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Cross-campus collaboration and its impact on resident students at Rowan University

Serafina R. Genise
Rowan University

CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RESIDENT STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

by
Serafina Genise

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Thesis Chair: Raquel Wright-Mair, Ph.D.

Committee Members:
Joe Lizza, Ed.D.
Rihab Saadeddine, Ed.D.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to anyone who is reading this and thinks that they cannot do this. You can. I believe in you and know that you can accomplish this and so much more. It always seems impossible until it is done.

Abstract

Serafina Genise
CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RESIDENT
STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY
2020-2021
Raquel Wright-Mair, Ph.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of cross-campus collaboration at Rowan University and understand the impact it has on resident students. By conducting multiple semi-structured interviews, I sought to understand the view of cross-campus collaboration from professionals from both academic and student affairs. After conducting a thematic analysis on the collected data, the findings of the study illustrated that there are some instances of cross-campus collaboration happening at Rowan University. These instances occur when they are integrated into one's position and or department, and through committee involvement at the university level. Outside of these instances cross collaboration often occurs in silos. While this study found that resident students are not currently impacted, it is beneficial to develop more intentional practices that incorporate cross-campus collaboration in order to more comprehensively benefit students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Institutions of higher education are typically made up of at least two divisions, namely the division of academic affairs and student affairs (Pace et al., 2006). The goal of both these divisions is to develop students to be successful after college and create positive experiences. Each area does this in their own ways within its own department with little crossover between the two areas. In other words, the divisions rarely work together. Instead, there is often competition between the two (Schroeder, 1999; Bourassa and Kruger, 2001; Kezar, 2003). With both of the areas providing programming for the student body, there is bound to be overlap and/or duplication of services provided campus wide. In order to combat the duplication of efforts, such as social programs, career fairs, networking opportunities, and guest speakers just to name a few, institutions need to begin engaging in more cross-campus collaboration (Frost et. al, 2010). This is where those in charge of programmatic efforts from both the academic affairs and student affairs divisions can join forces to plan and execute programs that provide holistic development for students. Utilizing cross-campus collaboration is crucial to students, who often benefit from them. These intentional collaborative partnerships demonstrate to students that institutions are invested in their growth and development both in and outside of the classroom.

Since the establishment of post-secondary education, the divide between academic affairs and students' affairs has existed, becoming a steady feature of higher education. In an effort to dissolve the tensions between academic and student affairs, faculty and administrators should develop an understanding of their unique roles,

allowing them to develop an appreciation for the work the other is doing and therefore opening up a path toward collaboration (Kezar, 2001). However, it is a process to develop cultures of collaboration between these two divisions in a way that will benefit the students, while also furthering the mission of institutions, which is often focused on developing active and successful citizens (Whitt et al., 2008). Cross-campus collaboration takes time and energy in order to be implemented effectively, it first requires those who are going to be working together to build a relationship, get to know each other, their work styles, and their goal for the program. Kezar (2003) and Whitt et al. (2008) outline multiple models and principles that should be worked on in order to have a positive and effective experience with cross-campus collaboration.

While there are a few studies focused on cross-campus collaboration, namely the one national research project conducted by the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Higher Education, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA, and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (Kezar, 2001). The study titled, *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning*, found ten principles that explain how a study learns and develops and the ways in which both academic and student affairs can work together to promote their students' learning and development. They call for action from each group involved. Faculty members are called to become involved in more aspects of their institution's community life. Student affairs professionals were called to take the initiative and reach out to each other and those within academic affairs, to be intentional with their learning contributions, and to help students look at their education holistically and participate in all aspects of their institution (NASPA, AASHE, NASPA, 1998). The institutions that are

included in these studies are already proving to be practicing cross-campus collaboration successfully by utilizing those powerful partnerships. This study examines the programmatic efforts from both the student affairs and academic affairs at Rowan University and examines what collaborative efforts are engaged and the impact on resident students.

Statement of Problem

Different areas and departments on campus hosting their own programming and catering to the same students results in campus wide duplication of efforts. There are a few issues that come with the duplication of programmatic efforts, one being if multiple areas are hosting the same or similar programs students only have one type of experience offered to them. This will not promote any robust growth and development of the student. The second issue that comes with the duplication of effort is fiscal responsibility. Again, multiple areas doing the same or similar programs costs the institution more than if the institution practiced cross-campus collaboration and areas worked together to provide the same program with a more holistic view. Academic departments work to have their students involved within their colleges but in and out of the classroom with events and organizations sponsored by their school or college. Outside of academics, various areas within student affairs host programs. The issue is students are being pulled in multiple directions and have to choose where to be involved, whether that be in their school or college or if one of the many options within the division of student affairs, thus compromising the breadth and depth of involvement possible.

At the core of this problem is a lack of understanding between those who work in student affairs and those who work in academic affairs. Schroeder (1999), Kezar (2003),

and Pace et al. (2006) argued that division between the two entities comes from a misunderstanding of what the other department does. This continues to be perpetuated and creates a sense of competition between faculty and student affairs practitioners (Schroeder, 1999; Bourassa and Kruger, 2001; Kezar, 2003). These authors also argued that there should be more collaboration between the two departments since research proved the usefulness of education from both in and out of the classroom. However, there had been no research done on how to effectively implement a change where those two areas work together to benefit the students (Kezar, 2001). This proved to be difficult because there had not been any movement towards collaboration instead the departments are still separated. Similarly, Whitt et al. stated that "institutions had become too fragmented by disciplinary and functional specializations to educate students effectively" (2008 p. 236). Areas within institutions of higher education have become focused on their own work, developing different facilities that outshine the work within the classroom, and further push apart student affairs and academic affairs. The divide between the areas siloed students and hindered their learning and development.

Through the underlying competition between departments what had been lost overtime was the foundation each department was built on. Each area's mission is to create a positive experience for their students and ensure they are prepared for their lives following graduation. The goal of student preparedness comes from student engagement. Kuh stated that "student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (2009, p. 683). The competition between academic and student affairs offices has often hindered the success of potential

collaborative opportunities geared towards supporting student success. Mills (1989) agreed that student affairs and academic affairs have not viewed the other as being interconnected. Those who have worked within academic affairs and student affairs have spent most of the time since the creation of institutions of higher education, challenging each other, rather than taking the time to understand what the other does. Divisions of student affairs and academic affairs can combat the negative impact of duplicating efforts on students by working towards cross-campus collaboration. Through cross-campus collaboration, the different divisions will be able to provide the best experience for their students.

Setting of Study

The study will be conducted at Rowan University, which is located in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University is housed on 200 acres and has seven residence halls and five apartment complexes already to house approximately 6,5000 students ("Residential learning and University housing," n.d.). Rowan has over 2,400 non-faculty employees and about 2,300 faculty members campus wide ("Fast Facts," n.d.). This Carnegie classified R2 institution located 30 minutes outside of Philadelphia houses is prepared to serve about 19,000 students ("Fast Facts," n.d.). Within the institution is the division of academic affairs which is made up with nine schools and colleges, the Provost, The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Office of the Registrar, and University Libraries ("Division of Academic Affairs", n.d.). The division of Student Affairs and that is made up of three branches, Student Success, Student Life, and Strategic Enrollment Management ("Division of Student Affairs", n.d.).

Research Questions

The main research question was answered through interviews with faculty and staff from both divisions. This question, along with two sub-questions, provided an understanding of how professionals at Rowan University operate within their areas, and with their colleagues in another division. Also examining what impact, if any, cross-campus collaboration has on those students who reside on campus. The research question that guided the study was: Do those who work within academic and student affairs at Rowan University practice cross-campus collaboration? Sub-questions include: What is the reasoning behind their view on cross-campus collaboration? What impact does this have on resident students?

Assumptions & Limitations

At the conclusion of the study the answers to the research questions showed us that there is little collaboration between the two divisions at Rowan University. Outside of the collaboration that is built-into positions and involvement in university committees the divisions are experiencing silos that prevent meaningful collaboration. Each division works with other professionals within their division and outside of that there is little communication across divisions. This may have impacted the results of the research questions focused on the students' outlook on their experiences. This was because students do not see what goes on to plan a program or create an experience, they are on the receiving end. Whether they enjoyed the program or not was solely based on the person who planned that program. Which has provided information on how collaboration efforts worked but the planning process provided information on what the collaboration culture is like at Rowan. The researcher worked as a programmer within the division of

student affairs, there was an inherent bias carried that may have caused limitations with interviewing other student affairs professionals as they have partnered before.

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of literature on cross-campus collaboration, the types of collaborations, the student benefits, as well as silos that exist on college campuses.

Chapter III provides a detailed description on the procedures and methodology used to conduct this study. The methodology reiterates the context of the study, population and sample size, data collection and analysis.

Chapter IV reports on the findings of the study based on the research questions. The data is summarized and coded into themes.

Chapter V reports on the major finding and offers recommendations for further study on the topic.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

There are many different areas within student affairs and academic affairs, each area has a different function, but they all work towards a common goal. The common goal shared by both divisions is student learning and success (Dale & Drake, 2005). Each division achieves this goal in a different but important way. Student affairs does this by providing organizations that tend to the varying interests of their students, leadership opportunities within those organizations, dining halls that promote a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle, and fun activities that give students a chance to unwind and decompress (Frost et. al, 2010). Academic affairs focus on this goal both in and out of the classroom, by also providing organizations that relate back to their majors or intended careers, providing career and internship opportunities, and networking. The efforts between the two divisions range from vastly different, to pretty similar, with some of those being the complete same.

While focusing on programming is great for students, an institution could potentially contribute to the issue of duplication of efforts. Those who work in both divisions need to start to develop partnership programs that will help create a seamless learning environment for students. These partnership programs have become a valued way to keep higher education current and ensure student success and learning (Nesheim et. al, 2007). The collaboration between academic departments and student affairs departments could be mutually beneficial. It can provide the opportunity for relationship building amongst professionals' campus wide, increase student engagement, and create the learning environment students need in order to be successful. While the literature

shows that cross-campus collaboration and partnership programs are successful, as stated

by Dale and Drake (2005) students are still experiencing a gap between the two divisions.

Silos

The gap between those two divisions is due to silos, in the case of higher

education they are functional silos. Each office within both academic and student affairs

is focused on one area of responsibility (Kleemann, 2005). The figure below, figure 1.1.,

shows the traditional organization chart of college institutions.

Figure 1

Traditional Organization Chart (Kleemann, 2005)
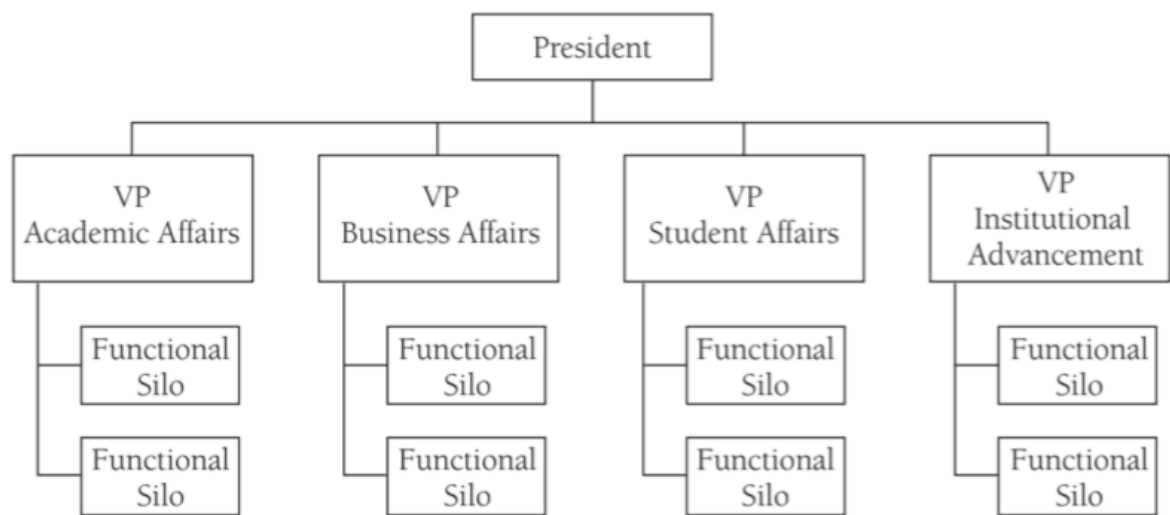
Based on this figure one can see that it begins with the President of the institution,

following that is the Vice President of each division. In that top area there is collaboration

between the Vice Presidents but below that is where the silos begin. An institution whose

organization chart looks exactly like this one or similarly is suffering from Ensor (1988)

would call Functional Silo Syndrome. The following are ways you determine if your

organization is suffering from functional silo syndrome, communication in the organization only comes from the top down and is typically not shared side to side due to the fact that each area has their own language (Ensor, 1988). The structure of these institutions does not serve the student population well. Students are served best across the functional areas but due to their vertical, silo structure of the organization, students are not being able to utilize all the resources (Kleemann, 2005). By breaking down these silos and restructuring the organization through new frameworks that promote collaboration students will have an overall better experience with an institution.

Cross-Campus Collaboration as a Solution

If an institution wants to create the most rewarding experience for its students, one way to work towards this goal is to promote cross-campus collaboration. Cross-campus collaboration is when areas on campus that would not typically interact, such as those offices within student affairs and the departments within academic affairs, work together on different initiatives or programs to benefit the campus community (Hord, 1986). Some institutions might consider their divisional relationships already incorporate cross-campus collaboration, but this can easily be mistaken for simple cooperation. Cross-campus collaboration is not to be confused with cooperation, which is defined as, "two individuals or organizations reach some mutual agreement, but their work together does not progress beyond this level" (Hord, 1986, p. 22). While this would be the current model at some institutions, and they feel as though this is sufficient it has been proven that collaboration is more effective.

For an institution who is looking to make the changes and transition from cooperation to a collaboration model Kezar introduced three change frameworks in their

article, *Enhancing Innovative Partnerships: Creating a Change Model for Academic and Student Affairs Collaboration*, which discussed how the outcomes of each framework will increase student learning at an institution. The first change framework model is *Kuh's Model for Developing a Seamless Environment*, in this model Kuh had created six principles to help institutions start to integrate the academic curriculum and the extra-curricular activities, and they are:

1. generate enthusiasm for institutional renewal,

2. create a common vision of learning,

3. develop a common language,

4. foster collaboration and cross-functional dialogue,

5. examine the influence of student cultures on student learning and,

6. focus on systematic change (Kezar, 2003, p. 140).

The first principle in this change model would require the institution to find people to help gather support and energy around the institutional renewal. The focus being on showing faculty, staff, and students why beginning to collaborate between the two divisions was a good idea for all who were involved (Kezar, 2003). The second principle is focused on getting everyone on the same page on how, what, and why students should learn and how they can work together to promote this effectively (Kezar, 2003). Regardless how much one learning style is pushed and enforced in the classroom does not mean that all students will succeed in that style. The third principle goes deeper into more than just the words that are chosen and the way one speaks, it is more about self-reflection and change in order to positively move forward (Kezar, 2003). The fourth principle focuses on organizational learning and developing an understanding of all the

work being done at the institution (Kezar, 2003). The final principle that was discussed in the article about not viewing the institution for its pieces but viewing it as a whole. There cannot be effective change without that understanding. Through the framework one can see how involved changing the way in which an institutional division operates is. It is not as easy as telling those within the two divisions to start collaborating, that will not lead to impactful and sustainable advancements. In order to achieve change, one needs to be actively invested in the process to accomplish that change.

The second change framework, Planned *Change,* which focuses on the role leaders play in the creation of change (Kezar, 2003). The key elements of this framework are "leadership or senior administrative support, planning, strategy, clear goals and objectives, setting expectations and demanding accountability, use of outside expertise such as consultants, incentives, staff development, and marketing/promotion of change" (Kezar, 2003, p. 141). The goal of the planned change model is changing processes through strategic planning, such as assessment of the area, and the analysis of the needs of stakeholders (Kezar, 2003). The final change framework, *Restructuring/Re-Engineering*, focuses on the structure of the organization by creating a chart that lists rules, regulations, roles, who does what work, objectives, and how people are each connected (Kezar, 2003). Each of the aforementioned frameworks would best help different institution types and departments. In order to determine which framework to utilize, the institution needs to determine what would best suit them and the change they want to see. It requires reflection and honesty in an institution's fault in order to move forward and create positive change.

In their article, Kinzie and Kuh (2004) discussed leadership, academic and student affairs partnerships, and student agency. Within leadership, the focus is on strong senior leadership similar to the planned change framework. (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). The academic and student affairs partnerships section is similar to Kuh's Model for Developing a Seamless Environment, in which each area works together to understand one another to create the best experience for their students. The student agency is similar to the reconstruction model, where students now get to be involved in the division of labor and are connected to the professionals (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004).

Another model for collaboration between academic and student affairs is the intergroup dialogue model introduced by Pace et. al (2006). This model of collaboration is used as a tool to encourage more dialogue between groups who are experiencing conflict. This model provides a space for those who have different views to come together in the hopes of developing an understanding of one another and strategies on how to work together moving forward (Pace et. al, 2006). As Fried puts it "changes in higher education provoke this paradoxical reaction among those of us who have devoted our lives to the management of colleges and universities and to the education of students." (1999). Fried continues on and states that "paradoxes are not questions - they are problematic situations which call for serious conversation." (1999). Utilizing the intergroup dialogue model allows the professionals from both academic and student affairs the space and opportunity to begin to solve the problem.

Once the chosen framework that best suits an institution is implemented on campus and change begins to happen, those who benefit from it most are the students. Models that promote cross-campus collaboration should be adopted at all institutions for

many reasons. It shows commitment to growth and development of the institution and to the students. It allows for resources for students, as well as professional staff, to be utilized probably and for the creation of new programs or initiatives to begin and be successful. Outside of those reasons, it would also develop new relationships and understanding between student affairs and academic affairs, where one has lacked in the past.

Types of Collaboration

Once an area has implemented the framework for their collaboration there are multiple ways to collaborate across divisions. The first type of collaboration is within residence life, the main one and now popular way to collaborate is through learning communities (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001, p. 11). A learning community is a group of students who live on the same floor in a residence hall or in the same building based on their major or a shared interest (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001, p. 11). This space allows for seamless collaboration as the student affairs professional can use the expertise of the academic affairs professional to create quality programming for their residence, and the academic affairs professional can use the space and program to enhance relationships (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001, p. 11). Another way to collaborate is through traditional student life programming (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001, p. 12). This could be with student run organizations, the student government, leadership development programs, diversity programs, or career development. All of these areas could benefit from having academic affairs be part of their programs, it would broaden their audience, potentially targeting a group of students they have not been able to reach. While also helping academic affairs connect with their students outside of the classroom.

Student Benefits

Creating a positive and rewarding experience for students while developing them into active citizens, is generally a goal of an institution of higher learning. Jorgenson et al. (2018) discussed strategies to help students feel connected to their institution. The study was based on two theories, the *Social Identity Theory* and the *Student Involvement Theory*. The social identity theory argues that how one identifies themself or how a larger group identifies themself can lead to a feeling of connectedness within a group (Jorgensen et al., 2018). Student involvement theory gives the student credit for the success through their involvement, and not only because of the facilities or courses an institution offers (Jorgensen et al., 2018). Through these two theories one can see there needs to be space and opportunities created for students to find their community and space to develop in the ways they want. Connectedness for students comes from relationships built with peers, faculty and staff (Jorgensen et al., 2018).

In a second article based on student involvement, Wooten et al. focused on incorporating academics into campus activities and creating meaningful learning experiences for the students and an overall focus on collaboration (2012). There has been a shift in focus for students' affairs to create learning outcomes for their programs and core competencies for the student leaders. The National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) highlighted ten core competencies are: (a) Leadership Development (b) Assessment and Evaluation, (c) Event Management, (d) Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships, (e) Collaboration, (f) Social Responsibility, (g) Effective Communication, (h) Multicultural Competency, (i) Intellectual Growth, (j) Clarified Values (Wooten et al., 2012, p 49). With NACA's new core competencies and a revitalization of student affairs,

it pushes those divisions to have a focus on peer leadership; the overall student growth it promotes, along with enhancing cross-campus collaboration and keeping students at the center of the institutional purpose (Wooten et al., 2012).

Summary

Higher education is full of intellectual and creative individuals who work to do their part for the student experience, typically individually and focused on their own area. While each area and the work that is done is significant and is needed to help achieve the institution's mission. In order to fully recognize that mission and to be a successful institution each area needs to work together, as all of the literature above has stated. Through developing an effective plan to implement cross-campus collaboration, through the change frameworks, leads to faculty and staff who have a greater respect for the work each other does and motivation to enhance the ways they are keeping students at the center of the mission. Once the change from cross-campus collaboration starts to influence the campus the students will begin to be impacted. They will see the care the institution's faculty and staff have for them and their experience. In result, the students will become well-rounded student leaders as well as prepared and motivated citizens.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether faculty and professional staff members at Rowan University practice cross-campus collaboration and the impact it had on residential students. Findings emerged through qualitative methods, utilizing narrative inquiry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals who are working within the divisions of academic affairs and student affairs. The purpose of this study was to examine participant lived experiences and develop an understanding of operations, expectations, and outcomes of their jobs. Following the interviews, the interview transcripts were analyzed for recurring themes that explain why an individual does or does not practice cross-campus collaboration within their position. The findings of this study can be used to inform policies and practices that increase cross-campus collaboration at Rowan University and thus promotes student growth both in and out of the classroom.

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University. Rowan University is a public institution serving approximately 18,000 students between their bachelor's and master's programs ("About*"*, n.d.). Of the 18,000 students, approximately 6,000 of them live on the main campus at Rowan University ("Fast Facts", n.d.). Rowan University is a predominantly white institution, with over 10,000 students identifying as White/Non-Hispanic ("UG Student Demographics Spring 2020", 2020). Currently under the leadership of the President, Dr. Ali A. Houshmand, there are around 3,500 employees ranging from full-time to part-time, faculty and staff ("Working at Rowan", n.d.). Within

the institution is the division of academic affairs which is made up with nine schools and colleges, the Provost, The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Office of the Registrar, and University Libraries ("Division of Academic Affairs", n.d.). The division of Student Affairs and that is made up of three branches, Student Success, Student Life, Strategic Enrollment Management ("Division of Student Affairs", n.d.). This study will be focusing on two areas within student affairs, student success and student life. Student Success are the areas that are foundational necessitates for students in order to succeed while in college. Those areas are financial aid, housing, dining, academic advising, career advancement, and disability resources ("Student Success Programs", n.d.). Student life is made up of offices that cater to enhance the student experience. Those areas are Dean of students, orientation, student center & campus activities, campus rec, student government, Greek affairs, and volunteerism ("Student Life", n.d.). While at Rowan student success and student life work as their own smaller divisions, in this study we will be referring to them as a collective, under the term, student affairs.

Research Design Approach

A qualitative research design, more specifically narrative inquiry, was selected as the research method for this study. Employing narrative inquiry allowed those professionals who directly contributed to this practice of cross-campus collaboration, to explain their experiences and explain what it meant to navigate their varying roles (Ochieng, 2009 & Clandinin, 2006). Being able to hear their experiences firsthand provides the opportunity to develop an understanding of the programming process at Rowan University, the population each area is targeting in their programs and the expected outcomes of each of those programs.

Population and Sampling

Due to the methodological design of the study, participants were individually selected based on the positions they held in academic and/or student affairs. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a narrative inquiry typically includes one or two participants. Due to the high variance of job responsibilities across higher education, the researcher found it beneficial for this study to have up to 10 participants, five from each division of academic and student affairs in order to provide rich and thick descriptions. Any and all professionals who fit the criteria outlined for the study were considered for the study. Participants who were qualified to partake in this study were contacted via Rowan email upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). As was stated previously, 10 professionals were contacted to partake in this study, 5 from the division of academic affairs and 5 from the division of student affairs. 9 out of the 10 participants agreed to take part in this study. They were emailed the electronic consent form and then the interview was scheduled.

Data Collection

When conducting this study each interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner with seven open-ended questions, conducted in a fully virtual format, utilizing the zoom platform due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Each interview lasted between 25- 40 minutes, and was recorded and transcribed using zoom, over the course of three weeks. As recommended by Creswell & Creswell (2018) this approach is intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. The questions for participants were as followed

1. Tell me about your job as (insert job title here).

2. How did you enter the profession?

3. What is your process for planning programs in your department?

4. Who is the target audience of your programs?

5. Tell me about any collaborative efforts between your office and other offices across divisions on campus.

6. Tell me about how you asses your programs on campus?

7. What feedback do students provide regarding your programs?

Along with these questions, the researcher also utilized probes. This occurred when the researcher had followed up questions requiring more information or further explanation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When it seemed fit, the researcher asked if there were any supporting documents, such as reports, emails, and newspapers that provided further data regarding the programming that was occurring on campus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were concluded and the recordings had been transcribed the researcher began coding the data. In order to analyze the qualitative data that was collected, the researcher utilized thematic analysis. Thematic analysis required the researcher to review the transcriptions multiple times, giving the researcher true insight into the data collected and discovering codes that lead to the development of the final themes of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since all interviews were conducted and recorded through zoom, transcripts from each interview were readily available to the researcher. Following each interview, the transcripts were reviewed against the recordings to ensure accuracy. All interview documents were kept in a separate password protected Google drive folder, where each participant had their own folder containing

recording, transcript, notes taken by the researcher during the interview, and consent form. This drive also contained the document in which the researcher collected codes and themes. Transcripts were read multiple times, and the researcher analyzed each answer carefully and often looked for deeper meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). That led to the emergence of multiple codes, Emergent codes were then categorized into broader themes y (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Limitations

The first limitation of the study was that the researcher worked within the division of student affairs at Rowan University as someone who plans and oversees programmatic efforts for students. In their role they have worked with a few of the participants on programs, and understand what collaboration looks like at Rowan University. The final limitation is that this study took place in the midst of a global pandemic, COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the daily operations of higher education across the country. As such, there were currently less programs and events taking place in-person on campus, but have increased the number of virtual events, and thus this change influenced the experiences some participants have had within their position.

Chapter 4

Findings

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether faculty and professional staff members at Rowan University practice cross-campus collaboration and the impact this has on resident students at the institution. This chapter includes the profiles of the sample as well as the data analysis of the interviews.

Profile of the Sample

The individuals who participated in this study were recruited by purposeful sampling, where participants were directly invited to participate in this study based on criteria that related to the research question. The only criteria required to be involved in this study was based on the professional's job description, which should involve planning and executing programming events for students. After researching the staff of each college and the departments within student affairs at Rowan University, emails to 10 professionals were sent to ask for their participation in this study. The sample goal for this study was 10, 5 participants from the division of academic affairs and 5 participants from the division of student affairs. All but one invited participant agreed to participate in this study. In total there were 9 participants, 5 of whom were from the division of academic affairs and 4 of whom were from the division of student affairs. Those one-on-one interviews, lasting between 25 to 40 minutes, took place from February 9th, 2021 through February 23rd, 2021 all virtually through the Zoom platform. To protect the confidentiality of the participants in this study I have replaced their names with numbers.

Here is a list of participants and the areas they fall under. Participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms for confidentiality.

- Jane, a professional from the division of student affairs

- Tim, a professional from the division of academic affairs

- Paul, a professional from the division of student affairs

- Alex, a professional from the division of student affairs

- Nancy, a professional from the division of academic affairs

- Amy, a professional from the division of student affairs

- Emma, a professional from the division of academic affairs

- Hannah, a professional from the division of academic affairs

- Sarah, a professional from the division of academic affairs

Data Analysis

The data was collected through 9 semi-structured interviews using a list of questions that were approved by Rowan University's IRB. Prior to each individual interview, the participant signed and returned a consent form that showed they agreed to their involvement, recording of the interview, and use of that information for this study. Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were hosted virtually through the zoom platform. Zoom allowed the capability to record and transcribe the interviews. Following the interviews, the co-investigator listened to the recordings and compared them against each transcription to ensure accuracy.

In order to find the themes of this study, the method of thematic analysis was used, which entailed each individual transcript to be re-read multiple before codes could be developed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this process, I created specific color codes for

similar topics that came up in each interview. I pulled the quotes from each interview and put them alongside similar quotes from other interviews to find the theme that tied them all together. The themes that emerged from this study were: a) Built-in collaboration, b) University committee involvement, and c) Silos that prevent collaboration.

Built-In Collaboration

Within the institution, there are few areas that require cross-campus collaboration in order for participants to do their jobs well and be successful. The areas that repeatedly came up in interviews were orientation, advising, and career advancement. Orientation and career advancement are embedded in multiple aspects of campus life. Orientation, which falls under the division of student affairs, works with each college and student affairs to ensure the incoming students at Rowan University are set up for success. Orientation works on marketing orientation to the incoming students, hiring student staff to facilitate that experience for those students, and communicates dates and times with the other areas who need to prepare and need to be present. It is the role of the other areas who are involved in orientation to provide the content. Jane said in regard to the orientation program that "it really is the primary cross-campus collaboration program on our campus", essentially making orientation a group project for the university. When discussing orientation Alex said, "orientation is a phenomenal example of what strong collaboration looks like. When you bring all those folks together, and you kind of deliver the best holistic student experience for our students.". This was a sentiment that seemed to be shared by the other professionals interviewed for this study.

The second area that was brought up throughout the course of the interviews was advising. This is an area that plays a unique role at the institution. It currently falls under

the division of academic affairs, but in the past, it has fallen under student affairs. Emma said

> The division morphs quite a bit so that advising has been under academic affairs and student affairs, so we jump around a lot and that's just because different administrations and different leadership view where advising fits differently, and that is because advising is one of those areas that touch everybody, in some way shape or form, so it's easy to put us with different divisions.

Advising is an area that students need in order to succeed in their classes and have that guidance on what is the best route for them to graduate, as well as succeeding outside of the classroom, the professionals who work in advising are well versed in many resources and avenues for students to succeed.

An area similar to advising that can play a role in and out of the classroom, if students choose to utilize their services, is the office of career advancement. The office of career advancement is housed under student affairs at Rowan University. This office provides services and resources to the Rowan community that help prepare them to successfully find jobs. Through the structure of the office, each of the professional staff members serves in the role of a liaison to a specific college and works with them to see what their office can provide to the students. Amy explained that the office of career advancement and the resources they provide can also be embedded into a classroom. Some professors require their students to meet with someone from the office. Another option that some professors utilize is to request a workshop, a staff member from the office of career advancement will come into the class and work with those students on preparing cover letters, resumes, interview skills, or internships. Collaboration between

faculty and the office of career advancement allows both areas to focus on setting the student up for success outside of Rowan, which is the goal of all professionals at the university.

University Committee Involvement

Similar to the built-in collaboration, some areas have another way these professionals' practice cross-campus collaboration. This was through their involvement in committees at the university level. Most, if not all, of the participants in this study, were involved in multiple committees that serve the university as a whole. These committees range from homecoming communications, but the largest being commencement. Commencement, similar to orientation, is a university effort. It requires the participation of all areas in different ways. In regard to commencement, Nancy said, "We all work together for commencement, that's a huge effort." For those participants in this study who work within academic affairs, their involvement looks different than the participants who work within student affairs. What commencement looks like for those within academic affairs, Nancy described it as,

Each college has its designated commencement representative, then we work with the Deans, on the scripts for the actual commencement. We put out notifications to the students to make sure that they are ready for graduation. That they're checking with their advisors, that they are getting their caps and gowns, and that they are reserving their tickets.

While those who work within student affairs are tasked with volunteering for the commencement ceremonies day-of each event, and other campus events that take place throughout the week of commencement.

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The communications committee is another prominent committee for those who work within academic affairs. This group of professionals meets with university relations about twice a year. Tim said "A group of us chat regularly and that helps to foster a relationship. Whether it's publicizing events or collaborating to run an event. Other than commencement and homecoming that's the most collaborative effort we tried, and everyone seemed to like it.".

The homecoming committee was another committee that almost all participants were involved in. This committee is similar to that of commencement, while not on the same scale, it is something that the entire university is invested in. Committee members volunteer their time for this week-long initiative. Whether that be through programming an event, volunteering for a shift during one of the many events or tabling for your college-on-college row during the tailgate. Homecoming provides the opportunity for the Rowan community to come together and put their efforts towards celebrating the Rowan community.

Silos that Prevent Collaboration

Throughout the participant interviews, this was the most prominent and recurring topic that came up. While they talked about the few ways that cross-campus collaboration was being practiced. The sentiment from each participant was clear, there is still a way to go and there are still silos at Rowan University that exist for both student and academic affairs. Tim, notes:

Everybody just wants to stay in their own lane, and they have blinders on. They never want to think outside the box. I definitely push that envelope not that I'm on the academic side because there's no way that we can get what we need unless

everybody's kind of pulling in the same direction. And unfortunately, not

everybody likes to do that, so this is one of my big focuses. I try to get out of that

silo mentality and kind of push things forward collaborating as much as we can.

Similar thoughts were shared by Paul who had this say when asked about the

collaborative efforts at Rowan:

I still think there is a kind of hesitancy, almost like a head in the sand approach of

like We've been doing this for a while, and it's worked and there's like no real

incentive to try and change it. So, it's that kind of you don't know what you don't

know and just not considering collaborating on some things.

The other participants reiterated what both Tim and Paul had said. Many of the

professionals stick to what they know and with the people who also know that too. This

was even reflected in the above section. The communications committee was focused on

the academic affairs side of the house and those who worked in similar roles in the

different colleges worked together but there was no collaboration across divisions. When

asked about her thoughts on collaboration at Rowan Emma said "It's a problem, and it

can be a problem for any campus, everybody is territorial. Rowan is very territorial.".

While talking to Alex about their thoughts on collaboration at Rowan, they had the same

sentiment as Emma but spoke towards the ways in which professionals can break those

silos down. Alex discusses:

We constantly have to be reminding ourselves that even though you're passionate

about a topic there's actually someone who gets paid full-time to talk about that

topic, that's the person we should be collaborating with for this program. So, it

can be difficult because there are a lot of different folks on campus and

sometimes, we kind of live in our little worlds and forget that all of those folks are there.

These silos that both student and academic affairs are navigating, are only hindering what they are able to supply and offer to their students. Hannah put it best when they said "the institution needs to project themselves as a coordinated and streamlined community. This would make it easier to engage with the student population.". While there still is work that needs to be done on being more intentional on collaboration Sarah had made it a point to state that "cross-campus collaboration has gotten better over the years at Rowan because in the past we were all in our own silos, doing our own thing, but it has changed quite a bit.".

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This final chapter will summarize the study and discuss what cross-campus collaboration looks like at Rowan University. This chapter will also answer the research questions outlined for the study. Lastly, the author will make recommendations for future practice and research on cross-campus collaboration.

Summary of Study

Overall, the goal of this study was to understand the role cross-campus collaboration plays at Rowan University and to find the way in which it can be enhanced. Collaboration is a highly encouraged practice amongst those within higher education but has not been executed in an effective manner. The goal of this study was to discover what cross-campus collaboration looks like at Rowan through the lens of those who are asked to practice it. The findings of this study can be used to promote and enhance the practice of cross-campus collaboration at Rowan University. In addition, this study was seeking to find what impact cross-campus collaboration has on the resident students at Rowan University.

Utilizing purposive sampling and criteria based on job descriptions professionals who work to provide programs and services for students were contacted to participate in this study. 9 out of the 10 professionals contacted agreed to participate. Over the course of three weeks those 9 one-on-one virtual interviews, conducted on Zoom, took place. Utilizing Zoom's recording and transcription features for each interview and reviewing transcripts to ensure accuracy following the interviews. In order to find and understand

the codes and themes of this study thematic analysis was used. Both direct and indirect quotes were used to further explain the themes of this study.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question

Do those who work within academic and student affairs at Rowan University practice cross-campus collaboration?

The professionals who are tasked with programming for students or have student facing roles do practice cross-campus collaboration, when they have to. For some of the professionals who participated in this study collaborating within their division and across it, is required. Areas such as orientation, advising, or career advancement need to work more collaboratively with others in order to be successful in their roles. They need the participation of those within both academic and student affairs in order to get their job done well. While other professionals are involved in university committees that provide them the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues across divisions. Examples of these committees are commencement, homecoming and a communications committee. While the communications committee was a committee that only the professionals from academic affairs spoke on, homecoming and commencement require the participation from all areas in different ways. While these are all great examples of cross-campus collaboration, that is where they ended. No more than three times in an academic calendar do professionals between academic and students affairs intentionally work together. Based on Kellogg's article there needs to be an institutional decision to focus on and foster collaboration between academic and student affairs, and that is what Rowan

needs to do in order to make a significant difference in their current view on collaboration (1999).

Sub-Question 1. What is the reasoning behind their view on cross-campus collaboration? For many of the professionals when asked about their thoughts or perceptions on what cross- campus collaboration looks like at Rowan University they expressed frustration. The participants who spoke on the silos that each division operates under, talked about the professionals who work within each division and are set in their ways. Many professionals stick to working with those within their division and work as they always have. In addition to that people become territorial over specific programs, services or events they offer the community and do not want others to be duplicating them. Based on the findings the professionals are aware and understand what it would take to change this dynamic, but it becomes a challenge to be vulnerable and reach out for that collaboration or to get the other party to buy-in into. The participants viewed this culture of collaboration to come from upper-level leadership and feel as though through their guidance, the silos can start to be dismantled the views of the participants on how to change the perception of collaboration at Rowan are supported by Bourassa and Kruger's article on academic and student affairs collaboration and the top priority needing to be to start blending the two cultures of academic and student affairs (2001).

Sub-Question 2. What impact does this have on resident students? Through this study each participant was asked about the feedback they received and from the students that engage with their offices, services, or programs. For most of the participants their target population was not strictly resident students, with the exception of Residence Life

and University Housing. The students who did provide feedback were those students who were actively seeking out involvement and had mostly positive experiences.

Conclusions

Professionals from both academic and student affairs work tirelessly to provide the best services and experiences for their students. These professionals are aware of the organizational structure that is working against, and while they speak out against and bring these issues to those who are higher up at the institution, there is nothing else being done. Professionals now have more access to their colleagues across divisions than in the past and use their voices and work to start more purposeful and meaningful collaboration from the ground-up but in order for it to be sustainable those in the position of power at the institution need to be invested in this change. In the end the ones who will truly reap the benefits of this change will be the students they are working to serve.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study and the examples provided by the participants of this study the following recommendations for Rowan University are presented:

1. Upper-level leadership and administration at Rowan University should create space for campus-wide dialogue on the topic of cross-campus collaboration, in the hopes to gather more information from professionals on their perception of collaboration at Rowan.

2. In addition to facilitating a campus-wide dialogue, creating a cross-campus collaboration taskforce whose role it is to take the information collected from that dialogue and figure out how to implement it at the university, and to also provide

support, resources, and connections for professionals and to encourage more
intentional and meaningful collaboration.

Recommendations for Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further
research are presented:

1. A study should be conducted using a larger sample size to gauge how more
    professionals feel on this topic and how other areas operate.

2. Another study should be conducted on this topic including students as participants
    to gain more knowledge on how students as a whole are impacted by cross-
    campus collaboration.

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Appendix A

Institutional Board Review Approval

IRB #: PRO-2020-174
Title: Cross-Campus Collaboration and its Impact on Resident Students at Rowan University
Creation Date: 11-17-2020
End Date: 1-17-2022
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Raquel Wright-Mair
Review Board: Glassboro/CMSRU
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Raquel Wright-Mair	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	wrightmair@rowan.edu
Member	Serafina Genise	**Role**	Co-Principal Investigator	**Contact**	genise43@rowan.edu
Member	Serafina Genise	**Role**	Primary Contact	**Contact**	genise43@rowan.edu

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

KEY INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

ADULT CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY: Cross-Campus Collaboration and its Impact on Resident Students at Rowan University
Principal Investigator: Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide key information that will help you decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study.

Please carefully read the key information provided in questions 1-9 and 14 below. The purpose behind those questions is to provide clear information about the purpose of the study, study specific information about what will happen in the course of the study, what are the anticipated risks and benefits, and what alternatives are available to you if you do not wish to participate in this research study.

The study team will explain the study to you, and they will answer any question you might have before volunteering to take part in this study. It is important that you take your time to make your decision. You may take this consent form with you to ask a family member or anyone else before agreeing to participate in the study.

Participation in this study is not required for employment or contingent upon your continued employment. Participation in this research will only be used and viewed by the investigators, and any and all disclosures to individuals outside of the study will not include any identifiable information, including job titles and other information related to your position, and all research results published and presented will not include any identifiable information, including job titles and other information related to your position, and reported in aggregate.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask the study team and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

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Leave Blank for IRB
Stamping

The Principal Investigator, Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair, or another member of the study team will also be asked to sign this informed consent.

1. **What is the purpose of the study?**
   The Purpose of this research study is to evaluate if and how cross-campus collaboration takes place at Rowan University, specifically the main campus. This study is for a thesis, which is part of the Masters in Higher Education program at Rowan University.

2. **Why have you been asked to take part in this study?**
   You have been asked to take part in this study because you are an employee who is tasked with programming planning at Rowan University.

3. **What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?**
   If you choose to participate in this research study, you are asked to partake in one interview. This interview will last anywhere between 45 to 90 minutes and will take place virtually on WebEx.

4. **Who may take part in this research study? And who may not?**
   The target population we have are employees who are tasked with planning programs for students at Rowan University. For the employees we will include both males and females irrespective of their ethnic background.

   The nature of this study is specific to those employees who are tasked with planning programs for Rowan Students, if the employee does not plan programs they will be excluded from this study.

5. **How long will the study take and where will the research study be conducted?**
   This study will take employees approximately 45 to 90 minutes to conduct the virtual interview.

6. **How many visits may take to complete the study?**
   This will take you one visit, of one virtual interview for an employee.

7. **What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?**
   Employee subjects may feel minimal psychological or emotional discomfort since questions are asking about employer and work performance.

8. **Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?**

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There may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study or benefits to others or society in general

9. **What are the alternatives if you do not wish to participate in the study?**
Your alternative is not to participate in the study.

10. **How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?**
The number of employee subjects to be enrolled in this study is a max of 10 employees.

11. **How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?**
During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

12. **Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?**

There is no cost to take part in this study.

13. **Will you be paid to take part in this study?**

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

14. **How will information about you be kept private or confidential?**
All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your personal information. Research data collected during the course of the interviews (de-identified or reported in aggregate) will be included in the thesis. All data collected during this study will be kept in a private password-protected account.

15. **What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?**
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to *Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair at wrightmair@rowan.edu*

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If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

16. Who can you call if you have any questions?
If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

> *Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair*
> *College of Education, Educational Services and Leadership*
> *856-256-4711*

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

> Office of Research Compliance
> (856) 256-4058– Glassboro/CMSRU

17. What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?
You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the entire information about the research study, research risks, benefits and the alternatives, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed.

All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered and I agree to volunteer to participate in the study.

Subject Name:_____

Subject Signature:_____ Date:_____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:
To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent:_____

Signature: _____ Date_____

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Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Cross-Campus Collaboration Interview Questions   Version: 1.2

Employee Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your job as (insert title here).

2. How did you enter the profession?

3. What is your process for planning programs in your department?

4. Who is the target audience of your programs?

5. Tell me about any collaborative efforts between your office and other offices across divisions on campus

6. Tell me about how you assess your programs on campus?

7. What feedback do students provide regarding your programs?

Appendix D

Recruitment Email

Cross-Campus Collaboration Recruitment Email   Version: 1.1

Subject: Master's Thesis Interview Participation

Hello (Insert name of employee here),

My name is Serafina Genise and I am currently in my final semester of the Higher Education Administration master's program here at Rowan University. Part of the program requirements is that second year students conduct research based on a topic of their choosing and write a thesis. I am writing my thesis on cross-campus collaboration and it's impact on resident students at Rowan University.

In order to determine the answer to this question I need to interview several professionals who are directly involved in programming for students that occurs at Rowan. I am reaching out to you today because based on your position here at Rowan you fit within my study. I will be conducting virtual interviews that will take anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. We would be having a conversation that would include 7 questions in regards to your programming process. These interviews can be scheduled to fit best for you. I would truly appreciate your participation in this effort. If you have any further questions about this process please do not hesitate to reach out. I hope to hear back from you soon.

Best,
Serafina Genise