quality.

These testimonies from participants demonstrated the invaluable influence of reflection on student learning.

Abstract Conceptualization

In Abstract Conceptualization, the learner uses the new knowledge or thoughts gained from exposure to firsthand experiences and develops theories; these theories are then used to make decisions and solve problems (D. A. Kolb, 2014). In this study, I defined Abstract Conceptualization as participants sharing how the employment experience sparked deeper thinking or analysis of how to integrate learning and grapple with information gaps. Further discussion of how participants used this new analysis to implement solutions is included in the examination of Active Experimentation in the next section.

Learning Integration. Many participants shared ways they integrated new perspectives and experiences to enhance their work proficiency and incorporated on-campus employment within their academic or future work experiences. Because of the close alignment of her career path with the oversight of her residents, Maize, a resident assistant in Campus Living, found a great connection between class and work. She shared,

> I use examples of my experiences in residence life a lot of times in my education classes, just in terms of mediating things or teaching things or communication. Because we talk about that sort of psychology part of it in my education classes. And so, being able to use

> those examples, I just feel like I'm learning so much every day that I will be able to use as a teacher.

I found integration of learning particularly evident among employees where the job includes the opportunity to work independently, for example, employees in Campus Recreation who must create their own individual and/or workout routines for patrons. Samantha shared how reflecting on her own learning experience as a Pre-medicine student allowed her to better teach in her fitness class.

> I always need other ways to ways to teach a new movement. Whereas for me, with chemistry, I need other ways to learn the material. Because even sometimes in class, if I'm teaching a movement, since I know it, I can just be like "oh yeah, just put your arms here and then do that." But then I have to be like, "oh wait that might not make sense to some." So, you have to think of other ways to teach that. And really thinking about it step by step, which actually that works perfectly for chemistry, I need to learn other ways to learn it, step by step.

Participants also provided several examples of how they considered the needs and perspectives of others and incorporated this into their daily work, either by modifying an activity to create greater access for other students or reframing a policy or procedure so others might better understand the requirements.

Resolving Information Gaps. Some participants described elevated thinking when resolving missing information or conflicting ideas. For Mark, his prior training as a lifeguard conflicted with the lifesaving procedures permitted in his role as a resident assistant. He shared,

> Something I've thought about a lot is the intersection of job responsibilities and liability. So, something we learned in training is that if you see someone passed out on the floor, throwing up, you're not supposed to touch them because you weren't trained in first aid through the school. Which is very difficult, because I'm a lifeguard, so I know what first-aid I should be doing. And I have been told in no uncertain terms that my job [as a resident assistant] could be in trouble if I do this. And so, understanding what's inside the job responsibility, what's outside of it, and where I am comfort level wise with that. And understanding, if I do something, that there will be consequences or could be consequences. And having to reconcile that with what I value in the situation and long term.

Through Abstract Conceptualization, participants made connections between employment and other contexts to develop theories they could use on the job to solve problems or improve their work as employees.

Active Experimentation.

In Active Experimentation, the learner's new theories are deployed so they may make decisions and/or solve problems (D. A. Kolb, 2014). The examples of Active Experimentation identified in this study included the application of observations and/or developed knowledge through practicing and active problem-solving. These examples of Active Experimentation were most often described by participants alongside the absence of oversight from professional staff, such as after-hours or on weekends, thereby reinforcing the effects of independent work on learning. Participants reported the repetition of experience, such as regular report writing, recurring requests for services, and actively testing functional knowledge such as equipment or

software knowledge. For these participants, the on-campus employment experience was truly a practice field for the expansion of knowledge. Sarah, a facilities supervisor in Campus Recreation shared,

> I think a lot of learning from Campus Rec has been also interpersonal skills, just talking to other people and how to convey, [for example] how to tell someone they have to leave because they're not wearing their mask. That [example] I feel has transferred into life because you do have to say things that people don't want to hear sometimes if they were doing something wrong in a group project setting or something. And that can be hard to do, but it makes it easier when you practice in a situation where you can say well, "This is my job to do it," and then it becomes easier to say.

Finally, Lucy shared how she integrated her knowledge to both enhance the quality of her work and engage others more effectively,

> I kind of alter what I'm doing to be more accessible…something that everyone tries to do in their classes is offering modifications. So, if you're feeling tired today, you can do this or if you're feeling more, energized, you can take it up a notch. I try to always offer those different modifications. And then sometimes I'll simplify the choreography if I see people are struggling. Or every time before a song, I give a little recap of what the choreography will be, so sometimes I'll make that more in-depth if I feel people need that extra support.

Through Active Experimentation, participants were able to test their theories in real-life experiences and consider how application of learning transfers to other contexts.

Summary of RQ2 Findings

Research Question 2 asked, *What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?* In conclusion, based on participant interviews, I found rich examples of all four dimensions of experiential learning within the on-campus employment experience. The opportunity to use Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation in their employment experiences allowed participants to develop and integrate their knowledge across a variety of learning environments. However, the source of these influences, particularly when connected to Reflective Observation, was not always the job itself as students often self-directed their own learning. Overall, students perceived the influence of on-campus employment on their learning to be the opportunity to develop and test interpersonal and problem-solving skills that could be used in both the classroom in group settings and outside of the classroom in their on-campus employment and future work settings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this embedded case study was to explore W&M student perceptions of the connection between on-campus employment and the elements of high-impact practice (HIP), as well as the influence of the on-campus employment experience on student learning. Participant interviews and document analysis informed the findings of this study and provided insights to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of HIPs and their on-campus employment experiences?
    a. How does students' employment type affect the use of the educational elements of HIPs?
2. What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

The results informed the discussion of major findings and allowed me to create data-driven recommendations for policy and future practice of on-campus student employment at W&M.

This chapter provides a summary of the major findings from each research question. Because this study was centered on student perceptions of their experience, it is important to recognize that findings not mentioned by participants does not mean those aspects were not present in their on-campus employment experience; rather, participants may not have identified them as such. The chapter concludes with actionable recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Summary of Major Findings

The following section is divided into addressing major findings from each research question, beginning with discussion of the findings associated with each of the essential elements of HIPs as determined by Kuh (2013).

Research Question 1: What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of high-impact practices and their on-campus employment experiences?

Previous research identified elements that are frequently found in employment to include feedback, exposure to difference, significant investment of time, and interactions with faculty and staff (Kincaid, 1996; Perozzi, 2009; and Savoca, 2016). In this study, although I found evidence of each of the eight elements in participant responses, the degree to which these existed because of their employment varied. In other words, students experienced these elements in their role as employees but not always as a result of the employment experience or to the level expected of a HIP. For example, I found integration and reflection existed, but they were not always structured experiences; feedback existed but it was not always frequent, timely, and constructive.

The following section outlines major findings according to each HIP element and discusses relevant findings regarding RQ1a, exploring the differences in the use of the education elements between paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employee roles in all employing units. Table 8 demonstrates the supervision and distribution of employment types and individual supervisors amongst participating units. The table highlights how each embedded unit employed both student employment types to varying degrees. The section concludes with a summary of the HIP educational elements within the on-campus employment at W&M I found through this study.

Table 8

Employing Units With Work Positions Delineated by Employment Types

Employing Unit	Work Position
Campus Recreation	Personal Trainer/Fitness Instructor (NP)
	Facilities Supervisor (PP)
	Trip Leader (PP)
Campus Living	Resident Assistant/Head Resident (PP)
	Orientation Aid Director (PP)
Student Unions & Engagement	Information Desk Attendant (NP)
	Games Desk Attendant (NP)
	Building Manager (PP)
University Libraries	Media Assistant (NP)
	Student Assistant (NP)
	Public Service Assistant (PP)

Note. PP = Paraprofessional, NP = non-paraprofessional. Each work position had different supervisors. Campus Living did not employ non-paraprofessional employees until Fall 2022 after data collection was completed (L. Garrett, personal communication, May 2023).

HIP Element 1: Performance Expectations Set at Appropriate Levels. All participants reported receiving communication of work expectations, provided mostly through job advertisement and employee onboarding. However, participant accounts of the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for clear, direct communication of expectations throughout the employment experience. This is important for employers to remember not only when developing hiring, training, and onboarding materials but also when implementing new expectations, processes, and/or tasks once employees have begun working. Often, employers relied on employees to train each other and while this reinforced peer interactions, this approach

is problematic if employees were not trained sufficiently or were equally confused on a task or project.

Not surprisingly, participant interviews and document analysis confirmed that paraprofessional work required a higher level of responsibility than non-paraprofessional employees. Though they sometimes marveled at the depth of responsibility, the paraprofessionals I interviewed appeared to be prepared for the work. However, some paraprofessional participants reported actual work to be more than they initially expected, thereby constraining their capabilities, and forcing them to reconsider academic pursuits and/or their ability to continue to work. These findings are consistent with previous research on student employment that reported the curvilinear nature of student employment whereby working too much or too little becomes detrimental and identified working 15–20 hours as ideal (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perna, 2010). Although these demands on time allowed for important reflection for the students about the time they spent working and its value within their college experience, when considering the influence of HIP on student persistence, this finding is problematic and indicates at times expectations may exceed reasonable levels for student employees. For employment to serve as high-impact and contribute to student success employers must carefully consider what they require of their student employees. However, the employment experience is not static, so careful reconsideration and ongoing assessment are necessary to ensure employee expectations and the experience are aligned.

HIP Element 2: Significant Investment of Time and Effort. Participants reported that individual tasks do not require effort; however, situational context, such as the number of tasks required at once or other demands on attention, increased required effort. Paraprofessional students also reported higher demands on their time. This is likely connected to the higher level

of responsibility required, resulting in a higher workload. As discussed above, employers must be careful in constructing and executing employment experiences that do not overburden students in these roles.

Non-paraprofessionals spoke frequently about serving as a representative of the university and the value they found in this opportunity. However, they also shared they needed to work more hours than were available for financial reasons, as such they more often reported holding additional employment positions on or off campus. While this study focused on one specific on-campus employment experience, holding multiple jobs can contribute to overwork and conflicting demands on time. Therefore, employers must continue to consider how they can maximize their on-campus work opportunities. Although all participants reported the work as challenging, non-paraprofessional responses suggested their work on campus did not require the same level of effort demanded of students working in paraprofessional roles. Often non-paraprofessional work is considered inconsequential because it often requires minimal or simple task execution. Most of the non-paraprofessionals I interviewed spoke with great pride about their jobs and the ability to represent their department and therefore the university while serving as a valuable resource to others. These findings suggest practitioners should not overlook the influence of employment on the student experience, regardless of the job type and associated tasks.

HIP Element 3: Interactions With Others About Substantive Matters. Participants reported a considerable number of interactions with others in a variety of contexts with limited differences in responses based on employment types. Connections made with peers often resulted in friendships outside of work. The most substantive interactions reported were those with faculty and staff, where participants valued receiving meaningful support from supervisors

and being treated as both employees and students. For many, these relationships were a strong influence on their desire to return to the job for additional years. These findings support the positive effects of caring attitudes of faculty and staff on student persistence (Beal & Noel, 1980). Paraprofessional responses contained more discussion of interactions with faculty/staff who served as their supervisors, indicating students in this role have greater interactions with their supervisor and thus faculty/staff.

Again, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic helped to highlight the influence of this element on student employment. Participants employed in front-line positions shared examples of the isolation caused by the social distancing of the pandemic whereas those in community-building roles, such as resident assistants, described an increase in close relationships because they could only spend time with a select group of coworkers. Additionally, the type of interactions between peers changed during COVID-19 because of increased levels of policy enforcement that required student staff to more frequently confront and hold their peers accountable.

Participant responses also revealed a connection between this HIP element and other essential educational elements of HIPs. For example, participants reported exposure to differences through interactions with peers and older coworkers with different backgrounds (HIP Element 4); helping and teaching others allowed them to show their work proficiency and thereby demonstrate their competence (HIP Element 8); and through interacting with others, they learned and developed interpersonal skills necessary to apply knowledge gained through employment in other real-world contexts (HIP Element 7). In essence, *Interaction with Faculty and Peers Over Substantive Matters* emerged as a foundational component of HIP in on-campus employment, as it facilitated the execution of other essential elements of HIPs.

HIP Element 4: Experiences with Diversity. Starting a new job inherently required the development of new skills and perspectives and this exposure was reported by one student who had not worked previously. However, the largest source of contact with differences shared by participants was through interactions with others. Participant responses indicated on-campus employment is ripe with possibilities to "contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar" (Kuh, 2013, p. 10). Unfortunately, the type of exposure to diversity was not profound, with participants only identifying other people who were different than them in age, skills, interests, and backgrounds. In the few instances when participants described interactions related to differing views or values, such as sexuality, participants avoided engaging in further discussion. These examples suggested that perhaps participants are not describing more significant interactions with diversity due to the limitations of the work environment, the nature of their work tasks, and/or lack of training in how to manage these conversations. While this explanation fits transactional jobs, such as desk attendants or facility managers, it is unclear as to why resident assistant or other roles with high one-on-one interaction with other students did not include a higher level of engagement with diversity.

Although I found participant accounts lacking in exposure to meaningful diversity, paraprofessionals shared richer descriptions of the influence of working with others on their learning and development, suggesting their exposure is deeper or more meaningful. This discovery aligns with previous discussions of paraprofessionals across other HIP elements, confirming that despite the lack of distinction of employment types within the literature, not all student on-campus employment opportunities provide the same experience for students.

HIP Element 5: Frequent, Timely, and Constructive Feedback. Research has indicated receiving feedback is an important part of the learning process for student employees

(McClellan et al., 2018; Phillips, 2016). Twenty participants reported receiving feedback; however, seven non-paraprofessional employees working in University Libraries and SUE, reported receiving informal feedback only. Interestingly, document analysis revealed these units did provide formal feedback through employee evaluations. These results suggested participants either did not consider evaluation as feedback or an evaluation process was available but not used for those employees. The former is likely true because many participants reported receiving feedback, but it was reported as infrequent, informal, and not specific. Therefore, the lack of consistent, constructive feedback likely contributed to participants' perception of not receiving formal or structured feedback. As such, even though feedback was reported by participants, the type of feedback experienced was not enough to support evidence of this HIP element in the on-campus employment experience. These findings demonstrated how HIP educational elements may exist within an experience but not meet the parameters established by Kuh (2013). In this instance, it is not enough for feedback to exist; it must also be frequent, timely, and constructive. Because a significant portion of employees did not report feedback in this manner, I determined sufficient evidence of this element in the W&M on-campus employment experience did not exist.

Furthermore, the findings associated with the differences between employing units highlighted a challenge for this study. Some units provided effective structured feedback whereas others did not. While my examination included four employing units as an embedded case study, each unit employed differing numbers and types of employees (see Table 8) and directed their employment experience at their discretion, adding another layer of complexity to data analysis. Just as employment types are the same, neither are the employing units. If employment oversight remains at the department level, as is standard across U.S. colleges and

universities (Burnside et al., 2019), these differences need to be neutralized to provide an impactful employment experience for all students. This is a limitation of the study that highlights how the employment experience can be more intentionally designed and implemented to create stronger outcomes for student employees regardless of which unit employs them.

HIP Element 6: Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning. As described by participants, the on-campus employment experience offered little structured opportunity for employees to reflect and integrate what they learned at work into other contexts and vice versa. References to reflection were discovered through my review of documents or brief mentions by participants regarding evaluations and regular reporting. As Hansen and Hoag (2018) described, "in an employment setting, the supervision and appraisal processes provide reflection opportunities" (p. 87). As such, I assumed these practices allowed for reflection and therefore deeper learning; however, participants rarely connected these opportunities to reflection and/or learning. Instead, participants shared examples of how they self-directed their own reflection and learning integration. While I found little difference between employment types regarding this HIP element, this phenomenon was most frequently found among paraprofessional employees.

Although the examples shared underscored the importance of reflection in learning, overall, the evidence gathered in this study revealed structured opportunities to reflect and learn within the employment experience, as perceived by students, do not exist, consequently, eliminating evidence of HIP Element 6. This is disappointing because, in addition to providing enticing examples of self-directed reflection, participants spoke frequently about the knowledge and skills they obtained as a result of their employment thereby providing strong evidence that learning did occur as a result of working on campus. However, this learning occurred without

any facilitation by skilled educators or direct connections to the experience. These findings suggest that if the employment experience is to exist as a quality HIP experience, intentional inclusion of guided reflection and integration of learning is necessary.

HIP Element 7: Discovery of Learning Through Real-World Application. All participants described the development of transferable skills because of their on-campus work experience, most frequently identifying soft skills development such as communication and time management. Participants shared that this skill development was beneficial in many contexts, including class assignments and communicating with professors. However, many participants also shared distinct delineations of academic learning from their on-campus jobs. When asked if they saw an opportunity to use what they learned in class in their role as a student employee or vice versa, participants enrolled in a major not naturally aligned with the employment experience, such as Physics or Chemistry, immediately rejected a connection despite also sharing ways working on-campus enhanced the development of soft skills they used in classroom settings. I found that non-paraprofessionals were more likely to delineate between work and academics; however, I believe this was connected to the type of academic major held by these participants rather than influenced by employment type. The frequent distinction between academics and employment emphasized the need for guided reflection that permits students to discover the relevance of their learning across multiple contexts.

HIP Element 8: Public Demonstration of Competence. Participants displayed job proficiency through task execution, problem-solving, and helping others. As suspected, participants reported more opportunities to display their capabilities when professional staff employees were not present such as after hours or on the weekends. Therefore, by providing more occasions for student employees to act independently, practitioners can facilitate the public

demonstration of competence and learning for their employees. Although I found no differences between employment types, the employing unit played an important role in how participants displayed their acquired skills because the structure and available offerings within the employment experience impacted opportunities to display competence. For example, only Campus Recreation provided a system for employees to serve as peer mentors. This finding supports the influence of the design of an experience on its ability to serve as a HIP.

Summary of RQ1 Findings. My examination of student perceptions of their on-campus employment revealed evidence of six of the essential elements of HIPs. My findings revealed that according to participants' perspectives, the employment experience lacked consistent and thereby precluding HIP Element 5, *Frequently, Timely, and Constructive Feedback*, and HIP Element 6, *Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning*. These elements are shown in Figure 1 in Chapter 1.

The use of HIP elements between different employment types was not evident. However, participant responses suggested the influence of the elements may be stronger for paraprofessionals due to increased effort and responsibility required of the role. Most notably, paraprofessional employees provided more robust narratives connected to the HIP elements. This seemed to indicate a greater influence of HIP elements on the on-campus employment experience for paraprofessional employees and at the very least, distinguished paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional experiences as different to some degree.

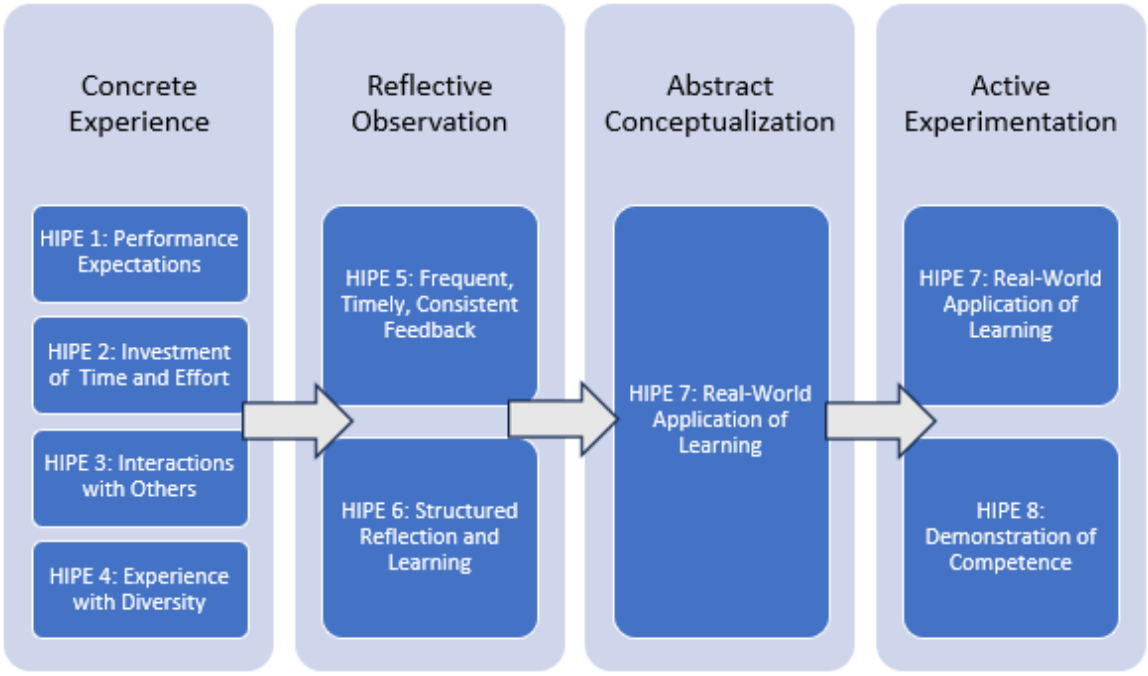
Overall, the findings from this study supported the strong possibility of on-campus employment serving as a HIP that contributes to student success. Moreover, I found the on-campus employment experience was abundant with opportunities to expand student learning and connect knowledge gained in their on-campus jobs with learning in and out of the classroom.

Research Question 2: What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?

As outlined previously this study found evidence of six of the essential HIP educational elements present in the employment experiences at W&M: (a) *Performance Expectations Set at Appropriately High Levels,* (b) *Significant Investment of Time and Effort,* (c) *Interactions with Faculty and Peers About Substantive Matters,* (d) *Experiences with Diversity,* (e) *Opportunities to Discover Relevance Through Real-World Application,* (f) *And Public Demonstration of Competence*. HIPs are inherently co-curricular and therefore allow for experiential learning, so it is not surprising this study also revealed strong evidence of Kolb's Experiential Learning Framework (ELT; A.Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Participants described instances of (a) Concrete Experience, (b) Reflective Observation, (c) Abstract Conceptualization, and (d) Active Experimentation, resulting from their employment experience, providing compelling evidence that on-campus employment serves as a tremendous avenue for experiential learning. Moreover, my examination of participant learning emphasized the parallels between the ELT learning dimensions and the essential elements of HIPs. The connection between these frameworks is shown in Figure 2. This figure illustrates the overlap of HIP Elements within the learning dimensions of ELT, demonstrating how HIPs influence student learning across various contexts while providing additional understanding of how participants leveraged learning from on-campus employment in and out of the classroom.

Figure 3

HIPE *Contained Within Learning Dimensions of Experiential Learning*



Note: HIPE = Essential educational elements of High-Impact Practices. This figure places each of the eight essential elements of HIPs within the four dimensions of experiential learning. Adapted from "Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education" by A. Y. Kolb and D. A. Kolb, 2005 in *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 4*(2), p. 193-212. (https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2005.17268566). Copyright 2005 Academy of Management Learning and Education.
Adapted from "Taking HIPs to the Next Level" by G. D. Kuh, 2013, in G. D. Kuh and K. O'Donnell, *Ensuring Quality &Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale* (p. 8), 2013, American Association of Colleges and Universities. Copyright 2013 by American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Concrete Experience. In on-campus employment, the sharing of performance expectations provided the student employee with a roadmap for navigating their job responsibilities, essentially introducing them to their new learning practice field. Additionally, the HIP elements of *Significant Investment of Time and Effort*, *Interactions with Others*, and *Exposure to Diversity* provided participants access to (a) new ideas, (b) individuals from different backgrounds, (c) professional environments with new demands on time and energy, and

(d) additional tangible experiences that challenged their existing worldviews. This exposure equipped participants with new perspectives that they could use when contending with how to navigate these new experiences.

Reflective Observation. Consistent, constructive feedback and structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning allowed for Reflective Observation as participants were offered external perspectives about the way they approached considered work tasks. However, evidence of these HIP elements from participants was extremely limited; as such, these are the HIP elements identified as having the least substantial evidence in this study due to inconsistent and infrequent implementation. Fortunately, participants reported instances of self-initiated opportunities to observe, learn from others, and reflect on their experiences and these findings supported the importance of reflection and feedback within this ELT learning dimension. While participants still found opportunities to engage in Reflective Observation, it is troublesome the employment experience at W&M lacks these elements and therefore provided little support within this learning dimension. More intentional design and execution of the employment experience is necessary so that student employees have greater opportunity to broaden the learning they acquire because of the employment experience.

Abstract Conceptualization. Reflective Observation evolved into Abstract Conceptualization as participants further contemplated their initial observations and developed theories about connecting the learning they obtained from exposure to concrete experiences into more complex contexts. Participant accounts of Abstract Conceptualization differed from Reflective Observation because their contemplation was compounded or multifaceted. For example, James was able to draw a broad line between his first aid/CPR training in anticipation of the theoretical application in his role as a resident assistant. Participants reported using

examples from their on-campus work experience in classroom assignments or reassessing a concept obtained from one endeavor for use in another, such as their career after college. These deep considerations of the real-world application of what they learned while working on-campus demonstrated influences on student learning and how learning might be applied outside the on-campus employment experience.

Active Experimentation. Once participants developed theories of application, they used that learning in real-world contexts through the accomplishment of tasks or solving complex problems and finding solutions. Through Active Experimentation, participants exhibited job proficiency in an actual environment such as their on-campus job, the classroom, or other co-curricular experiences. As a result, in addition to implementing real-world applications of learning, they also publicly demonstrated their competence in work-related skills and knowledge. This step was important because it allowed participants to test out their theories as well as demonstrate their job knowledge and experience. This opportunity to own and find value in their expertise is critical to student learning (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005) because it permits the students to realize their competencies and find value in possessing expertise.

Summary of RQ2 Findings. Combining A. Y. Kolb's ELT learning dimensions (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005) with Kuh's (2013) HIP Elements provides a clear pathway of how HIP elements occurring in the on-campus employment experience can influence student learning. Therefore, this framework helps to demonstrate the influences of on-campus employment including (a) exposure to experiences; (b) internal and external feedback that permitted employees to process variances and develop theories of application; and (c) hands-on learning, in and out of the classroom. Essentially, the framework demonstrates how on-campus student employees transform skills developed at work to be useful in contexts beyond the work

environment. However, the framework also highlights how the employment experience at W&M is missing the facilitation of a crucial part of the learning cycle, Reflective Observation. As such, W&M must adjust their implementation of on-campus employment experiences if they hope to expand student learning and execute employment as a HIP.

Discussion of Findings

This study aimed to understand the on-campus employment experience through student perceptions of the educational elements of HIPs and the influence of on-campus employment on learning. Although a key component of experiential learning, Reflective Observation, was lacking because of the missing elements of HIP Element 5, *Frequent, Timely, and Constructive Feedback*, and HIP Element 6, *Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning*; this study did provide evidence of examples of six of the eight HIP elements and learning across the learning dimensions of ELT (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The findings from this study suggest that on-campus employment can serve as a HIP that enriches student learning. The following sections further discuss findings from both research questions in consideration of relevant literature.

Implementation Matters

Implementation of HIPs is reliant on the use of the eight educational elements, and the literature regarding HIPs has long argued how universities implement HIPs affects their influence on important educational outcomes (Kinzie et al., 2020; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013). While participants shared examples that corresponded to each of the educational elements of HIPs, their responses varied based on employee type, employing unit, and self-directed learning, suggesting students' perceptions of experience were connected to the way the element is executed. For example, I found Campus Recreation offered a great deal of

structured opportunities for employees to receive feedback or interact and learn from others, whereas other units did not.

Moreover, previous research highlighted the importance of the relationship between the university and the individual for student engagement and persistence (according to participants' perspectives, the employment experience lacked consistent and constructive feedback as well as structured opportunities to reflect and incorporate learning (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Therefore, it is not enough for students to make meaning of their own experiences, as many of the participants in this study demonstrated, the university is obligated to frame these opportunities to support student success and persistence. By carefully considering and planning for the multiple aspects of the employment experience, W&M can create work environments that encourage student learning and expose them to difference through interactions and investment of time.

Social and Academic Connection to Learning

Research repeatedly supported the value of social and academic connections in student persistence and retention because they influence student learning. In his examination of student persistence, Tinto (1993) identified the importance and significance of social and academic connections and determined both the individual and the university must participate in these connections (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Su (2018) concluded on-campus employment serves as a supplement to the education experience, providing space for cross-cultural academic and social learning. Moreover, Fede et al. (2018) found the on-campus employment experience provided opportunities for academic access combined with lifelong learning. As stated above, the university has a duty to facilitate these connections as well as the student. The findings from this

study determined on-campus employment facilitated both academic and social connections for students, thereby contributing to student success.

Social. Overwhelmingly, for the participants in this study the value found in working on-campus was connected to interactions with peers and faculty/staff. These interactions led to employee satisfaction and in many instances, the desire to return to the job for additional years. Additionally, I found these interactions were a strong catalyst for student learning.

Social connection also existed beyond individual interactions as participants described the value associated with feeling connected to and representing the university and/or department; moreover, they viewed this as a significant responsibility. Review of the literature revealed how on-campus employment intrinsically connects the student and the university (Astin, 1993; Fede et al, 2018; Noel, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). I found this to be true in this study. Participants discussed access to resources previously unknown to them, participating in new events and activities, and an increase in their general knowledge of the university. Essentially, working on-campus instilled a sense of pride amongst participants in serving as representatives of the university. This finding connects to the "cheers/jeers experiential continuum" described by A. Y. Kolb and Kolb (2005),

> at one end learners feel that they are members of a learning community who are known and respected by faculty and colleagues and whose experience is taken seriously, a space "where everybody knows your name." At the other extreme are "mis-educative" learning environments where learners feel alienated, alone, unrecognized, and devalued. Learning and growth in the jeers environment "where nobody knows your name" can be difficult if not impossible. (p. 207)

The support and encouragement of respected individuals, such as faculty and staff, contributed substantially to student learning. These important relationships demonstrate the ways on-campus employment reinforces social connection and student engagement with the university and contributes to student retention.

Academic. As outlined previously, the literature regarding the connection between employment and the academic experience presents mixed findings. Although Su (2018) determined employment to be an opportunity to link academic and social connections, Jach and Trolian (2020) found a disconnect between on-campus employment and the broader academic experience and future career path. Additionally, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) determined student employment had little influence on student success unless related directly to students' field of study. I found significant evidence of the disconnect between the academic experience and work in this study. Participants whose future career and/or academic major more significantly aligned with their job, such as teaching or majoring in sociology, reported more opportunities to use what they learn across contexts as well as a stronger integration of learning, thereby supporting the assertion by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005).

Students enrolled in unrelated academic experiences, particularly those connected to STEM fields did not recognize a connection between the experiences, suggesting employees' influence on learning is not tied directly to their academic pursuits. However, all participants recognized the value of their employment experience in strengthening the soft skills needed in the classroom and future careers. These findings suggest that traditional research focused on outcomes such as subject matter and/or academic gains, such as GPA, may be too narrow to understand the correlation between working and academic success.

Differences in Employment Types

Although there is limited research connected to the differences between types of employment, we know that not all jobs are created equally. Previous research revealed paraprofessional positions are often supported with additional leadership development training based on theory (Hernandez & Smith, 2019). While I did not find evidence of different training for paraprofessionals or non-paraprofessionals, the higher level of responsibility reported by paraprofessionals and confirmed in document analysis, suggested they experienced higher expectations and advanced training. Additionally, paraprofessionals' rich descriptions and connection of the experience to learning and development outcomes, confirmed paraprofessional work provided a more robust student employment experience and suggested it is connected to leadership development training as found by Hernandez and Smith (2019).

Other than the quality of participant responses, the study revealed no differences between employment types and use of HIP educational elements. While paraprofessional responses presumed higher gains existed for this employment type, it is important to note that all employees reported opportunities to learn, regardless of employment type; as such, non-paraprofessional positions should not be discounted for their ability to contribute to student success.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The purpose of this study was to examine the intersection of on-campus employment with the essential elements of HIPs and gain insights into the influence of employment on student learning in and out of the classroom. My findings revealed the on-campus employment experience at W&M aligned with six of the eight essential HIP educational elements, as perceived by students. Two of these HIP elements, *Frequent, Timely, and Constructive Feedback*

and *Structured Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate Learning*, were present but not to the degree designated by Kuh (2013). Moreover, this study revealed that the employment process can contribute significantly to student learning.

The variety of participant responses across employment units demonstrated the opportunity for the deliberate implementation of the on-campus employment experience at W&M so it provides a more consistent learning opportunity for all employees. As discussed in Chapter 2, not all HIPs are created equally, and literature has repeatedly supported the need to carefully construct HIPs so that desired outcomes may be achieved.

Moreover, the recent implementation of the SCHEV *Transforming Federal Work-Study* (Jay, 2023) grant at W&M indicates a need for greater focus on the student employment experience at the university level. This grant seeks to transform on-campus jobs to serve as internships. However, what makes an internship different from on-campus employment is "a learning experience with real-world opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom" (NACE, 2023, para 2). As such, all on-campus jobs can be transformed with intentional design and execution to serve in an internship-like capacity. This provides a substantial opportunity to influence policy and practice by incorporating the following recommendations across units to directly support individual supervisors and other relevant administrative offices, such as Career Development and Financial Aid, while constructing meaningful on-campus employment experiences to enhance student success and learning.

In consideration of the related literature, the following section offers recommendations linked to the study's framework and additional recommendations revealed through participant responses. As stated previously, this study was based on student perceptions of their on-campus employment experience, as such, some aspects of related recommendations may already exist

within the workplace. In these instances, employers should continue to execute these practices while also strengthening their student employment design and execution through use of the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Develop Learning Outcomes for Employment Types

The variation between employee responsibilities among employee types requires supervisors to establish different expectations, training, and support for each group. Practitioners must acknowledge the differences between paraprofessional and non-paraprofessional employees and develop desired outcomes and provide a scaled approach to working with each type. I found paraprofessionals had more opportunity to display and execute leadership. This study supported previous literature that identified a stronger connection to leadership development among paraprofessional employees (Hernandez & Smith, 2019). However, I also found important learning and growth existed regardless of employee designation and so one type of employment should not be valued over the other.

Hansen and Hoag (2018) offered several learning-centered goals for supervisors to promote employment as HIP including (a) the use of learning language throughout employment, (b) setting learning goals, and (c) helping students experience the institution as interconnected. By developing outcomes such as communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership, and designing employment programs that uphold these values, practitioners can provide additional opportunities for non-paraprofessional students. Additionally, employers must infuse these outcomes into all aspects of the employment process including hiring materials and the way they speak about the experience thereby creating a work culture that facilitates student employee articulation of the outcomes from the experience (Hernadez & Smith, 2019).

Recommendation 2: Bolster Support for Practitioners

At W&M, the decentralized employment process empowered each department to construct and execute an on-campus employment program responsive to the department's needs. However, this presents a challenge in constructing experiences to have consistent outcomes for individuals across multiple contexts. The structure of this embedded case study highlighted some of the operational challenges of creating one seamless on-campus employment experience, mainly the importance of acknowledging the unique needs and approach of both the university and the units therein.

To ensure recommendations are implemented seamlessly and consistently, the university must identify all units that provide on-campus employment and provide additional support for these employers starting with distributing a one-page overview of the findings of this study. Additionally, I recommend creating connections between employing units, through regular meetings and training sessions. The Office of Career Development and Professional Engagement has already begun this work to establish support for the *Transforming Federal Work-Study* grant amongst all student employers at W&M (P. Heavilin, personal communication, January 2024). These gatherings will allow employers to share best practices, increase their knowledge and skill set regarding student employment, and work together to resolve challenges for student employees.

Additionally, to implement intentional student employment practices, supervision of student employees must be viewed as a critical job function and allocated appropriate resources, such as time, training, and compensation, similar to the approach currently implemented for full-time staff. The Office of Human Resources at W&M does not acknowledge the supervision of undergraduate student employees as a distinct job function that is as complex as other

responsibilities (T. Dickerson, personal communications, May 2023). If employers are to provide the intentional design and execution required of an on-campus employment environment that promotes student learning and contributes to persistence, W&M must categorize the supervision of student employees as a job responsibility at a high level of importance.

Recommendation 3: Require Structured, Deliberate Opportunities to Reflect

The largest gap found in this study was the lack of employer-directed facilitation of reflection and incorporation of learning. Reflection is foundational to the integration of learning because it provides space for thinking and bolsters metacognition, allowing students to consider their own assumptions and biases (Barber, 2020). Furthermore, research supports the need for understanding lived experiences and supporting the individual needs of students (Finley & McNair, 2013). Therefore, by structuring opportunities for each student to reflect on their learning and skill development, employers can reinforce learning while increasing student success and expanding the self-efficacy of their employees.

As abundantly demonstrated in this study, students can reflect and integrate learning on their own; however, doing so with another individual can strengthen the experience for the student. Through my interviews alone, participants shared how they enjoyed talking about their experiences as student employees. As Barber (2020) asserted, these other individuals can serve as confidence builders as well as a form of conscience, helping the students to consider the many layers of their experience and reminding them of their existing accomplishments. Providing space for students to think and engage in conversation is critical to a successful learning experience (Barber, 2020; A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

I recommend creating question prompts that employers can use in regular one-on-one meetings with employees. These questions will specifically ask the student to consider how the

employment experience can: (a) integrate learning gained on the job into their academic experience and other contexts, (b) influence post-graduate plans and help with the development of career and professional goals, and (c) provide meaningful exposure to diversity whereby students consider how they experience diversity and create more inclusive practices for others. Alternatively, employers can modify tools from national associations, such as National Association of Campus Activities (2024) Employability Skills Assessment. Although this tool focuses on outcomes for student event planners, the process can be modified and used as a model to assess an employing unit's specific outcomes for their student employees.

I also challenge educators to think creatively about how they can infuse reflection into their employment experiences. A few participants mentioned the use of reporting and I was unable to determine the level of reflection incorporated into this task. Ensuring tasks such as these use meaningful reflection, rather than solely reporting happenings is one way this can be done.

Recommendation 4: Provide Specific, Constructive Feedback

As stated above, understanding each student's lived experience is critical to student success. Although participants indicated they were satisfied with the level of feedback received, they also regularly reported the desire to hear more specific acknowledgment and increased understanding of the work they performed. Continued use of evaluation is necessary because it emulates many aspects connected to working in the real-world. However, this type of feedback is not responsive to student needs and additional regular feedback is necessary. Additionally, an increase in individual feedback would strengthen interactions with "adult" staff interactions frequently reported by participants as highly impactful to their experience. Alongside individual opportunities to reflect, it is imperative employers implement regular practices that provide

specific and timely feedback regarding the performance of each employee, such as regular check-ins with the supervisor.

For employing units with large numbers of student employees or where individual supervisor feedback is less feasible, creating a peer evaluation process whereby students observe and provide feedback on each other's performance would result in growth opportunities for both the individual receiving the feedback and the person providing it. As Phillips (2016) offered, peer assessment benefits all students involved, particularly because it allows students to learn how to both receive and give feedback. Employers should think critically about other ways they can understand the individual work of their employees and recognize and honestly evaluate those contributions.

Recommendation 5: Implement Independent, Autonomous Work

Responses from paraprofessional participants demonstrated how greater responsibility at work more strongly influenced their learning and development. Moreover, many responses regarding increased opportunities to solve problems from both employee types occurred while working autonomously. Therefore, greater access to independent work with perceived higher responsibility can contribute to the on-campus employment experience. Practitioners must implement structures and projects that allow employees to act independently in ways that are appropriate for the type of work and environment.

Another opportunity for autonomous work exists through the continued use of active experimentation, whereby students can recurrently think about and apply the concepts they have learned in their on-campus jobs. Employers must continue to offer these learning experiences and expand or create activities that allow student employees to demonstrate competence and job proficiency independently. Whenever possible, these opportunities should be hands-on and

cognitively stimulating; for example, using role-playing scenarios or case studies to resolve challenges, continuing to gamify learning through quizzes and interactive activities, and expanding or developing incentive programs that provide scaffolded learning whereby employees receive recognition or reward for accomplishing tasks.

Student development theory has long supported the notion of providing both challenge and support to enhance student growth implementation of this concept is critical in autonomous work, so the challenge experienced by the student is met with sufficient support in trying new ways of doing things and having confidence to make decisions. Practitioners can accomplish this by involving student employees directly in solving problems and finding solutions. For example, rather than immediately providing direction when employees have questions, when feasible, instead ask the employee how they would navigate the situation and/or delay response so they may reach their own conclusions and respond autonomously. Finally, employers must also develop a work culture that embraces learning and celebrates experimentation, where employees feel supported to think creatively and/or act to solve problems without fear of repercussions if they make a mistake.

Recommendation 6: Increase Interactions With Peers

This study defined the HIP element, *Interactions with Peers and Faculty Over Substantive Matters*, to be a foundational experience as interactions significantly influenced student learning and served as a gateway to implementation of many other HIP educational elements. Thus far the recommendations from this study largely reinforce interactions with and support from supervisors; however, employers must also reinforce peer interactions. The ability to demonstrate competence, through teaching, helping, and/or learning from others provides not only contributes to professional competency but also provides students with opportunities for

Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization. In addition to creating peer feedback processes, employers must develop systems that strengthen internal employee interactions such as shadowing, team teaching, and/or mentoring programs.

Additionally, employers must examine instances when students are working with limited or no peer interaction and determine how changes can be made; for example, scheduling students to work shifts together where financially and logistically feasible. Many participants shared their enjoyment of the social component of working; therefore, employers should not undervalue simple opportunities for employees to socialize and connect, particularly for those positions where students largely work alone. However, opportunities that influence task execution must be carefully constructed so that performance expectations stay in place; if students do not have sufficient or accurate information to teach each other than this may be counterproductive because of the dilution of performance expectations.

Additional Recommendation: Consider Student Motives for Working

In addition to the recommendations connected to the research framework of this study, data collection revealed several other findings, in particular, the need to consider student motivation for working. The W&M student population is relatively affluent, as such, certain stigma may exist for students who must pursue work for financial reasons. Although this study did not provide additional consideration for Federal Work-Study status, several participants voiced concerns regarding the pressure to work just to meet financial obligations and shared the complexities associated with receiving work-study aid. Many students reported confusion and difficulty regarding finding a work-study job. And for some, using their Federal Work-Study was non-negotiable, regardless of their desire to work. For example, Michael a Federal Work-Study student working in SUE shared,

> I think there's still some student understanding of, I'm here because working here pays for school. I'm not necessarily here because I want to be. And maybe that's fine that [student employees] don't want to be [at the job] and that they're just here because it's a job that pays money.

As W&M pursues grants to transform Federal Work-Study jobs into intentionally constructed internships, more students will pursue on-campus employment. These students will benefit from intentional design and execution and an environment that supports an expanded sense of belonging and student success. Additionally, they will require support that is different from their peers who pursue employment for non-essential reasons. As such, employers need transparency and support in understanding how to accommodate the specific needs and limitations of Federal Work-Study aid, including guaranteeing a suitable number of work hours while finding strategies to mitigate the stress associated with work that is essential rather than recreational.

Recommendations for Future Research

As an embedded case study, this research has limited generalizability to other contexts (Yin, 2017). However, I identified several key recommendations for future research including diversifying participants, expanding understanding of academic learning, defining HIP elements, and increasing perspectives of the on-campus employment experience.

Diversify Participants

Although this study did not analyze the causal relationship between the influence of employment experience and precollege characteristics or other demographics, it is impossible to separate the two. Five of the participants identified themselves as first-generation, and the study only included one Black/African American participant and six Multiracial participants.

Furthermore, most participants were female with only four males and one non-binary participant. Previous research demonstrated HIPs require access and equity and are particularly beneficial to populations that are traditionally underserved (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008). Therefore, to understand on-campus employment as a HIP, it is imperative employment is understood through this end.

Unfortunately, this study provided little additional understanding of underrepresented students. More intentional examination, particularly studies that considered individual, lived experience of students traditionally underserved, such as first-generation and/or people of color, is necessary. Additionally, lived experiences can be similar within groups of students such as those who share similar academic majors. Therefore, participant differences should go beyond the traditional understanding of diversity to include a variety of academic majors, prior work history, and extracurricular involvements.

Broaden Understanding of Academic Learning

As shared previously, research supports the connection of individuals' sense of belonging to academic and social connections. Evidence from this study clearly reported the value of social connection. Although participants denied connection between employment and academics, my findings revealed significant learning occurred within the on-campus employment experience. Therefore, on-campus employment contributes to academic connections too, although perhaps not in ways traditionally considered in the literature. By focusing on the influence of HIP participation on GPA, researchers narrow the impact of learning across contexts. Additional research that qualitatively examines how students connect their academic learning to non-academic contexts and how working does or does not impact retention and persistence is necessary.

Define Essential HIP Elements

Kuh (2008) advocated for the use of HIPs not as individual experiences but rather as a set of tools to enhance student engagement. This study focused on participant perception of HIP elements using the essential elements as a tool to understand the student experience of on-campus employment; however, without clear definition of each element, I found it difficult to discern accurate representation of the elements. Since the implementation of this study, NSSE developed an interactive module that explores the "extent to which HIP experiences incorporate elements theorized to account for their educational benefits" (NSSE, 2023, para 1). While this work certainly helps to examine the availability of quality HIPs and further determines learning outcomes for participants, it does not provide further definition of the HIP elements, instead providing thresholds based on quantitative responses (Kinzie et al., 2020). A greater understanding of the core components of the HIP elements for the purposes of qualitative investigation would help researchers determine how to implement quality HIPs with the educational elements that matter.

Expand Perspectives on On-Campus Student Employment

This study focused solely on student perceptions. As such, the perspective of employers and understanding of additional contexts, such as limitations because of university policies and practices, remain unknown. Additional research that considers both student and employer perspectives would provide additional insight into the unique challenges of the on-campus employment experience. Just as not all employment types are equal, neither are the units that employ them. Deeper examination of on-campus units with proven success in employing students would provide a stronger understanding of how HIP elements influence the student employment experience. For example, in this study, Campus Recreation employed a variety of

employees and they all reported substantial influence of the experience on learning as well as the use of HIP elements, although in different ways. Additionally, the documents provided by Campus Recreation administrators were extensive, and most often referenced as reinforcing the use of the HIP elements. Examining further how this unit successfully implements student employment on campus at W&M and how other units could replicate their efforts would be beneficial.

In addition to only considering student perspectives in this study, participants self-selected to participate in this study. The motives for participating can vary; however, almost all participants reported a positive experience in their on-campus employment. Expanding participant selection to include individuals with a variety of opinions on the influence of the experience would greatly enrich knowledge regarding the influence of on-campus employment at W&M and the ways administrators can strengthen the experience for those who may be less interested in their own success or the success of their employer.

Summary

This study discovered rich narratives of the lived experiences of on-campus student employees and their perceptions of the overlap of HIP elements within their on-campus employment experience and its influence on their learning both in and out of the classroom. While findings revealed some of the essential elements of HIPs to be missing from on-campus employment, participants still reported meaningful ways they could use employment to incorporate these missing elements. Overall, the findings determined that on-campus employment is a robust practice field for student learning and development with application to a multitude of contexts on campus and beyond. As such, on-campus employment not only serves as a HIP but also facilitates experiential learning in general. Moreover, I discovered that

combining the HIP elements defined by Kuh (2013) and the ELT devised by A. Y. Kolb and Kolb (2005) illustrates a clear roadmap for faculty and staff to guide student learning in on-campus student employment across multiple social and academic contexts. I provided seven recommendations to enhance the on-campus employment experience at W&M and identified the value of expanded research that considers a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. These findings suggest a shift in the on-campus employment experience whereby the university can no longer rely on solely receiving services from students, the relationship must be reciprocal, and employers must implement strategies that support holistic development and learning so that students can succeed as lifelong learners and contribute meaningfully to their communities and beyond.

Ultimately, this study demonstrated how on-campus employment serves as a core learning experience for students. Working as an on-campus employee strengthens the individual's connection to others and the university, enabling them to serve as a valuable resource while strengthening their own work proficiency and honing professional skills. Moreover, working in these settings with others challenges student employees' perspectives and aids them in making meaning of their experiences. This personal growth and skill development is invaluable and not only serves the employee in their current position but also equips them for work beyond their university experience. Most importantly, significant gains in student learning can result from the on-campus employment experience. By refining the on-campus employment experience, W&M can bolster student learning without significant financial implications, ensuring student belonging and persistence and contributing substantially to student success.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANT INTEREST AND SELECTION

Purpose of the Study
Examination of the employment program at William & Mary through students' perceptions of the role their employment plays in their undergraduate experience and examine its intersection with educational components of high-impact practices.

Participation
Participation in this survey is voluntary and participants may exit the survey at any point.

1. Are you willing to participate in this study, which requires a face-to-face interview? Selecting yes will indicate your consent and direct you to complete the remainder of the survey, which includes demographic questions for use in sample selection.
    a. Yes
    b. No
2. [if yes is selected] Please indicate the best form of contact to arrange for your interview:
    a. Text_____
    b. Email_____
3. Are you between the ages of 18 and 22?
    a. YES
    b. NO (If participant selects "NO" they will be directed to final page.)
4. Are you currently or have you ever been employed on-campus at William & Mary? Note "employed" means you receive financial compensation for your work.
    a. YES
    b. NO (If participant selects "NO" they will be directed to final page.)
5. Please select your on-campus employer(s).
    a. Athletics
    b. Arts & Sciences
    c. Associate Provost Enrollment Management
    d. Associate Provost eLearning
    e. Associate Provost Information Technology

f. Campus Living
g. Campus Recreation
h. Career Development
i. Dean of Students/Student Success
j. Finance & Administration
k. Health and Wellness
l. Muscarelle Art Museum
m. President's Office
n. Provost's Office
o. Registrar
p. Student Engagement & Leadership
q. School of Business
r. School of Education
s. School of Law
t. University Advancement
u. University Libraries
v. Virginia Institute of Marine Science
w. Washington DC Office
x. Other/Not Listed (Please provide)

6. Type of employment
    a. Customer Service/Front Line Attendant
    b. Paraprofessional
    c. Other (please indicate)
7. Is your employment part of your financial aid package and/or work-study?
    a. Yes
    b. No
8. Do you receive an hourly wage or stipend?
    a. Hourly
    b. Stipend
    c. Both

9. How long have you worked in your on-campus position(s)?
    a. 0-1 month
    b. 1-3 months
    c. 3-6 months
    d. 6-12 months
    e. 1-2 years
    f. 2+ years
10. How long have you worked in your current position?
    a. 0-1 month
    b. 1-3 months
    c. 3-6 months
    d. 6-12 months
    e. 1-2 years
    f. 2+ years
11. How many hours per week do you work on average?
    a. 0-5
    b. 5-10
    c. 10-15
    d. 15-20
    e. 20+
12. Are you employed off-campus?
    a. YES
    b. NO
13. How do you identify?
    a. Man
    b. Non-Binary
    c. Woman
    d. Prefer to self-describe (below)
14. Please indicate your graduating class:
    a. Freshman (Class of 2025)

b. Sophomore (Class of 2024)
c. Junior (Class of 2023)
d. Senior (Class of 2022)

15. Please indicate your racial or ethnic background:
    a. African American/Black
    b. American Indian/Alaskan Native
    c. Asian/Pacific Islander
    d. Hispanic/Latino
    e. International
    f. Multiracial
    g. White
    h. Prefer not to say
16. Are you a transfer student?
    a. Yes
    b. No
17. Did one or both of your parents graduate from college?
    a. Yes
    b. No
18. Please indicate your current academic course of study (major/minor/concentration).

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Student Perceptions of on-campus employment: Opportunities for High-impact practice

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to understand undergraduate, on-campus student employees' perceptions of the educational elements characteristic of high-impact practices (HIPs) and their connection with student learning.

Importance of the Study
As public demands of proof of impact on graduates increase, high-impact practices provide colleges and universities with focused programs to direct appropriate use of resources; however, many of these experiences remain in accessible to various student populations. By better understanding how existing practices can be shaped to support high-impact practice, institutions can better align resources and priorities while also reaching larger populations of students.

Procedure
Each participant will be asked to complete a survey that includes demographic information as well as general perceptions of the employment experience.

From those responses, a smaller group of participants will be asked to participate in individual interviews. If you participate in an individual interview, I request from you:

- Participation in an audio-recorded face-to-face, virtual interview in which I will ask you to describe your feelings and perceptions about your employment experience.
- The option of having a follow-up interview if necessary to collect more information.

If selected to participate in individual interviews

Risks
There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Confidentiality
Please be aware that:

- Your participation in this research project is confidential to the maximum extent allowed by law.
- Participation will in no way influence or jeopardize your employment status with the university.
- Your name and identifying information will only be known to the researchers through the information you provide. You will be given the opportunity to select a pseudonym to be used in all research presentations or publications.
- You may refuse to answer any question asked during the face-to-face interview. Additionally, you may terminate your participation in the research project at any time. No penalties will result from either action.

- Participation in this research project is completely voluntary.
- A summary of the content of your interview will be sent to you to verify your responses via email. At that time, you may clarify or add to your responses.

Contact Information

Any questions regarding this research project should be directed to Trici Fredrick pafredrick@wm.edu at William & Mary located in Williamsburg, Virginia. Any additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant should be directed (anonymously if desired) to Dr. Tom Ward at 757-221-2358 EDIRC-L@wm.edu or Dr. Jim Barber at 757-221-6208 or jpbarber@wm.edu.

By selecting the "*I agree to participate"* option below, signing, and dating this form, you are affirming your voluntary agreement to participate in this research and that you are at least 18 years of age.

_____ I agree to participate.

_____ I do not agree to participate.

Participant Printed Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please keep a copy of this document for your records.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what employment area do you work?
    a. What is your job title?
    b. How long have you worked in this area?
2. Have you been employed in other areas on campus?
    a. If so, which and for how long?
    b. How did you find out about these employment opportunities?
3. Can you briefly describe your position and responsibilities?
    a. How many hours a week do you work in this position?
    b. How would you describe the quality of the work you are required to do?
4. Why did you seek out employment in this specific area?
    a. What were your expectations of the position when you began work?
        i. Have those been met? Why or why not?
    b. What aspects made you return for additional year(s)?
5. How did you believe COVID-19 affect your employment experience (if at all)?
6. How are job expectations communicated to you?
7. How comfortable are you with those work expectations and the ability to accomplish required tasks?
8. Do you feel challenged by the work? Why or why not?
9. Describe your interactions with others in the area.
    a. Do you interact with professional staff?

        i. If so, how regularly do you interact and in what ways?

    b. Do you interact with other student employees in your area?

        i. If so, how regularly do you interact and in what ways?

    c. Do you interact with other students (not employees) through your position?

        i. If so, how regularly and in what ways?

10. Is your supervisor a student, faculty, or staff member?

    a. Describe the relationship between you and your supervisor.

    b. How do you and your supervisor communicate?

    c. How often and in what ways?

11. In what ways do you receive feedback on your performance as a student employee?

    a. Formal Evaluation
    b. Casual check-in with supervisor
    c. I do not receive

12. How satisfied are you with the amount of feedback you receive regarding your performance as a student employee?

13. Are you or your coworkers recognized for your work?

    a. How and in what ways?

14. In what ways has your employment introduced you to people and/or ideas different from you?

    a. How do you respond to those interactions?

15. Do you see opportunities to use what you have learned in class in your work as a student employee and/or vice versa?

a. If so, in what ways? Can you provide an example(s)?

16. Has your student work experience contributed to your learning experience at W&M?
    a. If so, in what ways?
17. How have you applied or used what you have learned in your on-campus job in other contexts?
18. As I am trying to understand the experiences of student employees, is there anything I have missed that you want to share that will help me understand this experience better?

APPENDIX D

CORRELATION OF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TO HIP EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS AND GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question	*Criteria*	*Interview Question*
RQ1 What are students' perceptions of the overlap between the elements of high-impact practices and their on-campus employment experiences?	Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels	6. How are job expectations communicated to you? 7. How comfortable are you with those work expectations and the ability to accomplish required tasks? 8. Do you feel challenged by the work? • Why or why not?
	Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time	3. Can you briefly describe your position and responsibilities? 8. Do you feel challenged by the work? • Why or why not?
	Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters	9. Describe your interactions with others in the area. • 7a. Describe the relationship between you and your supervisor
	Experiences with diversity	14. In what ways has your employment introduced you to people and/or ideas different from you?
	Frequently, timely, and constructive feedback	10b. How do you and your supervisor communicate? • How often and in what ways? 11. In what ways do you receive feedback on your performance as a student employee? 12. How satisfied are you with the amount of feedback you receive regarding your performance as a student employee?

	Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning	16. Do you see opportunities to use what you have learned in class in your work as a student employee and/or vice versa?
	Opportunities to discover relevance through real-world applications	18. How have you applied or used what you have learned in your on-campus job in other contexts?
	Public demonstration of competence	13. Are you or your coworkers recognized for your work? • How and in what ways?
RQ2 *What do students perceive as the influence of on-campus employment experiences on their learning in and out of the classroom?*		16. Do you see opportunities to use what you have learned in class in your work as a student employee and/or vice versa? • If so, in what ways? Can you provide an example(s)? 17. Has your student work experience contributed to your learning experience at W&M? • If so, in what ways? 18. How have you applied or used what you have learned in your on-campus job in other contexts?

VITA

Patricia Adams Fredrick Rudalf

Education:

2024: Doctor of Education: Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, William & Mary

2005: Master of Education: Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, William & Mary

2002: Bachelor of Arts: English and Religious Studies, Randolph-Macon College

Experience:

June 2019 – Present: Senior Associate Director, Office of Student Unions & Engagement, William & Mary

July 2013 – June 2019: Associate Director, Office of Student Leadership Development, William & Mary

August 2009 – June 2013: Assistant Director, Office of Student Activities, William & Mary

June 2007 – August 2009: Assistant to the Dean & Director of Orientation, Division of Student Affairs, Christopher Newport University

June 2005 – June 2007: Assistant Director, Office of Student Activities, Christopher Newport University