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Rowan After Hours: the impact of student employment on student engagement

Lauren Thompson

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**ROWAN AFTER HOURS: THE IMPACT OF
STUDENT EMPLOYMENT ON
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

by
Lauren A. Thompson

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education Department
College of Graduate and Continuing Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
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at
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Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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This work is dedicated to my mother, Arlene, who taught me a love for education and inquisitive thought. Her unconditional love and unending support have motivated me throughout my life to keep moving on and never look back. I would have never been able to go onto graduate school without her guidance. Although you may be gone, your encouraging and loving words still guide and comfort me today.

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Abstract

Lauren A. Thompson

ROWAN AFTER HOURS: THE IMPACT OF STUDENT EMPLOYEMENT
ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

2012/13

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Masters of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of student employment in Rowan After Hours (RAH) on student engagement at Rowan University. All respondents were employed by RAH during the spring 2013 semester. A survey was used to gather information on various aspects of student engagement on campus, including how often students contributed to academic classes, utilized information learned in class in their academics or daily life, interacted with faculty or staff, time spent completing various tasks, number of pages written throughout the semester, and work and co-curricular experiences. Established research indicates that engaging students in a variety of educationally productive activities is associated with self-reported gains in general abilities, critical thinking skills, learning, and persistence. The findings of this study suggest that RAH student employees are more highly engaged at their institution than students at similar large, master's granting institutions. Moreover, evidence suggests that the OSA student development model, focusing on promoting student engagement, is meeting its goals and objectives.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	ix
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Significance of Study	2
Assumptions and Limitations	2
Operational Definitions	3
Research Questions	4
Overview of the Study	5
II. Review of the Literature	6
An Introduction to the Rowan After Hours Program	6
Student Engagement Theory	7
The National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE)	9
Relevant Studies in Student Engagement	11
The Impact of Employment on Student Engagement	16
Previous Research on the Rowan After Hours Program	18
Summary of the Literature Review	19

III. Methodology	21
Context of the Study	21
Population and Sample Selection	22
Instrumentation	22
Data Collection	24
Data Analysis	25
IV. Findings	26
Profile of Sample	26
Analysis of Data	29
Research Question 1	29
Research Question 2	33
Research Question 3	37
Research Question 4	40
V. Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	50
Summary of the Study	50
Discussion of Findings	51
Conclusions	58
Recommendations for Future Practice	62
Recommendations for Future Research	63
References	65

Appendixes

Appendix A Institutional Review Board Approval Letter	70
Appendix B <i>The College Student Report</i> Item Usage Agreement	72
Appendix C Rowan After Hours Student Employee Survey	75

List of Figures

FIGURE	PAGE
4.1 RAH and NSSE Response Comparison	49

List of Tables

TABLE	PAGE
4.1 Years Employed by RAH	27
4.2 GPA	27
4.3 Highest Anticipated Level of Education	28
4.4 Number of Courses Taken in Spring 2013	28
4.5 Integrating Coursework to Real-Life Experiences	30
4.6 Emphasis on Coursework	31
4.7 Hours Spent Reading for Class	31
4.8 Length of Written Papers	32
4.9 Institutional Influence on Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Development	33
4.10 Academic Involvement	34
4.11 Involvement with Faculty	35
4.12 Plans Before Graduating	36
4.13 Quality of On-Campus Interactions	37
4.14 Time Spent in a 7-Day Week	39
4.15 Comparison of GPA between Rowan and NSSE 2012	40
4.16 Comparison of Emphasis on Coursework	41
4.17 Comparison of Institutional Influence	42
4.18 Comparison of Academic Involvement	44
4.19 Comparison of Involvement with Faculty	45
4.20 Comparison of Plans Before Graduating	46
4.21 Comparison of Quality of On-Campus Interactions	47

Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Student engagement has been a topic of discussion in higher education since the 1970s and 1980s when there was significant attention being paid to the shortcomings of American educational practices, specifically addressing the concerns of gains in student learning and personal development (Koljiatic & Kuh, 2001). Recently, researchers such as Schroeder (2003) discuss the nature of the undergraduate experiences, specifically focusing on the “degree to which students are meaningfully engaged in a variety of educationally purposeful activities that enhance their learning and success” (p. 9). Although student engagement has been discussed in multiple facets, including the level of student engagement when involved in on-campus clubs and organizations, there has been little discussion on the impact of student employment on engagement, specifically in the Rowan After Hours (RAH) program at Rowan University.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if Rowan After Hours (RAH) student employees were actively engaged in the Rowan University community and their academics. RAH has recently changed its student development model in conjunction with the Office of Student Activities (OSA). In order to encourage student engagement within their employees, RAH in coordination with the OSA encourages students to participate in

trainings on various topics, educational opportunities, celebrations with peers and professional staff, and participate in recognizing fellow students for being a role model.

Along with the development model, RAH has committees that develop, implement, and manage their areas, while contributing to the other committees. These committees include the Technical Services Committee responsible for managing all technical services and equipment for the program, as well as technical training for the entire staff; a Marketing Committee tasked with creating inventive ways to promote new and existing programming for RAH; a Recognition Committee who collects nominations for “Employee of the Week” and the “Goldfish Awards” that are handed out throughout the semester to encourage student employees to stay motivated, as well as scheduling opportunities for the staff to spend time together outside of work, such as volunteer opportunities or bowling nights; and the New Programming Committee that creates new interactive programming for RAH, such as game shows and themed RAH nights.

Significance of the Study

This study examined the impact of student employment at RAH on student engagement. The findings of this study may validate the OSA’s development model and influence further policy changes within the office for the 2013-2014 academic year. Furthermore, this study could impact how the OSA helps students connect with their employment.

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of this survey was limited to Rowan University Rowan After Hours’ student employees in Glassboro, NJ during the spring 2013 semester. It was assumed that all students who took part in the survey would understand the value of their opinion and

be honest in their responses to the survey. However, this was not always true and became a limitation because the subjects may not have been truthful or understood the concept of student engagement. Another limitation was the potential for response bias due to the fact that students were completing a survey about their personal and academic experiences and may have felt that their standing as a student employee may have been affected by their answers, although it was clearly stated that this would not be the case. Rowan After Hours student employees were currently employed during the spring 2013 semester. The student employees had various experiences with RAH, including the amount of time they worked for RAH and what positions they held while working for RAH in the spring 2013 semester. Only those who willingly participated were included in this study. As an employee in the OSA and co-creator of the newest version of the student development model, there may be the potential for researcher bias in the findings.

Operational Definitions

1. Academic Good Standing: As per the “Undergraduate Academic Standing Policy” (2011), “Students who have attempted 15 or more semester hour credits and have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 are considered to be in good academic standing” (p. 1). To participate in a Rowan University work study program, either known as a Federal Work Study (FWS) or an Institutional Work Study (IWS), student employees must “be in good academic standing” in order to participate in work study programs on campus (New Student Employee Orientation, 2012, p. 65).
2. Engagement: Kuh (2009) describes engagement in two ways, including “organizing constructs for institutional assessment, accountability, and

improvement efforts” and a term used to “represent constructs such as quality of effort and involvement in productive learning communities” (pp. 5-6).

Furthermore, the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) states that student engagement is “the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities... [and] how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities” (About NSSE, 2012, para. 1).

3. Rowan After Hours: As defined by the RAH website, “Rowan After Hours (RAH), a Student Activities initiative, supports the mission of the Division of Student Life in providing opportunities for students to become active in campus life and encourages students to engage in safe and healthy decision-making. RAH offers a welcoming environment aiming to provide quality programming which accounts for the diverse needs and interests of students at Rowan University” (About RAH, 2012, para. 1).
4. Student Employees: Rowan University students who were also employed by Rowan After Hours, in the Office of Student Activities, during the spring 2013 semester.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does being a student employee in RAH encourage students to become engaged in the Rowan University community and their academics?

2. Are RAH employees making significant gains in personal development and growth through their engagement in RAH?
3. How does student employment in RAH impact student engagement?
4. How do RAH student employees compare to the reported 2012 NSSE results?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of scholarly literature that is relevant to this study. This section includes an introduction to the Rowan After Hours Late Night Programming Initiative, an overview of student engagement theory, an introduction of the *National Survey for Student Engagement* (NSSE), relevant studies in student engagement, previous research on the Rowan After Hours program, the impact of employment on student engagement, and a summary of the literature review.

Chapter III discusses the methodology that is utilized within this study. The methodology includes an explanation of the context of the study, population and sample selection, the instrumentation used to collect data, the data collection process, and analysis of the data and findings.

Chapter IV provides the findings of the research. This chapter further discusses the profile of the sample of subjects and an analysis of the data.

Chapter V concludes the study with a summary of the research, a discussion of the findings, conclusions reached based on the findings, and recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

An Introduction to the Rowan After Hours Program

RAH is a late night and weekend programming initiative started in the 2007-2008 academic year. Originally, RAH was a once a week program on Thursday nights, but the program has developed into a department in Student Activities, programming for three-nights a week. As stated on the RAH website, RAH is a

Student Activities initiative, supports the mission of the Division of Student Life in providing opportunities for students to become active in campus life and encourages students to engage in safe and healthy decision-making. RAH offers a welcoming environment aiming to provide quality programming which accounts for the diverse needs and interests of students at Rowan University. (About RAH, n.d., para. 1)

Currently, RAH employs one full-time professional staff member, one graduate coordinator, three undergraduate coordinators, and 20 undergraduate employees. These students go through a hiring process that consists of a resume and individual and group interviews to obtain a year-long contract with RAH. Recently, RAH has implemented a student development model consisting of four different sub-committees chaired by the undergraduate coordinators and the graduate coordinator. These committees develop, implement, and manage their areas, while assisting the other committees. The committees include the Technical Services Committee responsible for managing all technical services

and equipment for the program, as well as technical training for the entire staff; a Marketing Committee tasked with creating inventive ways to promote new and existing programming for RAH; a Recognition Committee that collects nominations for “Employee of the Week” and the “Goldfish Awards” that are handed out throughout the semester to encourage student employees to stay motivated, as well as scheduling opportunities for the staff to spend time together outside of work, such as volunteer opportunities or bowling nights; and the New Programming Committee that creates new interactive programming for RAH, such as game shows and themed RAH nights.

Student Engagement Theory

Since the seminal work of Astin, Pace, and Kuh, student engagement has been a hot topic in higher education. Although these researchers have coined different names for their theories, they all agree that students learn from what they do while attending college. Koljatic and Kuh (2001) reported that in the 1970s and 1980s there was significant discussion about the shortcomings of American educational practices, specifically addressing the concerns of gains in student learning and personal development. During this time, researchers were challenged to provide “direct evidence of student achievement, growth, and development” (Koljiatic & Kuh, 2001, p. 352) in the college experience to demonstrate educational excellence. Schroeder (2003) further describes this challenge when interviewing George Kuh. Schroeder (2003) discusses the “nature of the undergraduate experience – particularly the degree to which students are meaningfully engaged in a variety of educationally purposeful activities that enhance their learning and success” (p. 9). These experiences have been expanded to include out-

of-classroom learning opportunities and experiences that will compliment what they learn in the classroom.

Kuh (2009) describes student engagement as an “organizing construct for institutional assessment, accountability, and improvement efforts” (p. 5). He continues to discuss that engagement is the term used to “represent constructs such as quality of effort and involvement in productive learning activities,” (Kuh, 2009, p. 6) which are not specifically restricted to the classroom environment. Kuh (2009) explains that engaging students in “a variety of educationally productive activities also builds the foundation of skills and dispositions people need to live a productive, satisfying life after college” (p. 5). While many researchers have focused in the past on how students are engaged in their in-classroom learning experiences, Kuh (2009) suggests that an education is constructed of multiple kinds of activities, including being employed or participating in a school-sponsored organization.

Although researchers may use different terminology to describe what has become known as student engagement, they all agree that “students learn from what they do in college” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 186). Specifically, students who are actively engaged in their learning, whether in or out of the classroom, are more likely to make significant gains in their education. As Pike and Kuh (2005) suggest, engagement in college is associated with “objective and subjective measures of gains in general abilities and critical thinking” (p. 186). To be actively engaged in or out of the classroom in an educational experience, students must be making significant gains in their general abilities and critical thinking skills.

Although it is understood that students must make significant gains in their general abilities in order to be considered actively engaged in their educational experiences, Pike and Kuh (2005) found that student engagement is difficult to quantify. Students attend a variety of institutions with different policies and procedures and the students enter the school with a variety of background characteristics. Instead, what Pike and Kuh (2005) found as being the most important institutional factor in engaging students are the policies and practices that are adopted to specifically increase student engagement.

An institution is committed to students' active engagement in their learning and other educational experiences if the institution promotes those types of engagement. Pike and Kuh (2005) found that a student attending a small liberal arts college is more likely to have higher levels of engagement than a peer attending a large research institution. They also comment that large institutions should not be discouraged, but they must adopt more practices and policies that would increase involvement, such as housing opportunities for their students. As the researchers report, living on campus and participating in learning communities "substantially increases student engagement, self-reported gains in learning, and persistence" (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 187) as compared to students who commute to their institution. There is a powerful relationship between engagement and positive educational outcomes that need to be enhanced with institutional policies and procedures.

The National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE)

In order to better understand how these policies and practices are related, the *National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE)*, was created as a way to provide colleges and universities with "information about the activities in which their students

engage and point of areas where improvement may be needed” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 188). The NSSE is a combination of several survey instruments created in the 1970s that were considered to be bulky and lengthy with low response rates. In the early 1990s, the U.S. Department of Education was interested in developing tools to provide institutions with “valid, reliable information about the student experience” (Kuh, 2009, p. 7) and commissioned an evaluation of the current instruments. Out of this request, the NSSE prototype was created in order to measure “student behaviors highly correlated with many desirable learning and personal development outcomes in college” (Kuh, 2009, p. 8). Today, the NSSE surveys approximately 100,000 students annually in order to accumulate data on institutional improvement, document good practices for student engagement, and public advocacy (Kuh, 2009; Schroeder, 2003).

The information primarily gathered by the NSSE Questionnaire is student behaviors, institutional actions and requirements, reactions to college, and student background information that all contribute to students’ learning and development. With this information, institutions of higher education can better engage their students, promoting persistence, student engagement on campus, and self-reported gains in learning. As Kuh (2009) explains, institutions cannot change who their students are when they begin college, but they can influence who their students become with the right tools, policies, and procedures to engage students in active and meaningful educational experiences.

During an interview with George Kuh, Schroeder (2003) explains that the NSSE surveys first-year and senior students at four-year colleges and universities who “take part in educational activities... that are strongly associated with high levels of learning

and personal development” (p. 10). With this survey, Kuh and other researchers are looking to assess two specific aspects of student engagement. The first is the time and energy students allot for studying and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how institutions entice students to participate in purposeful activities that lead to student success. As Kuh explains in the interview with Schroeder (2003), the NSSE does not “assess student learning directly, the results of the survey point to areas where the colleges are performing well... [or] could be improved” (p. 10).

In the interview, Kuh and Schroeder (2003) describe the five benchmarks of education practice as outlined by the NSSE. These benchmarks include the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, a supportive campus environment, and the enriching educational experiences provided to students. Although several of these benchmarks relate specifically to the classroom, it is important to consider the role of meaningful out-of-classroom experiences. The NSSE aims to turn the conversation about quality of college to effective educational practices. For institutions, NSSE provides meaningful and immediate results and know where they are doing well and where they can improve to get students more actively engaged in college.

Relevant Studies in Student Engagement

Kuh and Umbach (2004) discuss insights into the NSSE results, focusing on the college conditions that contribute to character development from data accumulated from the NSSE. The NSSE surveys approximately 100,000 first-year and senior students annually. Kuh and Umbach (2004) found that students are most likely to report greater gains in character development if they attend baccalaureate liberal arts colleges and are

actively involved in community service, volunteerism, and are regularly exposed to diversity. Although the NSSE reports these greater gains in student engagement, it is necessary to remember these gains are also influenced by the students' major, age, ethnicity, religion, major, Greek affiliation, grade point average, and full-time versus part-time student status. Researchers also need to take into account the institution-level coefficients predicting gains in character development, such as the type of degree-granting institution, religious affiliation, and public versus private institution.

As Kuh and Umbach (2004) report, there are several limitations to the NSSE Questionnaire that do not represent the entire picture of student engagement. It is very likely that the NSSE Questionnaire does not capture all relevant dimensions of student character since it can be difficult to quantify all parts that make up a student. Another limitation is the validity of the questionnaire, specifically the validity of the self-reported gains. Throughout the questionnaire, students are asked to honestly report how they are doing in college without any form of "proof." It is understood that some students may not be the most forth-coming with the truth, specifically with grade point averages, and time and energy spent studying. Although Kuh and Umbach (2004) see this as a valid argument, they suggest that "students who are committed to character development selected a college that emphasizes character-promoting activities" (p. 49). The researchers suggest that students are more likely to pick an institution that mirrors their own values, beliefs, and the type of character that they wish to portray.

Student engagement theory does not specifically focus on in-classroom learning experiences. In recent years, researchers have expanded engagement theory to relate to educationally purposeful activities outside of the classroom. These activities could

include on-campus living or live-in learning communities, student organizations and clubs that provide educational or professional experience, and college or club sports that promote teamwork and a connection to the school. Institutions are seeing the need to provide students with educationally purposeful activities outside of the classroom in order to engage students in a different way to the college.

One such study that explored student engagement outside of the classroom was Hu, Kuh, and Li's (2008) study using the data collected from the *College Student Experience Questionnaire* research program between 1998 and 2004. Specifically, the research focused on student engagement in inquiry-oriented activities. The researchers define inquiry-oriented activities as experiential and problem-based learning, not necessarily rooted in the classroom. Throughout their research, Hu, Kuh, and Li (2008) found that regular engagement in inquiry-based activities has a positive and significant effect on personal gains, a positive on some college outcomes, and although many students benefit from this type of activity, not all students will benefit. In their research, Hu, Kuh, and Li (2008) found that engagement in activities that ask students to regularly problem solve, students will develop personally. The researchers suggest that students participate in inquiry-oriented activities, in and out of the classroom, to foster student engagement and personal development.

Furthermore, Carini, Kuh, and Klein (2006) found that "student engagement is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as critical thinking and grades" (p. 23). The researchers were able to find, that although there is a degree of student experience/background and institutional atmosphere that can affect engagement, in general students reported that the more engaged they were in out-of-classroom activities,

the more they felt to belong to a community and able to problem solve and think critically.

Dugan (2011) explains that participation in clubs and organizations “has long been identified as an important form of involvement that contributes to student learning across a variety of domains” (p. 17). The researcher notes that the influence of student groups and leadership opportunities is a critical outcome of students who are actively engaged in their institution. Students who are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills, interact with peers, and form a connection with the institution outside of the classroom are more likely to be engaged and benefit from these opportunities.

In her dissertation, Griffith (2011) studied student satisfaction and development through the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE). Griffith (2011) found in her research that it is important for student affairs professionals to engage students in extra-curricular activities that “encourage student-student interaction” (p. 35). Elkins, Forrester, and Noel-Elkins (2011) further support Griffith’s findings of student-student interaction to promote student engagement in order to create “a sense of campus community” (para. 1). After surveying 330 students with an online questionnaire, Elkins et al. (2011) found that involvement in out-of-class activities “enhances development and is a significant factor in retention” (para. 2) and student engagement in educationally purposeful activities, such as a club or on-campus job, is important to developing a sense of campus community.

Kelley-Hall (2010) researched the impact of student support services on students’ engagement. She had 100 active participants in the study and found that students are more likely to be engaged in the program or institution if there were consistent meetings,

participation over the phone, email, or in a group, participation by all in program activities and workshops, and participated in a regular program assessment. Kelley-Hall (2010) encourages professionals who work with students to make a “real-life” connection to the students’ work and their futures to benefit the most from student engagement. Furthermore, by encouraging students to actively participate in out-of-work functions, students were more likely to positively respond to the activities. As Kelley-Hall (2010) explains that student engagement provides a better understanding of how students learn by stating that the more students learn, “the more they are involved in both the academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience” (p. 10). She also found that her study demonstrated “a strong correlation between high student involvement in campus life and academic success” (Kelley-Hall, 2010, p. 146). Students who were actively engaged, surrounded by like-minded students, and have a personal connection to the institution through personal relationships with co-workers, faculty, and staff were more likely to excel academically, be comfortable with the “college life atmosphere” (Kelley-Hall, 2010, p. 146), and stay at their institution. Throughout her research, Kelley-Hall (2010) found that academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvement were the greatest impacts on student learning and the students’ total level of campus engagement.

A study on the impact of student employment on student involvement took place at Rowan University and was conducted by Stefanie Anderson in 2009. Anderson (2009) notes that the relationship between student employment and academic success and persistence has many variables that may impact this relationship, including “the number of hours a student works per week, living conditions, and on-campus versus off-campus employment” (p. 1). The purpose of her research was to “assess the impact of student

employment on the level of involvement of students who lived on Rowan University's campus" (Anderson, 2009, p. 2) during the fall 2008 semester.

Anderson's (2009) study surveyed 223 students at Rowan University during the 2008-2009 academic year. Her findings suggested that "employed students spent almost an average of an hour more in involvement activities per week than the unemployed students" (p. 37). Furthermore, Anderson (2009) found that students who were employed on campus were 20% more likely to spend time in involvement activities than students employed off-campus. Employed students on average spent 4.28 hours per week involved in social clubs than any other involvement activity. Students who were employed were less likely to participate in intercollegiate sports. In Anderson's (2009) study, only six employed students were involved in intercollegiate sports with "an average of 20.33 hours per week was reported" (p. 38). As Anderson (2009) states in her conclusion, "Some students are more inclined to fit work, activities, and study into their schedules while others become overwhelmed with one or two of the three" (p. 41).

The Impact of Employment on Student Engagement

College employment has become a financial need for many students on campus. Moore and Rago (2009) note that during the 1999-2000 academic year, 80% of college students were working which is an 8% increase from the previous decade. The research in the field of student employment and engagement is varied, notes Moore and Rago (2009), stating that much of the research is "varied and contradictory, and have often been limited to single or a small number of institutions" (p. 87). In the authors' findings, it was found that "higher levels of engagement among students have been positively linked to critical thinking, in grades, and in persistence" (Moore & Rago, 2009, p. 89).

Another area of concern for college student employees is their motivation for employment. Moore and Rago (2009) suggest that the students' motivation can benefit from their college experience positively. In previous research, it has been found that "important developmental benefits of this congruence between students' career goals and their college experience" provide long-term benefits for the student (Moore & Rago, 2009, p. 90). There is a need for students to understand and relate to their on campus work and how it will benefit their future career goals. Moore and Rago (2009) found that the students who "work moderate amounts (1-5 and 10-15 hours per week) have slightly (although statistically significant) higher grades" than those who have worked more than 30 hours per week (p. 97). Women students, minority students, first-year students, part-time students, and younger students all reported higher grades than their counterparts, and students that attended less selective more urban and doctoral level schools also reported higher grade point averages (Moore & Rago, 2009).

With these findings, it is important that employers maintain a minimum amount of hours students can work, reach out to new and first year students, and help students connect with their employment. Moore and Rago (2009) suggest a "Continued reinforcement of skill development in the training, supervision, and performance evaluation processes can be used to create a habit of thinking in a future-oriented way" (p. 101). Although there has been some research on student employment, the knowledge-base is lacking in significant research on student employees and student development models. There is also very little research on the impact of student employment on overall grade point average (GPA) and academics.

Previous Research on the Rowan After Hours Program

In 2010, Brian Milstead completed his thesis at Rowan University on the impact of late night programming on student involvement on the Rowan campus. Milstead (2010) found while conducting his research that the previous research has focused primarily on how late night programming impacts on campus drinking habits. Milstead (2010) discovered that “It is unknown how successful late night programs that are geared towards student involvement are in achieving their mission, the mission of their larger department, or the overall mission of the institution” (p. 2).

Throughout the spring 2010 semester, Milstead (2010) surveyed 365 students who attended RAH at least once during that semester. The researcher’s results indicated an overall satisfaction with RAH. As Milstead (2010) reports, “the unique social culture and activities offered at RAH encourage further involvement and gives students the belief that the Rowan community is concerned with their future success and that they feel connected to the community” (p. 76). Furthermore, students become engaged in the Rowan community, realizing that they do not have to take part in underage drinking in order to belong to the Rowan community.

Milstead (2010) explains that students engage with the campus community and create personal connections with peers when they attend late night programming such as RAH. The researcher concluded that the “more focus paid to these personal connections amongst students, the greater the opportunity for student involvement” (p. 78). Many of the respondents commented that they made personal connections to the RAH staff and their interaction with the staff was their “favorite part of the late night program” (Milstead, 2010, p. 78). Seeing a socializing with peers is an integral part to student

engagement and retention rates, this study further demonstrates how late night programming can engage the student body at Rowan University. Milstead (2010) suggests that further study of the RAH student staff with student developmental theory would help to encourage students in their future success.

Summary of the Literature Review

The research proposed throughout this chapter heavily suggests the benefits to the student and institution when implementing policy to promote student engagement outside of the classroom. Not only will students learn important critical thinking and problem solving skills, students will be more likely to stay at their institution, form relationships at the college or university, have a positive impact on student grades, and provide students with real-life experiences. These suggested benefits of student engagement are related to positive personal development and growth within students. Although student engagement was originally proposed as a way to research students in the classroom, the definition has expanded to include extracurricular activities and student employment on campus.

These studies demonstrate the beneficial nature of engaging students in college life and their work outside of the classroom. Despite these findings, there is very little research done on promoting student engagement within student employment opportunities. More research needs to be conducted on the benefit of students being employed on campus. Students can spend upwards of 15 to 20 hours a week working on campus, yet there has been little research done on the way students are engaged in their work and how engaged they are with the institution as a whole. Specifically, more research needs to be conducted in the Office of Student Activities on the students

employed by the Rowan After Hours program and their engagement with their work and Rowan University.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University is a four-year, public institution that has a student population 12,183, of which 10,750 are undergraduate students (Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning, 2012). Rowan University was established in 1923 as a normal school “with a mission to train teachers for South Jersey classrooms” (From Normal to Extraordinary: The History of Rowan University, 2008, para. 1). As the town of Glassboro grew, and the need for a more comprehensive education system in South Jersey rose, the normal school was slowly transformed into a junior college, then a four-year institution. In 1992, industrialist Henry Rowan and his wife Betty donated \$100 million to Glassboro State, launching the college into university status and renaming the institution to Rowan University in 1997 (From Normal to Extraordinary: The History of Rowan University, 2012). Most recently, Rowan University has developed a partnership with the Cooper Health System, creating the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University. The medical school welcomed its first class in 2012 (From Normal to Extraordinary: The History of Rowan University, 2012).

The Office of Student Activities states that “Through constant collaboration with campus partners, the OSA plans and implements co-curricular programs for all students that are designed to stimulate personal development, create opportunities for student

engagement, and contribute to building campus community” (About Us, 2012, para. 1). The OSA employs approximately 28 students, including RAH employees, a graphic artist, videographer, a web designer, and two graduate coordinators. RAH employs 20 students, one graduate coordinator, and one professional staff member. There are three student coordinator positions, which supervise the remainder of the student staff, must have four office hours a week, and directly report to the professional staff member. The student staff is 80% female and 20% male. Students are scheduled to work on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays when Rowan is open. Their work hours are from 7:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. during these three nights. During the week, students must attend their committee meetings. The committees include Technical Services Committee, Recognition Committee, Marketing Committee, and the New Programming Committee. These committees are run by the graduate coordinator and three student coordinators.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population of this study was all RAH student employees at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey during the spring 2013 semester. The available population was 19 RAH student employees at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, Gloucester County. The convenience sample was selected students who were working for RAH in the spring 2013 semester. There are were 16 student employees and three student coordinators working for RAH during the spring 2013 semester.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used to assess the RAH student employee’s engagement in their work, academics, and in Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey was adapted from the knowledge base with changes to accommodate this study. The survey

instrument was adopted from the online version of the *National Survey of Student Engagement 2013* (NSSE) developed by *The College Student Report* and the Trustees of Indiana University. Copyright and permission to use the survey instrument can be found in *The College Student Report Item Usage Agreement* (Appendix __). The 21-item survey is made up of multiple-choice questions and a Likert-style evaluation.

The NSSE is a student survey... [that] annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. (About NSSE, 2012, para. 2)

The survey empirically confirms the types of good practices utilized in undergraduate education that are associated with desired outcomes.

NSSE was created in 1998 when the Pew Trusts supported the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in the creation of designing a survey “to explore ways of understanding the extent to which institutions emphasize effective teaching practices and students engage in educationally purposeful activities” (NSSE Timeline: 1998-2009, n.d., para. 1). During this time, the design team consisted of Alexander Astin, Gary Barnes, Arthur Chickering, Peter Ewell, John Gardener, George Kuh, Richard Light, Ted Marchese, and C. Robert Pace. In 2000, the first full-scale national administration of NSSE was launched on paper and online. As of 2009, about 1,393 U.S. and Canadian institutions have participated in NSSE (NSSE Timeline: 1998-2009, n.d.).

The Rowan After Hours Student Survey (Appendix B) consists of 21 items in a multiple choice and Likert scale to determine the relationship between being a student employee of RAH and being actively engaged at Rowan University. These statements were rated on a scale of 1-3, 1-4, and 1-8. Students were asked to rate how often they participated in certain activities, their coursework load, how many hours spent on certain assignments, how many papers they completed during this academic year, and what they plan on participating in before they graduate. An additional nine questions were asked to accumulate demographic data to determine age, gender, class level, years working for RAH, international affiliation, number of majors, grade point average, if the student began college at Rowan University, and the highest level of education the students expect to complete.

To determine face validity, I had three student employees who are not currently employed by RAH and two professional staff members examine the survey for its readability and efficacy. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the survey (Appendix B) were .815, indicating reasonable internal consistency among survey items.

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix A), a pilot test of the survey was conducted. The field test revealed that the survey was readable and ready to be administered to the RAH staff. Students who reviewed the survey are currently not employed by RAH.

Data Collection

The students selected to receive the survey were employed by RAH during the spring 2013 semester. The survey was administered in January 2013 and received a brief informational introduction prior to participating in the survey. This introduction

explained that the participation in this survey was completely voluntary and their participation would help with my thesis. The information collected from this survey may influence how the OSA conducts their student development in the future. No identifying information was collected on the survey.

Data Analysis

The independent variables in this study include gender, age, the length of time working for RAH, and the type of position within RAH. Information for these variables was collected in the survey provided to the student employees. Variations on student participation in Rowan University, beliefs and attitudes toward their work in RAH, and the students' academic abilities were explored using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage tables. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution and percentages), means, and standard deviation were used to examine the data in regards to the research questions.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of Sample

The subjects for this study were student employees selected from the Rowan University Rowan After Hours (RAH) program in Glassboro, New Jersey in spring 2013. The students surveyed were employed by RAH in the spring of 2013 and had been previously employed by RAH for at least one semester prior to the spring 2013 semester. Of the 19 surveys distributed, 19 completed surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 100%. There were 19 students employed by RAH in spring 2013. There were 5 males (26%) and 14 females (74%). Of the 19 students, 3 (16%) reported being sophomores, 7 (37%) reported being juniors, and 9 (47%) reported being seniors. Since RAH hires in the spring semester for the fall semester, it is rare to have a freshman employee. None of the students reported being an international student.

Table 4.1 describes how long each student has been employed by RAH as of January 2013. A majority (52.6%) reported that they have been employed by RAH for less than one year.

Table 4.1

Years Employed by RAH (N=19)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than one year	10	52.6
One year	1	5.3
Two years	4	21.1
Three years	2	10.5
Four or more years	2	10.5

When asked how many majors they plan to complete while enrolled at Rowan University (excluding minors), 11 students (58%) reported completing one major while 8 students (42%) reported that they plan to complete more than one major. Fourteen students (74%) reported starting their college experience at Rowan University while 5 students (26%) reported starting at another college and then transferring in to Rowan.

Table 4.2 describes the types of grades RAH student employees most commonly receive while in college. A majority of students (31.6%) reported earning a B+ while enrolled at Rowan University. No one reported regularly earning a grade below a B-.

Table 4.2

GPA (N=19)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
A	4	21.1
A-	3	15.8
B+	6	31.6
B	4	21.1
B-	2	10.5

Table 4.3 describes the highest level of education each student ever expects to complete. A majority of students (63.2%) anticipate earning their master's degree at some point in their future.

Table 4.3

Highest Anticipated Level of Education (N=19)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)	6	31.6
Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)	12	63.2
Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)	1	5.3

Table 4.4 describes the amount of courses each student employee was taking for credit during the current academic term. A majority (47.4%) were taking 5 classes for credit during the spring 2013 semester.

Table 4.4

Number of Courses Taken in Spring 2013 (N=19)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
1	1	5.3
4	3	15.8
5	9	47.4
6	3	15.8
7 or more	3	15.8

During the spring 2013 semester, a majority of RAH student employees were taking 5 courses for credit (47.4%). The remainder of the students reported taking 1 course (5.3%), 4 courses (15.8%), 6 courses (15.8%), and 7 or more courses (15.8%). In order to be employed by RAH, a student must be a full-time student which is considered 4 or more courses. Students were asked to evaluate their entire educational experience at Rowan University. RAH student employees reported having an either excellent experience (57.9%) or good experience (42.1%).

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: Does being a student employee in RAH encourage students to become more engaged in the Rowan University community and their academics?

Table 4.5 contains data showing how often they reported connecting learning experiences within the classroom to other experiences. A majority of students responded that they Very Often or Often utilize what they learned inside the classroom to other experiences in different classes or outside the classroom. Only 1 student (5.3%), responded that he/she has never included a diverse perspective in course discussions, examined the strengths and weaknesses of personal views on a topic, or tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.

Table 4.5

<i>Integrating Coursework to Real-Life Experiences (N=19)</i>								
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Never</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge <i>M=3.368, SD= .495</i>	7	36.8	12	63.2	0	0	0	0
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments <i>M=3.368, SD= .683</i>	9	47.4	8	42.1	2	10.5	0	0
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept <i>M=3.105, SD= .737</i>	6	31.6	9	47.4	4	21.1	0	0
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues <i>M=3.052, SD=.705</i>	5	26.3	10	52.6	4	21.1	0	0
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective <i>M=2.789, SD=.854</i>	4	21.1	8	42.1	6	31.6	1	5.3
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue <i>M=2.736, SD=.805</i>	3	15.8	9	47.4	6	31.6	1	5.3
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions <i>M=2.6842, SD=.820</i>	3	15.8	8	42.1	7	36.8	1	5.3

Table 4.6 demonstrates how often a students' coursework emphasized particular methods within the classroom. A majority of students responded saying they have Very Often or Often been encouraged to utilize the methods listed in Table 4.6. Only one respondent stated that he/she has never been encouraged to memorize course materials during the current academic school year.

Table 4.6

<i>Emphasis in Coursework (N=19)</i>									
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Never</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts <i>M=3.263, SD=.733</i>	8	42.1	8	42.1	3	15.8	0	0	
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations <i>M=3.210, SD=.713</i>	7	36.8	9	47.4	3	15.8	0	0	
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information <i>M=3.1579, SD=.688</i>	6	31.6	10	52.6	3	15.8	0	0	
Memorizing course material <i>M=3.105, SD=.875</i>	7	36.8	8	42.1	3	15.8	1	5.3	
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source <i>M=3.105, SD=.809</i>	7	36.8	7	36.8	5	26.3	0	0	

Table 4.7 contains data that demonstrate how often students read for their courses during a typical 7-day week. As the chart shows, a majority of the students (52.6%) spent 1-5 hours a week reading for their courses while 42.1% spent 6-10 hours reading, and only 1 student (5.3%) reported spending 11-15 hours reading during a week.

Table 4.7

<i>Hours Spent Reading for Class (N=19)</i>		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
1-5 hours	10	52.6
6-10 hours	8	42.1
11-15 hours	1	5.3

Table 4.8 describes how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks they have completed of various lengths. As the table demonstrates, all of the students have written

at least one paper that was up to 5 pages, while a majority of the students (42.1%) reported not being assigned an 11 page paper or more during the academic year.

Table 4.8

Length of Written Papers (N=19)

Variable	None		1-2 papers		3-5 papers		6-10 papers		11-15 papers		16-20 papers		More than 20	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Up to 5 pages <i>M=3.789, SD=1.397</i>	0	0	4	21.1	5	26.3	4	21.1	3	15.8	3	15.8	0	0
Between 6-10 pages <i>M=2.210, SD=.976</i>	4	21.1	10	52.6	2	10.5	3	15.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 pages or more <i>M=2.000, SD=1.154</i>	8	42.1	6	31.6	3	15.8	1	5.3	1	5.3	0	0	0	0

Table 4.9 demonstrates the types of experiences each student had that contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development. As the table shows, a majority of students felt that Rowan University either helped them Very Much or Quite a Bit to work effectively with others (a total of 100%), develop or clarify a personal code of values and ethics (a total of 100%), think critically and analytically (a total of 94.7%), acquire job- or work-related knowledge and skills (a total of 94.7%), to write and speak more clearly and effectively (a total of 89.5%), understand people of different backgrounds (a total of 89.5%), be an informed and active citizen (a total of 89.4%), and solve complex real-world problems (a total of 84.2%). On the other hand, the data demonstrate that a majority of the students felt that Rowan University helped them to analyze numerical and statistical information either Some (42.1%) or Very Little (5.3%).

Table 4.9

<i>Institutional Influence on Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Development (N=19)</i>								
Variable	Very much		Quite a bit		Some		Very little	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Work effectively with others <i>M=3.894, SD=.315</i>	17	89.5	2	10.5	0	0	0	0
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills <i>M=3.631, SD=.597</i>	13	68.4	5	26.3	1	5.3	0	0
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics <i>M=3.473, SD=.512</i>	9	47.4	10	52.6	0	0	0	0
Thinking critically and analytically <i>M=3.473, SD=.611</i>	10	52.6	8	42.1	1	5.3	0	0
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.) <i>M=3.368, SD=.683</i>	9	47.4	8	42.1	2	10.5	0	0
Speaking clearly and effectively <i>M=3.315, SD=.671</i>	8	42.1	9	47.4	2	10.5	0	0
Being an informed and active citizen <i>M=3.263, SD=.653</i>	7	36.8	10	52.6	2	10.5	0	0
Solving complex real-world problems <i>M=3.210, SD=.713</i>	7	36.8	9	47.4	3	15.8	0	0
Writing clearly and effectively <i>M=3.157, SD=.898</i>	8	42.1	7	36.8	3	15.8	1	5.3
Analyzing numerical and statistical information <i>M=2.684, SD=.885</i>	4	21.1	6	31.6	8	42.1	1	5.3

Research Question 2: Are RAH employees making significant gains in personal development and growth through their engagement in RAH?

Table 4.10 how often students interacted with one another, their course work, and assignments in class. As the table demonstrates, the majority of RAH employees have been actively involved in class. Although RAH student employees very often or often ask questions and contribute to course discussion (a total of 84.2%), explained course

material to one or more students (a total of 78.9%), worked with other students on course projects and assignments (a total of 78.9%), prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students (a total of 73.7%), and prepared two or more drafts of a paper assignment before handing it in (a total of 36.9%), subjects reported 5.3% very often and 31.6% often go to class without completing readings or assignments.

Table 4.10

<i>Academic Involvement (N=19)</i>									
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Never</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Asked questions or contributed to course discussion in other ways <i>M=3.210, SD=.713</i>	7	36.8	9	47.4	3	15.8	0	0	
Explained course material to one or more students <i>M=3.157, SD=.764</i>	7	36.8	8	42.1	4	21.1	0	0	
Worked with other students on course projects or assignments <i>M=3.052, SD=.705</i>	5	26.3	10	52.6	4	21.1	0	0	
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students <i>M=3.000, SD=.881</i>	6	31.6	8	42.1	4	21.1	1	5.3	
Gave a course presentation <i>M=2.789, SD=.917</i>	5	26.3	6	31.6	7	36.8	1	5.3	
Asked another student to help you understand course material <i>M=2.578, SD=.837</i>	2	10.5	9	47.4	6	31.6	2	10.5	
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in <i>M=2.368, SD=.955</i>	3	15.8	4	21.1	9	47.4	3	15.8	
Attend an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.) <i>M=2.315, SD=.945</i>	3	15.8	3	15.8	10	52.6	3	15.8	
Come to class without completing readings or assignments <i>M=2.157, SD=.898</i>	1	5.3	6	31.6	7	36.8	5	26.3	

Students were asked how often they discussed career plans with faculty; worked with faculty on activities outside of coursework; discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with faculty members; and discussed their academic performance with a faculty member. As Table 4.11 demonstrates, a majority of students often or sometimes talked to faculty about these specific areas in and out-of-the classroom.

Table 4.11

<i>Involvement with Faculty (N=19)</i>									
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Never</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.) <i>M=2.947, SD=.911</i>	5	26.3	10	52.6	2	10.5	2	10.5	
Talked about career plans with faculty members <i>M=2.631, SD=.830</i>	3	15.8	7	36.8	8	42.1	1	5.3	
Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member <i>M=2.578, SD=.768</i>	2	10.5	8	42.1	8	42.1	1	5.3	
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class <i>M=2.421, SD=.837</i>	2	10.5	6	31.6	9	47.4	2	10.5	

Table 4.12 contains information about their progress and interest in participating in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical practice; held a formal leadership role in a student organization; participated in a learning community or some other formal program; participated in a study abroad program; worked with a faculty member on a research project; and completed a culminating senior experience. As the data show, while most students completed or were in the process of, or planning to participate in an internship, a majority of the students had or held a formal leadership role (68.4%), 63.2% of students had or were participating in a learning community or similar

program, and 31.6% of students had or were in the process of completing their culminating senior experience, while 47.4% anticipated to complete a senior experience prior to graduation. A majority of students (57.9%) did not plan on participating in a study abroad program.

Table 4.12

Plans Before Graduating

Variable	Done or in progress		Plan to do		Do not plan to do		Have not decided	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group <i>N= 19, M=3.473, SD=.904</i>	13	68.4	3	15.8	2	10.5	1	5.3
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical practice <i>N= 19, M=3.368, SD=.683</i>	9	47.4	8	42.1	2	10.5	0	0
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together <i>N= 19, M=3.210, SD=1.084</i>	12	63.2	6	31.6	0	0	1	5.3
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.) <i>N= 19, M=2.894, SD=1.100</i>	6	31.6	9	47.4	0	0	4	21.1
Work with a faculty member on a research project <i>N= 19, M=2.263, SD=.933</i>	2	10.5	5	26.3	8	42.1	4	21.1
Participate in a study abroad program <i>n= 18, M=2.222, S=.732</i>	1	5.3	4	21.1	11	57.9	2	10.5

Table 4.13 presents the students' quality of interactions with fellow students, academic advisors, faculty, student services staff, and other administrative staff and offices. The majority of RAH employees (89.5%) reported having excellent interactions with students, 57.9% of students reported having excellent interactions with faculty, 42.1% of students stated they have had excellent interactions, and 47.4% said they had

acceptable interactions with student services staff, 63.2% reported having acceptable interactions with academic advisors, and 47.4% said they had acceptable interactions with other administrative staff and offices. The lowest reported area was 21.1% of students who reported having poor interactions with other administrative staff and offices.

Table 4.13

Quality of On-Campus Interactions (N=19)

Variable	Excellent		Acceptable		Poor		N/A	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Students <i>M=3.894, SD=.315</i>	17	89.5	2	10.5	0	0	0	0
Faculty <i>M=3.578, SD=.507</i>	11	57.9	8	42.1	0	0	0	0
Academic Advisors <i>M=3.263, SD=.561</i>	6	31.2	12	63.2	1	5.3	0	0
Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.) <i>M=3.263, SD=.805</i>	8	42.1	9	47.4	1	5.3	1	5.3
Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) <i>M=2.789, SD=.917</i>	4	21.1	9	47.4	4	21.1	2	10.5

Research Question 3: How does student employment in RAH impact student engagement?

Table 4.14 describes how the students spent their time during a typical 7-day week. As the table demonstrates, all RAH employees worked on campus between 1 hour – 30 hours per week, with the majority of students (47.4%) stated that they worked between 16-20 hours on campus per week. A majority of students (84.2%) did not work for pay off campus. All RAH employees spent between 1 hour-20 hours preparing for

class, with 31.6% spending between 16-20 hours preparing for class in one week. The majority of RAH employees spent at least 1 hour participating in a co-curricular activity with the majority (31.6%) spending 1-5 hours participating in a co-curricular activity.

Table 4.14 demonstrates that a majority of the RAH employees (42.1%) spent 1-5 hours volunteering, while 31.6% spent no time volunteering. A majority of the students (31.6%) spent between 6-10 hours relaxing and socializing, but no RAH employees spent any time providing for dependents. Finally, a majority of the students (63.2%) had not spent time commuting to campus, while 31.6% spent 1-5 hours commuting, and 5.3% spent 11-15 hours a week commuting to campus.

Table 4.14

<i>Time Spent in a 7-Day Week (N=19)</i>																
Variable	0		1-5		6-10		11-15		16-20		21-25		26-30		More than 30	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>												
Working for pay on campus <i>M=4.526, SD=1.263</i>	0	0	1	5.3	4	21.1	2	10.5	9	47.4	2	10.5	1	5.3	0	0
Relaxing and socializing <i>M=4.315, SD=1.492</i>	0	0	1	5.3	6	31.6	4	21.1	4	21.1	3	15.8	0	0	1	5.3
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities) <i>M=3.578, SD=1.216</i>	0	0	5	26.3	4	21.1	4	21.1	6	31.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.) <i>M=3.315, SD=1.416</i>	1	5.3	6	31.6	4	21.1	3	15.8	4	21.1	1	5.3	0	0	0	0
Doing community service or volunteer work <i>M=2.315, SD=1.701</i>	6	31.6	8	42.1	3	15.8	0	0	1	5.3	0	0	0	0	1	5.3
Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.) <i>M=1.473, SD=.772</i>	12	63.2	6	31.6	0	0	1	5.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Working for pay off campus <i>M=1.210, SD=.535</i>	16	84.2	2	10.5	1	5.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.) <i>M=1.000, SD=.000</i>	19	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Research Question 4: How do RAH student employees compare to the reported 2012 NSSE results?

Table 4.15 describes the comparison of grade point average between RAH employees and the NSSE 2012 results. As the chart indicates, RAH employees did not earn less than a B- grade, while 5% of students reported falling below a C+ on the 2012 NSSE.

Table 4.15

Comparison of GPA Between Rowan and NSSE 2012

Variable	% of RAH	% of NSSE 2012
A	21.1	30
A-	15.8	20
B+	31.6	20
B	21.1	18
B-	10.5	6
C+	0	4
C	0	1
C- or lower	0	0

Table 4.16 demonstrates the comparison of emphasis in coursework between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 survey results from a large master’s university. As the table demonstrates, RAH student employees answered Very Often or Often more often than the NSSE 2012 survey results. In analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts, RAH responded with 84.2% in Very Often and Often compared to NSSE’s 86% response. In response to applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new solutions, RAH student employees answered Very Often and Often for a total of 84.2% while NSSE 2012 respondents answered 82% with Very Often and Often. Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information, 84.2% of RAH student employees responded Very Often and Often while

only 78% of NSSE 2012 responded this way. RAH student employees responded with 78.9% to Very Often and Often in memorizing course material while only 64% of NSSE respondents answered Very Often and Often. Finally, RAH student employees responded Very Often and Often 73.6% on evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source, while NSSE 2012 respondents reported a slightly higher response to Very Often and Often with 76%.

Table 4.16

<i>Comparison of Emphasis in Coursework</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	42.1	46	42.1	40	84.2	86
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	36.8	47	47.4	35	84.2	82
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	31.6	38	52.6	40	84.2	78
Memorizing course material	36.8	27	42.1	37	78.9	64
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	36.8	37	36.8	39	73.6	76

Table 4.17 shows the results of the comparison between RAH student employee responses and NSSE 2012 responses from a large master’s institution of institutional influence. In this chart, RAH consecutively reported Very Much and Quite a Bit more often than NSSE. In acquiring job – or work-related knowledge and skills, 94.7% of RAH employees reported Very Much and Quite a Bit versus 76% reported by NSSE. In developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics, 100% of RAH student employees responded Very Much and Quite a Bit compared to the 62% reported by

NSSE. In thinking critically and analytically, 94.2% of RAH student employees reported Very Much or Quite a Bit compared to the 87% of NSSE respondents. When asked if the institution promoted an understanding of people of other backgrounds, RAH reported 89.5% Very Much and Quite a Bit versus the 57% reported by NSSE. In speaking clearly and effectively, 89.5% of RAH reported Very Much and Quite a bit compared to the 75% reported by NSSE. When asked if the institution helped students in solving complex real-world problems, RAH reported 84.2% Very Much and Quite a Bit while NSSE only reported 64%. Finally, in writing clearly and effectively, RAH reported 78.9% Very Much and Quite a Bit while NSSE 2012 respondents reported 79% - a 0.1% difference.

Table 4.17

<i>Comparison of Institutional Influence</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very much</i>		<i>Quite a bit</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	68.4	43	26.3	33	94.7	76
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	47.4	31	52.6	31	100	62
Thinking critically and analytically	52.6	53	42.1	34	94.7	87
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	47.4	26	42.1	31	89.5	57
Speaking clearly and effectively	42.1	39	47.4	36	89.5	75
Solving complex real-world problems	36.8	29	47.4	35	84.2	64
Writing clearly and effectively	42.1	42	36.8	37	78.9	79

Table 4.18 shows the comparison of academic involvement between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from a large master's institution. When asked if students asked questions or contributed to course discussion in other ways, 84.2% of

RAH student employees reported Very Often and Often while NSSE respondents reported 78%. When asked about working with other students on course projects or assignments, RAH student employees reported 78.9% Very Often and Often while NSSE respondents reported 53%. Students were asked how often they gave a course presentation, 57.9% of RAH student employees reported Very Often and Often while NSSE respondents reported Very Often and Often 66%. In preparing two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in, 36.9% of RAH student employees reported Very Often and Often while NSSE respondents reported 49% Very Often and Often. When asked how often students attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance, 31.6% of RAH student employees reported Very Often and Often and NSSE reported 22% Very Often and Often. Finally, when students were asked how often they come to class without completing readings or assignments, 36.9% of RAH reported Very Often and Often while 20% of NSSE reported Very Often and Often.

Table 4.18

<i>Comparison of Academic Involvement</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %	<i>RAH</i> %	<i>NSSE</i> %
Asked questions or contributed to course discussion in other ways	36.8	47	47.4	31	84.2	78
Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	26.3	20	52.6	33	78.9	53
Gave a course presentation	26.3	29	31.6	37	57.9	66
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	15.8	22	21.1	27	36.9	49
Attend an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)	15.8	9	15.8	13	31.6	22
Come to class without completing readings or assignments	5.3	7	31.6	13	36.9	20

Table 4.19 demonstrates the comparison of involvement with faculty between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from large master's institutions. When students were asked how often they worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework, 78.9% of RAH student employees responded Very Often and Often while only 25% of NSSE respondents responded Very Often and Often. RAH student employees reported 52.6% Very Often and Often when asked how often they have talked about career plans with faculty members while NSSE respondents reported only 46%. When asked how often students discussed their academic performance with a faculty member, 52.6% of RAH reported Very Often and Often while 63% of NSSE respondents reported Very Often and Often. RAH student employees reported 42.1% Very Often and Often when asked how often they discussed course topics, ideas, or

concepts with a faculty member outside of class, while only 30% of NSSE respondents reported Very Often and Often.

Table 4.19

<i>Comparison of Involvement with Faculty</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>
Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	26.3	10	52.6	15	78.9	25
Talked about career plans with faculty members	15.8	20	36.8	26	52.6	46
Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	10.5	30	42.1	33	52.6	63
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	10.5	12	31.6	18	42.1	30

Table 4.20 is a comparison of RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from large master’s institutions of plans before graduating college. When students were asked if they have completed, working on, or plan to participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical practice, 89.5% of RAH reported that they were Done or in Progress and Plan to do, while only 76% of NSSE respondents reported the same. In participating in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together, 94.8% of RAH reported that they are Done or in progress or Plan to do while only 38% of NSSE respondents reported the same. When students were asked where they are in completing a culminating senior experience, 79% of RAH reported that they were Done or in progress or plan to do before graduating while NSSE reported 68%. RAH reported that 36.8% were Done or in progress and plan to work with a faculty member on a research project

while NSSE reported 32% of students were doing the same. Finally, when asked if they would participate in a study abroad program, 26.4% of RAH and 21% of NSSE reported that they were Done or in progress or plan to do.

Table 4.20

<i>Comparison of Plans Before Graduating</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Done or in progress</i>		<i>Plan to do</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>	<i>RAH %</i>	<i>NSSE %</i>
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical practice	47.4	49	42.1	27	89.5	76
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	63.2	28	31.6	10	94.8	38
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	31.6	33	47.4	35	79	68
Work with a faculty member on a research project	10.5	18	26.3	14	36.8	32
Participate in a study abroad program	5.3	12	21.1	9	26.4	21

Table 4.21 compares the quality of on campus interactions between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from large master’s institutions. RAH students reported 100% and NSSE reported 94% that they had Excellent and Acceptable interactions with students. RAH reported 100% and NSSE 93% Excellent and Acceptable interactions with faculty. When asked about their interactions with academic advisors, RAH reported 94.4% and NSSE reported 73% Excellent and Acceptable interactions. Finally, when asked about their interactions with other administrative staff and offices, RAH student employees reported 68.5% and NSSE respondents reported 79% Excellent and Acceptable interactions.

Table 4.21

<i>Comparison of Quality of On-Campus Interactions</i>						
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Acceptable</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>RAH</i>	<i>NSSE</i>	<i>RAH</i>	<i>NSSE</i>	<i>RAH</i>	<i>NSSE</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Students	89.5	64	10.5	30	100	94
Faculty	57.9	61	42.1	32	100	93
Academic Advisors	31.2	35	63.2	38	94.4	73
Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	21.1	39	47.4	40	68.5	79

Table 4.22 shows the comparison of how students spend their time in a 7-day week between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from large master's institutions. This table only shows how much time students spent doing these activities between 11-30 hours, demonstrating a significant amount of time spent in a week. RAH reported working for pay 73.7% compared to NSSE reporting 13%. When asked how much time they spent relaxing and socializing, RAH reported 58% and NSSE reported 34%. RAH reported 52.7% and NSSE reported 53% spending between 11-30 hours preparing for class. RAH reported 42.2% and NSSE reported 12% spending between 11-30 hours participating in co-curricular activities. RAH reported 5.3% and NSSE reported 9% spending between 11-30 hours commuting to campus. RAH reported 0% while NSSE reported 27% spending between 11-30 hours working for pay off campus. Finally, RAH reported 0% while NSSE reported 20% providing care for dependents.

Table 4.22

<i>Comparison of Time Spent in a 7-Day Week</i>		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>11-30 hours</i>	
	<i>RAH</i>	<i>NSSE</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Working for pay on campus	73.7	13
Relaxing and socializing	58	34
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	52.7	53
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	42.2	12
Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)	5.3	9
Working for pay off campus	0	27
Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)	0	20

Figure 4.1 demonstrates out of 45 questions compared between the responses of RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents from large master's institutions, 30 of the questions were above average (above 1% of NSSE average), 2 were within the target quality (within 1% of NSSE average), and 13 were below the NSSE average (below 1%).

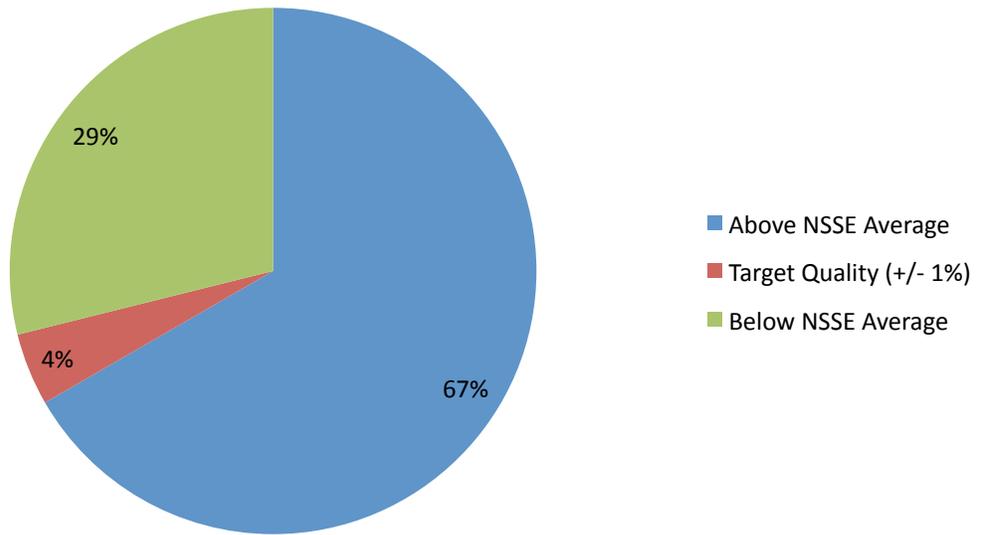


Figure 4.1. RAH and NSSE Response Comparison

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the engagement patterns of RAH student employees at Rowan University in New Jersey during the spring 2013 semester. The subjects of the study were current RAH student employees and full-time students.

The survey instrument used to assess the RAH student employee's engagement in their work, academics, and in Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey was adapted from the knowledge base with changes to accommodate this study. The survey instrument was adopted from the online version of the *National Survey of Student Engagement 2013* (NSSE) developed by *The College Student Report* and the Trustees of Indiana University (Survey Instrument, 2013).

The Rowan After Hours Student Survey (Appendix B) consists of 21 questions in a multiple choice and Likert scale to determine the relationship between being a student employee of RAH and being actively engaged at Rowan University. These statements were rated on a scale of 1-3, 1-4, and 1-8. Students were asked to rate how often they participated in certain activities, their coursework load, how many hours spent on certain assignments, how many papers they completed during this academic year, and what they plan on participating in before they graduate. An additional nine questions were asked to accumulate demographic data to determine age, gender, class level, years working for RAH, international affiliation, number of majors, grade point average, if the student

began college at Rowan University, and the highest level of education the students expect to complete. Of 19 surveys distributed to students, 19 were completed and returned, yielding a return rate of 100%.

Descriptive statistics were utilized in order to analyze questionnaires. Variations in student responses were explored using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software.

Discussion of the Findings

As the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2010) states, Rowan University is considered a large master's level institution (Rowan University: Carnegie Foundation Classifications). Based on the Carnegie Classification of Rowan University, the RAH student employees' answers to the Rowan After Hours Student Employee Survey were compared to the *National Survey of Student Engagement's* (NSSE) 2012 U.S. Grand Report Frequencies responses from large master's level institutions.

RAH student employees reported higher grade point averages than their peers attending similar sized institutions. RAH student employees averaged 36.9% earning a grade of an A- or better, while only 31% of students nationally at similarly sized institutions earned a grade of an A- or better. Nationally, 24% of students earned a grade of a B+, B, or B-, while 63.2% of RAH student employees earned a B+, B, or a B-. No RAH employee earned a grade of a C+ or lower, but the averaged percentage of students at large, master's level institutions that earned a grade point average of a C+ or lower totaled 22%.

Although it seems contradictory to previous research that students who, on average, worked between 16-20 hours a week for RAH and less than 10 hours a week off campus

scored 5.9% higher when comparing students who earned a A- or better grade point average; 39.2% higher when comparing students who earned a B+, B, or B-; and no RAH employee earned below a C+. This is compared to the students at a similar size institution who work 12-15 hours a week on campus. This would suggest that students who are actively employed and engaged in their on campus job are more likely to earn a higher grade point average.

In order to further emphasize that RAH student employees are more likely to have higher grade point average, the amount of time preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other activities) was compared between RAH employees and the national average as similarly sized institutions. The majority of RAH student employees spend between 16-20 hours preparing for class (31.6%). All RAH students spent between 1-20 hours preparing for class (100%). Nationally, only 53% of students nationally are spending between 1-20 hours preparing for class. Although 39% of students nationally spend between 26-30 hours preparing for class, 7% did not spend any time preparing for class.

Research Question 1: Does being a student employee in RAH encourage students to become more engaged in the Rowan University community and their academics?

Based on the responses from RAH student employees and the NSSE 2012 respondents from large master's level institutions, in general, RAH student employees fall above the grade point average compared to the NSSE 2012 report. In total, none of the RAH students fall below a B- while NSSE respondents report 5% falling below a B-. All RAH student employees (100%) earned a B- or better while NSSE 2012 students report only 94% earning a B- or better. More specifically, RAH students are earning more

grades of a B+, B, and B- than NSSE respondents. NSSE respondents reported 50% earning an A- and A while RAH student employees only reported 36.9% earning above an A-.

Next, I compared the emphasis in coursework between RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 respondents. The data demonstrate that RAH student employees are above the average laid out by NSSE 2012 results in applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations (RAH 84.2% / NSSE 82%) and memorizing course material (RAH 84.2% / NSSE 78%). RAH student employees fell below the average on analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts (RAH 84.2% / NSSE 86%); forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information (RAH 84.2% / NSSE 78%); and evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source (RAH 73.6% / NSSE 76%). In this particular set of data, there is more of a variable in what the institution and the specific professor values within the classroom. These data were evaluated on the respondents answering Very Often or Often on the survey instrument.

Finally, when comparing data on institutional influence, RAH student employees scored above average or on target, based on the NSSE 2012 percentages, on all responses. RAH student employees report that they believe that Rowan University has provided them with influence in acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills (RAH 94.7% / NSSE 76%), developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics (RAH 100% / NSSE 62%), thinking critically and analytically (RAH 94.7% / NSSE 87%), better understanding people of other backgrounds (RAH 89.5% / NSSE 57%), speaking clearly and effectively (RAH 89.5% / NSSE 75%), and solving complex real-

world problems (RAH 84.2% / 64%). RAH student employees hit the target for writing clearly and effectively (RAH 78.9% / NSSE 79%). These data suggest that students involved at Rowan University are more invested in their education and spending more time involved in their studies than the average student at a large master's institution.

Based on the data collected from RAH student employees and the comparison of data from RAH and the NSSE 2012 report, RAH student employees are more engaged in the Rowan University community and their academics. This is likely in part due to RAH students being encouraged by professional staff and the OSA to be involved on campus and to earn above a C grade point average in order to be employed in RAH. It is also a possibility that students who are positively invested in the Rowan Community are more likely to be active within the community.

Research Question 2: Are RAH employees making significant gains in personal development and growth through their engagement in RAH?

In order to answer Research Question 2, RAH students and NSSE 2012 respondents were asked about their academic involvement. On average, RAH student employees are more academically involved based on the NSSE 2012 student responses. RAH responded above average when asked if they asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways (RAH 84.2% / NSSE 78%), worked with other students on course projects or assignments (RAH 78.9% / NSSE 53%), and attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (RAH 31.6% / NSSE 22%). These above average responses are likely in part due to the fact that RAH student employees are constantly engaged with students and professional staff at Rowan University, making them feel more at ease to contribute to class discussions and work with other students.

RAH student employees scored below average on how often they gave a course presentation (RAH 57.9% / NSSE 66%) and prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in (RAH 36.9% / NSSE 49%). These responses could be based on the fact that their professor may not ask RAH student employees to give course presentations or prepare drafts of papers as frequently as other large masters institutions.

Finally, RAH student employees stated that they Very Often or Often arrive to class without completing readings or assignments (36.9%) while only 20% of NSSE 2012 students responded in the same way. This may be due to the fact that RAH student employees are more actively engaged in the Rowan community and do not spend as much time preparing for class, although these data are contradictory because RAH student employees are more engaged in their academics than NSSE 2012 students.

When RAH student employees were asked about their involvement with faculty, they consistently responded that they had positive interactions with faculty. When compared to NSSE 2012 data, RAH student employees stated they Very Often or Often worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (RAH 78.9% / NSSE 25%), talked about career plans with faculty (RAH 52.6% / NSSE 46%), and discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with faculty members outside of class (RAH 42.1% / NSSE 30%). These responses demonstrate that RAH student employees interact with faculty more and have a more positive interaction with faculty compared to the results of NSSE 2012.

The only response that fell below the NSSE 2012 standard is how often students discussed their academic performance with faculty members (RAH 52.6% / NSSE 63%). Based on the higher grade point averages of RAH student employees, it is likely that

RAH students do not need to discuss their academic performance with faculty more often. It is more likely that students earning below a B- may be more inclined to seek a discussion with faculty.

Students were asked about their plans before graduating college, and RAH student employees were found to have more plans prior to graduating college. When students were asked a series of questions to learn what type of activities or projects they were planning to complete before graduation, RAH students responded they completed, in the process of completing, or plan to complete participating in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical practice (RAH 89.5% / NSSE 76%); participating in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (RAH 94.8% / NSSE 38%); completing a culminating senior experience (RAH 79% / NSSE 68%); working with a faculty member on research (RAH 36.8% / NSSE 32%); and participating in a study abroad program (RAH 26.4% / NSSE 21%). These data demonstrate that RAH student employees are more making significant gains in their personal development and growth by experiencing working with faculty and participating in study abroad programs, learning communities, and internship experiences.

Finally, students were asked to rate the quality of interactions with people on campus. RAH student employees and NSSE 2012 students responded that they had Excellent or Acceptable interactions with students (RAH 100% / NSSE 94%), faculty (RAH 100% / NSSE 93%), and academic advisors (RAH 94.4% / NSSE 73%). RAH fell below the NSSE 2012 results on Excellent or Acceptable interactions with other administrative staff and offices (RAH 68.5% / NSSE 79%). Based on the position that RAH student

employees have at Rowan University, they regularly interact with students who attend their events. It is no surprise that they have positive interactions with students that are above the NSSE percentage. As the research has already demonstrated, students are also more invested in their academics suggesting it is more likely that they will report more positive interactions with faculty and academic advisors. As for the other administrative staff and offices, this may be a variable that is controlled by the University and the staff that work at Rowan rather than the RAH student employees.

Research Question 3: How does student employment in RAH impact student engagement?

Throughout a 7-day week, RAH student employees spend between 11-30 hours a week working on campus (73.7%) with the remainder working between 5-10 hours a week (26.4%) compared to 13% of NSSE 2012 students working between 11-30 hours a week. RAH student employees also spend more time, between 11-30 hours per week, relaxing and socializing (RAH 58% / NSSE 34%) and participating in co-curricular activities (RAH 42.2% / NSSE 12%). Comparatively, 20% of NSSE 2012 students reported spending 11-30 hours per week providing care for dependents and 27% spent that amount of time working for pay off campus where RAH student employees reported 0% working for pay off campus or taking care of dependents. RAH student employees were within target range of spending between 11-30 hours preparing for class (RAH 52.7% / NSSE 53%).

This suggests that RAH student employees see an impact in student engagement. They are able to still participate in co-curricular activities, spend time preparing for class,

and relaxing and socializing. Being employed by RAH seems to positively impact student engagement.

Research Question 4: How do RAH student employees compare to the reported 2012 NSSE results?

As reported throughout this section, compared to NSSE 2012 results, RAH student employees responded 67% above average, 4% on target (+/-1%) and only 29% below the average NSSE 2012 results. This suggests that RAH student employees are more fully engaged in their University and community than the average student at a large master's level institution.

Conclusions

RAH student employee responses were compared to the data collected during the NSSE 2012 survey at large master's level institutions. A majority (67%) of RAH student responses were above the NSSE 2012 percentage, 4% were considered on target (within a range of +/- 1%), and 29% fell below the NSSE 2012 percentage. Based on research conducted by Kuh (2009), the NSSE survey measures how "student behaviors [correlate] with many desirable learning and personal development outcomes in college" (p. 8). As this research suggests, RAH student employees who work on campus between 11-30 hours per week reported higher personal, professional, and academic gains by 67%.

The data suggest RAH student employees are more highly engaged on their campus and in their community. This may partially be in response to the student development model laid out by the Office of Student Activities (OSA). The OSA encourages RAH student employees, office employees, and student volunteers within the office to participate in trainings on various topics, educational opportunities, celebrations

with peers and professional staff, and participate in recognizing fellow students for being a positive role model to the Rowan community. It is clear that some of the data are dependent on the institution that students attend, such as how many pages they are required to write during a year and how often they are encouraged to memorize material. Although RAH student employees were compared to students of like institutions, each institution may have more focus on writing and reading while others may stress mathematics. A significant amount of the results demonstrate that the OSA student development model is highly effective to encourage student engagement.

Based on the results of the survey, RAH student employees responded with a higher rate that they have acquired job- or work-related knowledge and skills; increased their understanding of people of other backgrounds; speak clearly and effectively; participated more in extra- and co-curricular activities (i.e. internships, co-ops, learning communities, and a culminating senior experience); and have a higher level of satisfying interactions with students, faculty, and academic advisors. This suggests that students who are employed by RAH are more highly engaged within Rowan University and the community.

RAH student employees are acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills outside of the classroom that will help them in their future career. Kuh (2009) states that engaging students in “a variety of educationally productive activities also builds the foundation of skills and dispositions people need to live a productive, satisfying life after college” (p. 5). RAH focuses on building a team mentality in order to create a positive working environment. Since students are working Thursday, Friday, and or Saturday from 7:30pm-1:30am, it is necessary to maintain a positive attitude and working

environment. Students are trained in a variety of positions throughout the year, including the welcome table, technical services, greeting and promoting, hosting an event, and serving as customer service that provide them a variety of real-life work experience that they can use in their future career. Students are also expected to take part in one of four committees: Technical Services Committee that is responsible for managing all technical equipment and services for RAH; the Marketing Committee that is responsible for creating inventive ways to promote RAH events; the Recognition Committee that plans and executes all recognition awards and activities for the staff, including “Employee of the Week” and the “Goldfish Awards;” and the New Programming Committee that creates interactive “home-grown” programming for RAH, such as games shows and themed RAH nights. Through these committees, RAH student employees can learn marketing techniques, technical set-ups, and creating an event from start to finish.

RAH student employees also demonstrate an increased understanding of people of other backgrounds; speak clearly and effectively; and a higher level of satisfying interactions with students, faculty, and academic advisors than their peers at large master’s level institutions. Based on the OSA student development model, students are highly encouraged, almost forced, to interact with all students who attend our events. Since RAH student employees are trained at the welcome desk, greeting and promoting, and hosting an event, any student on any night could be given this as their job. Student employees are trained how to greet and be friendly, how to handle uncomfortable or dangerous situations, how to accept and respond to a complaint, and how to create an inviting and fun environment for students who attend RAH. As Griffith (2011) found in her research, it is important for student affairs professionals to engage students in

activities that “encourage student-student interaction” (p. 35) to promote student engagements that promote campus community (Elkins, Forrester, & Noel-Elkins, 2011). All these components suggest that RAH student employees would be more understanding of a variety of people, speak clearly and effectively in order to communicate with students who attend the events, and have positive interactions with students since they are highly trained in how to interact with others. It is not as likely that other students are highly trained in this way.

As RAH student employees have demonstrated through the survey results, they are more likely to participate in extra- and co-curricular activities, including internships, co-ops, learning communities, student organizations and clubs, culminating senior experiences, and study abroad programs. Based on Kelley-Hall’s (2010) research, she found that there is a “strong correlation between high student involvement in campus life and academic success” (p. 146). Based on RAH student employees’ high extra- and co-curricular involvement and Kelley-Hall’s (2010) research, it makes sense that RAH student employees are meeting or exceeding the grades of students at similar institutions, specifically earning higher grades of an A-, B+, B, and B-, while also not falling below a grade of a B-. Yet again, RAH student employees are demonstrating that they are more engaged, and in turn, earning higher grades.

Furthermore, Moore and Rago (2009) have found “important developmental benefits of this congruence between students’ career goals and their college experiences” that provide long-term benefits for the student” (p. 90). In the RAH program, student employees are actively engaged in how their current employment could benefit their future career plans, specifically discussing customer service, negotiation, positive

interactions with others, and learning to work on a team. Moore and Rago (2009) continue to suggest that “Continued reinforcement of skill development in the training, supervision, and performance evaluation processes can be used to create a habit of thinking in a future-oriented way” (p. 101). This part of their research is enforced by RAH student employees because they must maintain above a B- in order to be employed by RAH. This suggests that students are already considering the effects that their employment can be utilized to create a habit of thinking. Overall, this research demonstrates that RAH student employment positively affects student engagement at Rowan University. Although this research contributed to the knowledge-base, there still needs to be a significant amount of research conducted on how student employment affects student engagement on college campuses.

Recommendations for Further Practice

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. Create a more deliberate and thought-out student development model that uses student engagement theory in order to further create student engagement with student employees.
2. Focus on connecting students’ employment with their academic work, encouraging students to earn high grades, study for exams, go to class prepared, and write more effectively.
3. Encourage student employees to challenge themselves. As the survey found, RAH student employees are not analyzing an idea or experience in depth or evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source. Professional staff

should be engaging in conversation that helps students analyze an idea or evaluate a view point.

4. Concentrate on training students how to work in different areas of RAH in order to further develop the range of skills and experiences that can be utilized in a future career.
5. Further incorporate customer service and communication training into the development model. RAH student employees are constantly interacting with students at Rowan University, and it is important for both their current position and their potential future careers to learn how to interact with a variety of people and situations.
6. Further develop diversity training for students to interact with the diverse student population that attends RAH.
7. Encourage students to interact with faculty, staff, and students to create a connection to Rowan University and aid in students' communication skills.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. A study connecting student employment and their engagement level on campus should be conducted to see how the results differ across campus. This study should also look into what type of training these students receive as employees and find if on campus student employees are more or less engaged at Rowan University than students who work off campus.

2. Compare studies done on students before they start working for RAH and at the end of their employment. Is RAH more likely to employ highly engaged students or does RAH encourage students who would not be highly engaged to become engaged?
3. Further study the impact of student employment on student engagement on a large scale. As this study has found, there is very little research done on the impact of student employment on student engagement. As the need for student employment is rising, student affairs professionals need to know how to engage their students through their on campus work.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



November 28, 2012

Lauren Thompson
Educational Services, Administration, Higher Education
James Hall

Dear Lauren Thompson:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has exempted your project, category 2.

IRB application number: 2013-094

Project Title: Rowan After hours: The Impact of Student Employment on Student Engagement

If you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman (hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research (shreek@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harriet Hartman".

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Burton Sisco, Educational Services, Administration, Higher Education, James Hall

Office of Research
Bole Hall
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150
856-256-4425 fax

Appendix B

The College Student Report Item Usage Agreement



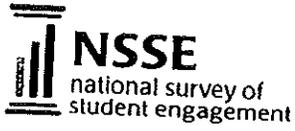
*The College Student Report
Item Usage Agreement*

The National Survey of Student Engagement's (NSSE) survey instrument, *The College Student Report*, is copyrighted and the copyright is owned by The Trustees of Indiana University. Any use of survey items contained within *The College Student Report* is prohibited without prior written permission from Indiana University. When fully executed, this Agreement constitutes written permission from the University, on behalf of NSSE, for the party named below to use an item or items from *The College Student Report* in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

In consideration of the mutual promises below, the parties hereby agree as follows:

- 1) The University hereby grants Lauren Thompson ("Licensee") a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable license to use, reproduce, distribute, publicly display and perform, and create derivatives from, in all media now known or hereafter developed, the item(s) listed in the proposal attached as Exhibit A, solely for the purpose of including such item(s) in the survey activity described in Exhibit A, which is incorporated by reference into this Agreement. This license does not include any right to sublicense others. This license only covers the survey instrument, time frame, population, and other terms described in Exhibit A. Any different or repeated use of the item(s) shall require an additional license.
- 2) In exchange for the license granted in section 1, Licensee agrees:
 - a) there will be no licensing fee to use NSSE items for the purposes described in Exhibit A;
 - b) to provide to NSSE frequency distributions and means on the licensed item(s);
 - c) on the survey form itself, and in all publications or presentations of data obtained through the licensed item(s), to include the following citation: "Items xx and xx used with permission from *The College Student Report*, National Survey of Student Engagement, Copyright 2001-13 The Trustees of Indiana University";
 - d) to provide to NSSE a copy of any derivatives of, or alterations to, the item(s) that Licensee makes for the purpose of Licensee's survey ("modified items"), for NSSE's own nonprofit, educational purposes, which shall include the use of the modified items in *The College Student Report* or any other survey instruments, reports, or other educational or professional materials that NSSE may develop or use in the future. Licensee hereby grants the University a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivatives from, and publicly display and perform the modified items, in any media now known or hereafter developed; and
 - e) to provide to NSSE, for its own nonprofit, educational purposes, a copy of all reports, presentations, analyses, or other materials in which the item(s) licensed under this

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Agreement, or modified items, and any responses to licensed or modified items, are presented, discussed, or analyzed. NSSE shall not make public any data it obtains under this subsection in a manner that identifies specific institutions or individuals, except with the consent of the Licensee.

3) This Agreement expires on June 30, 2013.

The undersigned hereby consent to the terms of this Agreement and confirm that they have all necessary authority to enter into this Agreement.

For The Trustees of Indiana University:

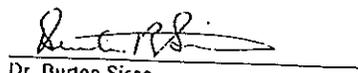

Alexander C. McCormick
Director
National Survey of Student Engagement

11/12/2012
Date

For Licensee:


Lauren Thompson
Graduate Student
Rowan University

11/7/12
Date


Dr. Burton Sisco
Thesis Advisor
Rowan University

11/7/12
Date

Appendix C

Rowan After Hours Student Employee Survey

ROWAN AFTER HOURS STUDENT EMPLOYEE SURVEY

My name is Lauren Thompson, and I am a graduate student in the Higher Education Administration program at Rowan University. You have been selected to take this survey because you are currently a Rowan After Hours student employee at Rowan University. The purpose of this study is to find, if any, relation between being a student employee of Rowan After Hours and being actively engaged at Rowan University.

This survey is completely optional. By participating in this survey, you give me permission to use the results in my study titled "Rowan After Hours: The Impact of Student Employment on Student Engagement." If you choose to participate in this survey, no identifying information will be provided about your responses and your identities will remain anonymous. By receiving this survey, your standing as an employee will not be affected based on your participation or lack of participation in this survey. You need not respond to any questions that you do not feel comfortable with answering. Participants must be 18 years or older in order to participate in this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, feel free to contact me at thompsonL@rowan.edu or 856-256-4187 or my supervisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at sisco@rowan.edu or 856-256-4500 ext. 3713.

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Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey.
The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18
 - b. 19
 - c. 20
 - d. 21
 - e. 22
 - f. 23
 - g. 24 or older

2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Both

3. What is your class level?
 - a. Freshman/first-year
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Unclassified

4. As of January 2012, I have been working for RAH:
 - a. Less than one year
 - b. One year
 - c. Two years
 - d. Three years
 - e. Four or more years

5. Are you an international student or foreign national?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

6. How many majors do you plan to complete? (Do not count minors.)
 - a. One
 - b. More than one

7. What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?
 - a. A
 - b. A-
 - c. B+
 - d. B
 - e. B-
 - f. C+
 - g. C
 - h. C- or lower

8. Did you begin college at this institution or elsewhere?
 - a. Started here
 - b. Started elsewhere

9. What is the highest level of education you ever expect to complete?
 - a. Some college but less than a bachelor's degree
 - b. Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
 - c. Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
 - d. Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

10. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Asked questions or contributed to course discussion in other ways	4	3	2	1
b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	4	3	2	1
c. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	4	3	2	1
d. Attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)	4	3	2	1
e. Asked another student to help you understand course material	4	3	2	1
f. Explained course material to one or more students	4	3	2	1
g. Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	4	3	2	1
h. Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	4	3	2	1
i. Gave a course presentation	4	3	2	1

11. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	4	3	2	1
b. Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	4	3	2	1
c. Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	4	3	2	1
d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	4	3	2	1
e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	4	3	2	1
f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	4	3	2	1
g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	4	3	2	1

12. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	4	3	2	1
b. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	4	3	2	1
c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	4	3	2	1
d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	4	3	2	1

13. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Memorizing course material	4	3	2	1
b. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	4	3	2	1
c. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	4	3	2	1
d. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	4	3	2	1
e. Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	4	3	2	1

14. In a typical 7-day week, about how many hours do you spend reading for your courses?

- a. 0 hours
- b. 1-5 hours
- c. 6-10 hours
- d. 11-15 hours
- e. 16-20 hours
- f. More than 20 hours

15. During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following length have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)

	None	1-2 papers	3-5 papers	6-10 papers	11-15 papers	16-20 papers	More than 20
a. Up to 5 pages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Between 6-10 pages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. 11 pages or more	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?

	Done or in progress	Plan to do	Do not plan to do	Have not decided
a. Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	4	3	2	1
b. Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	4	3	2	1
c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	4	3	2	1
d. Participate in a study abroad program	4	3	2	1
e. Work with a faculty member on a research project	4	3	2	1
f. Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	4	3	2	1

17. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
b. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c. Working for pay on campus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d. Working for pay off campus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
e. Doing community service or volunteer work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
f. Relaxing and socializing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
g. Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
h. Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

18. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Writing clearly and effectively	4	3	2	1
b. Speaking clearly and effectively	4	3	2	1
c. Thinking critically and analytically	4	3	2	1
d. Analyzing numerical and statistical information	4	3	2	1
e. Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	4	3	2	1
f. Working effectively with others	4	3	2	1
g. Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	4	3	2	1
h. Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	4	3	2	1
i. Solving complex real-world problems	4	3	2	1
j. Being an informed and active citizen	4	3	2	1

19. Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution.

	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	N/A
a. Students	4	3	2	1
b. Academic Advisors	4	3	2	1
c. Faculty	4	3	2	1
d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	4	3	2	1
e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	4	3	2	1

20. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Fair
- d. Poor

21. How many courses are you taking for credit this current academic term?

- a. 0
- b. 1
- c. 2
- d. 3
- e. 4
- f. 5
- g. 6
- h. 7 or more