

HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES
AND PRACTICES OF HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AT A PUBLIC
CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY

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Francisca Ann Crutchfield

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Committee Membership

Dr. Elizabeth Miller, Committee Chair

Dr. Eric Van Duzer Committee Member

Dr. Elizabeth Miller, Program Graduate Coordinator

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Abstract

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Within traditional American public colleges and universities, there is an emphasis on academic student success within the structures and values of educational programs, and the lack of a holistic approach to higher education may be negatively impacting college student development and well-being. By balancing academic knowledge with other areas of knowledge, including a heightened sense of community and mental and emotional well-being, higher education can cultivate students who apply their skills with reduced stress, a sense of belonging, and freedom of expression. This qualitative phenomenological study seeks to identify characteristics, educational priorities, and programming approaches of university student service programs through the perspectives of the leaders. Using three primary methods of data collection – surveys, interviews, and document review – the researcher explored the following questions: 1) What programs exist at a university that provide holistic student development opportunities? 2) What are some existing approaches to program activities that help students develop holistically? 3) How do educational values and priorities that inform these programs relate to holistic approaches to student development in higher education? 4) What barriers do these programs face? and 5) How do leaders in higher education student service programs

define *holistic well-being*? The findings of this research provided evidence that stress, anxiety, isolation, and trauma are all existing challenges for college students today. The findings of this research identified three student service programs, that were affinity-based groups, that demonstrated the greatest qualities of non-academic holistic student development opportunities, values, and approaches. It became evident that the perspectives of leaders provide a variety of approaches that can support students holistically including building community, nourishing cultural values, connecting students with nature, advising through the narrative approach, and advocating for student voices. Root causes of student challenges such as isolation and lack of community need to be addressed by creating programs in higher education that help develop student holistic well-being. To accomplish this, university leadership must focus on creating safe spaces for diverse student voices to be heard, provide more funding for affinity-based programs, and most of all, understand the role of higher education in the development of student holistic well-being.

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Introduction

The role of higher education is not just to distribute academic intellect or economic success to students, but to support and develop the growth of mind, body, and spirit for all college students (Miller, 2011; O'Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011). Through the theoretical lens of holism in society and interconnected non-academic areas of learning, new influences of higher education on the greater good can be considered for the students they serve. When a college's services are holistic in nature, existing as spaces to nourish student mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health, people grow to be even more successful both academically and personally (O'Connor, 2012). The continually changing demographics and increasing student stressors on college campuses today, depend on the evolution, broadening, and integration of holistic approaches to teaching and servicing students. Human development theory has guided college student affairs programs since the 1970's, yet the lack of integration across the college experience has prevented college students from developing holistically in higher education institutions (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Intentional connections between the role of academic departments and student affairs services in enriching student life and promoting holistic student development begins with a fundamental shift in our understanding of the purpose of higher education (Haynes, 2006).

This purpose of this study seeks to demonstrate how higher education student services provide opportunities for college students to learn non-academic life-skills for holistic well-being to foster meaningful lives and build healthy communities. Although

many K-12 schools are adopting holistic education and humanistic education frameworks, there is little research examining how American universities and colleges integrate holistic education principles into curriculum and services across campuses.

Problem Statement

Higher education institutions, specifically public universities in the U.S., are failing to adequately teach to the whole human experience. Gaps in student development exist due to a focus on academic success, and these gaps result in high rates of mental and emotional student challenges.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher had pre-existing assumptions of higher education due to past employment, as well as being a past student at the university used for this study. The researcher also assumed the student service staff professionals would willfully participate in this research and provide detailed descriptions of their perspectives. The researcher concentrated this phenomenological, qualitative research on a small regional state university in Northern California. Thus, there are several limitations including that the university is geographically isolated from urban areas, is in a rural community, and does not have the size or funding of other regional universities in the state. These limitations may have reduced the available sample program and participant sizes. In addition to the size and location, timing was another limitation with this research. The research was

conducted at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, which meant that a shelter in place was in order and university instruction was not functioning in-person as it normally would.

Literature Review

Introduction

The perspective of this review seeks to demonstrate that college services and programs should be designed to include opportunities for college students to learn non-academic life skills for holistic well-being and to foster meaningful lives and health communities. There is a lack of research examining how American universities and colleges integrate holistic education programs into curriculum and services across campuses.

A review of the literature was conducted relevant to topics on holistic education, holistic student development, the role of higher education, gaps in higher education, college student well-being, and existing approaches to holistic higher education programs. This literature review begins by illustrating a foundation of theoretical frameworks underlying holistic education and the related broader issues in society and education. Following the bigger picture, the review explores multi-dimensional holistic student development, examines the role of higher education in relation to holistic education, and identifies gaps that are preventing it from serving this role. Finally, this review will address current well-being issues faced by college students and demonstrate recent existing methods and programs in higher education institutions that have been shown to effectively increase holistic student development to the majority of students in

an interdisciplinary fashion. The review is significant, as it will contribute to understanding an evolved purpose for higher education today and provide critical viewpoints toward identifying recommendations to develop a more holistic experience for college students.

Defining Holistic Education

Education and the human world today have increasingly become a system of compartmentalized and standardized values and structures. A separateness among societal functions, human values, and nature has resulted in a disconnection between the human experience and the organic systems of the earth and beyond (Miller, 2007). Miller explains the characteristics of this fragmentation include a separation between economic life from the surrounding environment, social fragmentation resulting in fear, crime, abuse of self, abuse of others, a disconnection with our body and our hearts, and lastly, a lack of shared values and spirituality in our culture. The viewpoint of this review is oriented through this lens of fragmentation in society and more specifically in education, and the fundamental philosophies of holistic education and holistic student development become the context of this study.

A critical viewpoint of holistic education is that it is a system that better matches the ecological world, challenging the prominence of technological advances that don't consider nature but instead are fueled by consumerism and materialism (Miller, 2011).

Holistic education is integral and ever changing to shape a system of exchange between the human experience and meaning making. As Miller (2011) explains,

Holistic educators assert that every person intrinsically strives to participate in this journey of transformation, and requires a nourishing cultural environment to undertake this quest. Holistic education is essentially the effort to embrace the organic wholeness of our human experience and to support young human beings on their existential journeys (p. 2).

Miller (2011) demonstrates the challenge of asking higher education to become these nourishing cultural environments that go beyond a focus on fragmented academic content areas, and addresses the important question of how college courses can “cultivate emotional, moral, ecological, or spiritual layers of student experience” (p. 4).

For the purpose of this study, which focuses primarily on how higher education student services influence the holistic development of students, Miller’s (2007) description of holistic education provides a broader philosophical viewpoint of the issues discussed. This perennial philosophy emphasizes the interconnectedness of different realities and the potential for “social activity to counter injustice and human suffering” (Miller, 2007, p.18). Miller seeks to put forth in his writing the calling for holistic pedagogy, specifically in the teaching style of higher educators, while this review instead, although using the same theoretical foundations, seeks to demonstrate how holistic experiences can be provided through more broader and wider reaching areas of the non-academic curriculum on college campuses, such as student service programs. Through the theoretical lens of holism in society and interconnected non-academic areas of learning, new influences of higher education on the greater good can be considered for

the students they serve. When a college's services are holistic in nature, existing as spaces to nourish student mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health, people grow to be even more successful both academically and personally (O'Connor, 2012).

Holistic education is similar to holistic health care which acknowledges the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit to balance the whole human system (Sankari, 2009). By balancing academic knowledge with other areas of knowledge, including a heightened sense of self and a deeper connection to one's life purpose, higher education can cultivate students who apply their skills with wisdom, civic responsibility, and evolved moral compasses (Quinlan, 2011). Going beyond having a skill set, advanced training, or knowledge of a specific content area, today's society calls for graduates to apply their professional work with moral and social responsibility (Quinlan, 2011). There appears to be a call for more focus on holistic student development in creating curriculum, structures, and programs that consider all areas of human development and experience (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Braskamp et al., 2008; Haynes, 2006; Jackson, 2017; O'Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011), and higher education has a vital role in this process..

Dimensions of Holistic Student Development

Research on Holistic Student Development is a conceptual branch of holistic education interpreted differently by various scholars. One prominent shared view of holistic student development refers to students developing lives of deeper purpose, by

leading education with a humanistic perspective, so students learn to critically self-reflect in order to better make civic decisions that consider the needs and values of the common people (Braskamp et al, 2008; Haynes, 2006; Quinlan, 2011). The use of holistic development theory in scholarship is dependent on the aim of the author's purpose, and its framework shifts as an instrument to support varying arguments for improving areas of higher education. Quinlan (2011) explains this phenomenon of variable definitions as proof of the need to be more open ended in the purpose of holistic education,

A tight definition of holistic development might be counterproductive to opening a conversation about alternative ways of conceptualizing higher education's role in relation to its students. Different aspects of development may be more important in different contexts. Opening a conversation enables a community to choose the concepts and associated language that best capture its values and priorities (p. 2).

Hayne's (2006) discusses holistic student development with the goal of advancing the academic success, retention, and recruitment of honors students at Miami University. Toward that goal, holistic student development was used to advance academic learning. The integrated "multidimensional experiences" were implemented to promote holistic student development for an honor's program (Haynes, 2006). While Quinlan (2001) reinforces Hayne's claim that holistic student development theory can be used to target a specific student demographic (in this case honors students). Haynes (2006) points to a specific epistemology at the core of these desired outcomes founded on the learning theory from Marcia Baxtor Magolda's nineteen-year longitudinal landmark study, illustrating the importance of developing interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. Although the prominent view of the role of higher education as primarily academic or

“cognicentric” (Jackson, 2017), this review seeks to discover reasons for advancing non-academic learning through holistic development.

Miami University created student learning outcomes for their honors program including cognitive maturity, integrated identity, and authentic relationships. Toward this end, non-academic student development areas became academic support methods. By balancing the “affective, social, and intellectual dimensions” of learning (Haynes, 2006, p. 4), student experiences in college can become more interconnected, less separate, and in turn, higher education becomes holistic. The role of university faculty and student affairs services in enriching student life and promoting self-development begins with a fundamental shift in our understanding of the purpose of higher education (Haynes, 2006).

The Role of Higher Education

The role of higher education is not just to teach academic, professional, and economic tools for success, but also for adults to become emotionally and morally mature to apply their knowledge with social responsibility (Quinlin, 2011). Although many K-12 schools are adopting holistic education and humanistic education frameworks, there is little research examining how American universities and colleges integrate holistic well-being into curriculum and services across campuses. It is important to acknowledge why the role of higher education should be anything but academic or professional growth. Quinlan (2011) explains when higher education’s influence shapes community members

who are holistically developed, their emotional, spiritual, moral, and affective cognitive dimensions are well exercised to better shape our future society. The educational community must engage in scholarly dialogue to consider different perspectives about higher education's role (which varies depending on the needs of specific student groups and varying communities) "to choose the concepts and associated language that best capture its values and priorities" (Quinlan, 2011, p. 2). If a college's mission does not aim to balance diverse perspectives on priorities of student experiences, the role of the institution may neglect developing adults who are emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually advanced rather than dominantly academically advanced.

Another claim is that academic institutions are too "cognicentric" and need to provide opportunities for personal and meaningful self-development beyond acquiring professional or economic success in order for students to justify taking on increasing rates of debt, lower graduate employment rates, and rising stress levels (Jackson, 2017). Haynes (2006) reinforces this claim by explaining that when educators are attuned to "typical patterns of development" (p. 3), they learn how holistic education methods actually improve cognitive learning because higher academic learning levels demand students to be sure of themselves, be self-reflective, and engage responsibly.

Holistic learning theories and approaches aim to integrate knowledge of physical, emotional, and spiritual domains, which essentially manifested as the role of student affairs in higher education in the 1970's (Jackson, 2017). These theories and approaches rested, perhaps, on the broader understanding that college students cannot develop as

whole humans by only learning in the college classroom setting and must make sense of their psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual perspectives (Miller, 2011). There is a movement in the scholarly world of higher education to balance student life experiences of personal pain or social stress with programs that foster a deep acceptance and receptivity of their full human experience.

Another view is that colleges serve communities by existing as social safety nets and universal micro-systems through which students can freely use health and wellness programs (Ellis-Sankara, 2009). This safe place of health-care access contrasts with the widespread lack of access to affordable care for middle to lower class adults. This portrays the college or university as a safe place where students are socially supported in a democratic paradigm (Ellis-Sankari, 2009). The discussion of the role of higher education in providing students ways to deal with the complex life challenges of today, asks educators to revisit the role of higher education, expanding it to address more than just academic or professional learning (Jackson, 2017).

Gaps in Higher Education

College curriculum and culture emphasizes academic and professional success. There is agreement within recent literature (Eisen et al., 2008; Ellis-Sankari, 2009; Jackson, 2017; Jones, 2019; Keeling & Hersch, 2012; O'Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011) on the existence of various gaps in higher education teaching non-academic skills, but also on the lack of student support systems addressing life stressors in higher education

institutions. American public higher education neglects the intentional and integral development of non-academic student knowledge, including personal well-being (Jackson, 2017).

O'Connor (2012) reveals how student affairs and academic affairs are not working together to foster holistic experiences for student achievement. Haynes (2006) illustrates that with help from student affairs, college faculty can raise student academic success by collaborating to connect curricular and cocurricular experiences. As the traditional U.S. university structure works today, the student affairs department is “responsible for the student’s social and emotional development, while faculty were responsible for the intellectual and scholarly development of the student” (O’Connor, 2012, p. 4). This brings us back to the need for holistic approaches to higher education structures and student development. With separation rather than integration of university programs and student services, gaps continue to grow, preventing holistic student development.

Another critical consideration from Keeling and Hersch (2012) is that the current culture of higher education neglects transformative student development and higher learning because it is geared toward treating students as consumers. By prioritizing corporate style college marketing to boost retention rates, rankings, and collegiate sport profits, universities lose progress on increasing the quality of meaningful holistic student learning (Keeling & Hersch, 2012).

In considering all of the life-factors leading up to unhealthy college student behaviors (Shek & Wong, 2011), current rates of poor overall mental well-being (Collegiate Mental Health, 2018), and the failure of current higher education in teaching to these conditions (Keeling & Hersch, 2012), Eisen, Kushner, McLeod, Queen, Gordon, and Ford (2008, p. 455) comment that:

We and others wondered whether the original integrated goal of a liberal education - a vision balancing knowledge and discovery with personal well-being and civic engagement - has been forgotten by over emphasizing knowledge and splintering student life into so many noncommunicating fiefdoms. If so - and if health is more than merely the absence of disease and includes mental, physical, and spiritual well-being - then this has been done at the expense of student health and healthy living.

These gaps in learning, whether they be caused by the corporate consumer driven nature of institutions (Keeling & Hersch, 2012), or by the lack of integration across campus structures and departments (O'Connor, 2012), perpetuate the stress and struggles and overall well-being of college students (Jackson, 2017)

College Student Well-being

Many young adults suffer from mental illness including depression and anxiety which serve as barriers to finding meaningful life-purpose, healthy intrapersonal relationships, or physical vitality. There have been significant increases in rates of college student depression, anxiety, alcohol use, and stress (Shek & Wong, 2010). Of the many concerns of student wellness, anxiety, depression, and stress are the top issues (Harrell, 2018). Alcohol abuse and addiction rates among college students is sufficient evidence

that college campuses need to do more to implement interdisciplinary learning experiences to positively impact and improve overall student health (Eisen et al, 2008). “Institutional effectiveness and the value of higher education are being scrutinized as students’ health, development, and lack of ability to manage greater complexity are not adequately addressed as an outcome in the context of the learning experience of higher education” (Jackson, 2017, p. 4). Although colleges have streamlined availability of health services that address student basic physical health needs, there is an increasing demand for psycho-social health services (Jones, 2019). Student wellness programs are isolated programs, rather than being integrated throughout departments and services across the campus. With a holistic perspective, educators consider all domains of human development and these psycho-social domains become an integral part of both student services and academic content areas.

Shek and Wong (2011) relate mental and physical health issues in college students to a carry-over of developmental shortcomings from the teenage years into the college years. Jones (2019) adds that students move from high school, where student wellness and mental health are addressed, to college where those issues are dropped. It is important to evaluate the role of the university in addressing not only mental health issues, but also holistic development for students in their late teens and early twenties. This asks leaders to expand the role of higher education beyond the cognitive absorption of academic knowledge or vocational skill acquisition.

In contrast to addressing development of young or “traditional” college students, current research also points toward a need for greater initiative for the ever-growing majority of non-traditional college students today (Grabbowski et al., 2016; Jackson, 2017). Non-traditional students are just as susceptible to stress as traditional students, due to the pressure of their responsibilities and life circumstances outside of school (Grabbowski et al., 2016). Students over the age of twenty-five who are working full time make up over sixty percent of students enrolled in higher education today (Staley & Trankle, 2011). There is a growing need for college students to manage mental and emotional stress, as many college students today enter higher education with low literacy, math, or computer skills, low socioeconomic standing, dependents to support, or chronic illnesses (Ellis-Sankari, 2009). Low-income, first generation, and minority student health also suffers due to the current political and social state of the United States (Jones, 2019). Current social, economic, political, and cultural life circumstances cause college students to bring unhealthy mental and emotional states to their academic experiences; it is the role of education to serve all aspects of the student experience to increase positive, ethical, and healthy communities.

Findings from a sample of over 170,000 college students from U.S. college campuses in the academic year of 2017 through 2018, indicate “54.4% of students attended counseling for mental health, 34.3% have taken medication for mental health concerns, 27.8% purposely injured self without suicidal intent (cutting, hitting), and 35.8% seriously considered suicide; and each of these four areas of mental illness has

increased from previous year reports” (Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2018, p. 10). The report also reveals data on more specific negative life experiences: “23.8% had unwanted sexual contact, 36.8% experienced harassing, controlling, or abusive behavior from another person, and 40.3% suffered from a traumatic event that caused them to feel intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2018, p. 31-32). The average subscale scores from the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) indicate a steady increase of depression, general anxiety, and social anxiety for college students from 2010 through 2018 (Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2018). A significant limitation of this study is that it does not describe the general population of college students, but only those who received counseling health services. In addition, the 2017-2018 Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) data set was contributed only from colleges and universities that hold membership with CCMH. Only 10.6% of these colleges are located in the western United States (California, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, and Washington), while the remainder are in the Northeast, Midwest, and South, which may reflect a discrepancy between mental health conditions between the Western schools and the rest of the country. Nonetheless, the top most mental health concerns across the 2017-2018 academic year were clearly anxiety, depression, and stress. The Center for Collegiate Mental Health (2018) also found that “38.3% of students who receive mental health services engaged in binge drinking and 24.4% used marijuana” (p. 11).

Although universities offer wellness centers and centers for physical health practices, student wellness programs are limited to a minority of students who seek them out and are not integrated throughout departments and programs across the campus (Shek & Wong, 2010). Schools are trying to increase ways to help students cope with the physical and emotional challenges of today's ever-changing times (Jones, 2019). There is a separation between student health and counseling centers with the rest of campus, making these structures non-holistic. Institutions that address the holistic wellbeing of students integrate programs, services, and curriculum that serve non-academic student development and work to create a culture of healthy living, eliminate the fragmentation of student experiences on campus, and alleviate common mental, physical, social, and emotional student hardships (Ellis-Sankari, 2009; Jones, 2019, Shek & Wong, 2010).

Holistic Student Development Programming in Higher Education

University programs can be designed to make college a cultural environment where students can develop more holistically (Quinlan, 2011). As Quinlan reveals, in addition to leaders "modeling purposeful lives and faculty promoting student development programs, knowledge of necessary organizational conditions, specific curricular, and teaching strategies are needed to promote holistic student development" (p. 12). This section aims to demonstrate existing approaches, methods, and programs at colleges and universities that model holistic student development and holistic education.

There is agreement that university mission statements share an overarching goal to address non-academic student success, or the collaboration of student affairs and academic affairs, in order to shape holistic programs as the first necessary step to fostering holistic development (O'Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011). In order to implement holistic student development approaches, learning partnerships must be built across college campuses and we must ask our faculty “to see their role in more holistic, reciprocal, and relational terms than they may have ever done in their careers as educators” (Haynes, 2006, p.21).

Kenyon College created a program called “Eat Well, Sleep Well, Be Well” to address student anxiety and depression among its high achieving student population (Jones, 2019). But unlike most other schools, Kenyon is a fully residential campus, so they were able to teach students life-skills more directly (Jones, 2019). To ensure that specific methods are truly being utilized by students, institutions have also mandated student engagement in holistic programs or curricula (Haynes, 2006).

Florida International University (FIU) developed extensive multi-tiered support programs through their Healthy Living Program in Academic and Student Affairs, which effectively improved preventative approaches to student well-being while integrating through both academic and social campus programs (Jones, 2019). Schools can provide services far beyond the basic counseling and psychological services. FIU is an excellent example of creating a culture of healthy living across the entire campus with their victim empowerment program, food and housing initiatives, preventative health screenings,

extensive free educational literature, and even free or low-cost massage and acupuncture treatments for students (Jones, 2019).

Shek and Wong (2011) identify three methods higher education institutions use to help students develop holistically, specifically in addressing adolescent development issues that carry through to the early twenties. The methods include services and resources provided by the Student Affairs Office, health-related curriculum infusion, and credit-bearing courses on positive youth development.

Humboldt State University offers students a Brain Booth to facilitate mindfulness and nourish the mind-body connection to reduce stress and optimize learning. In order to promote metacognition and contemplative pedagogy, the Brain Booth provides an open area with activities such as origami, coloring, massage chairs, VR, and puzzles shown to enhance “emotional self-regulation and singular thoughtful focus” (Brain Booth in the HSU Library).

Jackson (2017) designed a self-creation and self-care model for addressing student development, learning, health, and well-being. Jackson describes the self-creation self-care (SCR/SCA) model as a transdisciplinary approach for student development. It is founded on theories of epistemological development, self-actualization, creativity, and care. The SCR/SCA model can be used implemented throughout college curriculum and student service programs and include curricular and cocurricular experiences (Jackson, 2017). Jack describes the model,

The model engages curiosity and tools (theory & practices) of creativity and care to promote wellness as a function of positive health and well-being as subjective satisfaction

and perceived ability to manage life, academic and life goal expression, and success toward self-creation and co-creation (larger context) in higher learning (p. 167).

University leaders and policy makers, can view the priority of their school's mission as this "subjective satisfaction" and can shape their mission to drive the specific community's needs and goals (Quinlan, 2011) with holistic student development as the means. Jackson's (2017) model is an example of how approaches to holistic education methods are vastly diverse and far-reaching. Each area of social, psychological, or educational facet supporting holistic student development can be researched more deeply. There is a need for more scholarship and creative research to design educational models that can be implemented in higher education to promote holistic lives and experiences for college students. The aim of this study is to contribute shared knowledge of holistic student development opportunities in higher education by providing further examples of existing college programs that model holistic student development.

Conclusion

This review aims to address the intersections of balance, integration, and wholeness in education, and the need to foster holistic student development within higher education frames the argument for more holistic education research for use in American university and college programs. Contributing issues include a lack of integration in curriculum and student services, a lack of collaboration between academic and student affairs, and perspectives of higher education's role deficient in enriching student life. By

learning ways to teach the whole human experience, colleges can help students with non-academic life skills that will improve their academic performance, overall well-being, and ability to cope with challenging life circumstances.

Education systems have become more compartmentalized, reflecting a fragmented world. This separateness among function, values, and human nature, neglects the wholeness of our human experience (Miller, 2007). By shifting higher education into progressive places for non-academic learning integrated with academic learning, we can cultivate students who apply their professional skills with wisdom, civic responsibility, and evolved moral compasses. This begins by understanding the road to holistic education is open ended and depends on a community's values. The next step is to study and examine how learning opportunities can develop both interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships and nourish holistic student development. By identifying a balance of social and intellectual learning domains and integrating these domains across and between academic departments and student service programs, we can create holistic higher education programs.

The role of higher education must evolve to shape the needs of not only a consumer society, but also the needs of complex students with psychological and social needs. By creating a more holistic development opportunities within higher education, we can shape community members who exercise themselves emotionally, spiritually, morally, and cognitively (Quinlan, 2011). We must return to the original goal of

education - a vision balancing knowledge and discovery with personal well-being and civic engagement (Eisen et al, 2008).

Faculty and staff partnerships, intentional holistic mission statements, mandated holistic curriculum, or relational integration across university services are some of the many ways to promote holistic student development. By supporting and developing the growth of mind, body, and spirit, higher education can serve the greater good of society and help create more whole humans to serve communities.

Methods

Introduction

This chapter will describe the research design and methodology used to study holistic student development in university student service programs through the understanding of perspectives of program leaders and program artifacts. The chapter will provide rationale and descriptions of the qualitative and transdisciplinary research methods and includes descriptions of constructs, the samples, instrument design and approach to data collection.

The purpose of the study is focused on identifying the role university student service programs play in providing holistic student development opportunities, and any theoretical perspectives that may influence them. Using three primary methods of data collection – surveys, interviews, and document review – the researched explored the following questions: 1) What programs exist at a university that provide holistic student development opportunities? 2) What are some existing approaches to program activities that help students develop holistically? and 3) How do educational values and priorities that inform these programs relate to holistic approaches to student development in higher education? 4) What barriers do these programs face? and 5) How do leaders in higher education student service programs define holistic well-being?

This study's data consists surveys and interviews provided by student service program leaders at a small regional university in the Northwest United States.

The researcher used a grounded theory approach, allowing themes to arise from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The aim was to describe characteristics of holistic student development opportunities within different student services programs and to understand perspectives program leaders have about existing non-academic student development opportunities. Methods were designed with the intent to obtain descriptions of existing college program goals, intentions, and activities, to demonstrate holistic student development in higher education.

Colleges and universities are responsible for continuing to teach students a balance of healthy life skills, culture or spiritual practice, and develop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The college student's experience is dominantly academic and career focused while lacking meaningful cultural, spiritual, and physical health practices. Therefore, young adults do not all complete college with the skills and relationships that foster strong personal values, self-actualization, humanistic well-being, ecological awareness or community interconnectedness. By taking a close look at established holistic methods in student service programs, and the goals that drive them, we can identify ways to shape educational programs, goals, and leadership to nourish and integrate the complex needs of student minds, bodies, and spirits.

Research Design

Transdisciplinary research transcends a particular search within one discipline, with integration as a primary goal (Jackson, 2017). The methodological goal included

selecting a sample of student service programs that reflect a transdisciplinary focus, consisting of a range of affective, social, and humanistic student development opportunities at a university. Because my interests lie in the intersections of shared holistic characteristics and goals of a range of student development areas, the goal was to study a sample of the largest possible range of non-academic programs at a university.

This transdisciplinary study included selecting a program sample, collecting survey and interview data, and documentation review. After the analysis of emergent themes and programmatic descriptions revealed by both the survey data and program artifacts (including the mission statements on the program websites), I purposefully selected a smaller sample of participants for a follow up interview to deepen the understanding of the programs and how they related to holistic student development.

Constructs

Part of the goal of this study is to better define the terms *holistic* and *holistic student development* in the context of higher education and to contribute to research existing descriptions of them based on student service programs. The terms are briefly discussed here to provide a theoretical context for the study's method design.

The current use of the term *holistic* to describe educational programming differs based on the discipline or context. The term *holistic* is used in this study to describe the style or approach to shaping a program to encompass a more whole or balanced integration of different student service goals, or to describe meaningful non-academic human development.

In more depth, the term *holistic student development* also is used to describe a well-rounded educational experience that nourishes specific human development areas more wholly, such as the cultivation of emotional, moral, ecological, or spiritual layers of student experience (Miller, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the term *holistic* is used to describe university program services, activities, or goals that address multiple areas of non-academic student development defined by the researcher. This research is also particularly focused on defining how program goals and activities intentionally or unintentionally nourish the mind, body, and spirit.

Research Site

The population for this research consisted of one primary subject pool: student service program staff professionals. The population worked directly as leaders for undergraduate student service programs at a small regional public university in the North Western United States. Staff participating in this research were experienced in leading the program they discussed and had an understanding of the program goals and activities.

Site access

In this study, I performed "backyard research" as I was a current graduate student at the university. As such, I had extensive familiarity with the student service programs included in this study. Because this research involved human subjects, the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was required to engage in research. After completing the Institutional Review Board process, I solicited individual participants at the university

to participate in the study. Lastly, the timing involved in this research is a noteworthy consideration. Physical access to the participants in person was limited due to the COVID-19 shelter in place orders.

Data Collection

Survey data collection

Data collection was conducted through a self-administered online survey (see Appendix C) and follow-up interviews. Data were collected on participant professional involvement with the programs and participant's perspectives of the programs. The survey was distributed using the Google Forms online survey program. Permission to send the research survey to university staff was obtained through the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. Participant contact information was obtained from the university program webpages. Of the total number of participants invited, 69.2% agreed to participate. Staff leaders from each program were invited to complete the initial survey (see Appendix C) using a recruitment email (see Appendix A). The invited staff had three weeks to respond to the initial survey invitation and the researcher sent up to two follow-up emails to any who had not responded. Each survey participant signed a consent form (see Appendix B) within the electronic survey to have his or her responses recorded as part of the research.

Interview data collection

Based on the program descriptions and data points from the survey, four survey participants were selected for an in-depth follow-up video conference interview. The

researcher purposefully selected a sample of four college staff members from four different programs to invite to a follow-up interview. The criteria for selection of the three interview participants included the following:

- 1) Participant's program description data from the survey met the highest level of holistic characteristics as identified by the researcher's analyses.
- 2) Participants provided a higher level of detail in their open-ended question responses on the survey.

Interview participants were invited by email (see Appendix D) to participate in a follow-up online recorded interview. The recruitment email explained that video is not required for the interview. One follow-up email was sent if participants did not respond to the initial interview invitation. An interview consent form (see Appendix E) and Zoom meeting link was sent to the email of participants who agreed to participate. Each interview participant signed the interview consent form, through the form of an email response, to have his or her responses recorded as part of the research. All follow-up interviews were held using the Zoom online video conferencing program, recorded, and transcribed using the Otter application. All interview data was saved in a password protected file on the researcher's computer. The duration of the four interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to one hour and all participants as well as the researcher used their video during the interview.

Review of documentation

The study also included a review of program artifacts including each program's website and mission statements. The primary purpose of this was to pull any evidence of

holistic student development opportunities in the publicly provided written program goals, vision, guiding principles, and any listed models or approaches used. The *About* section of each program's website was reviewed and themes were identified in order to triangulate data with the survey data as well as frame interview questions.

Program and Participant Sample

Program sample

Student service programs were identified on the university website and selected for review to capture the university's fullest scope of established student service programs. Of the university's total student service programs identified, twelve are represented in the final sample (66%). Twenty six staff leaders were invited to complete the survey and fourteen participated (53%). The criteria for selecting the programs were that they were not academically, career, or financially focused. Although the financial-aid, academic advising, and career center department programs were not invited to participate, due to the university's structure some selected programs may fall under one of those departments on an organization chart. The institution's formal organization of programs was not considered in the selection process, but rather each program's mission statements and description were used. All of the programs selected had distinct mission statements that could be related to areas of non-academic student development or holistic student development. Programs were found on the university website.

The goal was for the student service program sample to reflect a transdisciplinary focus representing a range of affective, social, and humanistic student development opportunities in higher education. Because my interests lie in the intersections between the dimensions of holistic student development and holistic student service programs, achieving a range of non-academic learning drove the sample selection. Throughout the study all data has been deidentified and all programs and participants are named using pseudonyms.

The twelve university student service programs included the following:

African American Center	Library Mindfulness Program
Student Association	Multicultural Center
Sustainability Center	Native American Center
Outdoor Activities	Student Mentoring Program
Diversity Center	
Student Opportunity Program	
Latinx Center	
Health Education	

Survey Participant Sample

Purposeful sampling was used to select the survey participants. The fourteen survey participants consisted of university staff working with one of the twelve student service programs during the academic year of this study. The participants consisted of eight program directors, five program coordinators, and one program steering committee member. The demographic tables below include the survey participant's time involved

leading the program their highest level of education attained at the time of this study, and their gender.

Table 1: Duration of Survey Participants' Previous Experience Leading Program

Position	Total Staff	<1 Year	1-3 Years	4-7 Years	8-10 years	11+ years
Director	54%	0	14%	29%	14%	43%
Coordinator	38%	40%	40%	20	0	0
Steering Committee	.7%	0	100%	0	0	0
Total	14	15%	31%	23%	.8%	23%

Table 2: Survey Participants Highest Level of Education and Gender

Staff Position	Bachelor's	Credentials	Doctorate	Women	Men
Total Staff	23%	62%	15%	54%	46%

Interview Participant Sample

Four survey participants were interviewed to gain further insight on the survey data and research questions. Interview participants each represented one of the four programs that the researcher selected based on the survey results, including the African American Center, Latinx Center, Native American Center, and Sustainability Center. All interview participants were currently working as leaders of the programs during the time of the study. Their professional roles included three program coordinators and one co-director. Two participants had been with the program for one academic year, one participant for two academic years, and one for seven academic years. The highest level

of education attained for three interview participants was a bachelor's degree and one held a master's degree.

Instrumentation

To gain knowledge and understand the lived experiences, the researcher relied on three sets of data: a) survey completed by student service program leaders b) individual interviews of a subset of survey participants, and finally c) artifact review of program web pages. The data collection instruments for this phenomenological study were administered to student affairs professionals in an effort to understand their experiences and beliefs regarding student development opportunities of the program and the values or goals of the programs. The researcher intended to identify program characteristics that relate to holistic student development areas described in the survey and any theoretical perspectives or traits that define program goals related to holistic well-being.

Survey Instrument

A researcher constructed survey (see Appendix C) was used to collect data describing the program's goals, services, accessibility, and size based on program leaders' perspectives. The survey was also used to collect data describing the participants' professional role within the program. The survey included likert-type items, short answers and open-ended questions. Survey questions were designed to obtain the following information:

Three questions were designed to gather general descriptions of the participant's professional role related to the program they are discussing (i.e., professional title, years working for program, level of education).

Five questions were designed to gather general information about the approximate size, age, and funding of the program (i.e., number of non-student staff members, number of student employees, whether it is grant funded, how long the program has existed).

One question was designed to gather participant's beliefs about what areas of holistic student development are central to the goals of the program. The list of these areas were developed by the researcher based on existing research relating to the topic areas. This question was multiple choice and the eight development areas to select from including academic development, biophilia development (relationship with nature), career/professional development, cultural development, interpersonal development (relationship with others), intrapersonal development (relationship with self), physical development (nutrition, exercise, or physical healing), spiritual development ((Religion, metaphysics, or relationship with a universal human experience), and an "other" option where participants could write in an answer.

One question was designed to understand the participants' perspectives of the degree to which the program's activities or services are effective in providing opportunities for student growth in each of the eight student development areas. This question asked participants to rate the degree of each area with a likert-type scale.

One question was open-ended and was designed to gather participant descriptions of any student activities the program uses to help students develop in each of the development areas of greatest importance to the program.

One question was designed to gather participant's beliefs about what student challenges are addressed by the program. The list of these challenges was developed by the researcher based on existing research relating to the topic areas. This question was multiple choice and the nine student challenges including stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, physical ailments or health issues, fear, disconnection with self, disconnection with others, trauma and an "other" option where participants could write in an answer.

One question was open-ended and was designed to gather participant descriptions of any theories, concepts, or research-driven frameworks that inform the goals of the program.

One question was open-ended and was designed to gather participant descriptions of any barriers to the program's success.

The researcher developed the survey with the purpose to allow participants to provide their perspectives of the program in relation to holistic student development areas. The survey was evaluated for face validity by two faculty advisors. The researcher intended to identify program characteristics or goals that supported or did not support the constructs of holistic and *holistic student development* defined by the literature.

Interview Protocol

The final interviews used a semi-structured interview schedule including open ended and probing questions to discuss in more depth the information participants provided in the initial survey. Interview questions varied slightly based on each participant's survey data. The goal of the interviews was to provide more understanding of each leader's survey data, any additional information related to the program's goals and activities, and to further my understanding of the leader's perspectives on holistic student development. Four university s professional staff were interviewed. For each semi-structured interview, the researcher had a set of 10-12 open-ended questions to help understand the interviewees' personal and professional beliefs, perceptions, and understanding regarding the specific student service program they worked for and the opportunities the program provides as well as barriers the program may experience A copy of the interview questions is located in Appendix F. The researcher recorded the transcripts of these semi-structured interviews and analyzed them using grounded theory. The purpose of the interviews were to provide the study with specific examples of holistic student development opportunities and how student service programs can provide them.

Data Analysis

Once all the data were collected, the researcher organized the data collected to place it into general and broad themes. The researcher organized and prepared the survey

and interview data for analysis using an excel sheet, read through all the data, developed analyses based on the questions that most linked to the research questions and that contained the most qualitative data from the participants. The researcher then identified themes within each analysis and triangulated the data to identify further themes. Finally the researcher interpreted the meaning of themes from both the survey and interview data to describe the findings.

Analyses were then designed by the researcher to describe the qualitative data from the survey and interviews. In grounded theory, the researcher completed two rounds of coding for the qualitative data points: open coding and focused coding. In open coding, initial themes were identified that emerged from data of the open ended survey questions (Analysis 4 and 5.1), from document review (Analysis 5.2), and from the interview data (Analysis 6). Document review data was referenced when survey participants did not provide sufficient data or when the researcher' own first hand experience of the program differed significantly with the participants description.

The researcher designed the survey analysis using a grounded theory for the qualitative data, meaning themes came from the emerging data, not from the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The first three survey analyses set the foundation for the subsequent analyses by providing the researcher with an understanding of what pieces of survey data may address the primary research questions, and what survey data is less significant for the research. Of the twenty two survey questions, data from four were used in the researcher's final data analyses.

Using the grounded theory approach, the researcher developed four analyses to describe the survey and interview data. These analyses were constructed based on the characteristics of *holistic* and *holistic student development* defined by the literature. The seven data analyses included the following:

Table 3: Data Analyses

Analysis 1	1.1 Range of student development areas addressed. 1.2 Programs that do not focus on academic development.
Analysis 2	Range of student challenges addressed.
Analysis 3	Correlation between the range of student challenges addressed and the range of student development areas addressed.
Analysis 4	Emerging themes in program activities.
Analysis 5	5.1 Defined theories or concepts informing the program goals. 5.2 Supporting or contrasting goals in written program mission on the program webpage.

In focused coding, themes were solidified, confirmed, and narrowed down in the survey data and from interview data. Survey data, interviews and program artifacts were triangulated in order to establish credibility and clarify and construct meaning (Denzin, 1978).

Findings

The focus of this research was on identifying university student service programs that provide holistic student development opportunities, and describing the educational values or priorities that inform holistic approaches to student development in higher education. The research aimed to investigate the perspectives of student service program leadership staff of a small regional public university in Northern California.

In this chapter, the results are presented in a way to address questions that emerged during analysis such as: a) What dimensions of student development are the focus of these programs? b) What student challenges are addressed by programs? c) What non-academic educational values emerge in the leader's descriptions of program activities and goals? d) Which programs can be described as most holistic and why? e) What are the shared or significant perspectives of holistic student service program leaders and f) How do program leaders understand the term *holistic wellbeing*?

With each of the five survey analyses, characteristics of holistic programming that emerged will be described. Areas of most significance revealed by the survey data included the range and focus of dimensions of student development, non-academic goals, and the student challenges addressed by programming. This section will also describe the data from open-ended survey and interview questions. This data includes themes of educational values and goals that were used to describe holistic student development, perspectives from program leaders that can be used to address the research questions, and emerging themes and ideas as suggestions for future research.

Participant Identity

Throughout the research process, the identities of the thirteen participants have remained anonymous. The participants are identified by their student service programs pseudonyms on campus and in the case of interview participants only, gender categories.

The specific pseudonyms are as follows:

African American Center	Library Mindfulness Program
Student Association	Multicultural Center
Sustainability Center	Native American Center
Outdoor Activities	Student Mentoring Program
Diversity Center	
Student Opportunity Program	
Latinx Center	
Health Education	

Eleven of the thirteen programs were represented by one staff leader each, and two programs, Health Education and Latinx Center, were represented by two program leaders. This is important to note because there were wide discrepancies between how these program leaders described their programs.

Dimensions of Student Development

The most commonly shared areas of student development targeted by programs were interpersonal (92%), intrapersonal (85%), professional (77%), and academic (77%)

development. The student development areas selected the least were spiritual (23%), biophilia (31%), and physical (39%).

Figure 1 shows percentages of program leaders that selected each area of student development of greatest importance to their programs goals.

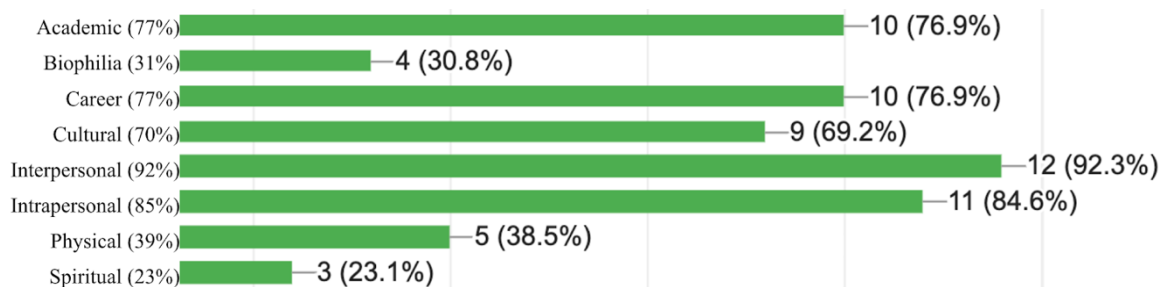


Figure 1: Percentages of Student Development Areas of Greatest Importance to Program Goals

American Center and the Native American Center. The exploration of how affinity groups demonstrated having many holistic characteristics and goals, is explored in the discussion section of this chapter. Analysis 2 served to identify which programs were not academic focused. Two program leaders did not select academic development as a program goal; the Health Education program and Sustainability Center.

Program leaders were asked in a survey question to briefly describe activities their program uses to help college students develop in each of the areas they selected. This descriptive data provided validation, further clarification of student development areas from the survey, as well as new areas of student development that emerged as qualitative themes. Interpersonal development was the most common student development theme in these qualitative descriptions (64%). This was described as developing community, connection among students, and student relationships. An additional development area

theme that emerged was *well-being*, also described as “healing” and “wellness” and was described by different leaders as physical, mental, or emotional well-being. The newly emerged student development theme of well-being was described by 50% of the program leaders in this open ended question. Other student development area themes that emerged were mental/emotional health (23%), justice/activism (15%), and leadership (15%).

Survey Results of Student Challenges Addressed

The survey asked participants to select any student challenges the program addresses from a list of options that included stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, physical ailments or health issues, fear, disconnection with self, disconnection with others, and trauma. The most commonly shared student challenges addressed were stress (85%), anxiety (69%), fear, (62%) disconnection with self (62%), and disconnection with others (62%). Student challenges addressed the least included physical/health issues (23%), alcohol or drug abuse (31%), and trauma (31%). Additional student challenges emerged as fill-in answers from the participant surveys including: “understanding of topics of equity and inclusion as they relate to the diversity of our student body”, “balancing multiple demands of school, social, work, family, and self”, “pleasure and sexual health”, and “relationship to body and mind”. The figure below shows percentages of program leaders that selected each area of student challenges addressed by their programs.

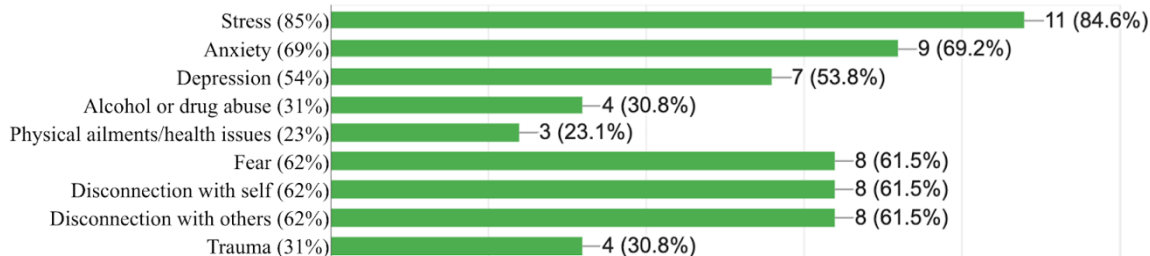


Figure 2: Percentages of Student Challenges Addressed by Programs

Survey analysis 2 served to identify which programs addressed the widest range of student challenges, which would demonstrate an understanding of how program goals and activities address specific non-academic college student challenges. Based on the program leader's surveys, six out of the twelve programs (50%) were said to address 60% or more of the student challenges. Programs that addressed 65% or more of the student challenges included the Health Education (100%), Student Mentoring Program (100%), African American Center (78%), Latinx Center (78%), Outdoor Activities (67%), and Student Opportunity Program (67%).

Programs that addressed 40%-60% of the student challenges included Native American Center (56%), Diversity Center (56%), Library Mindfulness Program (56%), and Health Education (44%). Programs that addressed the smallest range of student challenges included the Diversity Center (0%), Sustainability Center (33%), Latinx Center (33%).

It is important to note that two programs were described differently here by their two respective leaders. The Latinx Center was described as addressing 33% of student challenges by one leader and 78% of student challenges by the other. The Health

Education program was described as addressing 44% of student challenges by one leader and 100% of student challenges by the other.

Holistic Programming

This section will describe the programs that displayed the highest qualities of holistic programming. These qualities are both of programming design and activities, as well as in goals and values to support and develop holistic student well-being. The researcher used four of the survey analyses to identify the programs with the most holistic approach to programming. For the scope of this finding, *holistic programming*, is defined as programs that demonstrate a the highest ranges of a combination of qualities including a) a high range of student development areas addressed, b) the existence of a non-academic programming focus, c) a high range of student challenges addressed, and d) the a high range of thematic student development areas revealed by program activities. This section will describe in-depth the characteristics of the most holistic programs identified by the data; whose leaders were also selected for follow-up interviews. For the two programs (Health Education and Latinx) represented by two program leaders, for the purpose of this analysis, survey data was only used from the participants that provided the highest ranges and qualities of holistic programming. Table 4 shows six programs rated with the highest qualities of holistic programming and the four analyses that were totaled to create the final ratings. For the two programs (Health Education and Latinx)

represented by two program leaders. Data was only used from the survey participant that provided the highest ranges and qualities of holistic programming from each.

Table 4: Rating Scale Defining Top Six Most Holistic Program

Program	Holistic Rating (Sum of totals from analyses)	Non-Academic Focus (Yes = 1 rating point) (Survey data)	Total Student Dev. Areas Addressed (Survey data)	Total Student Challenges Addressed (Survey data)	Total student development area themes in activity descriptions (Survey data)
African American Center	27		8	7	12
Latinx Center	25		8	7	10
Native American Center	22		4	5	13
Sustainability Center	21	1	7	3	10
Student Mentoring Program	16		5	9	2
Health Education Program	14	1	4	5	4

Based on the four qualities describing holistic programming above, the African American Center was rated as the program with the most holistic programming design based on the leader's perspectives in comparison with other program leader perspectives. According to the leader's survey, the African American Center program provided opportunities for 100% of the eight student development areas, addressed 78% of the

student challenges, and included the highest range (12) of themes describing the program's activities.

Based on the three qualities describing holistic programming, the Latinx Center was rated as the program with the second most holistic programming design based on the leader's Perspectives. According to the leader's survey, the Latinx Center provided opportunities for 100% of the eight student development areas, addressed 78% of the student challenges, and included a high range (10) of themes describing the program's activities.

Based on the four qualities describing holistic programming, the Native American Center was rated as the program with the fourth most holistic programming design based on the leader's perspectives. According to the leader's survey, the Native American Center provided opportunities for 50% of the eight student development areas, addressed 56% of the student challenges, and included the highest range (12) of themes describing the program's activities.

It is important to note that these ratings are based on only one program leader's perspectives and opinions which does not illustrate a full spectrum of individual program traits and student opportunities.

Themes of Emerged Student Challenges

Student challenges that the African American Center programs addressed included, student difficulty navigating the institution, feelings of isolation, high stress due

to academic responsibilities, and being away from home. All three affinity-group program leaders expressed how feelings of isolation, cultural disconnect, and oppression shaped the challenges of students of color. The leader explained,

“Students of color often feel out of place in their local community, not really knowing where resources are, or the safe spaces in local communities.”

The Latinx Center leader also described student challenges and experiences of feeling isolated on campus due to a cultural shock. Both the African American and Latinx Center leaders described the difference in culture between urban areas where the students come from and the more rural campus community. This change was illustrated as a reason for serious student mental and emotional challenges due to feelings of isolation. The Native American Center also discussed student experiences of loneliness and being away from family.

Trauma was also a common theme shared by two leader interviews as a dominant student challenge. The trauma described included rape, sexual abuse, racial hate, and historical traumas - that were “reopened by current trauma”. The following section will show how creating community was the primary method programs used to address isolation, loneliness, and the other emerging student challenges.

Methods of Holistic Student Development

Creating community

Interview data revealed a wide range of opportunities for student development areas and program goals including building leadership skills, creating and strengthening

community, and promoting dialogue around specific ethnic cultures and student wellbeing. Creating community was a central focus. African American Center leader described a mission to “bridge gaps between the campus and broader community so that students find safe spaces.” Collaborative community events on and off campus and student led activities were some of the activities described to support student community development.

“It's about students learning to understand that being able to develop community is a life skill. No matter where they go, students need to learn that community is something that we rely on despite the message from society that being independent individuals is most important. This is about tying students back to our cultural roots and heritage which is centered on community.”

The Latinx Center also aimed to create a safe community space for its students to feel it is open. Their space includes couches, microwaves, movie nights, and aims to create feelings of home for students.

Similarly, the Native American Center provided “a space where students can meet people who have shared experiences and shared value systems from diverse cultural backgrounds and where students can nurture their value systems”. This dimension of creating community spaces was also done with advising sessions to discuss not just academics but happenings in their community, career aspirations, mental, physical experiences.

All three programs collaborated with community partnerships to widen the scope of presenters, events, and activities that build community. One leader explained how creating community links with academic success,

“When you build cultural relevance into the curriculum and into the academic plan, education, and career plan by building strong cultural internships, mentors, and placements, the academic success just comes naturally.”

The Sustainability Center leader described their program's form of building community by providing a place for people to learn more about and “promoting wellness, nutrition, organic gardening, eating healthy, or natural and sustainable living”. By building and creating feelings of community and community spaces for students, feelings of isolation were reduced and safe spaces were created for students to feel a sense of belonging, express their personal hardships, and reveal further needs that leaders can address through programming.

Self-preservation

In the Latinx Center leader’s interview a new student development area emerged termed *self-preservation*. By questioning the common term *self-care*, the leader revealed an important area of student development for specific student cultures saying,

“The term self-care doesn't sit well with people who have really been taught to produce, work, or to work to die. A lot of our family members have (been taught that). While we understand the need to survive, as happy, healthy, and full rounded people, it is still very conflicting with how difficult academics are as a working student who also has to maintain grades at the same rate as people who don't (work). Many of our students care for, or come from, immigrant families or undocumented families. With the stresses of those things, it feels weird to be talking about bubble baths. So I work to reframe the word self-care and talk about self-preservation.”

This construct of self-preservation was one that the leader brought to the program through their own knowledge and experience as a Hispanic or Latin American identifying college student.

Connection with nature

The African American Center program leader had much freedom in programming design to create opportunities for student centered, student led, community based, and culturally based non-academic student development opportunities. The leader described in the interview how they designed a program that builds community while addressing mental health issues caused by feelings of isolation and stress. So to target those specific student challenges, programming was designed to “get people together and get people into nature”. One example of this programming was a programming activity in which students would take day trips once a month to “get off campus and into nature to places they may not know because they are not local or do not have their own car.” The leader described further,

“During these nature trips, we facilitate a conversation about how we as Black people are tied to the natural environment, although we come from urban areas such as Los Angeles or the San Francisco bay area. Traditionally our ancestors are very tied to the environment, so we guide our student conversations to center them towards their cultural wealth.”

The African American Center leader also discussed how research shows that access to the natural environment has benefits to mental health, demonstrating research driven goals in programming efforts to target specific experiences of college students of color.

Approaches to Holistic Programming

Targeting causes of student challenges

Interviews with the program leaders revealed potential *causes* of mental and emotional student challenges. These causes were targeted in programming design to more effectively address different social, mental, and emotional health challenges associated with them. Many student challenges addressed by the most holistic of the programs are experiences specific to certain groups of ethnic and cultural identities, such as feelings of isolation, lack of safe community spaces, or lack of cultural connection across campus. Based on the leaders perspectives the language shifted from *student challenges* (such as mental or emotional issues and academic struggle) to the *root causes of student challenges* (such as isolation, lack of community, and loneliness).

The African American Center intentionally targeted student feelings of isolation and stress by providing opportunities for students to get together in small groups on and off campus, get out into nature through group outdoor trips, and to collaborate and gather with other community organizations that support black and brown people. Both the Latinx Center and Native American Center also targeted student feels of isolation by creating welcoming, supportive, and safe spaces for students to feel comfortable talking about their feelings or culturally connected. The Native American Center shapes these safe spaces with a specific and intentional form of communication that has been shown to be more effective for the Native American community's way of communicating personal experiences. All three programs described ways of program staff working intentionally to

not only address student challenges but to identify the root causes of those challenges so that they can reach students in a culturally relevant way.

Narrative approach

The Native American Center used a narrative approach to advising, mentorship, and programming. The narrative approach included focus groups with open dialogue and active listening by the staff when building relationships with students. The leader explained the narrative approach saying,

“It is trying to figure out where students are at by letting them express and open up about things. It's from the heart and from the gut... You have to really read the students, tune into them, and it is not always about words, there's so much communication beyond speaking. It is a real observant method of working with students. It requires us to be extremely observant and cognizant of what's coming out so that we know how to help guide students and direct them and build resources around them.”

The narrative approach related to the approach of the African American and Latinx Centers of targeting causes of student challenges. The Native American Center specifically did this through highly receptive forms of communication and observation with students to “build resources around them”. The leader explained how the program staff reflect, share, and piece together information gleaned from student narrative discussions to learn the bigger picture of the students' experiences. “If we don't do this [narrative] approach, we will lose them. That is why there's such a lack of completion rates for Native students, because the regular [advising] model doesn't work.” These programs adapt and shift programming based on discussions with students.

Program Barriers

Inconsistency

The African American Center's program barriers included fragmented silos of local community organizations who support black and brown people, interruptions in the regular academic instruction including power outages and COVID-19, lack of funding - specifically for affinity group programs on campus, and a lack of agreement between past program coordinators and administration. A history of inconsistency in program leadership arose in multiple program leader surveys as well.

Lack of institutional support

Program leaders expressed barriers in program success stemming from a lack of institutional funding, under staffing, and a lack of administrative understanding on student needs. One leader described the lack of institutional support explaining,

“Just because there is a physical space for our program, does not mean that students' needs are being met, or that resources are being facilitated. There is much more that the institution needs to do to support these students than just providing a space.”

Another leader described how a lack of institutional support stemmed from oppressive or racial barriers. This was illustrated in the form of the university's head administration outside of the program coming in with an agenda. Other related issues were described as the policing of student voices and a lack of institutional support for feelings of oppression. Another gap in institutional support was described by the leaders as a lack of policy, collaboration, or staff support from the university counseling centers

on issues such as rape, sexual violence, racism, and the mental health issues of students who participate in the program.

One leader described their success working with university administration due to longevity. The leader explains how longevity as well as strong data increased their freedom to support program goals,

“Part of it is because of my longevity on the campus and my connection with the local and tribal community. That coupled together with good strong data, as I kept really strong data right from the beginning, has given me a lot of freedom to where we plan and develop things through our program...I have a strong understanding of how the academic system works. I understand where we’ve been and where we’re going, and as I build trust with whoever is supervising me, that has always provided me with a lot of strength in being able to determine how the program runs.”

The Sustainability Center, which was not an affinity group-based program, expressed struggle with reaching students of color on campus. The program leader expressed the goal of reaching more students of color with their program and having more voices of students of color heard within the program.

Connotations of Holistic Well-being

When asked how they would describe holistic well-being the African American Center’s leader illustrated it as “being aware of and focused on the root of what things have a negative impact on our mental health, having an honest understanding of where those triggers come from”, and “seeking out healthy ways to address our triggers on causes of negative mental health”. When asked to describe how the African American Center’s program addresses student well-being, the leader explained the program

identifies causes that have negative impacts on mental health (like isolation) and addresses them together in a community. The leader further explained community as an important piece saying,

“I believe in moving away from the individualized concept of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps or that we can go on our own strength. We use community to address isolation and identify tools and resources to address challenges. To ask our students, what are the healthy ways to support our wellbeing and mental health so that we can help one another? Being specific and targeted in how we support students as they navigate our university.”

The leader of the Latinx Center also emphasized the use of building community to support student mental health while describing the meaning of holistic well-being. This leader explained how colleges must provide more than tutoring or support shaped around academics, and that students are most successful academically when they have “cultural connection, love, support, and a space to have a voice” amidst negative mental or emotional experiences. This leader described the issue of the university in not addressing holistic well-being saying,

“...people's physical health, people's mental health, people's spirituality, people's everything matters, and these things aren't being addressed at all by the university. All it's focused on is the productivity of their grades, their GPAs, and then getting to graduation so that numbers are up. We're not really doing a good job in supporting our students.”

The Native American Center's leader described holistic well-being using an analogy of how the students are like different plants in a garden, the garden being the university, and the centers must provide nutrients. This analogy of holistic was illustrated,

“Some things need a lot of sun, some need shade, some need a lot of water, some don't need water. There are a variety of needs. So our students have a variety of needs, and our program provides nutrients for those students so that they can thrive. Because the campus at large throws out one type of nutrient and some succeed, and many don't, the centers

provide a special nutrient specific to that group of their needs so that they can thrive as well in the garden.”

The leader more specifically explains their perspective of holistic well-being as everything being cared for and balanced and,

“taking each individual student from where they are, where they come from and trying to help them tune into their value systems to their genetic value systems, and to have them really start meditating on being mindful of what they want, who they are, where they want to go. And then we just help them develop that.”

These three interviews revealed a similarity of connotations of holistic well-being as overall health mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. A shared perspective is that the role of their program or the university at large to support students with their holistic well-being, not just academic success. Table 5 shows a summarized list of the three most holistic programs’ non-academic goals, example activities, and leader connotations of *holistic well-being*.

Table 5: Top Three Holistic Programs Goals, Activities, and Leader's Connotation of Holistic Well-being

Program	Non-Academic Goals	Example Activities	Connotation of Term Holistic Well-being
African American Center	Building community Connecting with nature Returning to cultural roots Addressing isolation and mental health issues Addressing experiences of students of color	Off campus events Student day trips to local nature Guided group dialogue Community events Mentorship	“being aware of and focused on the root of what things have a negative impact on our mental health, having an honest understanding of where those triggers come from”, and “seeking out healthy ways to address our triggers of causes of negative mental health”
Latinx Center	Building community Cultural representation on campus Uplifting student voices Supporting student pains caused by feelings of racial oppression or trauma Self-preservation Student advocacy	Guided group dialogue Comfortable home-like spaces Cultural events Mentorship Student leadership opportunities	“Having cultural connection, love, support, and a space to have a voice” [amidst negative mental or emotional experiences].
Native American Center	Building community Nurturing culture Connection with tribal groups Addressing loneliness, stress, and trauma Student advocacy	Provide space for narrative approach to dialogue Community partnerships Mentorship Student professional opportunities	“Based on balance and building, making sure that every aspect of your life is doing well so that we have a strong balance.”

Discussion and Conclusion

Within traditional forms of higher education, academic development is at the forefront of educational goals, which is a widespread institutional value that hinders the complete human development of college students. This study sought to identify how shaping holistic student development opportunities in higher education positively impacts students, and how existing student service programs work towards this non-academic goal. The study's analysis used a set of researcher-constructed nonacademic student development areas and student challenges, but the emerging themes from the perspectives of the student service program leaders, revealed a more appropriate way to identify characteristics of holistic education. The following discussion explores how the emerging data can reshape the initial research questions to better understand holistic approaches that support diverse student needs.

Student Service Program Leadership

By exploring the construct holistic education through the lenses of student service program leaders, the research is shaped through the perspectives of university staff rather than the student experiences. University staff have a higher level of education than college students, equipping them with the language to discuss the research questions. But leaders also bring personal bias. Although leaders provided rich data, a more in depth look at student service programs should design methods that include student interviews.

College student leaders are at the forefront of educational efforts, shaping programming and goals based on their own personal and professional backgrounds. As Miller (Miller, 2011) demonstrates, “holistic educators assert that every person intrinsically strives to participate in this journey of transformation, and requires a nourishing cultural environment to undertake this quest” (p.2). Leaders in higher education institutions must recognize the importance of hiring holistic educators and staff that 1) aim to support students holistically as whole human beings and 2) will obtain longevity in the position to effectively retain institutional support for their program’s efforts. In order for universities to improve the quality of holistic supports for diverse student populations, leaders must have an understanding of and passion for holistic well-being is.

Gaps in Higher Education

There is agreement within recent literature (Eisen et al., 2008; Ellis-Sankari, 2009; Jackson, 2017; Jones, 2019; Keeling & Hersch, 2012; O’Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011) on the existence of various gaps in higher education teaching non-academic skills, and on the lack of student support systems addressing life stressors in higher education institutions. This study brings to light more specifically the impact of these gaps on college student mental health, including feelings of isolation, stress, and loneliness. Based on the study participants from this regional state university, gaps in higher education may be linked to the oppressive nature of dominant white culture within the systemic workings of higher education institutions.

Program leader perspectives clarified that feelings of isolation are caused by being in a college community culture much different than students' places of familial upbringing. These lonely and isolated students are then stressed by academic responsibilities. In addition, a lack of nourishing cultural community spaces on university campuses, specifically for students of color, perpetuate mental and emotional health issues due to a lack of student sense of belonging. These compounded negative experiences result in mental and emotional health challenges. Student service programs may be the main way for universities to address the lack of a sense of belonging, lack of connection with culture, and a lack community for college students by nourishing diverse cultural values of students.

Although holistic student support programs do help combat these negative student experiences, it is only for a small portion of the larger student population due to a lack of funding and administrative priorities. This study provides us with a more specific way to address holistic student support, through the lens of the most common non-academic student challenges. A focus on dominantly funding academic efforts rather than holistic student support programs, will continue to result in student mental and emotional hardships that negatively impact academic and professional success. Academic focus for funding, programming efforts, and retention, without a focus on supporting other life areas of students, continues to create a gap in higher education student development.

Affinity Groups Modeling Holistic Programming

The programs that addressed student needs most holistically in this study all served affinity groups. The African American Center, Latinx Center, and Native American Center all provided a proportionally larger range of opportunities for students to develop mentally, emotionally, and culturally. This reveals an important future research question – is holistic education most needed for college students of color? And if so, why? The leaders from these student service programs reveal how college students of color, specifically at a state university in a rural town, experience high levels of isolation, loneliness, depression, stress, or trauma.

A large majority of students of color who attended this rural university came from urban areas. These experiences of culture shock negatively affect student's ability to feel a sense of cultural belonging. The emergence of this experiential difference between self and surroundings confirms a social fragmentation in higher education. This fragmentation can result in fear, crime, abuse of self, abuse of others, a disconnection with our body and our hearts, and lastly, a lack of community engagement around shared cultural values (Miller, 2007).

Affinity based student service groups serve as models for holistic programming efforts, because they aim to address the needs of the whole student. The diverse cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of students make this process complex for program leaders, yet invaluable for students. Each leader from these holistic student service programs expressed the goal of building close, loving, supportive relationships with students so that programming efforts can uplift and help heal mental and emotional

suffering while building cultural community among students, campus, and the broader community.

Affinity-based student service leaders recognize the need to support the whole human experience of a student. Questions for further research on these ideas arose including 1) How does a more holistic student center approach to higher education services benefit white students? and 2) Is there a lack of holistic student development in higher education due to educational priorities and goals being shaped around dominant white cultural values?

Place Matters

Student experiences of isolation, stress, and loneliness were all connected to a sense of disconnection with place. This manifestation was linked by program leaders to a lack of specific student cultural and ethnic groups feeling a sense of community within their college life. Student service program leaders addressed this disconnection by creating opportunities for students to intentionally connect with each other, the campus's broader community, as well as with the surrounding nature. By taking the students out of their living quarters or college classrooms and bringing them into spaces of cultural community and local nature, leaders can shape holistic education. This act of integration with local community and nature particularly benefits students of color who move from urban areas to unfamiliar, predominantly white, rural college communities. A future

research study might seek to ask how college student service programs in urban areas address student feelings of isolation within their own home-town communities.

Re-defining Holistic Education

Miller (2011) describes holistic education as going beyond a focus on fragmented academic content areas, and addressing the important question of how college can “cultivate emotional, moral, ecological, or spiritual layers of student experience” (p. 4). Although this study analyzed the holistic quality of programs using a cluster of non-academic dimensions of student development areas and social or emotional student challenges, this contradicts the need to move away from fragmentation and separation of student experience. Emerging data revealed that instead, holistic education involves shaping programming around root causes of negative student experiences. By providing personally authentic and culturally relevant mentorship, program leaders are able to identify how to most efficiently support students. Through creating culturally safe spaces, facilitating group dialogue, and using the narrative approach to advising, student voices are able to come forth to reveal their personal reasons for struggling. What emerged was a useful method of backward mapping to shape programming goals. Rather than identifying which programs demonstrate the highest range of areas of student development opportunities, we should be asking which programs cultivate student feelings of safety, compassion, care, and support.

Root causes of student challenges - which are often mental, emotional, racial, and cultural - can only be identified by building meaningful connections with students that are not just focused on academics - but about the whole human self. All student challenges and development areas need to be considered when designing student service programming and when prioritizing funding for campus programs. Student challenges differ based on student ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural background, which is why these affinity-based programs are so important in higher education.

There appears to be a call for more focus on holistic student development in creating curriculum, structures, and programs that consider all areas of human development and experience (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Braskamp et al., 2008; Haynes, 2006; Jackson, 2017; O'Connor, 2012; Quinlan, 2011), and this is evident in this study. Based on this data, *Holistic well-being*, can be defined as – having cultural connection and a loving community to seek out healthy ways to address negative experiences, so that every aspect of your life is balanced.

Future Research

The researcher recommends the six following questions to guide further studies on this topic to gain more understanding of holistic higher education and holistic student development:

1. How prevalent is holistic student development in college student service programs that specifically serve students of color in comparison to programs that serve all students? If there is a difference, why?
2. Do dominant white cultural values shape systems of higher education? If so, does this contribute to gaps in holistic student development on college campuses?
3. How do culturally relevant holistic student services impact student retention rates?
4. How do mental, emotional, and social student challenges differ between rural universities and urban universities?
5. How do student service program leaders identify and address the root causes of student challenges?
6. How do student programs create safe and culturally relevant spaces where student voices are heard?

Summary

Interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions of student development were rated of greater importance than academic or career development. This demonstrates the role of higher education student service programs in prioritizing the nourishment of social, emotional, and mental experiences of students.

Stress and anxiety were rated as the most common student challenge areas addressed by programs. The findings of this research identified three student service programs, that were affinity-based groups, that demonstrated the greatest qualities of

non-academic holistic student development opportunities, values, and approaches. All three affinity-group program leaders expressed how feelings of isolation, cultural disconnect, and oppression shaped the challenges of students of color.

By building and creating feelings of community and community spaces for students, feelings of isolation were reduced and safe spaces were created for students to feel a sense of belonging, express their personal hardships, and reveal further needs that leaders can address through programming.

It became evident that the perspectives of leaders provide a variety of approaches that can support students holistically including building community, nourishing cultural values, connecting students with nature, promoting self-preservation, advising through the narrative approach, and advocating for student voices. Rather than identifying holistic student services by the systemized Likert-type rating scales or ranges of student development areas their programs address, researchers and educators can instead look at how program leaders identify and address the root causes of student challenges by creating safe and culturally relevant spaces where student voices are uplifted.

Based on this study, *Holistic well-being*, can be defined as – having cultural connection and a loving community to seek out healthy ways to address negative experiences, so that every aspect of one’s life is balanced. Root causes of student challenges such as isolation and lack of community need to be addressed by creating programs in higher education that help develop student holistic well-being. To accomplish this, university leadership must focus on creating safe spaces for diverse

student voices to be heard, provide more funding for student service and affinity-based programs, and most of all, understand the role of higher education in the development of student holistic well-being.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Recruitment Email

Hello <<Participant Name>>,

My name is Francisca Crutchfield and I am a current graduate student studying holistic student development programs in higher education for my master's thesis.

I would like to invite you to be a participant in my study.

The purpose of the study is focused on identifying the role university student service programs play in providing holistic student development opportunities, and any theoretical perspectives that may underlie them.

This study is designed to help contribute to research ways universities can help students develop holistically.

I would like to invite you to participate in an initial survey to share basic information about the <<Program Name>> program. The initial survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes.

Would this be something you are interested in participating in?

Participation is completely voluntary, and you can decline or remove yourself from the research process at any time. If you choose to participate, your identity as a research participant will remain anonymous. Depending on the results of the initial survey, I may select your program to study more in depth. If selected, I will send you a second invitation to participate in a short 30 minute video conference interview.

Please let me know whether or not you would like to take the initial survey. If you agree to participate I will send you an email with the survey link.

Feel free to let me know if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Francisca Crutchfield

Appendix B: Survey Consent Form

Please read the consent form and check the appropriate box below:

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled “Holistic Student Development Opportunities in Student Service Programs and the Theories and Practices that Drive Them at a Humboldt State University.” This study is being led by the department of education at Humboldt State University. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Elizabeth Miller, Department of Education at Humboldt State University. The purpose of this research is to see how college programs support students and why they do it.

I will ask you to fill out this online survey asking you for basic information about the program you work for. The survey will take you 10-25 minutes.

Possible risks and discomforts of participating in this survey may include the following:

- Possible loss of confidentiality of program information, systems, barriers, or procedures.
- May take time out of your work day and keep you temporarily from other obligations.
- May touch on professional experiences in relation to your program’s systems, structures, and services.
- May bring up personal challenges that are a result of working for your program
- May cause you to feel you are sharing program information that could be used by other programs in the future.
- May cause you to feel like you do not know certain program information as leaders so you may feel self-critical of your leadership roles.

Benefits of participating in this survey may include the following:

- This survey may benefit you by providing you with an opportunity to review the purpose of your work, contribute to public knowledge of how your program benefits students, or promote further research of student service programs in higher education.
- Indirect benefits to completing the initial survey may include a professional review of the program you work for, contributing to public knowledge of your program’s benefits to students, and promoting research of student service programs in higher education.
- Benefits to completing the follow-up interview may include a reflection on the nature of their program to improve the program or other educational programs for the future.
- Information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future to better understand the role of higher education in holistic student development. We hope to learn more about what theoretical views guide student service programs and what barriers they face that could be alleviated through further research.

Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security:

Data from the survey form will be downloaded to a password protected Excel file on the researcher's computer for analysis.

Upon completion of the study the results of this survey will be archived in password protected files on the researcher's computer after transcription and destroyed after 3 years.

Check the consent box below if you are willing to have information from this survey used for publicly accessible knowledge. Please note that the survey is being conducted with the help of google Forms, a company not affiliated with Humboldt State University and with its own privacy and security policies that you can find at its website. We anticipate that your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

Please note that email communication is neither private nor secure. Though [I am/we are] taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that information sent through e-mail could be read by a third party.

Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. We cannot guarantee against interception of data sent via the internet by third parties.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance educational research. We will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Direct quotes will be used cautiously and only with your permission.

Taking part is voluntary:

Your involvement is voluntary, you may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty to you, and no effect on your record, or relationship with the university or other organization or service that may be involved with the research.

Follow up email:

We may contact you again to request information about questions that you left blank or did not answer in this survey. As always, your participation will be voluntary and we will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any of the follow up questions.

Follow up interview invitation:

We may contact you again to request your participation in a follow up interview. As always, your participation will be voluntary and we will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any of the follow up studies.

If you have questions:

The main researcher conducting this study is Francisca Crutchfield, a graduate student at Humboldt State University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Francisca Crutchfield by email at <<email here>> or by phone at <<phone number here>>, or you may contact this study's responsible HSU faculty member Dr. Libbi Miller by email at <<email here>> or by phone at <<phone number here>>. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at (707) 826-5165 or by e-mail at irb@humboldt.edu.

Appendix C: Survey Questions

1. Please select from the list below the Humboldt State University program or department related to the program you will be referring to in this survey:
2. How long have you been involved in leading this program?
3. Please describe your current professional role or staff position in relation to this program:
4. Approximately how many professional/non-student staff members or staff advisors does this program have?
5. Approximately how many, if any, college student employees does this program employ?
6. Is this program grant funded?
7. Approximately how long has this program existed?
8. What marketing methods or other methods to recruit college student participants does this program use? (Check all that apply)
9. What areas of college student development are central to the goals of your program?
Please select the areas of greatest importance to meeting the program's goals.
10. Of the areas of greatest importance, you selected above, please briefly describe any types of activities that your program uses to help college students develop in each area
11. To what degree do you feel the program's activities or services are effective in providing opportunities for college student growth in each of these areas:
12. Which of the following college student challenges does this program address? (Select all that apply)
13. Are there any well-defined theories, concepts, or research-driven frameworks that inform the goals of this program? Please list any that may apply.
14. Are there any barriers that prevent this program from being most successful? Please list or describe.
15. When is this program running?
16. Is this program available for all college students?
17. Is this program geared to support a specific student population? (Area of study, ethnic demographic etc.) If so, please describe what specific student population.
18. What is your highest attained level of education?
19. Would you recommend another staff member who helps lead this program to participate in this survey? If so, please list their name and position title below.
20. Would you be willing to participate in a video recorded interview to discuss your perspective of this program's goals, practices, or driving theoretical frameworks in more depth?
21. Would you recommend another staff member who helps lead this program to participate in a video interview to discuss this program in more depth? If so, please list their name and position title below.
22. Are there any questions or comments you have regarding this survey or study?

Thank you so much for your participation!

Appendix D: Interview Recruitment Email

Hello <<Participant Name>>,

Thank you so much for completing the initial survey for my thesis study.

As we previously discussed, I am studying holistic student development programs in higher education for my master's in education thesis. The purpose of the study is focused on identifying the role university student service programs play in providing college students the opportunity to develop holistically, and any theoretical perspectives that may drive the mission, approach, or goals of various student service programs.

Based on the results of your survey results, I would like to invite you to participate in a follow-up interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your experience and perspectives of the <Program Name>. This interview may include a discussion of program activities, theoretical perspectives, barriers, educational values, or principles that drive the mission and goals of the <<Program Name>>.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you can decline or remove yourself from the research process at any time. If you choose to participate, your identity as a research participant will remain anonymous. The interview process will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Please let me know if you are or are not interested in participating in the interview. If so, we can set up a time convenient for you to meet on Zoom.

I would like to complete the interview between the following times if possible:

<<Date and Time>>

Once we set a date and time, I will send you an email with the consent form and Zoom meeting link.

Feel free to let me know if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Francisca Crutchfield

Appendix E: Interview Consent Form

Please read the consent form attached and respond to this email with a statement saying you consent or do not consent in agreeing to participate in this interview.

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled “*Holistic Student Service Programs in Higher Education- Theories and Practices of Holistic Student Development at a California State University.*” This study is being led by the Department of Education at Humboldt State University. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Elizabeth Miller, Department of Education at Humboldt State University.

The purpose of this research is to see how college programs support students holistically and why they do it. I will ask to interview you on a recorded Zoom meeting to learn about the program you work for and the perspectives you have on holistic student development. Video is optional and not required to be used during the Zoom interview. The interview will take 30-45 minutes.

Possible Risks Possible risks and discomforts of participating in this interview may include the following:

- Possible loss of confidentiality of program information, systems, barriers, or procedures.
- May take time out of your work day and keep you temporarily from other obligations.
- May touch on professional experiences in relation to your program’s systems, structures, and services.
- May bring up personal challenges that are a result of working for your program.
- May cause you to feel like you are sharing program information that could be used by other programs in the future.
- Participants may feel like they do not know certain program information as leaders so they may feel self-critical of their leadership roles.

Possible Benefits Benefits of participating in this survey may include the following:

- This interview may benefit you by providing you with an opportunity to review the purpose of your work, contribute to public knowledge of how your program benefits students, or promote further research of student service programs in higher education.
- Indirect benefits to completing the interview may include a professional review of the program you work for, contributing to public knowledge of your program’s benefits to students, and promoting research of student service programs in higher education.
- May provide you with a reflection on the nature of your program to possibly improve the program or other educational programs for the future.
- Information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future to better understand the role of higher education in holistic student development. We hope to learn more about what theoretical views guide student service programs and what barriers they face that could be alleviated through further research.

Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security:

The recorded interview file will be downloaded to a password protected folder on the researcher's computer for analysis. Upon completion of the study the file will be archived in a password protected folder on the researcher's computer after transcription and destroyed after 3 years.

Please note that the interview is being conducted with the help of the Zoom video conferencing online platform which is a company not affiliated with Humboldt State University and with its own privacy and security policies that you can find at its website. We anticipate that your participation in this interview presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

Please note that email communication is neither private nor secure. Though [I am/we are] taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that information sent through e-mail could be read by a third party. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. We cannot guarantee against interception of data sent via the internet by third parties.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance educational research. We will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before information from the interview is shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Direct quotes will be used cautiously and only with your permission.

Taking part is voluntary:

Your involvement is voluntary, you may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty to you, and no effect on your record, or relationship with the university or other organization or service that may be involved with the research.

Follow up email:

We may contact you again to request information to clarify or confirm information you may have given during the interview. As always, your participation will be voluntary and we will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any of the follow up questions.

Reply to this email with a written statement saying “I consent to participating in this interview”, you are agreeing to have information from this interview used for publicly accessible knowledge.

If you have questions:

The main researcher conducting this study is Francisca Crutchfield, a graduate student at Humboldt State University. Please ask any questions you have now.

The main researcher conducting this study is Francisca Crutchfield, a graduate student at Humboldt State University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Francisca Crutchfield by email at <<email here>> or by phone at <<phone number here>>, or you may contact this study's responsible HSU faculty member Dr. Libbi Miller by email at <<email here>> or by phone at <<phone number here>>. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at (707) 826-5165 or by e-mail at irb@humboldt.edu.@humboldt.edu.

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Thank you for meeting with me today - I appreciate your participation.

The purpose of the study is focused on identifying the role university student service programs play in providing college students the opportunity to develop holistically, and any theoretical perspectives that may drive the mission, approach, or goals of various student service programs.

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your experience and perspectives of the HSU program. This interview may include a discussion of program activities, theoretical perspectives, barriers, educational values, or principles that drive the mission and goals of the <Program Name>.

Your involvement today is voluntary, you may discontinue at any time during this interview, or skip any questions that you may feel uncomfortable with, with no penalty to you, and no effect on your record, or relationship with the university or other organization or service that may be involved with the research.

Do you agree to continue with the interview?

1. Can you tell me about how you initially got involved with the program?
2. Can you describe your role at <<Program Name>> as a <Position>?
3. Are the coordinator's in charge of permitting the activities and services the program provides?
4. Can you describe how free you are to pursue shaping the program activities?
5. How has your experience been working for the program?
6. Two-part question - You wrote that the program provides holistic academic advising and planning based on a narrative approach - can you describe these two aspects -holistic and narrative approach to advising?
7. In the survey you mentioned the program aims to address student challenges regarding alcohol and drug abuse, can you tell me more about this challenge and how the program addresses it?
8. Do any other academic or student service programs on campus collaborate or integrate with <<Program Name>> at all?
9. You mentioned specific barriers including being moved into Student Affairs - and a push to provide campus-wide programming and campus-wide informational sessions. Can you tell me more about this barrier?
10. I see that the program has been around for over 50 years. How would you describe the impact of <<Program Name>> on the college student's experience?

11. The question is a two-part question - How do you define holistic well-being, and what do you see as <<Program Name> role in supporting the holistic well-being of students on campus.