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Graduate Student Placement: An Examination of Experience and Career Barriers in a Student Affairs Professional Preparation Program

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Abstract

This quantitative descriptive study examined the job placement success and challenges of graduate students in a higher education and student affairs professional preparation program at a mid-size public institution in the U.S. Specifically, this study investigated the impact of curricular standards in the form of supervised practice (i.e., internships and graduate assistantships) on the job placement rate of recent alumni. In addition, perceived barriers in the job search process were investigated and examined comparatively by gender. Findings suggest that current curricular standards may not be sufficient for successful placement and that men and women do not differ significantly with respect to perceived barriers in their job search process. Implications for practice include a re-evaluation of curricular standards for student affairs professional preparation programs and a greater understanding of what factors and barriers contribute to successful graduate student placement.

Keywords: graduate students, professional preparation, job placement, student affairs, higher education administration

Introduction

Student affairs administration graduate preparation programs are the foundation and bedrock of

the field, serving as the entry point and socialization experience for those who want to work in a variety of administrative capacities within an institution. With well over 200 preparation programs in the United States, the curricular standards, by which programs are typically established and evaluated, facilitate a shared understanding of the values, philosophies, and basic competencies of the profession for new profes-

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sionals (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2012). The effectiveness of these programs has long been a point of discussion between practitioners in the field and faculty teaching in the programs (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). What is perhaps agreed upon is that professional preparation programs need to be relevant and responsive, adapting and evolving as the needs and contexts of practice change (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

While extensive research has examined the perceptions of program effectiveness based on competency development and learning outcomes (Herdlein, 2004; Young, 2005; Young & Dean, 2015; Young & Janosik 2005), few if any studies have specifically examined the critical role of supervised practice (i.e., internships and graduate assistantships) within student affairs and its impact on new professional's employability and job placement. Internationally, there has been an enhanced emphasis on collaborative learning, or what is sometimes referred to as cooperative education, work-based learning, or work-integrated learning and its impact on employability (Billett, 2009; Jackson, 2015; Thune & Støren, 2015). Within the field of student affairs in higher education, effective professional preparation includes classroom instruction as well as supervised practice, which has been quantified at a minimum of 300 hours for graduates of student affairs professional preparation programs (CAS, 2012). Despite this standard, many entry-level position descriptions in student affairs appear to require far more professional experience than graduates may have acquired, leaving some students questioning their professional preparedness for positions touted as entry-level. This study aims to examine the job placement experience of graduate students in a student affairs professional preparation program and to specifically answer these two questions:

- To what extent does supervised practice (i.e., graduate assistantships and internships) and other factors (i.e., full-time/part-time status, employment outside higher education) impact job placement?
- What differences exist between men and women and their perceptions of career barriers?

Literature Review

Supervised Practice

Scholars and practitioners in the field have long asserted the need for a structured practicum as an essential tool for successful graduate preparation in the student affairs field (Delworth & Hanson, 1980; Herdlein, 2004). The *Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education* (CAS, 2012) provides guidelines and standards for best practices across 44 areas of higher education. These standards are agreed upon by the profession at large and represent the collaborative effort of 41 professional associations in higher education. Based on the CAS standards for the *Role of Masters-Level Student Affairs Preparation Programs*, effective professional preparation includes both classroom instruction and supervised practice. As stated previously, CAS (2012) recommends that professional preparation programs in student affairs include a minimum of 300 hours of supervised practice with two distinctive experiences. Supervised practice can be classified into a number of categories (Janosik, Cooper, Saunders & Hirt, 2015). Graduate assistantships are typically paid paraprofessional experiences where students are expected to perform sustained and regular job duties as part of the overall operation of the functional area. Internships for credit are often considered for a fixed duration and typically involve supervision from a site supervisor and the faculty, focused on specific learning outcomes for the student. Internships that are non-credit bearing are also generally for a fixed period of time, however students may receive a stipend, remuneration for expenses, or both. The requirements for supervised practice can vary

from program to program, but the nature of the term, supervised practice, is generally accepted across the field.

Supervised practice provides students with direct exposure to the field, an opportunity to engage theory to practice, and an environment in which to further develop professional competencies (Billett, 2009; Breiter, 1993). The “theory to practice” connection of internships and graduate assistantships increases credibility, accountability, and leadership ability (Anast-May, Buckner, & Geer, 2011; Jackson, 2015). Internships and graduate assistantships facilitate students’ understanding of office culture, assist them in discerning appropriate and ethical behavior, and enhance their ability to read the intentions of co-workers and supervisors (Janosik, Cooper, Saunders, & Hirt, 2015). Internships were reported by chief student affairs officers to be the primary means for training and career decision-making in student affairs professional preparation (Herdlein, 2004). In international research on graduate student employability, paid and sustained relevant work experience (which describes most graduate assistantships) has been linked to increased success post-graduation, based presumably on the development of both competencies and networks (Thune & Støren, 2015). For these reasons, supervised practice in the form of internships and graduate assistantships, are recognized as important and valuable aspects of professional training in the field of student affairs (Herdlein, 2004; Janosik et al., 2015; Young, 2005). While literature supports the value of supervised practice, there has been no empirical research that has investigated the viability of the current standards in student affairs professional preparation programs.

Job Placement and Career Barriers

Research on job placement rates of graduate students and career related barriers is extremely limited overall and non-existent within the field of student affairs and higher education administration. Therefore, research from related disciplines informs this study. Earlier scholars, examining undergraduate career placement, described career barriers as “thwarting conditions,” which may impede the career development process (Crites, 1969). Crites further distinguished these barriers into two categories, internal conflict (e.g., self-concept, self-efficacy) and external frustrations (e.g., salary). Other scholars have examined barriers through three broad clusters: social/interpersonal (e.g., job relocation), attitudinal (e.g., self-concept), and interactional (e.g., lack of qualifications) (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). This literature informs the researchers’ comparison of men and women and their perceived barriers in the job search process.

According to Berg and Ferber (1983), “...there is evidence that women are less confident than men and that this is likely to influence their career paths as well as their perseverance in carrying them out” (p. 631). They also found that women were more likely to indicate “lack of ability” as a barrier to their success. Research in other professional programs has suggested women make career choices based on family or other personal reasons, whereas men make decisions based more on advancement and politically better career moves (Hull & Nelson, 2000). Similarly, career decisions can be impacted by geographical considerations and student’s ability or willingness to “leave home.” One study previously reported that women were more likely to remain in their home state (Berg & Faber, 1983), again supporting the previous assertion that women are more likely to make decisions based on family or personal reasons. Related research examining graduate students’ intent to leave the field of student affairs identified financial concerns as one area of concern as they considered their postgraduate job search and ultimate career (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). Graduates of student affairs professional preparation programs questioned the rate of return on their investment in graduate school versus their expected initial salary as an entry-level professional (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). While gender differences were not necessarily examined in the aforementioned study, salary and cost of living concerns may be more often considerations of men who were noted to make decisions based on advancement (Hull & Nelson, 2000).

Finally, with a variety of functional areas of operation within student affairs (e.g., academic advising, residence life, orientation, financial aid), the development of transferable skills and competencies is an important consideration in the job placement process and may serve as an interactional barrier in graduate students job search. Students may perceive themselves as lacking qualifications based on their absence of direct experience in a particular area of student affairs (Sermersheim & Keirn, 2005), despite the professional trend and focus on agreed upon competencies for entry-level professionals (Cujet et al., 2009; Hoffman & Bresciani, 2012). Some students may commit themselves and their job search to a specific functional area of student affairs, unable to recognize the interrelatedness of their skills and competencies within other positions unless overtly stated (Haigh & Kilmartin, 1999).

Methodology

This quantitative and descriptive study examined factors and barriers of job placement within a higher education and student affairs administration professional preparation program at a mid-size, public, master's comprehensive college in the northeastern part of the U.S. Unlike some student affairs graduate preparation programs, this program is a non-cohort program and does not require or guarantee graduate assistantships for admitted students, but does require two independent credit-bearing internships as part of the core curriculum. On average the program has a total of 85-100 matriculated students, with approximately 75% of students attending full-time and approximately 25% of whom secure a graduate assistantship each year. Students who do not have graduate assistantships may be full-time student affairs professionals returning to school for advancement purposes or they are students who may work full-time outside of higher education and are returning to school to facilitate a career change. The institution is very limited in the number of graduate assistantships it provides, averaging 12-15 positions on-campus each year. However, the program partners with local smaller private institutions, which provide an additional 5-7 graduate assistantship opportunities each year.

The program is one of three student affairs professional preparation programs within a 30 mile radius, which lends to the complexity and competitiveness of the job placement process locally. However, the institution is also one of 21 colleges and universities within a relatively small region of the state. The program facilitates an internship and graduate assistantship fair to assist students in securing opportunities for supervised practice. In addition, students are required to enroll in two courses concurrent with their internship experience, which focus on professional development (i.e., exploring professional associations, creating an e-portfolio) and job search preparation (i.e., resume preparation, mock interviews).

Sample and Demographics

Given the insular nature of this study, permission was granted through both the program's department and the Institutional Review Board of the host institution. Participants for this study were alumni of the student affairs professional preparation program who had graduated in the past 10 years in hopes of garnering a better response rate with more recent and current alumni contact information. The initial sample consisted of 249 alumni in the database who were invited to participate. Additional solicitations were sent through social media, specifically to alumni within the designated 10-year span. A total of 72 alumni responded to the call for participants, resulting in a 29% response rate. The alumni sample was representative of the overall program with respect to gender, with women (69.4%) representing the majority of respondents. Participant's age was also reflective of the overall demographics of the program with 73% percent falling within the traditional graduate student age range of 21-30 years old, which is both a reflection of the overall sample of recent alums and a reflection of the traditional graduate student pursuing this type of degree. Of the respondents, 88% were still working in higher education and most had maintained

their proximity to the institution within the mid-Atlantic region (82 %). Participants varied with respect to the type and size of institution in which they currently worked. Descriptive statistics for the sample may be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for sample population

Variable		Frequency(<i>n</i>)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	22	30.6
	Female	50	69.4
Age	21-30 years old	52	73.2
	31-40 years old	10	14.1
	41-50 years old	7	9.9
	51-60 years old	1	1.4
	61+ years old	1	1.4
Current geographic region	New England (ME, MA, VT, NH, RI, CT)	2	2.8
	Mid-Atlantic (MD, DE, NJ, NY, PA, DC)	59	81.9
	South (FL, VA, WV, NC, SC, KY, GA, TX, AL, AR, LA, MS, OK, TN)	5	6.9
	Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, ID, WY, MT, AK)	0	0.0
	Southwest (AZ, CO, NV, NM, UT, CA, HI)	2	2.8
	Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, IA, MO, WI, IL, IM, MI, OH)	4	5.6
Currently working in HED	Yes	62	87.5
	No	9	12.5
Enrollment status	Part-time	16	21.9
	Full-time	56	76.7
Job outside higher education (hours/week)	Less than 10 hours	12	16.4
	10-19 hours	5	6.8
	20-29 hours	14	19.2
	30-39 hours	10	13.7
	40+ hours	17	23.3
	Do not have a job outside HED	14	19.2

Instrument and Analysis

A multi-item questionnaire was developed specifically to examine the factors and barriers of job placement for graduates of this particular professional preparation program. The online survey included questions pertaining to internships, graduate assistantships, and perceived barriers to the job search process. Analysis involved a multi-layer examination of job placement rate based on students' internship and graduate assistantship experience in the program. Students were categorized into one of four subgroups: those who fulfilled the basic requirements with two internships (denoted as BASIC), those who held a graduate assistantship (denoted as GA) in addition to the basic requirements, those who completed additional internships beyond the basic requirements (denoted as ADD), and those who held both a GA and completed additional internships (denoted as BOTH). Additional analysis examined perceived barriers to job placement, comparing the mean response rates of men and women.

Results

An initial examination of job placement rates suggests that of the 62 respondents who were still working in higher education, approximately 67% ($n=42$) were placed within 1-3 months of graduation. An additional 10% ($n=6$) were placed within 3-6 months and an additional 10% ($n=6$) were placed within 7-12 months. The remaining 13% ($n=9$) were successful in finding a job in higher education after more than 12 months post-graduation. An initial cross tabulation comparison of placement rates based on internship and graduate assistantship experience is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of placement rates based on experience (n (%))

	BASIC ($n=10$)	GA ($n=27$)	ADD ($n=6$)	BOTH ($n=19$)	Total ($n=62$)
1-3 months	6 (60.0)	20 (74.4)	4 (66.7)	12 (63.2)	42 (66.6)
4-6 months	1 (10.0)	2 (7.1)	2 (33.3)	1 (5.3)	6 (9.5)
7-9 months	0 (0.0)	2 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.3)	3 (4.8)
10-12 months	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (10.5)	3 (4.8)
More than 12 months	2 (20.0)	3 (10.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (21.1)	9 (13.3)

A comparison of the mean placement rates of graduates based on experience resulted in no statistically significant difference. Placement rate ranges were categorized on a scale of 1-5 with "1-3 months" equal to 1 and "more than 12 months" equal to 5. While a majority of graduates were placed within 1-3 months post-graduation, the mean placement rate for those who held a graduate assistantship was 1.66 ($SD=1.33$) and 1.33 ($SD=.51$) for those who conducted additional internships. Conversely the mean placement rate for those who had no additional experience was 2.20 ($SD=1.75$) suggesting that those graduates who had no additional experience beyond the basic requirements took longer to find a job than those who had the additional experience.

To examine these differences more in depth, an analysis of graduate student employment outside of higher education was examined to understand the impact this may have on career placement. Participants were asked to identify whether they were employed outside of higher education while attending graduate school. Of the participants, a total of 57.5% were employed outside of higher education while completing their graduate studies. These students varied significantly with respect to full or part-time employment with approximately 16% ($n=12$) indicating they

worked less than 10 hours per week outside of higher education, 7% ($n=5$) worked 10-19 hours per week, 19% ($n=14$) worked 20-29 hours per week, 14% ($n=10$) worked 30-30 hours per week, and 23% ($n=17$) indicated they worked more than 40 hours per week outside of higher education, while pursuing their graduate degree. Further analysis, comparing enrollment status (full-time or part-time) and number of hours worked outside higher education suggests that approximately 36% ($n=20$) of full-time enrolled students worked 30 hours or more per week and 44% ($n=7$) of part-time enrolled students worked 30 hours or more per week outside of higher education while pursuing their graduate studies. This data raises questions about student's ability to carry a graduate assistantship and/or an additional internship when many are working beyond part-time, outside of higher education, and some of who are working more than 40 hours per week (24%, $n=17$).

Further analysis presented in Table 3 suggests that of those who had a job outside of higher education during their graduate studies, 81% ($n=30$) were placed within 1-6 months of graduating, whereas only 68% ($n=17$) of those who did not have a job outside of higher education were placed within 1-6 months of graduating. While the data does not discern the type of employment held outside of higher education, the results raise interesting considerations about the impact of employment outside of higher education and its impact on placement after graduation.

	Job Outside Higher Education $n=37$	No Job Outside Higher Education $n=25$	TOTAL $n=62$
1-3 months	25 (67.5)	16 (64.0)	41 (66.1)
4-6 months	5 (13.5)	1 (4.0)	6 (9.7)
7-9 months	1 (2.7)	2 (8.0)	3 (4.8)
10-12 months	2 (5.4)	1 (4.0)	3 (4.8)
More than 12 months	4 (10.8)	5 (2.0)	9 (14.5)

Additional analysis in Table 4 compares employment outside of higher education with supervised practice, indicating that 72% ($n=18$) of those who did not have a job outside of higher education while pursuing their degree held a graduate assistantship in addition to the basic internship requirements. In contrast, of those who held a job outside of higher education, 32% ($n=12$) completed only the basic requirements of two supervised internship experiences. While not conclusive, the research suggests that those who do not have a graduate assistantship opportunity may be more likely to work outside of higher education and those who work outside of higher education may be more likely to complete only the minimum requirements for supervised practice. This may result in limited direct experience in higher education comparative to peers and impact placement success. Graduate assistantships, which are often paid positions, may allow students the financial flexibility to forgo a job outside of higher education while simultaneously affording them additional practical experience in higher education.

Table 4: Comparison of employment status and supervised practice *n* (%)

	Job Outside Higher Education (<i>n</i>=37)	No Job Outside Higher Education (<i>n</i>=25)	TOTAL (<i>n</i>=62)
BASIC	12 (32.4)	1 (4.0)	13 (21.0)
GA	12 (32.4)	18 (72.0)	30 (48.4)
ADD	6 (16.2)	3 (12.0)	9 (14.5)
BOTH	12 (32.4)	8 (32.0)	20 (32.3)

To examine the second research question regarding differences in perceived barriers to placement based on gender, respondents were asked to indicate which barriers they faced in their job search process, with an option of choosing more than one. Barriers included a search focused on one particular functional area of higher education, being geographically bound or limited, salary considerations, cost of living considerations, and perceived lack of ability. Of the total respondents (*n*=72) including those who were not successful in finding a job in higher education or no longer worked in higher education, 22% (*n*=16) indicated they did not face any barriers in their job search. Overall, women were significantly more likely to indicate they faced no perceived barriers in their job search process as compared with men $\chi^2(1, N = 16) = 5.73, p = .013$. The results of a cross tabulation and chi square analysis examining differences in gender and perceived barriers to job placement is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Frequency distribution for perceived barriers to job placement based on gender

	Men (<i>n</i>=22) <i>n</i> (%)	Women(<i>n</i>=50) <i>n</i> (%)	χ^2	<i>p</i>
Committed to functional area	4 (18.2)	11 (22.0)	.135	.489
Geographically bound	7 (31.8)	12 (24.0)	.481	.338
Salary considerations	11 (50.0)	15 (30.0)	2.649	.088
Family ties	5 (22.7)	11(22.0)	.005	.586
Cost of living	6 (27.3)	7 (14.0)	1.819	.155
Lack of ability	11 (50.0)	12 (24.0)	4.751	.030

No statistically significant difference resulted in the frequency with which men and women identified specific barriers in their job search process. However, proportionately, men more frequently cited geographically bound, salary considerations, cost of living and lack of ability as barriers in their job search process. Women more frequently indicated their commitment to a specific functional area as a barrier. Men and women were similar in the frequency with which they cited family ties as a barrier in their overall job search. While the results are not conclusive, they provide several important points for discussion and further examination.

Discussion

The results of this analysis offer one of the first examinations of graduate student experience and job placement within a student affairs professional preparation program. We found that graduate student experience in the form of graduate assistantships and additional internships, beyond the basic curricular requirements, may positively impact job placement. Specifically, 81.5% of graduate students who held a graduate assistantship and 100% of students who conducted additional internships were placed within 1-6 months of graduation, as compared to a 70% placement rate for those who did not have a graduate assistantship or additional internship experience. Of particular interest to this discussion is the finding that graduate students who held both a graduate assistantship and conducted an extra internship had the lowest mean placement rate of all four subgroups. Additional evidence suggests that those who have graduate assistantships are less likely to work outside higher education, which may result in more direct and relevant experience for competitiveness in the job market. While the differences may not have been statistically significant, the results do present some evidence that the basic curricular standards that have been set, a minimum of 300 hours of supervised practice through internship or practicum (CAS, 2012), may not be sufficient for securing a job within the field of student affairs. While several larger studies have assessed alumni learning based on the CAS standards (Cujet et al., 2009; Young & Dean, 2015; Young & Janosik, 2007) they have not specifically examined supervised practice and its congruence with the expectations of the field. More specifically, programs similar to the one in this study might consider the availability of graduate assistantship opportunities and the impact these may have on the success of graduates in securing future employment.

Additionally, the examination of gender differences in perceived barriers to the job search process provides further insight into the success and challenges of graduate students in professional preparation programs in higher education. Unlike previous research, which found that women were more likely to remain in their home state and more likely to perceive their lack of ability as a barrier to career success (Berg & Ferber, 1983), our findings suggest that men were more likely to indicate a lack of ability and geographic limitations as barriers in their job search. Furthermore, men were more likely than women to indicate salary considerations and cost of living as perceived barriers; however, a large proportion of women also indicated salary considerations as a perceived barrier in their job search process. This evidence supports previous research in student affairs where financial concerns were a factor in attrition or intent to leave the field (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). The expected lower salary of entry-level positions may steer some graduate students to seek out higher salary positions where their qualifications and experience may not align with the expectations of the position, resulting in an unsuccessful placement. Conversely, women were more likely than men to indicate their commitment to a functional area as a perceived barrier in their job search. While previous research in student affairs has not examined this specifically, these findings reflect research in other disciplines, which suggests that students may in fact be unaware of the transferability of their experience (Haigh & Kilmartin, 1999). While there is generally agreement in the field as to the importance of transferable skills, there is little evidence to support this operationally. Liddell, Wilson, Pasquesi, Hirschy, and Boyle (2014) found that most student affairs graduates continued in professional positions within the same functional area as their graduate assistantship or graduate experience. Student's self-limiting thoughts about their experience and qualifications may serve as a barrier in their job search process, preventing them from considering positions that fall outside of their perceived area of expertise. Understanding factors and barriers to graduate student placement in the field of student affairs, equips faculty with greater knowledge to advise, educate, and prepare graduates for the job search process.

Limitations & Future Research

This study has several limitations, which can only serve as points of consideration for future research and greater understanding in this area. First, this study intentionally examined a decade of alumni from one professional preparation program in the field, resulting in a smaller sample size. Future studies might examine multiple programs with consideration given to the differences in program expectations surrounding graduate assistantships (required and not required) and internships. Having a larger sample with more representation from men would also provide more representation and an improved gender comparison. Second, it is important to note that the sample for this study included graduates from the past decade, during which time the U.S. experienced one of the most extreme recessions, which had a significant impact on employment rates (New, 2014). These conditions were not accounted for specifically within this quantitative examination and may be a factor in the delayed success of some of the graduates. Third, the sample size was not representative of the typical graduate student in this specific program, with 44% of alumni indicating they held a graduate assistantship as compared to an average of 25% each year. Given an over representation of alumni with graduate assistantships, the results may not accurately reflect the experience of graduates in the program of inquiry or programs similar in nature. Future research should strive for a more representative sample to accurately assess both placement rates and the experiences of graduates. And finally, the job search process for graduate students is an individualized experience and barriers cannot be fully concluded within a quantitative study. The results of this study are but a starting point in the conversation and may serve as a channel for a more in depth qualitative investigation into the job placement and job search experience of graduate students in student affairs professional preparation programs.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Practice

The findings of this study present several areas of consideration for faculty teaching in higher education and student affairs preparation programs, as well as the field as a whole. First, the evidence suggests that students with practical experience beyond the recommended CAS standards (300 hours) were more successful in their job search, securing jobs at a slightly faster rate than their peers. In a field in which a master's degree and relevant experience has become the industry standard, consideration should be given to the quantity, as well as quality, of the experience that is expected of recent graduates and how that aligns with the standards of our profession. Faculty in professional preparation programs should consider assessing the placement rates of their graduates and consider similar factors of experience. This type of assessment may provide additional evidence to garner administrative support for developing and providing finance for additional graduate assistantships in programs that may not have enough or may not have them at all. In an era in which completion and job placement are increasingly being considered as factors in program performance (Dougherty, Natow, Bork, Jones, & Vega, 2013), graduate preparation programs should consider their role and success with similar factors. Additionally, students should be encouraged or have the opportunity to seek additional experience beyond the minimum standard, either through graduate assistantships or additional internships, based on the required standards for each respective program.

This study also provides further understanding of the student job search process based on various perceived barriers. While men and women did not significantly differ in their responses, the evidence suggests that financial considerations, be it salary or cost of living based on location, are proportionately more frequently concerns for men, yet still important for women. While no previous research in the field of student affairs has examined this specifically, general research on salary expectations of men and women suggests that men have far greater expectations for their starting salary and perhaps less access to accurate information about salaries than women (Schweitzer, Lyons, Kuron, & Ng, 2014). This provides additional evidence to support open and

candid conversations about entry level salary expectations within the early stages of the program. Additionally, the number of men and women who identified perceived lack of ability as a barrier in their job search is an important factor for consideration. While the evidence is not necessarily conclusive, this might suggest that students are applying for jobs they may not be qualified for, based on their desire for quick advancement or greater salary, or it may be a factor of their practical experience. The data from this study supports the need for faculty and professional preparation programs to provide further professional development and training surrounding the job search process and expectations, so students may be better prepared to address these perceived barriers. This study represents only one program and therefore may not be generalizable to all student affairs professional preparation programs; however, the evidence in this study provides multiple points of consideration in the evaluation and assessment of graduate preparation programs and graduate student placement, of which both are becoming more significant in an area of increasing accountability.

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