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The Impact of Residential Life Hall Directors Becoming Hourly Employees in the Minnesota State University System

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**The Impact of Residential Life Hall Directors Becoming Hourly Employees in the
Minnesota State University System**

by

Jamie Van Boxel

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Abstract

Live-on residential life hall director staff shifted from a salaried employment status to an hourly employment status as a result of a reinterpretation of the duties test of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for these positions. Transitioning live-on residential life staff to hourly employment status occurred at institutions in the Minnesota State University System resulting in an unusual employment status for hall directors in the Minnesota State System compared to the national norm. Residence hall directors who became hourly employees served as the population of this basic qualitative study. The purpose was to explore the impact on worker performance resulting from the transition to hourly employment status. Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance served as the theoretical framework that guided this study. Kezar's (2013) expansion of this theory of worker performance also contributed to the theoretical underpinning of this study. The narratives that emerged from this qualitative study provides context for future higher education leaders faced with the changing employment status of employees who have historically been salaried and then must transition to overtime-eligible status. Non-exempt (overtime-eligible) professionals in a higher education setting are likely confined to performing their duties in the context of a 40-hour workweek. The impact of this on professional residential life hall directors will be discussed.

Acknowledgements

If you had asked me in 2006, or anytime prior to that, if I would ever continue on with my education beyond my masters degree I would have emphatically said “absolutely not!” As it turns out, a seed was planted at my masters graduation party by my advisor, Dr. Robert Bowman, and that seed was Dr. Bob (as my cohort endearing called him), meeting my parents and grandparents and telling my family that I was bound to eventually earn a doctorate. Thank you for planting an idea that I’ve never been able to shake! Thanks to my family, especially my mother and my grandfather, for reminding me of that conversation over the years.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As reported by Field (2016) and Gardner (2016a), University and residential life leaders throughout the United States faced an unprecedented challenge during 2016 when news became more widely-reported that the Department of Labor was going to make changes to the salary threshold of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that would result in many live-on residential life professionals falling under the newly proposed salary threshold. University and residential life administrators needed to make preparations and decisions on how to prepare for these changing employment standards in order to make sure the impact on worker performance did not have a negative impact on the students being served by residential life staff who would shift to hourly employees.

As reported by DeSantis (2016), Asimou and Adams (2016), and by Wiessner (2017), preparations to transition staff to hourly employees were occurring throughout the United States in the fall of 2016 until a federal injunction stopped the Department of Labor from moving forward with a new salary threshold. However, in the Minnesota State University System circumstances had already been set in motion to reevaluate all positions within the system using the “duties test” of the FLSA (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Regardless of the federal court injunction on the new salary threshold that was proposed by the Obama administration that as reported by Wiessner, it would be the duties test that would be the cause of positions to shift to hourly in the Minnesota State University System (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017). This scenario resulted in the universities in the Minnesota State University System to move forward with transitioning some residential life staff, who have historically been salaried employees, to hourly staff. This is noteworthy given

that DeSantis (2016) was reporting uncertainty regarding whether residential life operations throughout the country would still be shifting employees to hourly status once the federal injunction halted the salary threshold increase.

This study examined the impact of having hall directors transition to hourly employees within the Minnesota State University System. Specifically, the impact on hall directors and how they approach their work after transitioning from a salaried to hourly status was explored. In analyzing how professionals in the residential life departments within the Minnesota State System adjusted to having some of their staff transition to hourly employees, this study will provide a foundation for future university leaders if the FLSA is adjusted by the Department of Labor in ways that result in more staff becoming hourly employees. Before examining the impact on worker performance of residential life staff shifting to hourly employees, an overview of recent national events related to the FLSA will be reviewed. These events played a part in influencing leaders in the Minnesota State University System to reexamine how they interpreted the duties test of the FLSA.

Overview of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Impact in Higher Education

The goal of the Obama administration in readjusting the Fair Labor Standards Act in 2016 was to offer financial protections for “nearly five million workers, many in retail and food services, whose employers manage to avoid paying the overtime rate by classifying them as managerial” (Basken, 2015, para. 4). Basken reported that adjustments to the salary threshold of the FLSA could impact “several hundred thousand” (para. 10) college and university employees. According to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a) the final rule/overtime rule was intended to “strengthen overtime protections and provide greater clarity

for both workers and employers” (p. 1) by updating the “salary level required for the executive, administrative, and professional (“white collar”) exemptions to ensure that the FLSA’s intended overtime protections are fully implemented, and to simplify the identification of overtime-protected employees” (p. 1). The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a) reported that the proposed salary threshold was set to “equal the 40th percentile of earnings of full-time salaried workers from the lowest wage Census Region” (p. 1) and that this equated to \$913 per week or \$47,476 per year. Salaried employees who made below this level would be entitled to overtime pay unless they qualified for one of the white-collar exemptions. According to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, these final overtime rules were scheduled to take effect beginning December 2016. According to Field (2016), by May 2016 the Obama administration set the salary threshold to be \$47,476 (at one point it was proposed to be set over \$50,000). Additionally, the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division established that the final rule also created a process, starting in 2020, for the salary level to be updated in three-year increments.

The final rule proposed by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a) during fall 2016 would not have changed the duties test. Employees who meet the duties test would still be eligible for overtime even if they would meet the new salary threshold of \$47,476. The Department of Labor stipulated that these rules would apply to all types of higher education institutions. However, the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division established that public higher education institutions (not private or for-profit) could provide compensation time off instead of overtime pay for hours worked above 40 hours per week. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division established the

overtime rate of pay to be at least one-and-one-half times the base rate of pay for hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek, and this overtime rate would be true for state institutions offering compensation time in lieu of overtime pay. For example, 48 hours worked in a week would mean that an employee would get 12 hours of compensation time off ($8 + 4 = 12$). Given this high overtime payment rate and the fact that residential life employees, like many employees in higher education, work in excess of 40 hours per week, there have been exceptions established within the FLSA to mitigate overtime eligibility.

The higher education system has benefited from being excluded, in part, to some of the rules of the FLSA. These exclusions are referred to as exemptions. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016b) outlined a number of exemptions in the FLSA including the following, which apply to higher education positions:

- **Teaching Exemption:** The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division identified exemptions for teachers and academic administrators, which were unchanged in the proposed 2016 revision of the FLSA. Teachers, coaches (not athlete recruiters), and adjunct instructors are all exempt from overtime pay. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division stipulates that the final rule offering overtime compensation does not apply to students, including graduate assistants (GAs), teaching assistants (TAs), research assistants, resident assistants (RAs), or other student employees.
- **Professional Exemption:** The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division identified these people as “learned professionals” (p. 6) such as those practicing accounting, law, or medicine. A person in a position that qualifies for the professional exemption must meet both the salary and duties test to be exempt from receiving overtime pay.

- **Administrative Exemption:** The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division stated that to qualify for this exemption a person must meet the salary test and the duties test. To meet the duties test the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division stipulated that the “primary duty must include the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance” (p. 7). These employees often include: department heads, academic counselors and advisors, and intervention specialists who must be available to respond to student academic issues.
- **Executive Exemption:** To qualify for this exemption, The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division stipulated that these employees have an organizational scope of responsibility and must have the “authority to hire and fire employees” (p. 8) and these employees must meet the salary test.

For employees who do not meet one of the exemptions provided in the FLSA, the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016b) suggested a number of options to comply with the proposed version of the FLSA. These considerations for higher education leaders included: do nothing when a particular position does not exceed 40 hours in a workweek even if the salary does not reach the new threshold, raise the salary by adjusting wages accordingly to meet the minimum salary threshold, pay overtime for hours worked above 40 at time-and-one-half the regular rate of pay, or reorganize workloads and adjust work schedules in order to spread work hours evenly to be able to consistently meet a 40-hour work week.

Additionally, according to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, public agencies could consider offering compensation time or “comp time” in lieu of overtime pay at 1.5 hours for every hour of work over 40 hours. These suggestions served as a starting

point for leaders in higher education who were attempting to prepare for the December 2016 salary threshold increase. These strategies would be important should the salary threshold ever be raised in the future; a prospect left open by the August 2017 decision by Judge Mazzant, who, as reported by Wiessner (2017), struck down the increased salary threshold offered by the Obama administration.

Judge Mazzant's ruling, as reported by Wiessner (2017), left the opportunity for changes to the FLSA to arise again in the future. In the Minnesota State University System the transition was slowed by the Mazzant ruling, as reported by Wiessner, but not halted, as confirmed in a memo sent to system employees in spring 2017 (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Determining how to transition employees to hourly status was still a reality in the Minnesota State University System. There is a significant impact on employees who were at one time salaried and were expected to "do whatever it takes to get the job done" to suddenly be required to report hours within a 40-hour workweek. The foreseen impact of limiting work to a 40-hour workweek is two-fold: limiting work hours therefore no longer doing whatever it takes to get the job done and an increased perception that hourly employees are less professional quickly surfaced.

The goal, according to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a), was to "strengthen overtime protections" (p. 1) through the proposed changes to the FLSA, yet not all employees saw this positively. Gardner (2016a) reported that while the goal was to pay people for their labor in a fair way, the impact on staff was not universally seen as a benefit and many were more concerned with a loss of identity—the identity of being a professional, and some university employees felt they were being demoted.

Paterson (2016) reported that there may be a shift from employees “doing what it takes to get the job done” in order to best serve students, to working hourly and having limits to what services they can provide to students given time constraints. Paterson suggested that hourly employees would eventually reframe their perspective from getting the work done to a focus on hours in a workday and letting work linger for another day and another pay period. This reframing would be a significant shift for student affairs professionals, including residential life professionals who approach their work from the perspective of prioritizing the impact on student success over limiting the work to a standard 40-hour work schedule. What remained clear for many who would be directly or indirectly impacted by reinterpreting the duties test of the FLSA was that change in the Minnesota State University System was still on the horizon while the threat of significant change as a result of the FLSA diminished elsewhere in the United States.

Higher education media reporting: 2015 through 2017. Managing change without verifiable information is especially difficult, although not uncommon in higher education. As exemplified by the reporting by Field (2016) and Gardner (2016a), by fall of 2016 more attention through higher education news media was being given to the Obama administration’s plans to adjust the salary threshold and otherwise update the FLSA. For higher education leaders and for employees working in higher education, this was a time of uncertainty that came with mixed emotions. As Gardner reported, employees started to anticipate adjustments to their work schedules and potentially their salaries and university leaders started to wonder what the budgetary impact would become and how they would then need to manage their employees in order to maintain student services. Field reported that diminished work performance by staff was an increasing concern. Additionally, as reported by Gardner, employees worried about loss

of autonomy and their professional identity resulting from moving from salaried to hourly employees. Gardner reported there was a sense that becoming an hourly employee is a demotion and that professional employees who would be moving to hourly status recognized that the tradeoff for receiving more pay came with less flexibility and autonomy and contributed to the feeling of being demoted in professional status. Gardner's reporting suggested that many higher education professionals associated hourly work with "less than" professional status. Asimou and Adams (2016) reported that some residential life leaders started to plan for more clearly identified weekly work schedules in order to be able to comply with a 40-hour per workweek standard.

There was a lot of change that needed to take place, yet there was also a lack of clear information to help leaders prepare for these looming changes. This was true in the Minnesota State University System as well, where there was little information being offered to most employees to suggest that the position designation of salaried employee was on a different path in Minnesota than those in similar positions across the nation that were being reported by Field (2016) and Asimou and Adams (2016).

News media outlets, especially from sources closely connected to higher education such as The Chronicle of Higher Education, became resources for university leaders and employees looking for more information on who may be impacted. Field (2016) reported that "many entry-level and midlevel professionals—from admissions officers to athletic trainers to student-aid administrators—will qualify too" (para. 2), in reference to new overtime eligibility for higher education professionals. Basken (2015) reported specific salary thresholds, implementation timelines, and details about which types of positions would be impacted which showcased the

usefulness of media reports in providing information to university leaders. To understand how university leaders managed and prepared for the change coming as a result of proposed adjustments to the FLSA, a review of the news articles coming out in the summer and fall of 2016 (such as Gardner (2016a), Hoover (2016), and DeSantis (2016)) and through summer of 2017 (such as Wiessner (2017)) exemplify the information flow that higher education leaders at that time were privy to. In many cases these published news reports were valuable to higher education leaders, who had many questions about the potential impact of changes to the FLSA.

As reported by Asimou (2016a) a straw poll of residential life leaders indicated a lack of knowledge about the FLSA, especially regarding just how significant this Department of Labor policy would be in regards to its impact on university personnel. Polling conducted by Asimou (2016a) and Asimou (2016b) showed that residential life leaders during this period in time were starting to seek answers to questions that were becoming more frequently asked by higher education professionals: what is the FLSA and why might this change how we do our work?

Preparing for a new Fair Labor Standards Act salary threshold. The Obama administration's goal was to "extend overtime pay to millions more workers" (DeSantis, 2016, para. 1). According to Hoover (2016) the new salary threshold as of December 1st, 2016 would have been \$47,476 and salaried employees making less than that figure would have been eligible for overtime pay if they worked more than 40 hours in a week. Hoover also explained that part-time employees making \$35,000 would be exempt from overtime pay and reported that this could have resulted in 12-month positions becoming 9-month positions as a management strategy to avoid overtime payment obligations. According to Gardner (2016a), the proposed changes to the FLSA would increase the number of salaried employees who would become

eligible to receive overtime for hours worked beyond 40 per week because the current salary threshold of about \$23,000 was so low that most higher education professionals exceeded it. The United State Department of Labor (2016) proposed the salary threshold to become more than \$47,000 by December 2016. This reporting in 2016 was gaining more attention by higher education staff at universities where employees would become impacted; with residential life staff being among those anticipated to be impacted by the proposed salary threshold change.

As outlined by Paterson (2016), the final rule was announced by the Department of Labor on May 23, 2016, setting the salary threshold at \$47,476, up from \$23,660, but lower than the original recommendation of \$54,000. As Paterson noted, this proposal would have been the first raise of the salary minimum since 2004. These new rules were scheduled for implementation on December 1st, 2016.

Challenges presented by updating the FLSA. Gardner (2016a) reported that university staff impacted the most have student contact during irregular hours, which would have presented implementation challenges for college administrators. Additionally, Gardner reported that because the salary threshold of \$23,000 had not been increased since 2004, a number of administrators who would have to manage implementation challenges and grapple with complications related to these changes still supported the proposed salary threshold increase. Gardner reported that other administrators believed that a gradual change would be better because that would allow more time for organizational leaders to adapt and to ensure a more positive impact on employee performance. Similarly, Hoover (2016) and Love (2016) reported that there were managers who saw the necessity for the FLSA to be adjusted for the benefit of employees because they recognized that employees had been overworked and underpaid, while

also acknowledging the proposed adjustment to the FLSA would place a financial burden on organizational budgets. Another potential challenge included a concern that workloads would increase for staff above the salary threshold as a way to compensate for diminished work performance by those adjusted to hourly status. As reported by Hoover (2016) and Banks and Hanvey (2016), another challenge administrators faced was preparing newly salaried individuals to manage their workload within a standard workweek while also limiting staff who expressed a need to work more hours that they would not be approved for overtime hours.

Given the challenges foreseen by adjusting the salary threshold of the FLSA, many associations related to college and university organizations, as referenced by Love (2016), made their concerns known and outlined the potential impact that the proposed adjustments to the FLSA would have on the higher education system. Additionally, the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) sent a letter to the Obama administration in July 2015 “when President Obama first proposed raising the overtime-pay threshold to just over \$50,000” (Field, 2016, para. 14) that “warned that the new rule would force colleges to reclassify many workers to hourly status “to the detriment of employees, institutions, and students”” (Field, 2016, para. 14). That letter, followed one reported by DeSantis (2015) that CUPA-HR sent a message to the Department of Labor during the Obama administration, “on behalf of 18 higher-education groups” (para. 4), expressing concern that the salary threshold was being adjusted too high (from \$23,660 to a proposed \$50,440). CUPA-HR was not alone in offering a warning to the Obama administration. The American Council of Education warned that the impact would include: “tuition increases, service reductions, and, possibly, layoffs” (Field, 2016, para. 4). Field reported that it became clear as early as the summer of 2015 that

“many entry-level and midlevel professionals—from admissions officers to athletic trainers to student-aid administrators—will qualify” (para. 2) for overtime pay. Basken (2015) reported that “many in student life, development, administration, and academic affairs” (para. 12) would also be impacted given that many make less than the proposed salary threshold.

Similarly to the American Council of Education, Field (2016) reported that the president of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities warned that the high costs would have a significant budget impact that would impact the ability of universities to fulfill its mission related to academics, research, and outreach. As reported by Field, the vice-president of the American Association of Community Colleges made it known that many of the salaries at its member institutions fell below the \$47,476 threshold. Field reported that many private colleges “said the rule would undermine their efforts to rein in tuition growth” according to a statement by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (n.d.), agreeing with other associations that the budget impact would be extensive. Many of the higher education groups associated with CUPA-HR wanted the Department of Labor to “consider lowering the new proposed salary cutoff and to phase in the new level over time” (DeSantis, 2015, para. 6). The advocacy by higher education professional associations reported by DeSantis did eventually result in change, as the salary threshold proposed by the Department of Labor was dropped from \$50,440 to \$47,476. The national organizations representing higher education coalesced around the concerns about the challenges the proposed changes to the FLSA were creating. The negative impact to higher education was emerging within the national discourse as fall 2016 commenced. Yet, there was an alternative and more positive perspective on the reaction to changes by some higher education professionals as well.

The impact on higher education organizations. A letter written in September 2016 by Dr. Cindi Love, the Executive Director of ACPA (College Student Educators International) captured the conflicting perspectives of higher education administrators related to the impending impact of the updated final rule of the FLSA that was scheduled for implementation in December 2016. In her letter to ACPA colleagues, Love (2016) acknowledged that a consortium on government relations for student affairs, which included five higher education associations: ACPA, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I), the Association for Student Conduct Association (ASCA), NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and NIRSA-Leaders in Collegiate Recreation; all supported a letter to congress urging a delay of FLSA overtime regulations. In her letter Dr. Love stated that ACPA would not join the consortium in urging congress to delay FLSA implementation. Love cited issues related to the FLSA putting forward an opportunity to positively address living wage issues for higher education entry-level and mid-level professionals. Love wrote that “colleges and universities have not adjusted the minimum wage trajectory quickly enough to keep pace with the cost of living” (para. 11) and went on to write “the threshold for campus payrolls has needed an overhaul for quite some time, so the amount of correction needed to bring equity is huge” (para. 11).

Love (2016) wrote that the reason for ACPA’s position of support for the adjustments to the FLSA regulations was because “we have listened to our members and made the decision that seems to best reflect their views at this time” (Conclusion section, para. 2). ACPA, while acknowledging the impact on campus budgets that would come with implementing the higher

salary threshold and paying employees overtime, took the position that, as Love wrote, is a “path to equity and economic justice” (Conclusion section, para. 3).

Love (2016) stressed that other leading associations in student affairs, including the national association for residential life programs, spent political capital advocating for a scaled back and delayed implementation of the final rule of the FLSA. The position of these associations carried significant weight in the national narrative about the FLSA because members would be personally and financially impacted by the new standards. Members of these associations would also be managing the implementation of the changes to the FLSA in their role as senior administrators overseeing departmental budgets.

Faculty, because of their role in teaching students and who make up the largest constituency in employee groups at colleges and universities, are exempt, as outlined by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016b), from many of the policies outlined in the FLSA. Field (2016) reported that the FLSA includes exemptions that benefit higher education institutions, most specifically, the teaching exemption. Gardner (2016a) reported that a position-by-position analysis needed to be performed by universities to see if the teacher exemption applied to non-faculty positions. As reported by Field (2016), the teacher exemption exempts those who primarily teach from being eligible for overtime no matter their level of salary. However, as Field noted, not everyone who works at a college or university has at the basis of her or his job description teaching duties, meaning that many university employees would become eligible for overtime pay because they do not meet a duties exemption and they would not meet the salary threshold by earning less than \$47,476. For this reason universities

needed to start to plan to implement changes in order to meet the updated salary threshold being proposed by the Department of Labor.

Different university types had to sort through different implementation challenges. Two examples named by Gardner (2016a) included small private colleges with fiscal challenges and rural universities with lower living costs and salaries. Any college, but small colleges in particular, face tighter budgets and smaller staff numbers. A smaller staff, limited to 40 hours, would be unable to absorb additional work necessary to serve students. In addition, a president of a small college in the northeast warned of a “potential reduction in autonomy for employees who up until now have viewed their work as a vocation more than a job” (Field, 2016, para. 13). Basken (2015) reported that rural institutions also pay people according to local cost of living standards, so these institutions would find themselves having to fill a wage gap in order to meet the new salary standard at a disproportional amount compared to urban institutions that pay employees higher salaries given local cost of living. Basken reported that legal representatives for colleges and universities believed that adjustments to the salary threshold would be “most pronounced for colleges in parts of the country that have lower average wages and lack state laws that already set stricter rules on overtime pay” (para. 14). Basken’s reporting made it clear that a higher national salary standard for employees who are eligible for overtime pay would impact universities throughout the country differently, dependent on local conditions, while also impacting different employees within the university uniquely depending on their salary and their professional duties.

According to DeSantis (2016), the revisions to the FLSA would not have changed salary and overtime rules for faculty because of the teaching exemption, but would have impacted other

employees, mostly those who fall into student affairs and athletic roles. For all nonteaching faculty who would be impacted by the proposed FLSA standards, strategies to manage implementation needed to be considered. Gardner (2016a) suggested using students and work-study positions as an opportunity to overcome some of the workload issues that may have resulted in overtime pay. Employing more students would have benefited students who face tuition costs that continue to rise. Gardner reported that the FLSA allows for compensation time as an option available to public institutions, which may help administrators manage the ebb and flow of a workload that might see a period of time where overtime is necessary followed by periods of time where an employee is not needed for 40 hours. While some strategies to mitigate the impact on higher education staff being held to perform at a standard that students have come to expect, the impact on higher education institutions was of clear concern. The impact on residential life organizations is but one microcosm within the greater higher education system, but certainly one worth highlighting given the focus of this study.

The impact on residential life organizations. Residential life organizations hire professional staff to live in the residential facilities with students. Implementation of the FLSA for residential life staff, because of the unique job description and job expectations for hall directors, is especially challenging under the circumstances that occurred in the Minnesota State University System where many hall directors were transitioned to hourly employees (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017). As Gardner (2016a) reported, one reason the FLSA will challenge higher education organizations in complying with the FLSA is that hall directors are on the clock when they are responding to students, and this can occur without notice and have impact on hours worked that are unanticipated by a standard weekly

schedule. Additionally, Gardner draws attention to how technology has created a culture of working non-standard hours (such as at night). Hall directors often respond to student requests via email, university provided cell phones, and other forms of electronic communication such as social media.

Paterson (2016) reported that salary compression issues are another major challenge that must be overcome by residential life leaders. One of the reasons for this is that residential life departments often have multiple levels within their organizations including: hall directors in the entry-level positions, one or multiple mid-level management positions, and a senior housing officer. Significant salary increases at the entry-level, in order to meet potentially new salary thresholds or duties tests interpretations that shift employees to hourly status, have implications for the layers of positions above the entry-level in the organization. Navigating each of these issues (and others) as residential life leaders prepared for hall directors to become hourly employees added levels of complexity to the transition process for residential life staff that may be more complex than when other university staff have set weekly work schedules. This complexity would impact the transition of residence life staff to hourly employees.

The Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) published an impact analysis paper written by Asimou (2016) that reported that the Department of Labor first released updates to the FLSA in July 2015, with a new salary threshold going from \$23,660 to \$50,440 per year. According to Asimou (2016) compensation for hall directors typically included a salary stipend, a furnished and provided apartment, and a meal plan to eat on campus. The average salary based on the 2015 ACUHO-I Operational Survey data, reported by Asimou, was \$27,047 to \$33,809, depending on specific job titles and job requirements (such as

does the hall director supervise other professional staff). Asimou reported that the average salary per position also differed based on institution type (four-year vs. two-year and public vs. private). Salaries would have needed to be adjusted from about \$11,000 to about \$24,000 per individual in order to meet the proposed salary threshold of about \$47,000. Given the clear impact that was outlined by ACUHO-I, the professional organization that most residential life professionals align with, it became more clear that residential life professionals needed to prepare for the changes that would be required of them as the implementation deadline neared.

Asimou and Adams (2016) acknowledged a lack of official information coming from the Department of Labor or from university or system leaders about how to prepare for the impact of the new FLSA rules being proposed. Residential life leaders faced unprecedented challenges to how their new hourly staff would function. Finding useful information to make informed decisions became a necessity. Unfortunately, the swift movement of the proposed changes to the FLSA did not lend itself well to residential life organizations more used to adapting more slowly when managing change. While higher education news media outlets provided helpful insight to the evolving nature of the proposed FLSA changes, other web-based resources allowed professional residential life staff, human resource professionals, and employment lawyers to provide insight into interpreting and understanding the impact of the Department of Labor's proposed updates to the FLSA.

In June of 2016, Bill Pokorny, a lawyer working for a law firm that specialized in wage and employment law, published an online article that specifically addressed many questions that residential life leaders had about the potential impact that an updated FLSA would have on a residential life operation. Pokorny (2016) suggested that position responsibilities of live-on hall

directors typically meet the duties test for exempt status under the administrative exemption given the amount of “discretion and independent judgment in the course of their duties” (para. 1), yet hall directors typically would not meet the salary test. Hall director salaries may be markedly lower than other student affairs professionals because, as Asimou (2016) referenced, compensation models for hall directors include free room and board due to the requirement that a hall director live on campus.

Pokorny (2016) suggested that the FLSA regulations identified room and board benefits as typically not being able to be counted toward salary standard minimums, this was also reported by Paterson (2016). Paterson went on to report that compensation models for hall directors are one reason that “residence hall staff seem to create the greatest challenges” (para. 3) for leaders trying to implement the proposed changes to the FLSA. Pokorny identified five requirements outlined in the FLSA that must be reached in order to count room and board as part of an employee’s salary, and these five criteria typically do not fit with how most hall director position descriptions have been designed. The requirement that hall directors live on campus and be able to respond to students in a short period of time prohibits room and board from being counted towards salary. According to Pokorny, even if the five stipulations could be met, the amount that gets included as part of the salary is the exact cost of room and board and cannot include “markup for profit or fixed costs that would be incurred regardless of whether the meal is provided to the employee” (para. 8). This threshold identified by Pokorny makes the chargeback idea, where a hall director is paid more, than charged room and board fees to live on campus, a steep threshold to meet with minimal impact on increasing the salary of a hall director. Pokorny

identified on-call duties as one of the major challenges that universities needed to cope with in order to accurately account for the work hours for hall directors.

While residence life leaders nationwide grappled with what adjustments to make for their hall director staff, as outlined in the polls conducted by Asimou (2016a) and Asimou (2016b), it is likely that residential life leaders in the Minnesota State University System were also considering how their hall director staff could remain exempt from becoming hourly employees. Due to the complications that university leaders must overcome in the process of appropriately paying hall directors for their services, there has been interest at looking at the exemptions within the FLSA to make adjustments to the hall director role so it could qualify for one of those exemptions.

Under the proposed increase to the salary test, the easiest standard for many residential life operations to meet would have been the salary test; simply pay hall directors the minimum salary. In reality, this is the standard that hall directors in most institutions had been meeting since 2004, because hall directors typically make more than \$23,000. The question being considered in 2016 by many residential life leaders, as outlined in the two polls reported by Asimou (2016a) and Asimou (2016b), was what would it take to raise the salary of hall directors to \$47,476? If a path to increase salary could be identified, that was a common solution for many residential life departments. In the unionized environment in Minnesota, as one example, this solution was not easily achieved. According to Pokorny (2016) university leaders may also have been considering another exemption for their hall directors, called the academic administrator exemption. According to Pokorny, this exemption allows administrators to make a salary less than the salary threshold as long as: they are paid equal to the starting salary of

professors and instructors whose primary role is teaching; the administrator's job functions include matters related to curriculum, instruction, testing achievement, academic and grading standards; and job functions are clearly related to teaching. Pokorny reported that hall director job descriptions typically did not include most of the job duties identified (related to curriculum, instruction, testing achievement, academic and grading standards, and job duties related to teaching). In Minnesota State, duties test reviews starting the summer of 2017 (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017) would reveal that hall director roles would not always qualify for this exemption.

Like the Minnesota State University System proved after the federal injunction halted the increase to the salary threshold, passing the salary test was only one prong of two that determined salary status for employees. The job duties of the hall director still had to pass the duties test; prong number two. It is in the application of the duties test that the Minnesota State University System separated itself from the national trend to claim hall directors as salaried employees based on the duties test and the low salary threshold which has been maintained at about \$23,000 (as a result of the federal ruling against the Obama administration's proposed increase to the salary threshold, as reported by Wiessner (2017)).

Looking beyond the salary and the duties tests, Pokorny (2016) concluded that the other exemptions provided by the FLSA generally would not apply to the hall director role, yet Pokorny provided many considerations for residential life leaders to consider and plan for as the implementation deadline for the new FLSA standards approached. Those considerations included:

- Restrictions placed on hall directors related to being in their facilities; these restrictions mean they are working, due to the time and place restriction.
- Instead of restrictions, require hall directors to respond when called, in a reasonable time (30-45 minutes). What is a reasonable amount of time? Some departments might say 15 minutes; this may be too short of a required response time if the goal is to avoid pay status while on-call. Unrestricted on-call time does not generally need to be paid.
- Staggering hall director schedules is another way to account for availability to students without having restrictions in place and limited response times for hall directors.
- Increase reliance on student staff who are not entitled to overtime pay as outlined in the FLSA.
- Pay hall directors “minimum wage” for on-call hours and their regular rate for “office hours.”
- Give hall directors flexible schedules, where they work more on one day and less on another in order to maintain the 40-hour per week minimum.

As the implementation deadline approached, university leaders found value in any information available to assist them in decision-making as it related to coming into compliance with the new version of the FLSA. Pokorny’s reporting provided one of the more comprehensive and residential life specific resources for those who were searching for guidance leading up to the expected transition for many hall directors across the nation prior to a federal judge halting the salary threshold increase.

About the federal court injunction. A lawsuit was brought forward to stop the new FLSA standards from going into effect. According to DeSantis (2016) the lawsuit, which was

backed by 21 states and many private businesses, resulted in an injunction on the basis of irreparable harm due to the financial impact of needing to pay more overtime to employees. The judge ruled that it was an unlawful overreach by the Obama administration.

In November 2016, days before the new FLSA standards were scheduled to go into effect, “Judge Amos L. Mazzant issued an injunction, blocking the rule’s enforcement nationwide” (Goral, 2016, para. 3). According to Gardner (2016b) the new FLSA standards were supposed to go into effect on December 1st, 2016 until Judge Mazzant issued a temporary injunction. The injunction came too late for some institutions that had already initiated salary increases and left leaders at other institutions with the decision to move forward with the planned pay raises or halt them. As DeSantis (2016) reported, the injunction stopped that rule from going into effect nation-wide, however there was still an impact on various campuses throughout the nation, such as those in the Minnesota State University System.

The injunction by Judge Mazzant found that the U.S. Department of Labor “exceeded its authority and ignored the intent of Congress in issuing the rule” (DeSantis, 2016, para. 2). DeSantis (2016) reported that this injunction was likely impacted by the election of Donald Trump in November 2016 because the new salary threshold was “among many Obama-administration policies that had been cast into doubt” (para. 4) when both houses of congress and the presidency became republican controlled upon inauguration in January 2017. DeSantis reported that the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources put out a statement suggesting that although it would be likely that the Department of Labor would appeal Judge Mazzant’s injunction, the Trump administration would have the opportunity to “revise the final rule” (para 6). This likely meant that if the FLSA would get adjusted in the future, the

salary threshold would be lower, reducing the impact to university personnel. The most likely scenario seems to be a change to the FLSA to the degree proposed by the Obama administration that would occur in the future, after the 2020 or 2024 elections when democrats could potentially retake the presidency and parts of congress. Wiessner (2017) reported that the opportunity for a significant change to the salary threshold in the future was made possible by Judge Mazzant's August 2017 ruling that struck down the new salary threshold out of concern for state spending and the impact on businesses. Wiessner reported that this ruling created opportunity for a smaller-scaled salary increase to come in the future and withstand judicial review.

After the injunction. The injunction against the salary threshold increase, as reported by Goral (2016) came the month prior to the Trump administration taking office and replacing the Obama administration. The Department of Labor takes direction from the president and his administration, so the final decision rejecting the new salary threshold was not surprising given the Department of Labor's changing perspective on higher education policy under the Trump administration. As reported by Blumenstyk (2017), a minor clue to the position that the Trump administration would take on higher education policy was in a memo sent by the President of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities to the president of Liberty University, who was appointed to head a new Higher Education Task Force for the Trump administration. In this memo from Warren (2016), he urges the Trump administration to target the overtime rules of the FLSA as one of a number of areas for deregulating higher education.

According to a report from Blumenstyk (2017), the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities was requesting that the Trump administration examine higher education policy and urged deregulation, including the overtime rules of the FLSA. According

to the National Association of Independent Colleges (n.d.), the Department of Labor under the Trump administration would likely propose a “salary threshold [that] will have a gradual, less severe adjustment to the overtime pay rate that employers have indicated they could live with” (para. 10). While this report does not provide any suggestion on specific salary thresholds the Trump administration might recommend, it is evident that due to many higher education organizations and institutions being opposed to the Obama administration’s approach to updating the FLSA, the Trump administration will respond in a more muted fashion. The salary threshold increased by too much and too quickly. This suggested that any action by the Department of Labor in the future is likely to result in a lower salary threshold than originally set by the Obama administration’s Department of Labor. A long timeline for implementation is also likely.

One cannot know for sure when or in what way the Trump administration will address the FLSA. After all, until the Obama administration made adjustments in 2016, the FLSA was last updated in 2004. The overview of the Obama administration’s attempt to update the FLSA and the overview of the reaction by higher education leaders offers important context in which this study has emerged.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to offer context and insight on the impact when changes are made to the FLSA that cause university staff to switch classification from salaried to hourly employees. While this transition happened in the Minnesota State University System starting in July 2017 (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017), adjusting employees from salaried to hourly status could happen at institutions throughout the country in the future. Hall directors in residential life operations are a unique population of university staff to examine

because they are impacted by this change in interesting ways. Hall directors often have non-traditional work schedules and, at times, professionals in these positions are expected to respond to student issues at any hour and on any day. Capturing how this change has impacted their work performance will provide valuable context for future administrators having to transition higher education staff to hourly employees. According to Hasham (2004) “when major changes occur and the dominant coalition lacks the expertise to develop a strategy appropriate to the new challenges, the organization will become out of phase with the environment” (p. 46). The context offered to future leaders through this research will hopefully help improve the expertise of leaders faced with managing change of this type.

The value in this research is that it gives future university and residential life leaders a starting point for planning for change that did not exist in 2016 when university leaders found themselves facing an implementation deadline that would have forced them to transition their staff to hourly status or significantly increase the salary of their staff. Insight into the impact of changing the exemption status of employees from salaried to hourly is important for planning purposes by those who face a similar situation in the future. The Minnesota State University System serves as an example for future leaders because they decided to transition some hall directors to hourly status.

This research is important because live-on residential life staff have an important role in the retention of college students, especially first-year college students. It is valuable to residential life leaders to be able to manage change in a way that mitigates the negative impact on students and their ability to be successful. Blumberg and Pringle (1982) suggested that environmental factors, such as workplace policies and procedures, impact worker performance.

This would suggest that changes that negatively impact the performance of hall directors would in turn, impact college students who hall directors work to support. This is one reason why hall directors make for an interesting and special population to examine as it relates to changing employment status from salaried to hourly. The change to the employment status from salaried to hourly, specifically the impact to limiting live-on staff to a 40-hour workweek, has every potential to impact staff performance. This study attempts to highlight the impact on worker performance in residential life departments in the Minnesota State University System.

There is an opportunity to examine the impact in the Minnesota State University System and analyze what took place to provide context, guidance, and recommendations to future university and residential life leaders should future FLSA changes once again arise on a national scale. Exemption status reclassification is likely to impact worker performance and is therefore worth examining.

Analyzing how staff performance is impacted by this change may be of national interest in the future. Prior to the 2016 proposed adjustment to the FLSA, navigating the expectations and responsibilities of a live-on residential life staff member did not include navigating a rigid 40-hour workweek. Residence hall directors live with students in residential communities and it is common within the residential life setting for these professional staff members to have a work schedule that is more reflective of a traditional on-campus student schedule than a standard work schedule of 8-5 pm. A live-on staff member's work ebbs and flows with that of a student's schedule. When students are most active, late into the evening, a hall director is often working and most active in their role. When students are least active, in the mornings and when students are mostly in class, hall directors are also spending less time working. Over the course of the

semester the busy times for students, such as when they are moving in, moving out, and preparing for final exams, are also times when live-in staff are especially busy and likely working in excess of 40 hours per week. During times when students are on breaks and holidays, live-on staff may have been allowed to work less than 40 hours in an often undocumented compensatory compensation strategy that accounted for the busy work periods including staff training and residence hall move-in and move-out time periods. This non-standard work schedule, both from a day-to-day perspective, and when viewed from the perspective of the ebb and flow of an academic year, is part of the work experience hall directors who are salaried have typically navigated.

The value in this research is that it gives future university and residential life leaders a starting point for planning for change that did not exist in 2016 when university and residential life leaders found themselves facing a clear deadline and having to navigate significant change to one of the most fundamental staff positions in most residential life operations, the live-on staff position. While this research will focus on the impact on worker performance due to hall directors becoming hourly employees, the FLSA impacts all university staff whose primary function is not teaching. The purpose of this study is to capture the impact of Minnesota State University System's mandate that resulted in live-on staff transitioning to hourly employees.

Statement of the Problem

University and residential life leaders faced an unprecedented challenge during fall 2016 after news, as reported in Gardner (2016a), became more widespread throughout the profession that suggested the Department of Labor was making significant changes to the salary threshold of the FLSA. These news reports suggested that many live-on residential life professionals

would become eligible for overtime pay. University and residential life administrators needed to make preparations and decisions on how to manage this change in ways that minimized the negative impact on students. These preparations were impacted by: changing federal standards within the FLSA, university policies and procedures, employee contracts, and employee bargaining rights among other factors. Many university and residential life leaders had never managed a change of this variety, the impact of which would alter how hall directors would approach their work.

As reported by Paterson (2016), preparing to adjust how live-on staff would function as hourly employees was met by disbelief, surprise, unpreparedness, trepidation, uncertainty, and anxiety. Without being able to rely on past experience to manage this impending transition, university and residential life leaders lacked one significant tool in preparing for this significant and radical change. The information collected through this study will be a valuable part of the narrative available to university and residential life leaders in navigating future changes that result in adjusting the status of employees from salaried to hourly. The design of this study will bring a diverse perspective related to how employees work performance is impacted by including staff from various universities within the Minnesota State University System to share their experience transitioning from salaried to hourly employees.

Description and Scope of the Research

A basic qualitative design was used to explore the impact on work performance of hall directors who had their salary status changed to hourly. Hall directors from various residential life departments in the Minnesota State University System were interviewed and served as data sources for this study. The qualitative design of this study allowed for exploration of the

research questions in an emergent nature. It is recognized, as a result of the emergent nature of a qualitative study, that the purpose and scope of this study will shift as the study unfolds. In other words, the discovery that is started on at the beginning of this study may not be what this research study ends up being mainly on at the end of the study. This phenomenon encapsulates the tenants of a basic qualitative study and the emergent nature of this methodology. Qualitative researchers should be open to emergent paths that the research study may take. This was the goal when approaching this study at the proposal phase.

At the onset of this study, a goal was to take advantage of staff transitioning to hourly employees in the Minnesota State University System during 2017 and 2018 to explore the impact on their performance resulting from a significant transition to how individual residential life staff approached their professional work as a result of mandated change. The scope of this research, exploring worker performance by staff who have transitioned to hourly employees when those staff positions have historically been salaried, were analyzed using a framework of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982). The framework for worker performance that they offered suggested that worker performance is impacted by the intersection of worker capacity, worker willingness, and worker opportunity. This framework has been expanded on by other researchers, which will contribute to the analytical depth of this study. The decisions made by residential life leaders and the impacts of those decisions upon hall directors are best captured through qualitative interviews. This allows for the complexity and the nuances of this transition to be explored and analyzed through the theoretical framework guiding this study. Residential life staff at the universities with residential life programs in the Minnesota State University System served as the population for this study. The purposeful sample targeted for interviews

were live-on residential life hall directors because their insight on the impact to worker performance was revealing. The insights offered by the participants targeted for this study contribute to answering the research questions guiding this study.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study include:

1. What has been the impact on hall directors who transitioned to hourly employees?
2. How does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact their work performance?

Exploring the answers to these research questions offers a rich narrative that will contribute to the knowledge base about the impact of transitioning salaried residential life staff to hourly employees; especially when staff in residential life positions have historically been professionalized within a salaried environment with a “work until the job gets done” mentality. Given that “the job” for residential life employees is to contribute to the personal and academic success of college students, any impact on work performance of these staff members is critical to explore. These research questions offer a guiding framework for this study that contributed to valuable information emerging for residential life and university leaders who are charged with making decisions in the changing work environment that arises as a result of the changing employment status of the residential life workforce.

Definition of Terms

FLSA refers to the Fair Labor Standards Act. According to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2008) fact sheet, the FLSA “requires that employees must receive at least the minimum wage and may not be employed for more than 40 hours in a week

without receiving at least one and one-half times their regular rates of pay for the overtime hours” (para. 1). The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a) said “as with most employees, the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA generally apply to employees at higher education institutions” (para. 4), including residential life professional staff.

A common title for a live-on residential life professional staff member is hall director, although there are other titles for these live-on staff as well. In this study the term hall director will be used to mean any professional (full-time employee) who lives on campus with students.

Hall directors are a unique population due to work responsibilities that have special considerations under the FLSA. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2008) defines some of these special considerations in determining work hours:

- On-call time is defined as time worked by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division and applies to employee being on-site or off-site with time and place restrictions that place “constraints on the employee’s freedom” (para. 5).
- Rest and meal periods are more fluid for hall directors who are often required to live on-campus; in other words, hall directors live in their place of employment. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division stipulates that employers should be paid for rest and meal periods that are “usually 20 minutes or less” (para. 6) and meal periods of “30 minutes or more” (para. 6) are not work time.
- The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division defines unpaid sleep time while on duty when an employee is “required to be on duty for 24 hours or more” (para. 7) as a period of time for sleeping “of not more than 8 hours...and the employee can usually enjoy

an uninterrupted night's sleep" (para. 7). The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division further stipulates that during this 24 hour period of time, the employee must get "at least 5 hours" (para. 7) of uninterrupted sleep in order to be considered unpaid time during a 24 hour duty shift.

On-call time, rest and meal periods, and 24-hour duty response times are some of the prominent elements of the FLSA, as outlined by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, that are more prominently featured elements of the job duties of a hall director. Therefore these definitions are relevant to understanding the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees.

There are other terms defined in the FLSA that are relevant to understand, as they are referenced throughout this research study. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016a), defined the following terms:

- **Final Rule:** Also referred to as the overtime rule by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, which are the set of policies proposed by the Obama administration that "will strengthen the overtime protections and provide greater clarity for both workers and employers alike across sectors, including higher education" (p. 1). The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division further defined the final rule to include the new salary threshold that must be met, in addition to the duties test that must be met under the "executive, administrative, and professional ("white collar") exemptions" (p. 1).
- **Exempt:** This is the term used by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division which refers to a status for employees who meet the final rule (exceed the minimum

salary threshold and fulfill the duties tests outlined in the exemptions) and are therefore allowed to be designated as a salaried employee who is not eligible for overtime compensation.

- **Non-Exempt:** This is the term used by the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division identifying the status for employees who do not meet either one of or both the minimum salary threshold or one of the exemptions, and therefore these employees must be paid overtime for any hours worked in excess of 40-hours per week.

The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division provided clarity to the final rule and explained the changes that were proposed by the Obama administration leading up to the fall of 2016. These changes would have adjusted the salary threshold and increased the opportunities for workers to become eligible for overtime pay by shifting the status of those employees from exempt to non-exempt based only on the salary threshold. In other words, by adjusting the final rule, the Obama administration would have established a salary threshold above the current salary levels of many workers, including workers in higher education, and putting those employees into non-exempt status.

Summary

The impact of residential life employees becoming hourly employees in the Minnesota State University System is the focus that guides this basic qualitative study. As reported by Gardner (2016), the higher education workforce grappled with how to navigate the changes that would come as a result of the Department of Labor's proposed increase to the minimum salary threshold of the FLSA under the Obama administration throughout 2016. Although, as Goral (2016) reported, a federal injunction halted the new salary threshold from being implemented,

the Minnesota State University System continued taking steps to reexamine the job descriptions of their non-teaching faculty and staff under the current duties test of the FLSA (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017). In late 2016, after the election of Donald Trump and the change in philosophy that came with the political administration change at the Department of Labor, Goral reported that a federal judge first put an injunction on the salary threshold, and then Wiessner (2017) reported that same federal judge later halted the mandated increase to the salary threshold. Wiessner reported that the end result of this federal court action would be a salary threshold that would remain at approximately \$23,000, instead of the proposed hike to almost \$48,000. While the goal of the Obama administration, as reported by Basken (2015), was to increase the salaries of many middle-income families through these proposed changes to the FLSA, Wiessner reported that the federal judge's final determination was that the proposed increase was too much and beyond the scope of the Department of Labor's authority. Many professional organizations advocated against raising the salary threshold, as referenced by ACPA's President Dr. Love (2016), including almost all higher education professional organizations except for ACPA. The federal judge's ruling, as reported by Wiessner, put a halt on many of the changes that were beginning to get implemented on a national level. For staff working in the Minnesota State University System, the transition of staff from salaried employees to hourly employees continued to move forward throughout 2017 and 2018 (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

The driving force behind the transition that was occurring in the Minnesota State University System was a result of a reinterpretation of the duties test of the FLSA (S. Appelquist, personal communication, March 30, 2017), and not the salary test as had been the catalyst

driving the anticipated change at the national level until December 2016. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016b) offers guidance for the duties test, which is described as a process carried out by human resource professionals that categorizes the job duties of positions as either those reaching executive, administrative, or professional thresholds and therefore eligible for salaried status or less than executive, administrative, or professional thresholds and therefore mandated to be hourly positions and therefore overtime eligible. As the reporting that was available to university leaders suggested during 2016, including Field (2016), Gardner (2016a), Hoover (2016), and Pokorny (2016), there would be positions in higher education that would not achieve these exemptions, and would transition to hourly status. Unlike most higher education organizations throughout the United States, the Minnesota University State System began to classify student affairs positions, including residential life hall director positions, as non-exempt and overtime eligible beginning in 2017 and continuing throughout 2018.

It is foreseeable that transitioning student affairs staff from salaried to hourly status will have an impact on the work performance of these staff members, given that Blumberg and Pringle (1982) suggested that worker performance is impacted by adjusting the work environment of employees, including the policies and procedures that influence that work environment. As suggested in two 2016 polls of residential life leaders reported by Asimou (2016a) and Asimou (2016b), limited funding opportunities for significant increases to departmental salary budgets reduced the likelihood that increasing overtime offerings to newly designated hourly employees would have been an option used to mitigate the impact of transitioning staff to hourly status. Given this working assumption, it is likely that an impact to

worker performance would result by changing the status of student affairs staff to hourly, because Blumberg and Pringle suggested that reduced capacity also reduces worker performance, and limiting work hours is likely to reduce capacity. Hall directors are an interesting sample of higher education professionals to examine because of the unique job responsibilities these professionals perform.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact on hall directors changing to hourly employees. The findings from this basic qualitative study offer insight to future higher education leaders who may be called upon to manage the transition of their staff from salaried to hourly in the future. It is entirely possible that interpretations of the duties test within the FLSA may begin to take place beyond the Minnesota State University System. One might also predict that the current salary threshold that remains (since 2004) at about \$23,000, as reported by Wiessner (2017), will eventually be increased. Just as the Obama administration proposed in 2015, as reported by Basken (2015), the salary threshold could be raised to exceed the salary level of many higher education employees. When this happens, the rich narrative emerging from this study about the impact this transition is having in the Minnesota State University System will be a resource for others who will embark on a similar journey. I truly see this research being a resource that will assist other professional student affairs practitioners manage the transition that arises when the FLSA is adjusted in the future.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review begins with an overview of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and then delves into the readiness to implement the changes resulting from the proposed changes to the FLSA in the time period leading up to a new salary threshold that would have impacted many residential life staff throughout the nation. In order to understand the impact from changes to the FLSA in the Minnesota State System, a profile of the hall director position will be the focus of the second section of this literature review, with a focus on research of job satisfaction and retention of hall directors coming next. That will be followed by a review of the research on the training and developmental needs of hall directors

After a review of research on hall directors, worker performance will be reviewed, including a brief examination of the impact of organizational culture and the impact of managerialism on worker performance. The length of time an employee spends in a position also connects to worker performance and an overview on the research related to job embeddedness will also be reviewed.

Worker performance becomes the theoretical framework that this study is built on, given that each of the research questions guiding this study can be answered through the context of worker performance. A review of the theoretical framework for this study concludes the literature review. Figure 1 offers a map of the flow of this literature review.

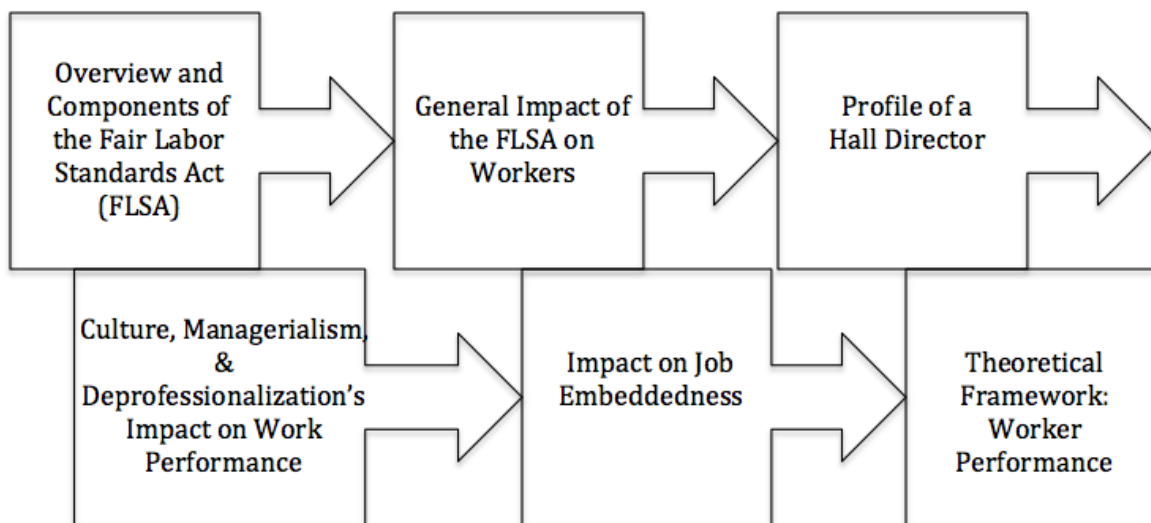


Figure 1. Mapping the flow of the literature review.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

To understand the impact of changing the employment designation of staff from salaried to hourly, an overview of the FLSA, a profile of the hall director position, research on various aspects of worker performance, and insight into understanding job embeddedness is offered.

According to Dishman and Murphy (2007) public school systems were losing litigation related to decisions on exempt or non-exempt status designations they made for their employees, even for practices that “have existed in the past” (p. vii). Dishman and Murphy explained that beginning around the year 2000 litigation against public schools rose exponentially. Litigation likely became the driving force that contributed to the Minnesota State University System examining the FLSA more closely.

According to Dishman and Murphy (2007) “the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a comprehensive federal statute regulating the number of hours certain employees can work without being paid an “overtime” premium” (p. 1). The FLSA was enacted in 1938 to “combat

the dual evils of overwork and underpayment” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 2). The FLSA is considered “employee-friendly” in that it is “intended to prevent abuses of employees by employers” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 2). Dishman and Murphy suggested four main purposes of the FLSA including: (1) “to encourage employers to hire additional workers,” (2) “to establish a uniform workweek throughout the country,” (3) “to establish a uniform minimum wage in the country,” (4) and “to discourage child labor” (p. 2). Dishman and Murphy provided a thorough overview of the main components of the FLSA.

Components of the FLSA. Before one can understand the impact the FLSA has on professionals in higher education, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the following aspects of the FLSA: the exemptions within the FLSA that apply to higher education, the salary test, being designated non-exempt, the definition of work hours, the distinction between overtime and compensatory time, the impact collective bargaining has on modifying employment rules related to the FLSA, and finally the responsibility employers have for record keeping to avoid penalties that could arise from FLSA audits. An overview of each will be presented in the following sections.

The exemptions. The FLSA, as it relates to educational institutions, has three relevant rules called exemptions that allow workers who otherwise meet the salary test of the FLSA to be salaried employees who are not eligible for overtime pay. According to Dishman and Murphy (2007) the three exemptions are: (1) exempt executives, (2) exempt professionals, and (3) exempt administrators. Each of these exemptions are referred to as the white-collar exemptions and the “burden of proving that an employee is exempt is always on the employer” (Dishman & Murphy, p. 32). Dishman and Murphy stated, “if the employee’s primary job duty falls within

one of these exemptions, the employee is not entitled to earn overtime no matter how many hours he or she works in a given week” (p. 5).

Exemptions classify the primary job duties of the employee, which Dishman and Murphy (2007) described as the “job duty for which the position exists” (p. 38). There is not a specific percentage of time that one must spend on a type of work function for it to be considered the primary job duty. Exempt employees can also have non-exempt type work functions, however those functions cannot be the primary type of work performed by the employee who is considered exempt.

Broadly speaking, each of the three major white-collar exemptions are for employees who generally do not have daily supervision because these employees are highly educated and well-trained to carry out their responsibilities. Additionally, Dishman and Murphy (2007) suggested that the compensation level of exempt employees should exceed and be beyond compare related to the non-exempt employees subordinate to the exempt employee. Again, it is paramount to understand that the burden of proof falls to the employer when designating an employee exempt from overtime pay under the FLSA. According to Dishman and Murphy, improperly establishing an exemption opens the employer up for litigation, and for this reason, human resource professionals must knowingly designate employees appropriately if using one of the three white-collar exemptions that are used in the education sector. Dishman and Murphy stressed that the identification of exempt employee status can be very complicated. Dishman and Murphy also suggested that a high threshold is set for employers to be able to use one of the three exemptions, which then prevents employees from receiving overtime compensation. Ultimately, the goal of the FLSA, as suggested by Dishman and Murphy, is to protect employees

by establishing which employees have the right to overtime compensation. These employees are designated non-exempt (meaning they are eligible for overtime pay).

The basis of the exempt executive, as described by Dishman and Murphy (2007), is for a job that has primary job duties including the supervision of a minimum of two full-time employees and with the authority to “make recommendations on the hiring, firing, termination, or other changes in the employment status of employees under his or her supervision” (p. 44). Dishman and Murphy further described exempt executives as employees who provide regular work direction to other employees on a weekly basis and have real decision making authority as it relates to the employment status of full-time employees.

The basis of the exempt professional, as described by Dishman and Murphy (2007), is someone whose work is primarily “intellectual in nature” (p. 55) and who requires knowledge that comes from having an advanced degree or an artistic or creative talent. Dishman and Murphy provided examples of exempt professionals such as teachers and others whose primary job duty is that “of imparting knowledge” (p. 57) on others, which also includes counselors and academic advisors who conduct activities related to imparting knowledge onto others. Beyond teachers, other professions that fall under the exempt professional status of the FLSA includes those in the field of “law; medicine; theology; accounting; actuarial computation; engineering; architecture...” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, pp. 65-66) and various careers specific to the sciences.

The basis of the exempt administrator, as described by Dishman and Murphy (2007), is someone whose work primarily involves “decision making, policy making, and upper-level management” (p. 71). Dishman and Murphy described exempt administrators as employees who

must “exercise independent judgment and discretion” (p. 73) and whose primary duties must extend beyond simply following instructions, guidelines, procedures, or prescribed techniques in accomplishing their primary duties. Being salaried goes beyond qualifying for one of the white-collar exemptions because the FLSA sets a salary threshold that must also be met.

The salary test. Dishman and Murphy (2007) described two stipulations of the salary test: (1) “the employee must first be paid on a salary and that salary must exceed a certain amount” and (2) “the salary basis requires the employee be paid a salary of at least \$455 per week (which works out to an annual salary of \$23,660 for a full-time employee)” (p. 33). If a position does not meet the salary threshold and does not qualify for a white-collar exemption, the employee becomes non-exempt.

Non-exempt. Non-exempt employees are required to be paid an “overtime premium of one hundred and fifty percent of their hourly wage for all hours worked over forty in a particular workweek” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 6). An hourly employee’s work gets designated to a 40-hour workweek, bringing work hours into relevance in a way it is not for salaried employees.

Work hours. Work hours are time that must be compensated. What does not qualify as compensable work hours must be clearly understood by employees at all levels of an organization. As described by Dishman and Murphy (2007), “under the FLSA, nonexempt employees are generally entitled to receive overtime compensation, either in the form of one-and-a-half times their regular pay or in the form of paid compensatory time off from work, for all hours worked over forty in a given workweek” (p. 89). According to Dishman and Murphy, break times of less than 20 minutes are considered working hours, versus break times, often for meals, which must be a minimum of a half hour to be considered time that is not compensable.

Defining work becomes important in order to comply with the FLSA and according to Dishman and Murphy (2007) “an employee is working whenever he or she is engaged in any task (or occasionally waiting to perform a task) that is primarily for the benefit of his or her employer” (p. 90). Location of the work is also not relevant, according to Dishman and Murphy, what matters most is that the activities being performed “are pursued primarily for the benefit of the employer” (p. 90). Activities are considered work time even if they happen off the job site (such as when checking work-related email from home). Dishman and Murphy suggested that beyond official break times of 30 minutes in length or more, there is also the concept of *de minimis* time, which is not considered compensable. Dishman and Murphy described *de minimis* time as minor work incidents, or “work ancillary to an employee’s primary job duties” (p. 91) that “would probably be one to five minutes” (p. 92) in length that does not have to be recorded as work time. Defining work is complex under the FLSA.

Other complexities to understanding work time include periods of time where employees are waiting to work, on-call time, having a response time limit to return to work, training time, and travel time must also be considered when defining work time. The non-compensable concept of “waiting to be engaged” in work is described by Dishman and Murphy (2007) as a significant period of time “when an employee is totally relieved from all duties and this period of time is of sufficient duration to allow an employee to use this time for his own purposes” (p. 92). Being on-call/on-duty is a related concept that has employers facing compensable obligations. On-call/on-duty time may be work time based on the “degree and frequency of the intrusion upon an employee’s ability to otherwise utilize this time for his or her own purposes” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 93). Even when the amount of time being called into work is not excessive

the Department of Labor has established that there must be some level of agreed-upon level of compensation when there are “restriction on the employee’s freedom to engage in personal activities resulting from the duty of answering the telephone” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 93). Additionally, according to Dishman and Murphy, being called back into work after-hours creates a situation where the employee’s travel time “may constitute working hours” (p. 97). This means that time and place restrictions, and an expectation by an employer that an employee answer a duty phone call and respond to work results in some level of compensation in addition to compensation for actual time spent working.

Other complexities to understanding and obeying work time regulations under the FLSA continue to put an employer in a situation where they need to fully understand how to treat their employees or risk opening themselves up for litigation under the FLSA. According to Dishman and Murphy (2007), training, in particular off-site training and professional development activities, are considered compensable time if these activities are not voluntary, are related to the job functions of the employee, and when the training occurs within the regularly established work week schedule of the employee. Traveling to and from these training sites may also be compensable time dependent on the means of travel, the time-period that one is in travel status, and the distance from the worksite compared to an employee’s home where the training is taking place. Compensation is impacted by what is defined as work time, and there are a number of complexities to understanding the definition of work time that must be understood by employees and especially by the employer given that the employer “always has the duty to promulgate, monitor, and enforce any rules it so chooses to control the working hours” (Dishman & Murphy,

2007, p. 102) of its employees. Knowing what is considered work time is important to be able to calculate overtime.

Overtime and compensatory time. As Dishman and Murphy (2007) described, overtime must be paid by employers when their employees work more than 40 hours in a permanently established workweek, which means “an employer cannot average an employee’s hours over several weeks or a month” (pp. 105-106). Dishman and Murphy said that salaried (non-exempt) employees are eligible for overtime, which means that the employer is responsible for determining a salaried employee’s hourly equivalent rate of pay. Additionally, Dishman and Murphy cautioned that employees who have prorated salaries, for example a 10-month residence hall director whose 10-month salary is prorated over 12 months, must be paid overtime, and that rate cannot be determined on the prorated equivalent hourly rate, but the actual equivalent hourly rate for the employee. Employers also cannot adjust the workweek; the 7-day workweek must be established and seldom changed to protect the employee from having the employer shift the workweek to avoid overtime costs. However, according to Dishman and Murphy, it is permissible for an employer to flex hours within a workweek, which could result in an employee working more hours over a stretch of days one week and then working 40 hours within a different stretch of days the following week. This may result in employees not always having the same “off days” each week.

There are other factors that determine overtime, which Dishman and Murphy (2007) suggested may make determining overtime rate-of-pay for employees rather complicated. An employer can establish a fluctuating workweek, which is another method to “compensate an employee whose hours fluctuate from week to week at a fixed amount for all straight time

hours—regardless of how many or how few hours the employee worked” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 109). Using a fluctuating workweek method means the amount of overtime hours impacts the overtime rate, lowering the rate as the hours an employee works beyond 40 hours increases.

Other complications to determining the overtime rate include managing an employee who performs both exempt and non-exempt duties within the university, which Dishman and Murphy described as an employee who “worked in more than one (dual) position” (p. 114). According to Dishman and Murphy, the salary for each needs to be weighed to determine the overtime rate of pay or the employee may agree to be paid overtime for only one of the positions, as long as that overtime rate is calculated for the job actually being performed, not simply the position with the lower rate of pay. The United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division (2016b), offers more clarity on dual enrollment and asserted that the exemption status of the employee is determined by which duties are the primary duties of the dual employee. If the duties of the primary position are exempt and exceed fifty percent of the total duties the secondary duties will not result in overtime pay. According to the United States Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, if an employee’s primary duties are non-exempt the hours worked in the dual position, even if the duties of the secondary position are exempt, would necessitate overtime pay for hours worked over forty in a workweek. One of the most common examples of the impact of dual employment is when a residence hall director (non-exempt) is appointed to teach as an adjunct (exempt) in addition to their primary role as a hall director. In this scenario, the adjunct teaching hours must be paid on an hourly basis given the primary duties of hall director are considered non-exempt duties. This often means paying overtime for secondary duties such as adjunct

teaching. However, public employees do not necessarily need to be paid in cash for overtime, they could be offered compensatory time off instead.

Public educational systems are authorized under the FLSA to offer compensatory time “in lieu of paying an overtime premium for hours worked beyond forty hours per week” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 123). However, it must be clear to the employee before they work overtime that they will be compensated for this in the form of compensatory time off instead of overtime pay. This option is similar to overtime compensation as compensatory time “is earned at the same rate at which overtime wages are accumulated” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 125). Employees working in public education can earn a maximum of 240 compensatory hours and a policy can be established by the employer that requires “employees to use compensatory time within [a] time period” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 130). When employment ends all compensatory time must be paid to the departing employee at the highest of two rates: “the final regular rate of pay at the time of termination” or “the average regular rate of pay by the employee during the three years” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 131) of employment prior to separation. Given that compensation packages in some higher education settings are negotiated as part of a bargaining process, the FLSA also accounts for collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining. The main premise to understand the role of collective bargaining agreements and how those agreements intersect with the FLSA is to understand that “employee bargaining units cannot waive or modify individual rights under the act” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 177). Conversely, collective bargaining agreements can improve individual rights. According to Dishman and Murphy a collective bargaining agreement “may always agree to extend or expand the benefits and protections of the [Fair Labor Standards] Act” (p. 179). Given

the complexities of the FLSA, in addition to a bargaining contract also impacting employee compensation, administrating the employee compensation process correctly becomes vital for the employer.

Record keeping, penalties, and audits. Employees can make a claim of being improperly designated to a status under the duties test, an exemption, or another issue that is regulated under the FLSA to the Department of Labor. When that occurs the “employer has the absolute burden of maintaining proper records” otherwise the employer “could not accurately refute employee claims that they had worked overtime—particularly when the overtime was allegedly worked two years earlier” (Dishman & Murphy, 2007, p. 184). The most extensive records must be kept for nonexempt (hourly) employees given how their compensation is tied to clearly defined work hours, otherwise the employer faces penalties.

According to Dishman and Murphy (2007), “congress set the Act’s penalties, wanting to make them a deterrent to the economic allure of violating the Act, it made them both severe and progressive” (p. 191). Repeated violations by an employer results in increased accountability that could lead to criminal prosecution. An example given by Dishman and Murphy about a school district in Mississippi resulted in FLSA noncompliance settlements awarded to employees as high as 50 million dollars. According to Dishman and Murphy, the most common settlement that public school districts found in violation of the FLSA resulted in school districts needing to pay the unpaid overtime wage to their employees. Dishman and Murphy explained that the employer is responsible for all legal fees, including those of their employee’s attorney, which also contributes to a costly consequence for violating the FLSA.

Dishman and Murphy (2007) stressed that employers should do a yearly audit of all positions to ensure “compliance with the requirements of the Act” (p. 195). Two audit periods were encouraged by Dishman and Murphy, first auditing employees work hours and policies related to recording work hours. Secondly, Dishman and Murphy stressed the importance of the yearly exempt employee determination audit, to make sure exempt employees are working under a current position description and that the primary job duties still fall within one of the main exemptions (executive, professional, or administrator) required so that the employee remains exempt and not eligible for overtime pay. Given the clear mandate from the FLSA to protect employees from being underpaid, and the accountability that the FLSA establishes, workers are impacted by the FLSA in all occupations.

FLSA’s anticipated impact on workers, in general. Banks and Hanvey (2016) outline the impact upon employers and employees that would result from the Department of Labor’s proposed changes to the salary threshold of the FLSA. Banks and Hanvey explained that these changes came as a result of “a 2014 directive from President Obama to “modernize and streamline” the FLSA regulations” (p. 80). The goal of the Obama administration in updating the FLSA was to account for a lack of change in FLSA protections; protections that have only been adjusted a couple of times in 40 years. Banks and Hanvey reported that there were three significant proposed changes made to the FLSA by the Department of Labor. One of those is most impactful to higher education, which was the changes being made to the “FLSA overtime exemption criteria” (Banks & Hanvey, 2016, p. 80).

As Banks and Hanvey (2016) suggested, the changes to the overtime criteria that would increase the minimum salary from \$23,660 to closer to \$50,000 per year would result in

significant impacts to employees and employers. The result of the salary threshold change would be in a great number of salaried employees across the United States becoming hourly employees. Banks and Hanvey suggested these employees would be impacted by adjustments to the “number of hours worked per week,” adjustments to one’s work responsibilities, “new timekeeping requirements,” new procedures for break time, and “perceived decrease in status” (p. 82). Banks and Hanvey identified that “loss of prestige associated with exempt status” (p. 82) as one of the more impactful outcomes of the adjustments being made to the overtime criteria that would be felt by employees. However, employees would not be the only group impacted, organizations also faced a number of challenges under the proposed changes to the FLSA.

Banks and Hanvey (2016) offered that employers would need to: adjust their process for determining compensation, “adjust schedules to limit the amount of time reclassified employees spend at work,” provide training to employees so they know how to “record their time worked including overtime,” develop “meal and rest break” (pp. 81-82) schedules, and potentially increase personnel to make up for a loss of productive work hours within the organization. Oah and Jang-Han (2011) offered that productivity and time on task are not necessarily positively related. Instead, they suggested that incentive pay impacts productivity by getting individuals to spend less time on off-task activities at work and more time on task. This increase in productivity, according to Oah and Jan-Han, does not result in employees working faster, only in them spending less time on off-task activities. Oah and Jan-Han’s results may suggest that different incentives could impact work productivity differently, shifting staff to hourly is not necessarily an incentive that would result in decreased worker performance, even if that same worker has less hours to do their work. Oah and Jan-Han’s findings offer that hourly workers

may simply be more efficient in their newly limited workweek schedules. To understand the work performance impact of the transition to hourly status, employers must understand the job duties of their employees.

Banks and Hanvey (2016) urged employers to get an accurate understanding of the primary duties of each position, and urged employers to make sure to understand the “work employees actually perform, the context in which it’s performed, the nature of the work, and the time spent on that work” (p. 81). Two key questions offered by Banks and Hanvey that impact exemption status included: (1) “What do workers actually do on the job and who do they interact with?” (p. 86) and (2) “How much discretion and independence is exercised on the job” (p. 86)? These questions are at the heart of the duties test of the FLSA.

While the duties test was not involved in the Department of Labor’s proposed changes to the FLSA, Banks and Hanvey (2016) suggested that the Obama administration was also interested in more clearly defining the duties test to advantage workers. While none of the changes to the Department of Labor’s adjustments to the FLSA held due to a federal judge’s ruling that the salary threshold was set too high, as was reported by Wiessner (2017), it seems likely that changes will be forthcoming, since the salary test has only been updated twice in the past 40 years. A presidential administration, especially one particularly sensitive to labor, could intervene in the coming decade, making relevant again the research done by Banks and Hanvey. Other researchers were focused on what the impact in higher education would be prior to the federal judge’s ruling.

FLSA's anticipated impact on higher education workers. The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) sent a letter to the Department of Labor (DOL) in September 2015, a letter written on behalf of eighteen higher education organizations, including the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I), to take over a dozen considerations into account regarding the FLSA. Most notably, the letter from CUPA-HR stated that the undersigned “agree that an increase to the minimum salary threshold is due and DOL must update the salary levels and regulations from time to time to ensure the exemptions are not abused” (Ulman & Thomson, 2015, p. 3), yet go on to stress that the proposed minimum salary threshold was established too high. The rationale cited by Ulman and Thomson related to the salary threshold proposed at \$50,440 being too high would: reduce service to students, create employee morale issues, and cause extensive budget implications due to a significant percentage of a college's workforce that was exempt under the duties test to be transitioned to hourly (non-exempt) status. Ulman and Thomson explained that a salary threshold of \$50,440 would cause people in positions such as “highly educated scientists, athletics coaches managing entire teams, and admissions, human resources and other professionals, all of whom are relied upon for their skills and who consistently exercise discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance” (pp. 17-18), as the types of roles that would have transitioned to hourly status due to the significant salary threshold increase that was proposed by the Obama administration.

Ulman and Thomson (2015) offered an argument against the Department of Labor raising the salary threshold from the previous level of \$23,660 to \$50,550, an argument made on behalf of about 18 university professional organizations. Ulman and Thomson suggested the following

concerns regarding the large increase to the salary threshold originally proposed by the Obama administration:

- “The proposed minimum salary level will trigger mass reclassification of white collar employees, particularly at institutions with fewer resources and/or in areas with lower cost of living” (p. 5).
- The “reclassification may adversely impact employee flexibility, career advancement and ability to perform job without providing any increase in compensation” (p. 8).
- The “impact of proposed minimum salary level on higher education institutions and students” would be considerable due to the budget implications, resulting in service declines and tuition increases (p. 13).
- The “DOL’s proposal is inconsistent with the purpose and history of the minimum salary level” which “historically set the minimum salary at a level that tends to screen out only those employees who by virtue of their compensation obviously will not meet the duties test” (p. 17).
- “The proposed salary level fails to account for regional and sector differences in pay” (p. 18).
- The “DOL lacks the authority to impose automatic updates” (p. 21).
- “Automatically updating the salary level would negatively impact institutions’ budgets and budget planning, ability to provide merit-based increases and employee morale” (p. 22).

In recognition of the above concerns, Ulman and Thomson, on behalf of concerned professional organizations in the higher education sector, suggested the following recommendations to the Department of Labor:

- The “DOL should lower the proposed minimum salary threshold and phase the new level in over time” (p. 15).
- The “DOL should phase in over time any salary increase” (p. 19).
- The “DOL should not automatically update the salary levels” (p. 20), given the original proposal was a yearly increase in salary tied to the Consumer Price Index at the 40th percentile of weekly, full-time salary.
- The “DOL should only increase the salary level via notice and comment rulemaking” (p. 21) and not automatically without going through this administrative procedure.
- “If DOL imposes automatic updates, the updates should occur at most every five years and the agency should provide the public with notice of the new level at least one year prior to implementation” (p. 23).
- “If the DOL imposes automatic updates, the updates should be based on inflation rather than the 40th percentile” (p. 25).
- The “DOL should not make changes to the duties test without issuing a separate NPRM containing specific proposed regulatory language” (p. 26).

In offering the proposed recommendations, CUPA-HR makes a strong case for not increasing the salary threshold. However, many of their assertions are not supported by data collected to obtain the perspective of the 40%-60% of impacted university staff who were estimated to be impacted by the Department of Labor’s salary threshold increase. The perspective offered by CUPA-HR acknowledged university upper-level administrators, whose responsibility aligns with budget making decisions, and state governments that would be under increasing pressure to provide more funding for public institutions of higher education. CUPA-

HR's advocacy against the salary threshold increase captured the university-level impact of the proposed changes to the FLSA. Other higher education professional organizations focused more specifically on department-level impacts.

FLSA's anticipated impact on residential life workers. As reported by Asimou and Adams (2016), less than two months prior to the December 2016 implementation deadline of the salary threshold increase, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) held a symposium that was attended by over 35 institutional leaders from across the United States and they discussed the impact the FLSA would have on residential life operations. That discussion centered on a number of questions that are especially relevant to adjusting live-on residential life staff to hourly employees (non-exempt). Asimou and Adams reported that those topics included: examining the applicability of the teacher exemption and the academic administrator exemption, considering the definition of work, exploring on-call/on-duty experiences that many live-on staff have as part of their job duties, reviewing the concept of *de minimis* or incidental contact as defined by the Department of Labor, and evaluating the impact of the room and board compensation elements on the salary of a live-on staff. Asimou and Adams presented a report reviewing these issues and examined each consideration. Asimou is a researcher for the ACUHO-I association and Adams is a human resource professional at a major university in an upper-Midwestern state.

Asimou and Adams (2016) suggested that the teacher exemption within the FLSA would not align well with residential life positions because the exemption is predicated on teaching being the primary job responsibility, which means that even live-on staff who adjunct teach a course or teach student staff as part of training courses would not fit well within the teaching

exemption. According to Asimou and Adams, the teacher exemption raised some questions, yet many residential life professionals were more interested in exploring the applicability of the academic administrative exemption because live-on residential life roles were seen as positions that support academic success and therefore support instructional activities of the faculty.

According to Asimou and Adams “the DOL defines the categories of positions intended” (p. 6) for the academic administrative exemption and the “general national consensus” (p. 6) was that the academic administrative exemption was “not a viable option for the vast majority of live-in housing professionals” (p.6). The initial reaction by residential life leaders was to find ways to keep residential life staff exempt from overtime, knowing the job duties make a transition to hourly complicated.

Asimou and Adams (2016) said, in relation to the perspective of worker performance by residential life staff, “for a long time, we have worked in a world where being present and available for students and going the extra mile, were expectations and badges of honor” (p. 10). This philosophical view of residential life worker performance alludes to the paradigm shift that will be needed as residential life professionals begin to view all their student interaction as work, and therefore compensatory time under non-exempt status. In further trying to define work, questions arose about how to compensate staff for being on-call/on-duty, a fundamental role in residential life job descriptions that needed to be addressed give the new non-exempt status. During a 2016 straw poll of ACUHO-I institutions, Asimou and Adams reported that 70% of respondents were planning to treat their on-duty/on-call staff as eligible for compensation when responding to work. In residential life terms, place restrictions such as requiring staff to stay on campus and time restrictions, such as requiring staff to respond to campus within a short amount

of time (example: 15 minutes versus 45 minutes) may put an employee on-duty into work status and then compensation would be due, while less restrictive place restrictions and longer allowable response times would put the person in a waiting to engage in work status and would not be compensatory time. Asimou and Adams described other challenges for residential life operations, given that staff live in the same areas on campus where they work, included differentiating between *de minimis* (incidental) work and compensatory work. An example of incidental work would be a staff member running into a student asking for assistance while the staff member is off-duty and the staff member referring the student to another person who is available to assist him/her. Asimou and Adams cautioned that defining work in these terms is not straightforward and consultation with human resources and campus counsel is encouraged. This warning spoke to the complexity of the transition by residential life staff to hourly employees.

If on-duty/on-call and incidental work issues did not complicate the impact on residential life staff becoming non-exempt enough, the concept of room and board, often included in the compensation packages of residential life professionals, offers further complication. Based on the research done by Asimou and Adams (2016), they suggested that providing a rent-free apartment would count as compensation, but would not be counted towards salary. According to Asimou and Adams, this differentiation hinged on the requirement that staff live on campus, and in order to include room and board benefits into salary, on-campus living would have to be optional for the residential life employee. Asimou and Adams suggested that providing meal plans has more opportunity for institutions to charge employees for this benefit and therefore could result in meal plan costs counting toward salary. However, if the job description for the

staff member required that person to eat meals with students as part of an effort to build connections with students, the cost of meal plans would be considered compensation but not salary for a residential life staff member. This issue became relevant for institutions trying to determine if salary levels should be raised to the proposed salary threshold established by the Obama administration and later rejected by a federal judge.

Asimou (2016a) and Asimou (2016b) published two straw polls taken by ACUHO-I to measure readiness in residential life organizations leading up to the December 2016 implementation deadline of the new salary threshold. Both offered interesting insight into how residential life leaders were preparing to transition their staff as a result of the anticipated salary threshold change.

Straw poll #1. Asimou (2016a) reported the results of a straw poll conducted by ACUHO-I that was conducted in July of 2016 that indicated for institutions below 10,000 beds, most institutions were “not at all” to “somewhat” close to making final decisions about implementing protocols related to their live-on staff transitioning to non-exempt. Asimou’s poll found that only universities with more than 10,000 beds were from “somewhat” to “extremely” prepared to transition staff to hourly employees.

Planning partners are other professional campus leaders that residential life leaders were in significant communication with during the time-period leading up to the proposed salary threshold going into effect. Asimou’s (2016a) straw poll offered insight into the professional resources that residential life leaders were using. According to Asimou, these planning partners included: human resources staff, the vice president for student affairs staff, and general counsel. By the five-month mark prior to implementation of the new salary threshold, bargaining unit and

state system administrators were rated as being low-priority communication partners according to Asimou's straw poll data.

Asimou (2016a) reported that the following planning considerations were assessed in the straw poll: raise salary, reclassify staff to non-exempt and pay overtime, reclassify staff to non-exempt and provide compensatory time off, reclassify staff and limit them to a 40-hour work week schedule, hire more full-time staff to limit overtime, hire more full-time staff to serve on-call, hire more student staff, eliminate job responsibilities, limit optional committee involvement, attempt to use the teacher professional exemption, transition staff to a flexible work week schedule, make living on campus optional, and eliminate jobs. These considerations consist of core elements of the work performed by hall directors.

The straw poll was an attempt to explore the definition of work while a staff member was on-duty as it was seen by various residential life leaders. Asimou's poll found that 52% reported that "awake time" would not likely be counted as work and 69% would likely count "incident time" as work time.

A second straw poll was also conducted by ACUHO-I, which showed some clarity to some of the same issues assessed in the first straw poll. Asimou (2016b) reported the results of this second straw poll, which served as a follow-up to the first straw poll, in order to see what progress had been made by residential life leaders between July 2016 and October 2016.

Straw poll #2. Asimou (2016 b) reported that during a second 2016 straw poll of ACUHO-I members 62% of respondents were going to maintain current salary levels and allow positions to turn non-exempt while the rest planned to increase the salary of live-in staff to the new threshold. Asimou reported the results of the second straw poll that was conducted in late

September of 2016, less than 3 months prior to the expected implementation of the anticipated salary threshold change that would have resulted in many live-on residential life positions transitioning to hourly employees. The benefit of this second straw poll was in tracking institutional readiness as compared to the first straw poll from three months previous. Asimou reported results that indicated that institutions that indicated they were very close to having made final implementation decisions increased by 158%. Despite an increase in preparations by residence life leaders, when asked about communication with impacted staff, Asimou reported the increase was only 10% higher between June and September. Additionally, Asimou reported that communication with human resource leaders and the vice president for student affairs increased more significantly compared to the first straw poll tracking overall readiness. According to Asimou, the percentage of institutions communicating with general counsel, system offices, and the bargaining units decreased, in most cases significantly, potentially indicating that legal advice was minimally helpful during the lead-up to the implementation deadline of December 2016.

According to Asimou (2016b), the second straw poll indicated that respondents from schools larger than 10,000 beds were more likely to adjust salaries in order to keep staff exempt from overtime pay. Most respondents indicated that staff would transition to hourly and most said they would limit work hours to 40 hours per work week in order to avoid overtime. By the second straw poll reported by Asimou, considering the teacher or academic administrator exemption was no longer under serious consideration. Additionally, Asimou reported that restructuring job duties and transitioning staff to flexible workweek schedules were the most likely strategies being considered to adapt staff positions to non-exempt status. In polling how

leaders would define work time, there was an 11% increase in the number of institutions that would consider being on-duty work time except for eight hours of designated sleeping time. This suggested that an increasing number of institutions were viewing on-call time as time worked on an hour-per-hour basis, with the exception of an eight-hour sleep window. The impact on residential life operations was starting to emerge, as the straw polls showed, there would be an impact in how hall directors would perform their job duties under the context of an hourly employee. A look at the research about the hall director position contributes to being able to explore this impact further.

Profile of a Hall Director

According to St. Onge, Ellett, and Nestor (2008) hall directors in residential life are “full-time staff that are primarily responsible for oversight of residential facility/facilities, including aspects of staff and student development (i.e., direct supervision of resident assistants/advisors, discipline, and programming)” (p. 13). St. Onge et al. offered that residential life staff have operational management and emergency response duties in their job descriptions. According to St. Onge et al. about 31% of residential life hall directors have their masters degree (57% had a bachelors degree) and almost 95% of hall directors are required to live on campus in or near the facilities where they perform their work.

Collins and Hirt (2006) identified three conceptual areas that residential life work can be defined by: work conditions, relationships, and intrinsic rewards. Collins and Hirt, in describing the motivations of people who take on roles like being a hall director, said “operating autonomously, and influencing major decisions are all intrinsic in nature and are all more highly

valued by student affairs professionals” (p. 14). Salaries are extrinsic rewards that Collins and Hirt said are also valued by residential life staff.

In describing the nature of residential life work as it compared with other student affairs work, Collins and Hirt (2006) found “the workload for residential life professionals oscillated more dramatically” which resulted in “doing evening and weekend work to a significantly greater extent” (p. 16). Other findings that differentiated residential life work from other student affairs work included residential life staff being “significantly less likely to serve on campus committees and to have input into decisions made in their offices,” and student affairs staff spend “significantly less time serving students and more time performing administrative and communication tasks” (Collins & Hirt, 2006, p. 16). Residential life staff have unique competencies, even when compared with other student affairs staff.

Kretovics and Nobles (2005) examined the competencies sought during the hiring and selection process for entry-level residential life employees and the actual competencies of the staff after they were hired. The pre-hire and post-hire competencies were similar, with some reordering. Top competencies for entry-level residential life positions according to Kretovics and Nobles (2005) included: having a masters degree in a relevant student affairs program, having practical experience in student affairs through a graduate assistantship or internship, having strong helping skills (including listening, responding to critical issues, and making effective referrals), and having a personal commitment to diversity and social justice. Kretovics and Nobles found the hiring processes for hiring entry-level staff were successful in hiring candidates with the core competencies that were desired. These results demonstrate that entry-level residential life professionals are highly educated (having a masters degree) and come with

extensive practical experience from their undergraduate and graduate experiences; which prepare entry-level residential life staff to meet the needs of a diverse group of students.

The competencies that are sought after and demonstrated by residential life staff who transition to hourly employees could create a challenge related to a perceived lack of prestige when these positions transition to hourly. A sense of prestige may be internalized as less-than when a position transitions from salaried to hourly. Additionally, performance expectations of residential life staff suggest that the impact of them becoming hourly employees creates challenges to meet performance expectations in a 40-hour workweek schedule. Given Collins and Hirt's (2006) assertion that autonomy and influencing decisions are core to the identities of residential life professionals, influencing how transition plans are developed and being a part of the transition's decision-making process would be desired, although their findings also suggested that these types of department-wide decisions are not likely to be the types of decisions that entry-level staff would be highly involved in.

Collins and Hirt (2006) described residential life staff as being insular regarding their lack of strong connections with faculty, administrators, and other student affairs staff within the university. Residential life staff are most connected to security and law enforcement staff. This reality may also impact decisions related to residential life staff transitioning to hourly employees, where the challenges faced by entry-level residential life staff may happen in an environment where they are isolated from others within the university to help them through these challenges. Collins and Hirt suggested that residential life staff were found to be more likely than other student affairs staff to be involved in professional development, either through conference attendance or by taking classes. This suggested that the professional organizations

that residential life staff belong to could play an important role in helping hall directors and their supervisors manage the transition from salaried to hourly employees. As Collins and Hirt stated “residence life professionals seem to operate in two dramatically different worlds: their institutional life and their professional life” (p. 21). Both the institution and the profession will be valuable partners in supporting residential life staff in transitioning from salaried workers to hourly workers. Without appropriate support within the institution and from professional organizations residence life staff may become dissatisfied in their positions, resulting in higher turnover.

Retention and job satisfaction of hall directors. Scheuermann and Ellett (2007) offered a review of the literature on research studies that address the recruitment and retention issues facing entry-level hall director professionals in residential life. They concluded that the issues of retention and recruitment of residential hall director positions have been a concern that was first named by the ACUHO-I president in the 1950s. St. Onge et al.’s (2008) study related to the quality of life for entry-level residence hall directors examined data relating to the retention rate for entry-level residential life staff. St. Onge et al. reported that the average length of time a live-on hall director remains in the position at one institution was 2-3 years (44.5%) or 3-4 years (26.7%); meaning that most staff stayed in these positions at least two years. Other characteristics of the entry-level position profile identified by St. Onge et al. were that fewer than 2% of people in these positions leave in the middle of the academic year and from one academic-year to the next the turnover rate is 14%. This profile of the entry-level hall director experience resulted in St. Onge et al. concluding that the retention problem for these positions is “less significant than the myth surrounding it” (p. 22).

Scheuermann and Ellett (2007) acknowledged that salary issues were the prominent reasons that emerged in the literature as impacting retention in the 1980s and which emerged again in the first decade after 2000. Compensation was also a key finding by Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005), who found that compensation policies improved recruitment and retention of academic staff. While these researchers were focused on academic faculty, service faculty would likely align with teaching faculty in their desire for “competitive compensation and desirable working conditions” (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005, p. 390), and should be taken into account in order to recruit and retain staff.

By 2007, Scheuermann and Ellett (2007) identified new characteristics that were impacting recruitment and retention, including domestic partner benefits. They called for a “comprehensive research approach” to serve as a foundation to “address the challenges of entry-level staff recruitment and retention” (Scheuermann & Ellett, 2007, p. 17) and acknowledged that quality of life and compensation impact retention of residential life staff.

According to St. Onge et al.'s (2008) research, chief housing officers identified the following factors that impact recruiting entry-level staff: salary and benefits packages, the location of the institution, the availability of funding in support of professional development, and specific job responsibilities. Similarly, St. Onge et al. indicated that entry-level staff said the following had an influence on their retention: professional development funding, salary and benefit packages, supervision and support within the department, and available opportunities for advancement. It is foreseeable that changing compensation from salary to hourly potentially impacts salary levels (if entry-level staff receive overtime) but it could also impact time available for professional development (if supervisors no longer can afford to pay these staff hourly to take

part in professional development opportunities). It is also foreseeable that job responsibilities might also become adjusted in ways that are likely to be viewed as both positive and negative by entry-level staff as a result of the transition from salary to hourly. The context regarding the profile of entry-level residential life staff provided by St. Onge et al. is helpful in providing a basic understanding of the hall director position prior to examining the impact of a salary-to-hourly transition. It is clear that retention is already a challenge when it comes to maintaining a hall director staff.

Collins and Hirt (2006) found that improving retention for entry-level residential life staff is already challenging, and recommended that residential life senior leaders find ways to connect residential life staff to others within the greater university community. Providing time for these opportunities while also allowing for involvement in professional development to the degree that residential life staff find rewarding account for significant investments in time. Time is measured differently as residential life staff become hourly employees. This is a foreseeable challenge with the retention rates of entry-level staff being at stake. This is especially concerning given that, as reported by Collins and Hirt, retention is already a concern for many live-on residential life staff.

St. Onge et al. (2008) said, “recruitment and retention of competent, if not excellent, housing and residential life staff is essential to our success as professionals and as a profession” (p. 11). As chief student affairs officers, St. Onge et al. were interested in understanding what impacts the recruitment and retention of hall director staff. The question that is faced a decade after their research is, if hall directors are limited to 40 hours of work per week, is quality of life improved? Would such a result increase the retention of hall directors or would it result in hall

directors staying in these positions for less time than they did a decade ago? St. Onge et al.'s study of the recruitment and retention challenges faced by housing programs provides a foundation to begin to understand the hall director role in ways that this study can build on. How is worker retention impacted when compensation is based on an hourly work status, limited 40-hour workweeks, and the potential for occasional overtime pay? Does this work structure create desirable working conditions and a desirable compensation package? As Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) stated, the answers to these questions contribute to the ability of "academic administrators [who] must understand what motivates individuals to select a career in higher education, [and] what factors will keep them in academe..." (p. 399). Knowing what motivates staff and contributes to their satisfaction is an important element of this study.

Davidson (2012) said, "entry-level [residential life staff] workers enjoy the work they engage in and that, on the whole, they are satisfied with their jobs" (p. 88). Davidson also suggested a number of factors that supervisors of residential life staff should take into account because those factors impact satisfaction in the position. These factors include developing staff to understand that promotion should include being prepared for a lateral move within the institution and moves outside the institution. Davidson suggested that professional development conversation about promotion, a factor that influences job satisfaction, "should occur sooner rather than later; results demonstrate that entry-level employees think about advancement issues as early as the second year of employment" (p. 88). Relationships with coworkers are another factor identified by Davidson that impacts job satisfaction, especially as entry-level professionals move into their second year in the role. Supervisors through the use of collaborative work projects should encourage positive working relationships. Understanding job satisfaction, and

knowing that staff are generally satisfied, and also knowing what factors a supervisor should pay attention to as it relates to job satisfaction are relevant to this study.

Davidson's (2012) study was motivated by the idea that emerged in her review of literature on job satisfaction of residential life positions which led to her conclusion that "attracting and retaining a qualified professional is important to the implementation of residence hall environments that promote student learning and development" (p. 79). Davidson suggested that future research is needed that is qualitative in nature in order to create a deeper appreciation of the factors that influence job satisfaction. This study aims to do that by exploring the impact of changing job classifications under the FLSA and the impact that reclassification has on entry-level residential life professionals. For example, does the transition to hourly employment status reduce professional development and training opportunities for hall directors? This is a question worth exploring.

Professional development and training needs of hall directors. Henning, Cilente, Kennedy, and Sloane (2011) examined the professional development and training needs of residential life professionals including the desired method for delivering this development. One of those need areas identified in their research was the need for further development of administrative and management skills of new residential life staff. It is foreseeable that adjustments to the work schedules of residential life staff may impact these areas, necessitating more skills in administrating and managing a residential facility with a more limited workweek schedule. Additionally, Henning et al. concluded, "mentoring seemed to be the preferred method for professional development" (p. 30). This may present a challenge as entry-level residential life staff transition to hourly, given that many of the supervisors for these hall directors would

have been unlikely to have experienced an hourly work schedule in their previous residential life careers. While mentoring will still be a valuable training pedagogy, the mentors will not have the practical experience of performing the entry-level job duties as hourly employees for a number of years, until currently impacted hall directors advance to mid-level positions. If professional development and training strategies are negatively impacted due to limited available work hours, what will be the impact on work performance overall? This question gets to the core of this study.

Worker Performance

Professional identity is an important starting point to begin to examine work performance because professional identity frames motivation to perform. Perry and Porter (1982) defined job motivation as a feeling that “energized, directs, and sustains behavior” (p. 89). They also suggested that motivation is influenced by the following factors: individual characteristics of the public employee, job characteristics impacting the public employee, the work environment/organizational climate, and the environment external to the organization. Perry and Porter offered four techniques to motivate employees including: (1) monetary incentives, (2) goal setting (establishing standards for performance), (3) job design (the content of the job including responsibilities, tasks, and autonomy to do the work), and (4) the level of participation in decision-making. Motivation relates to the theoretical framework of this study, which will be described further, and according to Pringle (1994) motivation would be captured in the “opportunity” variable of worker performance. While the professional identity of hall directors frames motivation to perform in the job, a hall director’s identity as a public servant also frames their performance.

A hall director's identity is that of a public servant. Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise (2010) reviewed twenty years of research on the concept of public service motivation. One of the areas these researchers focused on was the connection between motivation and organizational incentive structures. Various studies cited by Perry et al. found that the notion that public service employees "attach less importance to material rewards than their private sector colleagues overall" (p. 688) is an inconclusive notion. Alternatively, Perry et al. suggested that it is possible that public organization may offer lower compensation packages to public employees while appealing to their altruistic sense of service. This suggested that public institutions might have some leverage in underpaying public employees, although there are limits. In an earlier study to Perry et al.'s, Perry (1986) found that while pay is a valuable motivator for employees, even for public employees who are found to be less motivated by pay than private-sector employees, merit pay as a concept was not beneficial. Perry asserted, "merit pay has failed in many public organizations" (p. 66). Perry's conclusions suggested that compensation is a complex motivator of performance, with sharp downsides if compensation is not structured appropriately. If compensation offers a complex frame to understand work performance, then understanding a hall director through their identity as a professional academic staff member may offer more insight into work performance than simply examining performance through the lens of compensation.

Calvert, Lewis, and Spindler's (2011) qualitative study focused on "investigating the work patterns of academic staff and, with particular reference to professional identity, to illuminate how they prioritized competing demands" (p. 25). These researchers connected professional identity with the concepts of time constraints that drew attention to the impact on performance in much the same way that the study of the impact of limiting student affairs staff to

a 40-hour workweek would have on performance of residential life staff. Calvert et al. brought attention to the concept of time and the impact on academic staff who must make choices about “how they do their work and use their time” (p. 27). A point of focus that Calvert et al. brought to their research was to examine what their participants believed they were mandated to do and what they felt like they needed to do with their time based on their professional identity. Worker performance became the measure and professional identity motivated performance beyond the basic expectation on academic staff by external sources. Calvert et al. examined how prioritization of work performance was impacted by professional identity. This serves as an important analytical point in the study of hall directors being impacted by their transition to hourly employees.

How staff prioritize their work is impacted by the conflict between an employee’s feeling of what they should be doing with their time and the obligation the employee feels to do what they are expected to do by external sources. Calvert et al. (2011) suggested that the first obligation regarding worker performance is a concept that emerged from professional identity and the second obligation stemmed directly from the expectation of work performance by outside authority (such as supervisors, procedures, policies, etc.). Calvert et al. concluded that academic staff must “negotiate obligations” (p. 30) and that a tension exists between the two that impacts worker performance.

In Calvert et al.’s (2011) study, “the notion of putting the students first” (p. 31) was a demand derived from professional identity that impacted time spent performing. Calvert et al. found that “meeting these demands can mean that other work is taken home and completed in the evening, done at weekends or days specifically booked as leave” (p. 32). Professionalism is

about having an intrinsically high standard, and maintaining that standard impacts time spent performing. Calvert et al. concluded that there is a cost associated with high professional standards, including an impact on personal and family life, and a need to manage emotions to avoid feeling drained when one continues to try to achieve at a high level of performance. In Calvert et al.'s study time is a flexible factor, and they concluded, "for professional academics long hours, disrupted holidays and working at weekends are just part of the job and that may even mean, at least to some extent, sacrificing family life" (p. 33). The study of residential life staff shifting to hourly employees will look at the concept of worker performance and professional identity from a framework in which time becomes fixed. This may change the impact on performance and possibly even professional identity.

Calvert et al. (2011) suggested that a factor that impacts time on task and worker performance is efficiency in the role and they also suggested that efficiency is impacted by the degree of newness a person has in their academic role. Newer staff make different decisions related to what they feel is important in their role and what they feel obligated to accomplish given the impact of external authority on their work performance. Experience in an academic staff position becomes part of an employee's identity, impacting their level of performance due to decisions they make in navigating the conflict that exists between doing what they believe they ought to do and doing what they feel obligated to do given external pressures. Calvert et al. highlighted an important impact on worker performance: efficiency and how experience impacts efficiency. This is an important frame through which analysis on the impact on residential life staff becoming hourly employees should be analyzed against. Understanding professional identity and the impact that becoming hourly has on professional identity may highlight the

impact on the professional organizations as a result of staff transition that fixes time for professional employees.

Impact of organizational culture on worker performance. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2016) there are a number of organizational factors that impact an employee in ways that contribute to their satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied are more likely to perform for their current organization. The Society for Human Resource Management offered that while 88% of employees in 2015 were satisfied with their jobs, 45% were likely looking for a new job outside their organization. The Society for Human Resource Management reported that employees expected: respectful treatment, competitive compensation and benefits packages, job security, and trust in the senior management of their organization. According to the Society for Human Resource Management employees value good compensation and they desire trust and a feeling of safety from their organization. Additionally, almost half of employees wish to use their skills and abilities to benefit their organization, they value opportunities for career advancement, and “autonomy and independence...[is a] very important contributor to job satisfaction” (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016, p. 31). Employee work performance is impacted by the strength of the connection between employee and employer, and how satisfied the employee is with their work environment.

Marcoulides and Heck (1993) found the connection between organizational culture and performance to be loosely coupled concepts given the large number of variables that come together to form organizational culture. Marcoulides and Heck stated, “researchers have not really identified what specific variables comprise an effective organizational culture” (p. 210). While Marcoulides and Heck acknowledged that a relationship exists, they did so cautiously, in-

spite of an abundance of attention that organizational culture has received in the literature. Marcoulides and Heck concluded that all of the following interconnected variables of organizational culture impact organizational performance including: organizational structure and purpose, task organization, organizational variables, organizational climate, and worker attitudes and goals. While Marcoulides and Heck did not prescribe a theory of organizational performance, the variables found to impact organizational performance demonstrate that performance in an organization is not impacted by one isolated variable. Additionally, Martin (1992) provided an overview on three perspectives on organizational culture (integrated, differentiated, and fragmented perspectives) which also suggested that understanding the impact of the FLSA on residential life staff from the theoretical paradigm of culture is problematic given that to do so would mean analyzing culture through vastly different perspectives and frameworks on culture.

To focus on only one perspective on culture to understand the entirety of an organization's culture would mean ignoring another perspective that could be equal or more legitimate than the perspective chosen. Martin's (1992) overview of the integrated view of culture can be summarized by understanding culture through the frame of the "organization-wide consensus" (p. 57) that theoretically exists. Martin's overview of the differentiation view of culture can be summarized by understanding culture through the frame of various subcultures within an organization that are rife with ambiguity and inconsistencies. Martin's overview of the fragmentation view of culture can be summarized by understanding culture through the frame of ambiguity and ignores the concepts of consistency and inconsistency. Martin does not offer a

clear definition of culture, and his conclusions caution against putting too much emphasis on organizational culture to understand worker performance.

The findings in both of these studies on organizational culture suggests that a qualitative design in examining worker performance is fitting, given that a qualitative design to studying worker performance will best capture the nuance that informs worker performance, in ways that cultural variables alone could not explain. Organizations are impacted by managerialism, one of many variables that merge to make up an organization's culture. Managerialism in the higher education context offers another analytical point to consider in this study.

Impact of managerialism on worker performance: Moving towards deprofessionalization. Kolsaker (2008) sought to explore in her research the concept of managerialism and a growing belief that “higher education has gradually been appropriated by managerialist ideology” (p. 513). Kolsaker believed that academic work was increasingly falling “within performative systems of accountability embedded in managerialism” (p. 412). Kolsaker cited as a core frame within managerialism the insistence that professionals working in such a system perform in the best interest of the organization, and to do so, work in a “more structured, monitored, and managed regime than in the past” (p. 514). Kolsaker asserts that managerialism is a move away from collegiality within the higher education governance system. Other researchers, including Beck and Young (2005) wrote about the weakening of professionalism in higher education to make way for managerialism. Hasham (2004) noted, “over-supervision stifles initiative, breeds resentment, and lowers morale and motivation” (p. 47) and suggested a balance is necessary so as to not also provide “under-supervision” (p. 47) in an organization. Fitzgerald (2008) in looking at the deprofessionalization of teachers, noted that managerialism is

successful only in moving from self-regulation to state regulation, but has not resulted in any improvements in performance. Instead, Fitzgerald asserted that the “unrelenting focus on performance and standards, rules and regulations has, in complicated ways, interrupted the professional work of teachers” (p. 122). The adverse affect of managerialism on work performance was also explored by Teelken (2012). Teelken sought to explore the impact of managerialism on faculty at the individual level and found that managerialist efforts by the university are, for the most part, accepted only symbolically by faculty and are not accepted as a true part of their professional identity or motivation. Teelken warned that managerialism may not produce the desired effects of productivity, and instead, managerialism can “work against its own intentions” of improving productivity. These researchers offer caution regarding a move away from collegiality towards managerialism.

Beck and Young (2005) suggest that professionalism, including within higher education, is being undermined by managerialism in recent times, resulting in a lack of autonomy and “privileged status” and “legitimacy of their claims to expertise based on exclusive possession of specialized knowledge” (p. 183). Beck and Young stated that this deprofessionalization is a direct result of government regulations and other interventions and an indirect result of the marketization of higher education with external regulation and what they call an audit culture in higher education. Historic traits of professionalism, as described by Beck and Young, included “collegiate autonomy,” where “professions themselves largely defined the boundaries of their own knowledge base,” and professional training which “involved intensive socialization into the values of a professional community and its standards and professional integrity, judgment, and

loyalty” (p. 188). As managerialism, impacted by increasing government oversight, became more accepted within the higher education arena, professionalism declines.

According to Beck and Young (2005), a management culture has been “enthusiastically embraced” (p. 194) by a growing number of higher education professionals who often come from within the ranks of the professions they eventually manage. In other words, an entry-level employee wants to have professional autonomy to do their work as they were professionally trained to do, yet it is these same employees who “enthusiastically embraced the new managerial opportunities that have been opened up and have indeed pushed through the very restructuring that others so bitterly resent” (Beck & Young, 2005, p. 194). Beck and Young warned that eroding professionalism is not just driven by governmental oversight, but also by internal forces including the desire for new leadership opportunities by professionals after they have gained experience and then seek out managerial opportunities. Understanding how to define professionalism is necessary to further understand its intersection with managerialism.

Of interest in Kolsaker’s (2008) study of managerialism in higher education, which can be conceptualized as a step away from professionalism, was her summary of studies that attempted to identify and define professionalism. Kolsaker concluded that research on professionalism is “criticized as ambiguous and lacking a solid theoretical foundation” (p. 516). Despite a lack of coalescence around professionalism as a theoretical construct, Kolsaker settled on a definition of professionalism that included the following concepts she recognized from the literature: “shared values, altruistic concern for students, educational expertise, high level of autonomy, generation of new knowledge, application of logic, use of evidence, conceptual and theoretical rigour and the disinterested pursuit of truth” (p. 516). Kolsaker indicated that

managerialism and professionalism were conflicting frameworks and associated managerialism with power and professionalism as liberty. Managerialism and professionalism have unique impacts on worker performance. The purpose of her study was to examine the relationships between the frameworks of managerialism and professionalism in higher education.

Kolsaker's (2008) study helped her identify a shift in the literature about managerialism in higher education in the 1990s to what she found in 2008; that academic staff had accepted what has been true for decades, that managerialism and professionalism frameworks have merged within higher education governance. She concluded that academics have accepted this merger as normal university operating procedure. Kolsaker wrote, "in acknowledging some compatibility between managerialism and professionalism, academics are simply trying to cope with rapidly changing environments" (p. 523). This acceptance of managerialism in higher education offers credence to the role of the mid-level manager, who oversees student affairs staff in roles such as hall director.

The role of the mid-level manager in higher education is to contribute to the university by "serving and supporting the primary functions of teaching, research, and service" (Rosser, 2004, p. 319). Included in that role, given their position at the organization's mid-level, is to "find the balance between supervisor's directions and the needs of those who require their support and service" (Rosser, 2004, p. 319).

According to the research findings from a nation-wide research study conducted by Rosser (2004), the following attributes of a mid-level manager's experience impacts their satisfaction and morale: (1) their status as an ethnic minority, which results in "a lower overall level of morale than Caucasians" (p. 329) and (2) the quality of their work-life issues, including

career support, recognition for competence, external relationships, review/intervention [to influence the bureaucracy], and discrimination experiences. Given that mid-level managers will have minimal influence on the decision to change their employees to hourly status, what may impact how the transition progresses is the level of satisfaction and morale that the mid-level managers have as they navigate this transition of their staff to hourly employees. The level of influence mid-level managers have in structuring the transition may influence the success of the transition, as well as influence individual satisfaction by those mid-level managers and the overall morale in the areas they manage. The buy-in of the mid-level manager will impact morale as well. The competency of the mid-level manager will also impact the success of the transition. Overall, the role of the mid-level manager in an ever-increasing managerialized higher education environment will have an impact on the work performance of the residence hall staff who shift to hourly employees.

Kolsaker's (2008) conclusions about the growing acceptance of managerialism in higher education suggested that worker performance is impacted by a lack of collegiality and autonomy and independent determination. All of which are an increasing reality in higher education; yet higher education is still a work environment that allows space for professionalism and independence, even with a growing mid-level of supervision. This adaptation over the decades to a performance focused academic environment offers insight to the future as more student affairs staff may have to incorporate the structured and procedural approach of becoming hourly employees in how they express themselves as professionals. By examining how residential life staff are impacted at the early stages of this transition, opportunities will present themselves in the future to see if this transition unfolds like managerialism overall has unfolded in higher

education: first with resistance and later with a sense of acceptance and incorporation. If acceptance and incorporation does not emerge through the transition, job embeddedness is at risk.

Job Embeddedness

Burton, Holtom, Sablinski, Mitchell, & Lee (2010) described the shocks that workers experience in their work environment; shocks are experiences that motivate “an individual to think about leaving an organization” (p. 42). Burton et al. described job embeddedness as a motivational force on a worker that keeps them in their position. Burton et al. explained that the interaction between the shocks a worker experiences and the job embeddedness perspective that a worker maintains acts like a push and pull force between leaving an organization and staying within it. For individual workers, some are motivated to perform more and some less when faced with situations that cause shock. Burton et al. concluded that “job-related negative shocks are unpleasant events in the organizational life of an employee” and contrary to what may be assumed “not everyone reacts to these events in the same way” (p. 47). In other words, experiencing shock-type events does not necessarily result in diminished worker performance, for reasons related to the job embeddedness of that employee. A more embedded employee can sustain more shocks.

Holtom, Burton, and Crossley (2012) expanded on the findings related to the impact employment shocks have on job embeddedness from Burton et al.’s (2010) study and suggested that a worker’s tendency for negative affectivity (being generally pessimistic) compounds the shock and increases the likelihood that the worker will perform at a lower level and leave the

position. Furthermore, Holtom et al.'s research explored the role of the manager in anticipating shocking events in an effort to mitigate the impact of those negative events by the manager.

According to research that Holtom et al. (2012) based their study on, "negative events are much more salient and impactful on individual behaviors than are positive events" (p. 435). In an environment where there is limited job mobility, if managers do not anticipate the shocking/negative work situations that their staff experience, the end result could be employee underperformance; to the detriment of organizational performance as a whole. Holtom et al. offered, "when leaders anticipate the occurrence of potentially negative events, they may be able to proactively undertake activities that will reduce their detrimental impact" (p. 442). By understanding the job embeddedness framework and its connection to the willingness of an employee to perform and also by understanding the opportunity that supervisors and leaders have to mitigate negative shocks, an organization's overall performance could be improved by improving the individual work performance of its employees.

Various research studies that delve into aspects of worker performance serve as analytical points of reference for this study, yet an all-encompassing theoretical framework on worker performance best serves as the main theoretical foundation from which this study will be based.

Theoretical Framework

Blumberg and Pringle (1982) offered a clear framework from which to make meaning of what participants in this study offer this researcher through the interview process. According to Pringle and Blumberg (1986) there are many theories that attempt to predict worker performance and their meta-analysis of many of those theories demonstrated clarity for these researchers that while "all of the theories predict job performance" (p. 9), none of them do so in significant ways

because they are lacking an overarching explanation for worker performance that accounts for all influencing factors. For this reason, Blumberg and Pringle's framework will be the basis for examining worker performance in this study. Blumberg and Pringle's framework for understanding worker performance has been referenced and expanded on, which demonstrates the solid foundation that this theory offers. Kezar (2013) expanded on the three main concepts of Blumberg and Pringle's theory, which will be reviewed.

Blumberg and Pringle (1982). Blumberg and Pringle (1982) recognized that an employee's willingness and capacity to perform are not the only major variables that impact performance output. Their model also offered that the opportunity to perform is also impactful on employee performance levels, and opportunity to perform is impacted by a number of environmental factors outside the direct control of an employee. The concept of opportunity is an expansion upon the hypothesis offered by Peters and O'Connor (1980) who asserted that an employee's motivation and skill are not enough to impact performance and that "persons tend to perform better and express more positive affective responses in work settings in which constraints are absent compared to when they are present" (p. 394). Peters and O'Connor warned: "persons who are both willing and able to successfully accomplish a task may be either inhibited in or prevented from doing so due to situational characteristics beyond their control" (pp. 391-392). These situational constraints fall into the opportunity variable that Pringle and Blumberg included in their three-variable framework for worker performance. Pringle and Blumberg (1986) offered a series of examples that demonstrate that while an employee may have all the internal attributes to perform that fall within the capacity and willingness factors of

performance, that a “difference in each person’s environment” (p. 10) may make all the difference in the level of performance.

Pringle and Blumberg (1986) later explained that “if any one of these categories is missing or has a low value, then performance will not occur or will occur at a very low level” (p. 10). To understand the impact of the FLSA on residential life employees, this researcher will consider dimensions of work performance and how these various dimensions interact together in ways that impact performance. In particular, Pringle and Blumberg pointed to opportunity, the dimension that includes environment, and stressed that supervisors must provide “a good situation for their subordinates to work” (p. 12). The question about impact of the FLSA on the work performance of hall directors may be addressed considering how supervisors manage the changing environment that hall directors perform given these new regulations that either contributes to or diminishes the opportunity for hall directors to perform.

According to Blumberg and Pringle (1982) “all three elements—opportunity, capacity, and willingness—must be present in some degree for performance to occur” (p. 565) and therefore, all three of these elements should be considered when assessing the performance of employees. Figure 2 offers a visual depiction of Blumberg and Pringle’s model. Blumberg and Pringle’s model depicts the intersection of opportunity, capacity, and willingness on performance.

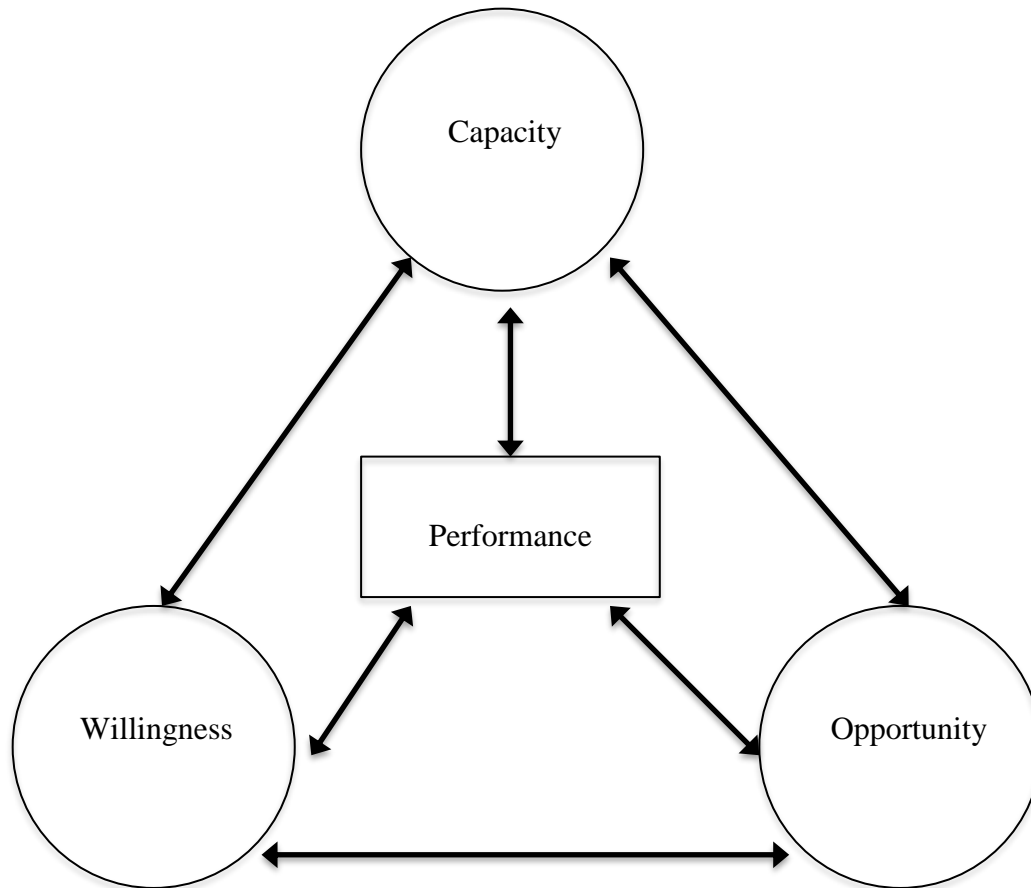


Figure 2. The interaction of capacity, opportunity, and willingness on performance (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982, p. 565).

Blumberg and Pringle (1982) acknowledged that “virtually overlooked has been the role that opportunity plays in subordinate performance” (p. 567). While Pringle (1994) found in a quantitative study on student academic performance that opportunity is the variable which offered the least impact on worker performance, this study will examine opportunity to perform more broadly through a qualitative interview with hall directors whose opportunity to perform was impacted by a change to the work-environment through a policy change. It is within the dimension of opportunity that changing the FLSA status from salaried (exempt) to hourly (non exempt) is contained. The procedures in place to account for an hourly employee’s time-on-task

is different than a salaried employee, and given Blumberg and Pringle's framework, a change to this variable will impact the opportunity those employees have to perform. Kezar (2013) took Blumberg and Pringle's model and expanded on it in her study. Kezar's expanded model of worker performance will contribute to the analysis in this study by adding to the concepts of capacity, willingness, and opportunity first offered by Blumberg and Pringle.

Kezar (2013). The purpose of Kezar's (2013) study was to explore departmental culture, including internal policies and procedures that impacted the performance of non-tenure track faculty. Kezar's theoretical framework for her study on the performance of non-tenure track faculty was "based on Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) synthesis of fifty years of literature on work performance" (p. 155). Kezar explored the concept offered by Blumberg and Pringle that examined employee performance through the lens of their opportunity to perform as related to a number of working conditions, including those relevant to this study on the impact of the FLSA on residential life staff. Kezar suggested that work conditions that impact the opportunities for performance include: actions of coworkers, leader behavior, mentoring, organizational policies, rules and procedures, norms, and access to information. Kezar was encouraged by Blumberg and Pringle's assertion that the institution has a responsibility to provide a work environment that supported the opportunity for employee performance and suggested that structures, procedures, and policies put in place by the institution impact employee performance. Kezar merged concepts offered by Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) into Blumberg and Pringle's framework to more thoroughly define factors that impact worker performance. Figure 3 shows the merging of Blumberg and Pringle's framework with Gappa et al.'s framework. Kezar suggested that worker performance is best understood by merging both frameworks.

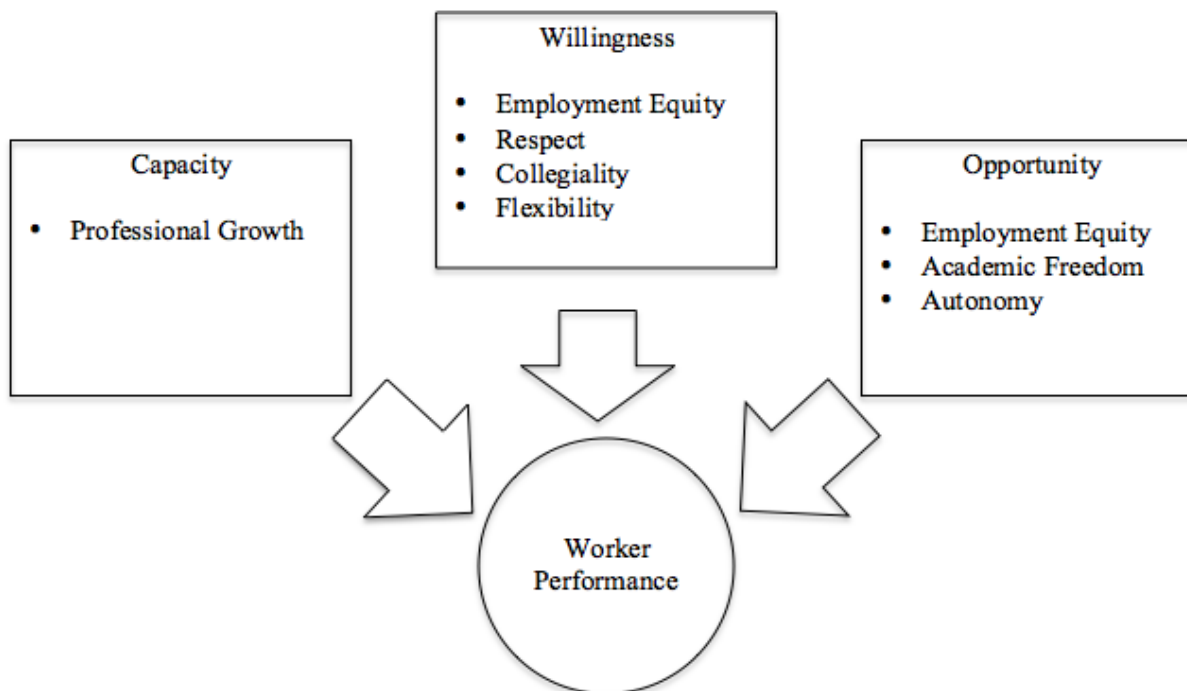


Figure 3. Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) depiction of the interaction of capacity, opportunity, and willingness on performance merged with the concepts from Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) (Kezar, 2013, p. 157).

Kezar (2013), in her study on the impact of departmental culture on non-tenure track faculty's work performance, identified the influencers of culture within an organization. Kezar recognized that organizational leaders influence how policy is implemented and how employees are rewarded for implementing said policies, which impacts the culture of the organization. Kezar also recognized the impact of long-term members of the organization and the impact they have on organizational culture given years of impact upon the "policies and practices that shape values, through their connections with other colleagues and networks, and through resultant social clout" (p. 159) within the organization. Kezar offered that to understand employee performance is to recognize not only the policies and practices that impact the opportunity employees have to perform optimally, but her framework also stressed that "policies and practices

related to performance emerge from underlying culture—that is, its values and norms” (p. 159). In exploring the impact upon an organization as it relates to the policies and procedures that employees must follow in the organization, Kezar suggested that one must also explore the culture of the organization as the organization’s culture also impacts the way practice emerges from policy. In relation to the FLSA, while each department being examined in this study may have the same policy impacting it (the FLSA), departmental procedures and practices will not emerge in the same way from department to department given the preexisting culture within each organization. Organizational culture will impact how each organization adapts to changing FLSA guidelines.

Categorizing organizational culture became the focus of Kezar’s (2013) study, and her findings resulted in “four different types of cultures that emerged as prototypes (destructive, neutral, inclusive, and learning)” (p. 163). To more completely understand the impact within each campus represented in this study, it is important to try to identify cultural elements of the department from the perspective of Kezar’s framework.

Kezar (2013) described a destructive culture as including the following traits: disrespect for the employees, rigid procedures that show a distrust of the employees abilities to perform, and a lack of overall support and collaboration from the department to achieve high performance given the restraints put upon them. Kezar’s description of a neutral culture included having employees that are generally ignored by others within the organization and at times forgotten about, resulting in their influence within the organization being minimized because they are not part of the communication network or the decision making process. The inclusive culture was described by Kezar as: including all employees in meetings and governance events, offering

support for professional development and leadership opportunities, and inclusion in decision-making opportunities. Lastly, Kezar identified the learning culture as similar to the inclusive culture in terms of level of participation and respect for employees at all levels of the organization, but the focus was more on supporting employees in their performance. In the learning culture, according to Kezar, department policies and procedures supported improving the performance by investing in the development of staff. This culture most directly included procedures and standards for employees that contributed to their opportunity for high performance, one of the major frameworks to understand employee performance. Kezar found that in the learning culture “orientation and mentoring [were] essential and were consistently offered” (p. 177) to employees within the organization. Kezar’s goal in identifying departmental cultures was to identify the impact of that culture on the opportunity of those in the department to perform strongly in their service to students. Kezar urged academia to consider that the willingness, capacity, and opportunity for workers to perform are impacted by the policies, procedures, and culture of that organization. Kezar incorporated Gappa et al.’s (2007) framework into Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) framework to bring together a number of dimensions of worker performance.

Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007). Gappa et al. (2007) identified four focus areas for faculty work performance, and one of those focuses was to identify “patterns and changes in academic work and workplaces” (p. xvi). This informed Kezar’s (2013) framework for understanding how departmental culture impacts faculty performance and therefore is relevant to understanding the impact of changing the FLSA exemption status of employees.

Gappa et al. (2007) recognized that the environment where higher education is situated is changing and being impacted by a number of external sources. Their research is informed by having questioned how the policies and practices of an institution impact the work that is carried out by faculty. Their research aligns with one of the research questions in this study, how does changing the FLSA guidelines impact the performance of staff, especially when the policy change results in a significant impact to the way an employee approaches their work? Gappa et al. acknowledged that policies have been developed to “regulate faculty workloads” (p. 10). This has a direct correlation to what the Minnesota State University System is doing to academic staff, by adjusting the exemption status of staff they are regulating the workload of individual staff. Staff will be limited to working a standard 40-hour workweek in order to minimize the impact on departmental budgets by having to pay overtime wages. The value of this research study in exploring policies that put constraints on workload diverges from Gappa et al.’s study of faculty members, where they found that administrative policies were increasing the workload upon faculty.

Gappa et al. (2007) specifically referenced the FLSA in setting the context for their research on the faculty work experience and wrote that 15% of professional employees were exempt from overtime pay in 1938 when the FLSA was created, but by 2013 that number had doubled to 30% of employees being exempt from overtime pay. They asserted that as a result of employees being exempt from overtime pay, management could exert pressure on employees to work longer hours at no cost to the employer. Gappa et al. explained, “employers have a strong incentive to develop a culture where employees are full-time and fifty-hour weeks are the norm” (p. 27). Employers are also expecting more devotion to work that manifests itself in less time off

taken by employees than would be the norm in other industrialized countries. According to researchers cited by Gappa et al., the number of vacation days people in the United States are taking is decreasing from year-to-year, showing that pressure to work more is resulting in less time off.

Gappa et al. (2007) found that workers had the following workplace needs: flexibility (regarding flexibility in time worked, shorter workweeks, and more vacations without employment consequences), security regarding employability (recognizing that employment relationships are not permanent and preparing people to gain future employment elsewhere), and having meaningful and satisfying work. Gappa et al. suggested that a worker's needs has a direct connection to job satisfaction.

In describing job satisfaction for faculty members Gappa et al. (2007) cited the following influences on job satisfaction based on their literature review: support from the institution's administration, departmental climate, positive interpersonal relationships with colleagues, satisfaction with compensation package, autonomy, and professional security. Gappa et al. developed their framework for what they called the "essential elements of the faculty work experience" (p. 134). The framework served as a "strategic tool for each institution to use in examining its current academic employment policies and practices and deciding where, what, and how it wants to change" (Gappa et al., 2007, p. 132). Gappa et al. argued that the following five components of their framework "enhances faculty work and contributes to the strategic priorities of colleges and universities" (p. 133): (1) employment equity, (2) academic freedom and autonomy, (3) flexibility, (4) professional growth, and (5) collegiality. Gappa et al. linked these five elements to the concept of respect, which they found to be an essential element found

in the literature related to meaningful work experiences. Gappa et al. placed respect at the center of their framework, as depicted in figure 4.

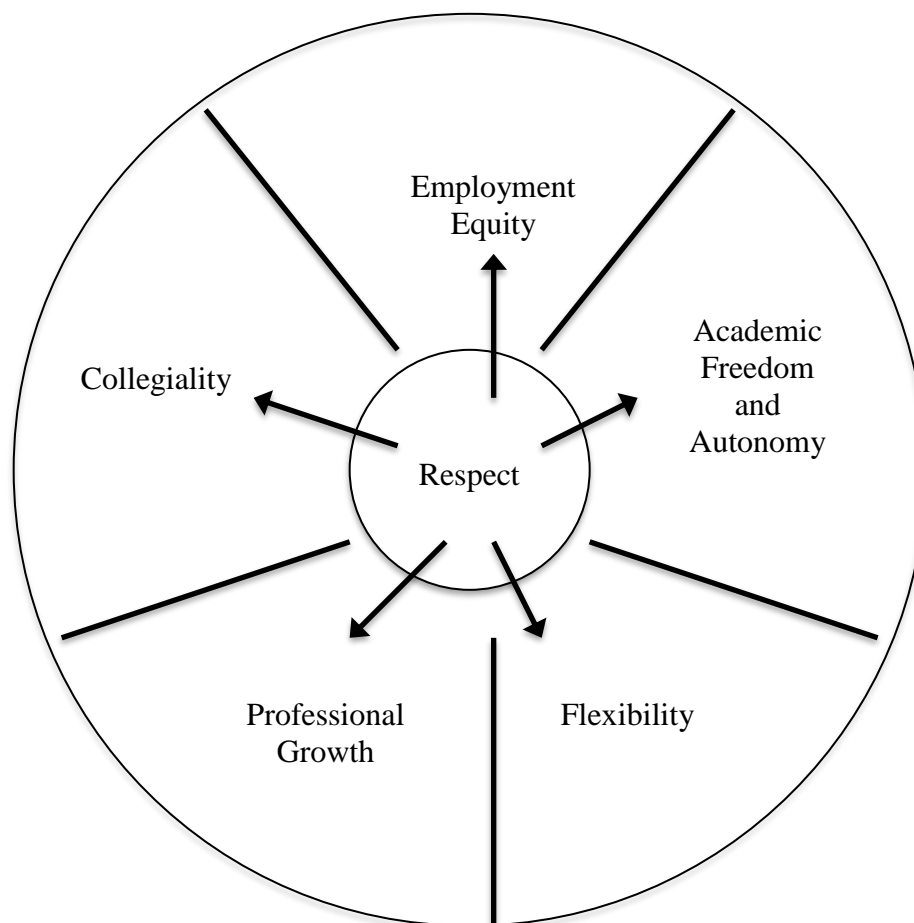


Figure 4. The five essential elements of a meaningful work experience (Gappa et al., 2007, p. 138).

According to Gappa et al. (2007) these five essential elements “apply to all types of faculty appointments” (p. 137). Kezar (2013) merged these elements with Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) theory of worker performance. There are specific concepts within Gappa et al.’s framework that serve as useful analytical points to understand the experiences of residential life staff who become hourly employees. In defining employment equity Gappa et al. referenced employment policies that staff work within; in defining professional growth Gappa et al.

referenced training and workload management practices that allow time for professional development; in defining collegiality Gappa et al. acknowledged that respectful communication and access to decision making are vital. The benefit of a culture that recognizes that respect is foundational to an essential work experience is an organizational culture conducive to performance that mutually benefits the employee and the organization.

Gappa et al. (2007) described flexibility in employment policies as those that consider some of the following elements:

- Flexible work schedules to account for personal needs (raising children, caring for family members, etc.). Some leave time could extend to many months to care for family or to recover from personal illness.
- Parkinson's law is described by Gappa et al. (2007) as the idea that "work expands to fill the time available" and therefore "when time is constrained, people tend to be more efficient" and conversely "when time is seen as unconstrained or infinite workers defer to the accepted time needed to be a "dedicated employee" (pp. 254-256). Gappa et al. cited research that found the reason for increased productivity during shorter periods of time has to do with fatigue and attention span. Jochimsen (2009) explored Parkinson's Law further through a study of the bureaucracy of a German vehicle registration office. Jochimsen concluded that a "bureaucrat's extra time is not used to the benefit of the customer" (p. 62) and "the bureaucracy keeps itself busy because each additional employee adds to administrative work" (p. 62). In further connecting to the theoretical framework of this study regarding worker performance, Jochimsen suggested that more staff and more work hours on task are not necessarily a path to increase efficiency, instead Jochimsen suggested that motivation

may be a factor that impacts performance. Motivation is related to what Blumberg and Pringle (1982) referred to as a willingness to perform.

- Gappa et al. (2007) suggested that work-life balance that approaches or exceeds 50 hours in a work week results in a work life balance that is out-of sync and has negative consequences to a workers personal life priorities. A study by Ziebertz, van Hooff, Beckers, Hoofman, Kompier, and Geurts (2015) identified what they called work-home interference as one factor in their study to determine if on-call work has “negative effects on employees’ well-being and work-related outcomes such as performance and turnover intentions” (p. 77). Ziebertz et al. concluded that employees who have on-call work duties experience “general fatigue, work-home interference, and... [have] difficulties... performing well when called to work” (p. 88). Work-life balance may impact the willingness component of Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) theory of worker performance, and offers a valuable analytical framework for this study.
- Gappa et al.’s (2007) concluding thesis as it related to the flexibility that must be offered within the opportunity framework of the worker performance model was that “policies that provide increased work-life flexibility is a crucial step if institutions are to address adequately the needs of today’s faculty” (p. 267). In many ways Minnesota State University System’s decision to re-evaluate positions against the duties test of the FLSA and favor the status of non-exempt in turning staff into hourly employees is effectively limiting the workweek schedule to 40 hours per week. Considering that workweek schedules likely exceeded 40 hours, the impact may end up being positive for many staff who find they have increased personal time.

- Funding more flexible work schedule policies requires extra funding in many cases and Gappa et al. (2007) acknowledged that most campus departments have limited resources to offer more flexible work schedules without funding support. Without access to funding sources, departments that are well funded are advantaged and underfunded departments have a limited ability to offer flexibility in terms of hiring additional staff or paying overtime.

In addition to describing flexible work policies, Gappa et al. (2007) described employment policies that aligned with personal growth as those that consider some of the following elements:

- Gappa et al. (2007) recommended that an important aspect of worker performance is that “faculty members have ready access to information needed to perform their jobs” (p. 283).
- Gappa et al. (2007) suggested that there are work performance benefits to serving on shared-governance committees and task forces because these opportunities have both professional development and work performance benefits. Gappa et al. suggested that collegial interactions that take place in these settings also contribute to professional growth, which in turn, improves worker performance. In an earlier study related to a recognition that the bureaucratic model for organizations were no longer effective in the post mass-production economy, Kallenberg and Moody (1994) found that decentralized management structures in a strong job training focused organization allowed workers to “participate in making various kinds of decisions” (para. 9) while job training in high performing organizations “facilitates flexible deployment of employees among job tasks” (para. 10). In higher education, shared governance offers a model for leadership that is participative, and relies on a highly trained and professional labor force to succeed.

Lastly, Gappa et al. (2007) described collegiality in employment policies as those that consider some of the following elements:

- In describing a collegial academic environment, Gappa et al. (2007) urged employees to take “personal responsibility for the quality of their academic community and the professional behavior of their colleagues” (p. 309), because doing so would contribute to a collegial work environment and would improve the willingness of employees to perform. Mather and Seifert (2011) described the education environment as one of where highly educated professionals work in a “labour-intensive” (p. 26) environment that includes more of a professional management strategy to solve what management would describe as “the long-standing labour problem, namely relatively low productivity” (p. 26). Conversely, Mather and Seifert warned that increased managerialism in education comes at the expense of collegiality and while it may produce some level of productivity, it does so at the expense of a quality education. Mather and Seifert warned that professional management in education that results in “tighter controls over performance turns these workers into waged labor, undermining collegial, high trust relations and the educational autonomy that professionals...might reasonably expect” (p. 3). Mather and Seifert concluded that the quality of the education that students receive is threatened when collegiality gives way to managerialism, which can turned workers from professionals to waged-employees.
- Gappa et al. (2007) suggested that involvement in shared governance contributed to a collegial environment, as a result, policies and practices of the organization should “offer opportunities for all faculty members to participate in roles appropriate to their experience and types of their appointments” (p. 310) within shared governance.

- Gappa et al. (2007) offered a framework for collegiality that demonstrates that worker performance is influenced both by peers (who strive to ensure collegiality among equals) and administrative leaders who set policies for shared governance participation.

The above three elements: flexibility, personal growth, and collegiality, emerged from the research that was conducted by Gappa et al. (2007) as part of their framework of the essential elements of a meaningful work experience. These elements are especially relevant to understanding the potential impact on work performance by hall directors in this study, given that Kezar (2013) incorporated them into Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance, which serves as the underlying theoretical framework for this study.

Summary

The foundation of this study rests on the theoretical framework of Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance that was expanded on by other researchers, including Kezar (2013). Examined through a framework of worker performance and the many researchers in the past who have created a profile for the hall director position, this study begins to explore the impact on a sample of hall directors throughout the Minnesota State University System who transitioned to hourly employees. Being designated an hourly employee as a live-on hall director is not yet standard within the United States higher education system. Since this study will unfold within the same time period that hall directors become hourly employees, there will be an opportunity to explore the impact of this transition from the perspective of hourly hall directors who likely knew "what it was like before." The impact of this transition on job satisfaction, retention, job embeddedness, and the professional development and training needs of hall directors who are working in this new reality as student affairs practitioners in the

Minnesota State University System is best understood by considering the elements of worker performance first offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982).

Chapter 3: Methodology

A basic qualitative study was used to explore the impact of residential life staff in the Minnesota State University System becoming hourly employees as a result of reinterpreting the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) duties test. The Minnesota State University System provides an example for higher education leaders in the future who may have to manage the transition of live-on staff to hourly employment status due to reinterpretation of the duties test or future increases to the salary threshold of the FLSA.

One goal is to explore the impact this transition had on the work performance of the impacted hall director staff. The impact of hall directors shifting to hourly status is best captured through qualitative interviews so the complexity and nuance can be explored. Qualitative interviews produced a rich narrative through which the impact experienced by individuals who are in newly transitioned hourly positions could be examined. The research questions guiding this study include:

1. What has been the impact on hall directors who transitioned to hourly employees?
2. How does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact their work performance?

The answers to these research questions will be a resource for future residential life leaders who may find themselves in a situation where the FLSA salary threshold may change, or like in the Minnesota State University System, the duties test may be reinterpreted, causing staff to shift to hourly employees. This study provides a foundation of knowledge for other leaders in the higher education setting who must manage legislative or policy related changes impacting the FLSA status of their employees.

This chapter describes the design of this study and identifies the population of residential life staff who make up the sample of this study. The data collection process consists of interviews with residential life hall directors. Hall directors in hourly positions serve as the primary sample for the interviews. Data collection and analysis illuminate the impact of having residence hall directors who are in hourly positions from the perspective of the impacted hourly worker.

This chapter will also highlight the role of the researcher, who has a close connection to one of the organizations where data was collected. This researcher is a mid-level leader in the residential life department and a senior leader in the university's shared governance and collective bargaining (union) system. The researcher's role creates certain biases that may impact the analysis of this study. Other delimitations that exist as a result of the basic qualitative design of this study will also be explored. Lastly, this chapter will outline how the researcher carried out this study.

Leaders throughout higher education who find they have to manage change due to mandated legislative or policy changes would find value in this study. The focus on a state system that moved forward with transitioning live-on residential life professionals to hourly employees enriches the data collected and the analysis that followed.

Research Design

The basic qualitative design of this study, given its emergent nature, impacts the richness of the information collected for the benefit of leaders in higher education who find themselves impacted by mandated changes that have the potential to impact the work performance of their staff. Punch and Oancea (2014) described the research design as the plan for research and they

identified four components of a research design: the strategy, the conceptual framework, who/what will be studied, and the “tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analyzing empirical materials” (p. 142). The research strategy used for this study is what Merriam and Tisdell (2016) referred to as a basic or interpretive qualitative research study. Merriam and Tisdell suggested that constructivism is the underlying premise of an interpretive qualitative research study and researcher and participants construct meaning together. This design contributes to the goal of identifying the impact on staff performance as a result of changes to how newly transitioned hourly employees carried out their work functions. The basic qualitative nature of this study contributes to meaning making between researcher and research participant for the benefit of future leaders in higher education. The role of the researcher as a residential life practitioner contributes to meaning making given the insider status this researcher has in the residential life profession.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described the impact the theoretical framework (or as Punch and Oancea (2014) called it, the conceptual framework) has on analysis. A theory of worker performance first offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), and expanded on by Kezar (2013) to analyze adjunct faculty performance, serves as the theoretical backdrop for this research study. The theory of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle proposes that worker performance is impacted by capacity, opportunity, and willingness. Blumberg and Pringle stated, “the model predicts that the highest performance would be obtained by assigning the most capable and willing people to the more favorable environmental conditions” (p. 566). Given that employment status change (from salaried to hourly) may impact elements of all three of the

tenants of this theoretical framework, this framework serves as a useful analytical lens to examine the interview data collected from hourly hall directors.

Population/Sample

A purposeful sample of live-on (hall director) staff who transitioned to hourly employment status at the six universities in the Minnesota State University System with residential life operations were approached to participate in this study. The advantage of identifying a purposeful sample was described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), who wrote that purposeful sampling allows a researcher to “discover, understand, and gain insight” from a sample which “the most can be learned” (p. 96).

In purposefully identifying hall directors for this study, first-hand data was collected by those most impacted by the transition to hourly status, the hourly hall directors in the Minnesota State University System. Tracy (2013) described a sample where participants “meet certain theoretical characteristics or conceptual frameworks” as a “theoretical-construct sample” (p. 138). Residence life staff in newly designated hourly positions offered clear insight into worker performance that is impacted by a more limited 40-hour workweek than a salaried staff member had, which serves as the theoretical-construct sample of this study.

Table 1 provides an overview of the population for this study, where every effort was made to seek out participants agreeable to be involved in this study. The goal was to have a sample that included at least one person in the live-on residential life staff position at each of the six institutions. The minimum sample size of at least $N = 6$, with a maximum sample size of $N = 28$. However, until fall 2018 it was not known that live-on staff at each university had been designated as hourly, given the ongoing duties test reviews by the Minnesota State University

System, which were not scheduled for completion until after fall 2018. At the time of data collection (during the summer of 2018), it was confirmed that St. Cloud State, Bemidji State, and Minnesota State University Mankato had live-on staff who had transitioned to hourly employment status.

Table 1

Population

| University | Position Title | Population /Sample |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Bemidji State University | Hall Director | 3/1 |
| Minnesota State University, Mankato | Hall Director | 9/9 |
| Minnesota State University, Moorehead | Area Director | 3/0 |
| Southwest Minnesota State University | Assistant Director | 2/0 |
| St. Cloud State University | Community Director | 4/3 |
| Winona State University | Hall Director | 7/0 |

Sources: Departmental Website for each institution

Data Sources and Collection Methods

There is one source of data for this research study. This source is the interview transcripts from interviewing the live-on (hourly) employees at the institutions outlined in Table 1. Interviewees were contacted via email and phone, explained the purpose of the study, and asked to participate in an interview conducted by the researcher. The researcher was clear with

each potential participant that this study would focus on as many of the six institutions in the Minnesota State University System that had an on-campus student population and that confidentiality could not be guaranteed given the limited population available for study. It was explained to each participant that his or her actual names would be replaced with a pseudonym in the manuscript. It was also explained that it might be possible for readers to determine who participated in this study. This was explained and outlined on the informed consent document provided to each participant. It was important that each participant understood the purpose of the study and the potential for their identity to be determined by those who would read about the study in the manuscript or any journal articles that follow.

The interview method consisted of semi-structured interviews. Tracy (2013) offered a contrast to the structured interviews more common in qualitative studies, and suggested that the more unstructured the interviews are, the more flexibility the interviewer is afforded. Tracy also encouraged the use of a “less structured interview guide” when collecting data using a more unstructured interview method. The interview guide served as a starting point by listing general topic areas that might have been covered during the interview, which was dependent on the emergent nature of the interaction between interviewer and participant. Aspects of the interview guide connected to the theoretical framework and therefore were influenced by Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) framework of worker performance. Topic areas included questions exploring the capacity, willingness, and opportunity to perform as impacted by being an hourly employee in roles that have traditionally been salaried. The interview guide allowed topics to emerge during the interview while also providing a general direction for the interview so that data could be collected in a systemic fashion that allowed for comparison among participants. Tracy (2013)

stated that an “interview guide is meant to stimulate discussion rather than dictate it” (p. 139).

This is the approach that was taken in this study in an effort to collect rich and emergent data.

Each interview was recorded on an audio recording device that allowed for a transcript to be created from each interview. The transcript was shared with each participant allowing each person the opportunity to review the transcript from their interview to ensure they were comfortable with the information that they shared. Feedback, which was minimal, was accounted for during the analysis of the interview data and again when writing the manuscript.

Data Analysis

According to Corbin and Strauss (2015) “analysis is an art and a science” (p. 65). This captures the role the researcher has in interpreting the data in a methodological and scientific fashion that contributes to the credibility of the interpretation. Corbin and Strauss offered, “knowing what ideas to pursue, how far to develop an idea, when to let go, and how to keep a balance between conceptualization and description” (p. 65) is the artistic side of data analysis. A researcher needs to make decisions on what aspects from each participant are most relevant to the research questions. The residential life staff at multiple state universities in the same system offered a varied and diverse perspective on how changes to their employment status to hourly worker impacted their performance. As each of the interviews was conducted data analysis began immediately. As additional interviews were conducted the analysis from the preceding interviews contributed to deepening the analysis and identifying the emerging concepts. As Corbin and Strauss suggested, “integrating data analysis into data collection provides a sense of direction on where to go and what to do next” (p. 69). Analysis took place throughout the study.

A series of analytical strategies were offered by Corbin and Strauss (2015) and were used throughout the data analysis process including: questioning the data in order to change perspectives on it, comparing data from one interview with that of another, examining the emotions expressed by the interviewees, and identifying negative cases (unique, exceptions, etc.). These and other analytical tools were used throughout the data analysis process and assisted in coding and creating themes from the codes that emerged from the data. All of this contributed to the trustworthiness of the analysis. Many of the concepts that emerged using the analytical strategies above were described in the memos that were written during the data collection stage of this research project.

Memo writing. The researcher's approach to this study was to let the analytical concepts emerge. In keeping with their emphasis to remain "responsive to the data," Corbin and Strauss (2015, p. 86) suggested that as the interview process concludes, and the initial review of the data begins, writing memos would contribute to identifying the analytical concepts that emerged as the data analysis unfolded. Writing memos took place after each grouping of interviews. The initial review of the data was exploratory in nature (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) and writing memos provided an opportunity to conceptualize the information from each batch of participants. Corbin and Strauss suggested that as the data analysis process continues to unfold, early concepts identified in the memos might be validated by data provided from other interviews and at that point it will become clear that a concept has emerged. This held true as the later interviews affirmed themes that arose in earlier batches of interviews.

After each set of interviews, the concepts that emerged, especially those concepts that the participants emphasized as each spoke were captured in a memo that was written. Since all the

interviews took place over the course of a month, often in batches given participant availability and location, a memo was written after each batch of interviews. As more of the interviews took place, concepts from earlier interviews would sometimes re-emerge. As this happened later memos would reflect the concepts that re-emerged. Writing a series of memos helped flush out concepts as more participants offered insight into a concept, new meaning was captured in later memos. As the interviews concluded memos were coded and those codes were later categorized, which helped establish the flow for reporting the results in chapter four.

Constant comparative analysis. While Corbin and Strauss (2015) referenced data analysis in a grounded theory approach, their process and ideas are also valuable and served as the foundation to the analytical approach for this basic qualitative study. Fram (2013), who used a similar method in her study, explained, “my intent was to modify the [constant comparative analysis] method outside of [grounded theory], so as to support a naturalistic inquiry and qualitative analysis” (p. 11). Fram suggested the constant comparative method of data analysis has great value in a basic qualitative design. Fram’s study connected the theoretical framework and the constant comparative method to create a data analysis method that served as the model for this study. Fram stated, “theoretical frameworks guide the researcher through a complex analysis” (p. 9). Using the theoretical framework based on Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) theory of worker performance allowed the researcher to look at the data at a level of abstraction that contributed to concepts emerging. Constantly comparing those emerging concepts between the data from each interview and the theoretical framework offered by Blumberg and Pringle’s theory of worker performance contributed to the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis.

Coding. Punch (2014) offered that coding is the process of “putting tags, names, or labels against pieces of the data” (p. 173). This process happened after the interview data was transcribed. Coding is key to narrowing the data into concepts and themes that can be used to compare the information from each of the interview participants. Fram (2013) stated that constant comparative analysis contributes to the researcher’s ability to “identify patterns in the data and to organize large amounts of data so as to abstract categories” (p. 20). As suggested by Punch, memo writing throughout the constant comparative analysis processes and contributed to key concepts being identified. Those memos were also coded and used as analytical points of reference in developing themes from the coded data.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) offered a coding method that was used to guide the analytic process for this study. Coding was done in two stages: “first cycle coding is a way to initially summarize segments of data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). The first cycle coding methods offered by Miles et al. that were used included: descriptive coding (short labels), *In Vivo* coding (short labels using participants language), process coding (action words ending in “-ing”), emotion coding (naming emotions), values coding (naming values, attitudes, and beliefs), evaluation coding (+ = successful; - = unsuccessful), and provisional coding (utilizing Blumberg and Pringle’s (1982) three topic areas that contribute to worker performance as codes). After completion of first cycle coding Miles et al. suggested a second cycle of coding which they described as “a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs” (p. 86). At that point pattern codes were developed that “identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). Miles et al. stated that “coding is

analysis” (p. 72), and in this basic qualitative study coding is at the heart of creating knowledge that contributed to the final analysis and manuscript writing.

Credibility. Ensuring the credibility of the data analysis process was important so this study would contribute to the preparedness of higher education leaders in the future when there could again be adjustments made to the FLSA. Credibility is a concept that Guba and Lincoln (1989) applied to constructivist studies such as this one which puts the focus on “establishing the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (p. 237). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that internal credibility “deals with the question of how research findings match reality” (p. 242) and offered analytic approaches used in this study. Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggested elements of achieving credibility, those that were used included: using multiple sources of data, using member checks (sharing emerging concepts with participants so they can provide feedback), and engaging with the data long enough to reach a saturation point (where the data and concepts derived from the data reoccur).

Member checking occurred during the interview process with the participants in an effort to “solicit feedback on [my] preliminary or emerging findings” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246). Merriam and Tisdell explained that member checking is about asking participants “whether [my] interpretation “rings true”” (p. 246). Additionally, each participant reviewed the transcript of their interview and provided edits, which further clarified their perspective. The transcripts included any member checking I did during the interview. The most common strategy used to member check in this study was parroting back what the participant had been discussing during the interview and adding the meaning I was gathering about the concept the

individual was explaining. This strategy offered two opportunities for member checking, first during the actual interview, where the participants could correct the meaning I offered and second when the participant reviewed their transcript of the interview. This member checking strategy contributed to the credibility of the data analysis process.

Data analysis was based on interviews of hall directors in the Minnesota State University System impacted by reevaluating the duties test of the FLSA resulting in a transition from salaried to hourly employment status. The techniques offered by Merriam and Tisdell contributed to the credibility of the analysis and improved the trustworthiness of this study. Merriam and Tisdell proposed that trustworthiness is reached when the study is conducted with rigor. The steps undertaken in this study contribute to the rigor of this study. Assumptions and bias would enter analysis without member checks and reaching saturation with the data, especially considering the researcher's role as a member of the residential life profession.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in collecting and analyzing data from the interviews creates opportunities for bias. This researcher is a residential life middle manager who participated in the planning for the proposed salary threshold change and was involved in planning for the potential impact that those changes would have on both students and staff. This researcher also was transitioned to an hourly employee in September 2017, two months after his hall directors became hourly employees. Those experiences framed data analysis. The residential life experience of this researcher, along with the role that this researcher had in the campus bargaining unit (union), impacted this research study. As President for the campus bargaining unit at one of the six campuses involved in this study, the researcher met regularly during the

2016-2018 academic years with the union leaders, the human resources director, and other instrumental human resources staff in planning for the impact of the FLSA changes on members throughout the university including, but not limited to, those positions within residential life. This perspective is a paradigm through which data from the participants will be viewed. This researcher also has a personal view that the impact upon middle-class workers that would result from increasing the salary threshold would be more money earned by workers or more personal time for workers outside their job given the likelihood that most universities will try to limit work hours to the standard 40-hour workweek to avoid excessive overtime payments to employees.

Fram (2013), who was an insider to her study in similar ways, suggested that the theoretical framework utilized during the analysis process might contribute to reducing the bias associated with being an insider. Fram stated that her “conceptual framework forced [her] to question any assumptions that could have blinded [her] and prevented [her] from gaining a full understanding of [her] participants’ experiences” (p. 12). In similar ways, the theoretical framework offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) grounded data analysis in a theory of worker performance and contributed to being able to view the data from a perspective other than simply a residential life professional and a bargaining unit (union) leader.

Another way to reduce biases impacting analysis was the use of member checks during the data collection and data analysis stages of this study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) “taking tentative interpretations/findings back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if they are plausible” (p. 259) contributes to the trustworthiness of the analysis that is produced from analyzing the interview data. By gathering interview data from

interview participants at various institutions within the Minnesota State System, bias brought into this study given the insider status of the researcher at one of the institutions within that system was mitigated.

Delimitations

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) said, “different interpreters find different meanings in the same interview” (p. 239). The researcher and each participant in this study will create knowledge about the impact on worker performance due to changes resulting in residence life staff shifting to hourly employees. The goal of this study is not replicability. The researcher does not assume that residential life staff have the same experience at different institutions. The goal was to better understand the impact of residential life live-on staff becoming hourly employees in the Minnesota State University System. It is possible that the conclusions drawn in this study would not fit the experiences of hall directors at other institutions or in other systems that are vastly different than the Minnesota State University System (such as private colleges and universities where federal regulations, including the FLSA, apply differently).

The analysis and conclusions drawn in this study are based on the experiences of the participants involved in this study. A delimitation of this study is that live-on staff have unique job responsibilities from one campus to the next, even within the Minnesota State University System. Additionally, the sample of participants involved in this study was limited to hourly hall directors only within the Minnesota State University System. Had a target population included a more diverse group of colleges and universities, residential life leaders at other types of institutions across the United States may have found the results of this study to be transferable to a stronger degree.

University leaders may find that the analysis in this study is relevant to future circumstances, even if data collection is focused only on residential life staff in the Minnesota State University System. The interpretations drawn from collecting data from participants through a qualitative interview process are based on “rich and nuanced descriptions in the interviews...as well as critical interpretative questions during the interview” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 245). The interpretation drawn from this process will offer a valuable perspective for future higher education leaders overseeing any functional area of a university, even though data collection for this study specifically focused on residential life staff.

Human Subject Approval – Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The basic IRB training module was completed by the researcher in spring 2016 and is valid for five years, which included the duration of this study. The Institutional Review Board at St. Cloud State University approved this study prior to data being collected from participants. Each participant interviewed had an opportunity to review and sign the full informed consent form at the onset of their participation in this study. See Appendix B for a copy of the consent form. Each participant of this study was an adult employee within the Minnesota State University System. The informed consent form provided participants information about this study and described their right to refuse to participate at any point throughout the study.

Summary

The methodology of this qualitative study, built upon a theoretical framework based on Blumberg and Pringle’s (2018) theory of worker performance, contributed to knowledge emerging related to the impact of the FLSA on a residential life operation. The hope is that the knowledge that emerged from this study through a constant comparative data analysis method

will have transferability value to other residential life and higher education leaders in the future. Guba and Lincoln (1989) wrote, “transferability is always relative and depends entirely on the degree to which salient conditions overlap or match” (p. 241). It is conceivable that at a future point FLSA changes will once again be proposed and eventually be implemented leading to the possibility that an increasing number of higher education staff could become hourly employees. In that situation the shift to hourly live-on hall director staff in the Minnesota State University System could serve as a planning starting point. Guba and Lincoln also suggested that in order to establish transferability in a study thick description is necessary. This qualitative study strove to produce thick description, offered in Chapter Four, to describe ideas generated, decisions made, and the impact of those decisions on worker performance when a decision by the Minnesota State University System forced a significant change on residential life operations at multiple institutions. This thick description will be valuable context for future higher education leaders managing transition of this variety in the future.

Chapter 4: Results

There were thirteen participants in this study that represented each of the institutions in the Minnesota State University System that had hourly hall directors by June 2018 when the interviews were conducted. As of June 2018, three of the six institutions with residential life programs employed hourly hall directors. Of the three institutions without hourly hall directors, one institution's Dean of Students indicated that it would be unlikely that their institution would ever have hourly live-on staff given the structure of the department and the job description of their live-on staff (S.E. Crowell, personal communication, May 17, 2018). Of the other two institutions that did not have hourly hall directors by June 2018, one director of residential life indicated that she expected her hall directors would eventually become hourly, but the official decision on that was forthcoming from the Minnesota State University System (H. Phillips, personal communication, May 15, 2018). At the third institution, the associate director of residential life explained that their hall directors were salaried and would continue to perform in that capacity unless final determinations from the Minnesota State University System indicated that a change in employment status was necessary (C.L. Guenther, personal communication, May 14, 2018). That left three institutions with hourly hall directors in the Minnesota State University System; and hall directors from each of those three institutions participated in this study.

Table 2 offers a breakdown of the hourly hall directors in the Minnesota State University System during the summer of 2018 when the data collection processes occurred. Table 2 also shows the participation rate of hall directors at each institution. The overall participation rate of

hourly hall directors within the Minnesota State University System was above 81%, which should contribute to the trustworthiness of the findings for this study.

Table 2

Participants

| University | Position Title | Population Size | Participants (rate) | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------|
| Bemidji State University | Hall Director | 3 | 1 | (33%) |
| Minnesota State University, Mankato | Hall Director | 9 | 9 | (100%) |
| St. Cloud State University | Hall Director | 4 | 3 | (75%) |
| Totals: | | 16 | 13 | (81%) |

The results of this study are reported in relation to the two research questions guiding this study. The results of the first research question, what has been the impact on hall directors who transitioned to hourly employees, are reported by offering narratives from the participants that speak to: the impact on students, the impact on student staff, the impact on a hall director's professional skill development, the impact on other university staff and peers, the impact on departmental processes and operations, and the impact on the work schedule and priorities that hall directors establish. The results that address the second research question, how does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact their work performance, is reported using the three elements of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), which include: willingness, opportunity, and capacity.

This chapter concludes with a summary of the results offered by the participants, including a broad explanation of the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees and how that impact affects the work performance of these hall directors. Certainly, as suggested by the two housing officers cited at the beginning of this chapter, there is a certain level of anticipation that other hall directors would begin to transition to hourly employment status. The results of this study offer valuable context for those leading a transition of hall directors from salaried to hourly employment status at other institutions.

Research Question One: What Has Been the Impact on Hall Directors Who Transitioned to Hourly Employees?

Exploring the impact on hall directors who transitioned to hourly employment status is the primary question that guides this research study. Relatively quickly during the interview process the answer to this question began to emerge as each hall director spoke about their experience during their first or second semester as an hourly hall director. Some had been in the same role previously (although salaried) and were able to describe very specific examples of how their performance was impacted, while others, most of whom had graduate assistant experience in hall director type roles or had classmates in hall director roles while in graduate school, had been acculturated into a residential life profession that was based on hall directors being salaried. In all cases the experiences that these thirteen participants had serve to answer the primary research question by describing the impact on hourly hall directors. Hall directors have a professional responsibility to serve students in ways that contribute to their development and success as college students. The participants in this study were quick to discuss how they viewed their hourly employment status affecting the students they serve.

Impact related to students. There is a sense from a number of the participants in this study that while they agree there is an impact on students; many feel that they have been able to mitigate the impact so that overall the impact is not negative. As Cindy, a returning hall director described:

It forced me to think about visibility and time with my students in a very intentional way. I think a lot of people's concerns about going hourly is that you're spending less time with students or you're being less developmental...you're not seen as much in your building, and so one of the things that I did intentionally is figuring out what does it mean to be seen in your building, and what does it mean for you being physically present to do that?

You can put a lot of time and work into building a culture and building an identity around who you are as a hall director at the beginning of the year, that your physical presence isn't always the part that continues on in that culture.

I personally think that that's made me better at my job, because I think a lot of what we do as a hall director actually happens when we're not present.

Hillary, a first-year hall director, seemed to share in the sentiment that her visibility with students, while impacted by her limited 40-hour workweek, was not an overall detriment to her students:

I personally believe it's a learning moment for these students. That someone is not at their beck and call at all hours...If there is an issue at their house off campus, they are going to have to work through it on their own or they are going to have to learn to call the police.

Some hall directors are clear that a limited workweek does not have a negative impact on students.

However, there is not consensus that hall directors limiting their work hours to 40 in a workweek does not negatively impact students. Erin, a returning hall director whose students got to experience her transition to hourly from salaried because the transition took place after the semester already began, commented that her student evaluations in the second semester reflected her decreased presence with students through seeing her less than they did during the previous

semester when she was salaried. Erin explained the impact this appeared to have had on her students:

That was hard for my students who were used to me being here from 8 a.m. to sometimes midnight in my office working and stuff like that. All of a sudden to be very condensed and like, “Where’s [the hall director] at? I need to talk to her.” That was, I think, a bigger transition for them where I could be available more often for them just to drop in because during the day, they’re all in class...but at night is when the residence halls become very lively.

Reduced visibility during evening hours was repeated by other participants who recognized reduced visibility as an impact to the new hourly employment status; as Brian suggested:

I think a hall director last year would’ve attended two, three events a week at night whereas that’s not going to be possible, and I’m choosing not to. I think there are other hall directors on campus that probably attend events without being paid for it, and it has been my choice not to do that because I don’t have to.

Participants are generally aligned with the fact that their contact with students is impacted. Some of the hall directors appear to be viewing this as a learning opportunity for students or at least some hall directors are developing strategies to mitigate the negative impact on students by their reduced level of visibility. It appears that hall directors are accepting the new reality of their new schedule, which is one of reduced contact with students.

A common belief among participants is that most students, with the expectation of upper-class students who tend to be in the minority in the residence halls, are not aware that hall directors have shifted their workweek schedules. The reason for this tends to be due to the matriculation of first year students out of the residence halls each year. Brian commented on this:

I question whether or not they even know some days. I think students who...[would be] third or fourth year students living in a residence community...that’s rare but I think they might recognize it because they might see me as a hall director less than my predecessor.

I don't believe my students that have lived with me this past year knew that I was 40 hours, cared that I was 40 hours, felt that I was 40 hours because they are more impacted by their community advisor than I believe they're impacted by me. Which is...how it should be because that's a peer for them and they know that they can come to me...because I'm still in communication with them via email a lot.

Jenny, a first-year hall director, made a similar judgment about the lack of awareness by students that hall directors are working fewer hours than previously:

Ideally, I think that they don't really know. I think about the students living in our community this year; 90% of them were first-year students. And so, I don't know that they knew anything different. However, the vision of what I had was different...When I was thinking the summer before I started my job about...doing my job, I would be like "I'm going to walk down the hallway and know every student's name" and...That just didn't happen.

Yeah, I think that they're impacted in that they see more of a conduct side, or more of a disciplinary side...

Many of the participants in this study seemed to agree that first-year students who did not experience having a hall director who was salaried would not be aware of the impact of having a hall director who was now hourly.

Whether current students are aware of how their experience is impacted by a hall director's hourly status, hall directors acknowledge that they must still invest in the opportunities that do exist within the workweek to develop relationships with students. Kristel, a first-year hall director described it this way:

I think one of the things that I think might have been expected of me had I been in a salaried role would've been a lot more engagement with my CA staff and a lot more engagement with my students. I'm pretty engaged. I spend a lot of time with those students, but I feel like there probably would've been more.

Similarly, Pam, another first-year hall director, explained how her engagement with students starts to become limited when working within a 40-hour workweek:

I attend some [CA floor programs], but not as many as I felt like I should have. And then going to floor dinners, if I'm able to...then I think my building wide visibility probably

struggled just because if I have a meeting or I have something that needs to get done, I close myself in my office and try to get that done as opposed to like, “Oh, I’ll spend some time at the desk and greet people as they walk by,” or, “I’ll go walk around the floors and talk to people who have their doors open or talk to people in the lounge.” I didn’t really get to do that too much.

A consciousness is emerging with hall directors around opportunities to directly engage with students that they are declining to do as a result of limited work hours.

Hall directors are aware they are reducing their time with students in order to maintain a 40-hour work schedule. Cindy started to cut certain events that would have been opportunities to connect with students:

[I] used to attend more on-campus events, and I used to be more involved in Community Council and student leadership for the building. I sort of stepped away from those things... it’s forced me to think about visibility and time with my students in a very intentional way.

While hall directors are reducing informal student contact, there are areas of student contact that remain priorities for hall directors. In these areas hall directors are very intentional about making sure they have time in their workweek schedules to continue to invest in students. Common areas of student contact that remained priorities by the participants in this study included: their role in responding to student crisis, serving within an on-call or on-duty rotation, and adjudicating student conduct.

Impact on responding to student crisis and emergency duty response. In responding to crisis most residential life departments have on-call or on-duty rotations that each hall director has a role in. This continued to be true when hall directors transition to hourly employment status. Responding to students in need, especially in crisis, as is often the role of a duty hall director, continues to be a priority given residential life staff’s commitment to student safety. Given that, hourly hall directors must manage their schedule differently than they once did when

salaried. Bobby, who had been a salaried hall director at multiple institutions before becoming hourly, explained:

What's different is that there was, when I was exempt [salaried], this grit to it. I had a tough duty night, but I have an eight-hour day ahead of me. Grin and bear it. Let's get through it, right? Now that you're non-exempt [hourly], you can't do that. You legally cannot do that if you aren't approved for the overtime or if you haven't had that conversation with your supervisor yet. You have to take the time away. That has been difficult.

Bobby further explained the impact of absorbing a large number of unexpected duty hours into a workweek that is in-progress:

Where it becomes difficult is when that on-duty/on-call shift becomes more than [the hours planned for], right? Because then you have to shift your schedule along so all those things you were intentional in planning out... We talked about supervision and community development, if I was very intentional in saying, "I have 36 hours of these things set up in my schedule and four hours of duty." If that four hours of duty goes over four hours, something's got to give. I [have] to take time away from something else. So that has been difficult.

Hall directors have an important role to play in ensuring student safety, a role that does not get deprioritized because they transitioned to hourly. Many of the participants in this study said in order to maintain student safety other roles such as visibility and investment in more informal contact with students were being deprioritized.

Crisis response remains the priority, and hall directors have the professional expertise to continue to assist students in crisis. Cindy explained it this way:

There is still a lot of respect for hall directors in general knowing our students and being the expert on our students...in a lot of ways when a student is in crisis, we are the best people to handle it. I've seen that in terms of no one, in any of the times we've talked about what happens when we're hourly...no one came to the conclusion that we shouldn't be the people on-call, or there's not value in having us be the people present when there is student crisis.

Even at one institution where hall directors had assistant hall directors who played an initial role in student crisis response, the hall director acknowledged that all the hall directors still needed to be available to support the assistant hall directors and in turn the student in crisis. Erin explained:

We don't have a hall director on duty necessarily, we do have assistant hall directors that are on duty and they have a duty phone 24 hours... Then, for us hall directors, it's communicating with not only each other as hall directors but with our assistants too on how to best reach us or what situations do...[they] need to let us know about ASAP.... Us [hall directors] need to communicate to make sure that we're not all gone all the time...[We must] make sure that someone is around just in case something were to happen and that a hall director could be...nearby.

While there are different on-call and on-duty structures for hall directors, the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees has minimal impact on the role that hall directors are playing in providing support to students facing a critical issue or emergency. The impact, as described by some hall directors, of devoting time to being responsive to crisis plays out in other areas of their job becoming deprioritized. There are other areas of a hall director's job description that also stay a priority, including student conduct.

Impact on adjudicating student conduct. Cindy's statement captures the struggle in deciding what aspects of the job to maintain and what aspects to adjust:

I won't ever...there has been a lot of talk of streamlining conduct and having a lot more happen over emails, especially for low-level things and letters, and I don't think there's value in that. I think having in-person face-to-face meetings with our students about behavioral issues is always going to be important.

Cindy's sentiment illuminates the internal conflict within each professional hall director to decide what is important and what parts of their work need to get adjusted to accommodate a limited workweek schedule. Lindsey, a hall director with both salaried and hourly experiences in the role, commented on why conduct is a priority:

I really do believe that if we have these policies that you need to properly adjudicate them. So, making sure that you're meeting with students in a timely manner and getting them their outcome letter in a timely manner.

Similarly, other hall directors commented on conduct being a priority and spoke to the experience of the student as the reason why conduct is a priority. As noted above, conduct is an important priority because students are waiting on communication from their hall director once they have been documented for a potential policy violation, and therefore, hall directors should minimize the length of time that students need to wait for an outcome to be communicated to them. As Brian said: "we say to a student, 'if you are involved in a situation and you are being pulled in for conduct, we're going to try to turn it around in seven days.' Great, that's a priority."

Unlike a hall director's role as a crisis responder, where there was unanimous agreement that continuing to serve in that capacity is a priority, some hall directors acknowledged that their role as conduct officers had become deprioritized. Erin described the lack of availability on her calendar for students to schedule conduct meetings in a timely fashion:

Before [being hourly], it was whenever you get done with classes and work, I had a schedule where they could sign up for [their conduct meeting]... Then the next semester is like...there's only three slots for the next week-and-a-half. So, that became really challenging... And of course, then I got behind on conduct stuff, which is not ideal but it happened.

In addition to conduct taking longer to adjudicate because of less availability for conduct meetings in a hall director's calendar, some hall directors see these meetings as vital opportunities to connect with students that they may not have because their informal time with students has been minimized. Kat, a first-year hall director, explained the pressure she felt to use conduct meetings to connect with her students:

I know this year, I was like, okay, this might be the only time I see this student. How do I make sure that I'm connecting with them so that they know who I am outside of this [meeting] too, outside of the context of being in a conduct meeting.

Student conduct becomes an important opportunity for hall directors to be visible with students, and the impact of being limited to a 40-hour workweek has made conduct a priority for reasons that have added meaning, which seems to be a result of hall directors acknowledging they spend less informal time with students.

Enhanced communication with students becomes necessary. In describing what may feel like a worst-case scenario to many in residential life, communication with students is impacted by a hall director being limited to a 40-hour workweek. Erin described this scenario rather vividly:

Sometimes people just need to talk that's not scheduled.... There's a lot of times where [a student approaches a hall director and says]... "Can I quickly talk to you?" I want to get out the door but I'm not going to say "no" as they're crying. I will gladly talk to them but like I said, when...everyone wants that additional attention, it becomes very strained. There are sometimes where I'm like "Can this wait until tomorrow?" type of question. Sometimes they say yes, sometimes they say no, but then I can see the look on their face when they're like, "I'll talk to you tomorrow"...when I know I could easily talk to them within 15 minutes.

Erin went on to explain that there are learning opportunities for students and opportunities for student staff to become more involved in these situations, even though hall directors do not feel positive in the moment that they are redirecting the student. Erin went on to explain:

Okay, what is this about...is this something that needs to immediately happen now or is this something that can wait a little later?...or "Can you talk to your RA about it?" Like, "hey, my light bulb's not working," okay, talk to your RA about that to get the work order process going.

Amy, a returning hall director, captured the feeling experienced when redirecting students that they do not have time to speak with in the moment that student is looking for attention:

When I know that I'm not able to talk to a student or I've walked past them in the hallway and they've said, "Hey, can we meet up and talk?" I think about my schedule and I know that I don't have an open hour for the next four days, I think that makes me feel sad and makes me feel like I'm not doing a great job and I'm not serving students well.

Relatedly, Kat spoke to a strategy to redirect the student who has approached her in an effort to still have the opportunity to connect and communicate with that student:

It's hard sometimes when you run into a student in the hallway and they're like "I have this issue," and you're like "Great, I'm not working right now, but you can set up an appointment at the front desk [to speak with me later]." I would like to solve [their issue] in that moment, but I have to be okay with putting that off. Or pointing them to somebody else if it's an emergency thing that they need [help with].

Communication with students and how a hall director responds to requests by students for their attention does not unfold in the way that it often does with salaried hall directors. As one hall director said "I think that I never had to train myself to have a conversation with a student on why I can't converse with them...now that I'm [hourly] I have to do that." Some hall directors, while they see the value in referring students to other capable resources, including student staff, are having a negative emotional reaction to the path they feel they must follow to maintain a 40-hour workweek.

As the hall directors got more experienced being intentional about their time spent with students, they developed a new style of open communication with those students to help students feel valued and cared for. Megan talked about her evolution with a student who repeatedly wanted to spend time with her:

I have a student, for instance, who always comes in and talks to me for maybe 45 minutes to an hour, and I realize okay, some of that stuff isn't work related, or it's out of my professional range that I can accomplish. And so, it's been easier to tell the student, "Well, I have to get back to work. I'm hourly, and so I need to make sure I have all these other tasks done, but here are the resources that I can still give to you."

Megan further explained:

It's a weird concept of not denying someone that comes in for help, but then also figuring out a way to still be there for them the next day or after your 40 hours.... I think the student at first felt like, "whoa, what? You can't do something now?" But I think as the specific student came in many times he realized, "oh, okay," and he would come in and say "Oh, it looks like you're doing work. I'll come bother you later."

As the hall directors establish these more intentional communication approaches with students, students may come to understand why there are limitations and hall directors become more comfortable redirecting those students to a different time and to other staff. Students appear to understand when the hall directors communicate the reason for their limited time. Student staff presents similar issues for the hall directors to work through.

Impact related to student staff. Student staff have a special relationship with hall directors, so the impact on student staff is also worth exploring as part of understanding the impact of hall directors transitioning to hourly employment status. The impact on student staff has its high points and low points according to the hall directors involved in this study. As Cindy shared, "that was an adjustment for my staff, I used to be way more available," yet, Cindy believes that staff are able to solve more problems without her involvement due to more delegation. For the most part student staff do understand the limitations that hall directors are under when they transition to hourly status, as Pam said:

Obviously the CAs know that we're 40-hours a week and they understand that that's a transition, and so my CAs have been extremely understanding, but I can also see that when I say I can't go to something, they're bummed about that.

Pam acknowledged that new CAs who have only reported to her as an hourly hall director react more positively about a hall director being hourly than returning CAs who were accustomed to hall directors having unlimited work hours, she explained:

For the most part, I would say [new CAs] react better because either they haven't experienced anything different as a CA, but I think where they question it is, if they were in a building where the hall director was super active last year, they wonder why that hall director was able to go to all these programs and be very active on their floor, and I'm not able to do that for their floor.

While CAs may notice that hall directors have limited availability, there are real opportunities for growth as employees and student leaders that hall directors see resulting from their limited availability.

CAs are finding themselves being empowered by hall directors to solve issues and work through situations without the hall directors managing these things for them. As Cindy shared, she challenged her staff to "problem-solve things when they were using my time in an inefficient way." This is creating a positive opportunity of empowerment for student staff. Cindy further explained how this is having a positive impact on the experience student staff have to grow in their role:

I think it has helped me empower some of my student employees to have a higher level of problem solving than maybe I would have asked them as a salaried employee. I think I was more likely to step into things, or help and be a part of more processes, and I think knowing that I have a limit on what I can do, a very hard and fast limit has helped me get more creative on who can be the person solving this problem. It doesn't have to be me. I think there are some smaller things that I used to do more of.

Hall directors are recognizing that they are offering CAs more autonomy to complete some responsibilities. In the past salaried hall directors would have gotten more directly involved.

CAs taking on more responsibilities has its limitations. One hall director shared a concern that her student staff were not feeling as supported in their role as they should have been. Hillary shared that she prioritized her time with her staff in meetings, so they would continue to get the support they needed to perform. Hillary suggested that staff supervision meetings are vital to her success:

I have really strong connections with my staff. And so, that's part of our job description, but also a personal value of mine. I set an hour a week of one-on-ones for each of my staff members, and we spend half that time talking about their personal life, and then we spend the other half talking about what's going on in their floor and their community. But I feel like I'm able to support them as a supervisor really well. And so, I feel like I can supervise well within 40 hours.

Erin shared a similar sentiment; overall hall directors are reluctant to deemphasize supervision of their staff:

Within 40 hours, I schedule out my student staff meetings within that time constraint...I found a way to organize their meeting schedule within those time constraints pretty well, and also accommodate their class schedules or other stuff going on.

It is clear that hall directors continue to prioritize time supervising staff, even when hours are limited.

Hall directors view their staff as key to compensating for the lack of available hours they have, especially hours available to the hall director to devote to building personal connections with students. Most hall directors are extremely reluctant to scale back supervision time with their staff, even under the 40-hour limitation. Additionally, student staff plays a role in keeping the hall director connected to students.

The role that student staff have in connecting with students is especially important now that hall directors are deemphasizing their direct and informal contact with students. Hillary addressed this directly:

There's no way I can know the 400ish students that live in [my residence community]. There is a way that my CAs can know the 30 to 40 individuals that live on their floor. Thus that means I know them. That's how I view it.

One of the highlights of empowering student staff is they grow into their role within community development, which in turn, has a positive impact on a residence community. Lindsey

commented on seeing the student staff increase their ownership in the community due to needing to manage more community-wide programs as a staff team. Lindsey said:

I think that [the student staff] take a lot of ownership in our social [events]...I think there's also a sense of community ownership and I feel like to a certain extent our student staff members feel empowered when they plan programs.

While student staff may be benefiting through more leadership opportunities, some student staff have not reacted positively through the transition of their hall directors to hourly employment status.

Student staff reacted in less positive ways to hall directors being less visible at community events, but this seemed to be a factor of student staff comparing involvement from when hall directors were salaried. Kat, a first-year hall director, noted that her student staff were not feeling supported:

Cause I think the previous year, they had seen...their supervisor...showing up to things and that wasn't something that I necessarily could do. Not that I wasn't supporting them as much as their hall director did last year, but I think they didn't perceive that as the same type or level of support.

Kat seemed to see the path forward as positive, even if some of the initial reactions by staff suggested staff felt a lack of support from their hall directors. Kat further explained:

I think being able to support my staff in a different way, maybe, than previous hall directors had, but I think that also, in the long run, [I] give the student staff more independence and autonomy over some aspects [of community development initiatives] that they might not have had when their hall director could be at everything; empowering them a little bit more.

The transition of hall directors to hourly employment status has an impact on student staff as much as it does on hall directors. It appears that this impact is as much a positive one as it can be a negative experience according to these hall directors.

As with any change, there is a period of adjustment that hall directors and their student staff must go through. Cindy explained how student staff might respond initially:

It was just, “You aren’t around in the exact moment I want you to be around, which I am used to having, and now you’re not there.” So, they had to adjust, and it was hard on them...to think about that. It was a higher-level thing, I think that something you can, as a hall director with a Master’s degree, conceptualize. When you’re talking about a 19-year-old or 20-year-old CA, they can’t. It breaks their brain to think about it that way, and I think that was hard.

The approach hall directors took in communicating with their student staff helped their student staff better understand how to navigate the limitations presented by hall directors being hourly employees limited to a 40-hour workweek. As this hall director suggested, they may only see the downsides and not understand why the change is taking place beyond some vague notion of a “law changing.”

Enhanced communication with student staff becomes necessary. Many of the hall directors have had to explain to their staff what it means for them that their supervisor is an hourly employee, as Bobby said:

I’ve been more intentional with my employees and my staff members to say, “Here’s what non-exempt status looks like and here’s how I still want to support you as your supervisor...We can have this conversation at a later date, or we can schedule it through a one-on-one.” That’s hard to hear for student staff. I think the more practice I have with that conversation, with helping my student staff specifically understand what being [hourly] means, the easier it will get. But that takes practice.

This explanation, although it may improve the understanding that student staff have of the limitations that hall directors have in how they spend their time, may not necessarily smooth over the negative feelings of some student staff. Amy explained:

I’ve heard more than once people in my position and above my position say, “no, I’m done for the day,” or “no, I’m out of hours,” or “no, I can’t do that.” I have talked to CAs who have been frustrated with the amount that their supervisors or supervisors above

them have talked about 40 hours and they feel that they aren't as able to approach them or they're more concerned about the time they're taking up.

Cindy, a hall director at a different institution from Amy, further described how CAs may react to a sense that they are taking up too much time from a hall director who already has limited availability:

I had to do a lot of work around my staff perceiving me as stressed, and then not wanting to talk to me, or process things or add more things to my plate. It was very compassionate of them, but problematic in a lot of ways, and so I had to do a lot of work around...I don't know if "concealing the busyness" is the right way to talk about it, but figuring out what the perception of my workload was to my students and how it changed what their idea of what my job was and how they communicated with me. I was not anticipating that. I think the first whole month of doing it, I didn't set aside intentional time to just be in the hall working, because it just didn't feel possible [with] how I had previously managed my work to managing it in 40 hours a week.

It becomes clear from the experiences of these hall directors that hourly hall directors have a responsibility to communicate with staff about work limitations and hall directors need to be aware of how the messages they communicate to staff are impacting how their student staff perceive their availability to be a supportive supervisor and resource.

Some of the messages that hall directors are communicating to their student staff are an attempt to establish clear boundaries about when the hall director is working and when they are not. Kristel explained a challenge that needed to be addressed with their team:

I had to tell them a couple times, "Okay, you texted me. You felt like it was really urgent. You're frustrated right now that I didn't respond in a timely fashion. Let's talk about that a little bit more, and why I'm not going to answer your text messages or your phone calls when I am out and about and doing things."

When asked how those student staff responded to that message, Kristel further explained, "I think they realize now that it's different. I think they also realize that they need to call the duty

[hall director].” Hall directors have a responsibility to be clear in their communication and to check in to be sure student staff are understanding the new expectations.

After a year of experience being an hourly hall director Kat has already started to strategize how she will communicate with her student staff at the start of the new year:

Looking forward to next year, how do I set my staff up in August? I was like, “I’m not going to be at every floor dinner or program or community council meeting, but I can still help you plan every program if you need it.”... Communicating clear expectations to staff about what you can and can’t do and then, sticking to that.

As with any transition, it takes time to figure out how to be the most effective within a new work context, and many of the comments, like the one above, demonstrate that hall directors are finding avenues to adapt and still be as effective as they would be as salaried hall directors. For hall directors who employ graduate student staff, there are some possible relief opportunities there as well.

Impact related to graduate student staff. Graduate students, at some institutions, work closely with and may be supervised by hall directors. Hall directors becoming hourly employees also impact graduate students, just as they do the undergraduate students discussed in the previous section. Cindy described how she was able to utilize a graduate student to cover some of the responsibilities that used to be within the scope of her salaried hall director’s role:

I empowered my grad student a little bit more to be the sole advisor for our community council, and then I really picked and chose what evening events I was going to be at. I think I might have done that anyway, like the more years I am a hall director, just stepping away from being physically present in the evenings as much, but FLSA definitely forced me to do that earlier.

This idea suggests that hall directors being mandated to limit their work hours is accelerating their skill in delegation, a skill that Cindy acknowledged is something that may have come with more experience in the hall director role anyway. For hall directors with graduate assistants on

their team, there are additional opportunities to delegate to the benefit of both the hall director and the graduate student. There are many other skills that hall directors acknowledged were enhanced as they managed the transition to hourly employment status.

Impact on hall director professional skills development. There are a number of professional skills that hall directors spoke to grooming as they managed the transition to hourly employment status including: more intentional planning, increased efficiency, improved prioritization of tasks, better organization, stronger time management skills, increased use of delegation, more self-advocacy, and more realistic expectations about their performance.

Hall directors often talked about needing to be more intentional with their time under their new hourly employment status, as Erin described:

I try to plan out as much as I can. With the 40 hours constraint, I mean, it has made me more proactive at looking at my schedule in advance. I'd be like "Okay, I need to get this done by this time. How am I going to plan to get it done by then and not go outside of 40 hours but still meet with my students and have all these meetings that I'm a part of...it has helped me prioritize and organize better and plan ahead versus trying to just go with the flow.

Megan, a hall director at a different institution, also spoke about the necessity to plan ahead more, a skill that Megan did not see as a personal strength going into the year:

How many hours am I dedicating to this? I'll put that down in my [calendar]. Okay, that's seven hours. That means I can only work two more hours, and then on Monday I have to come in later. So, that's been helping [me] plan out a little bit better. I'm not a planner, but it's been a little bit better.

Just as Megan talked about a need to improve skills as a planner, Pam talked about the growth that is made over the first year of being an hourly hall director:

After having a year of experience, and not only just learning the job in general, but also learning how to do the job in 40 hours, I think that moving forward I'll be able to figure out my schedule better so that I am coming in an hour later on a day when I don't need to be there so that I can go to a program at night that's an hour.

Pam is clearly seeing her improved ability to plan ahead as a way to get back to investing more time directly connecting with students outside of traditional office hours. A hall director who does not have sufficient time management and planning skills will struggle as an hourly hall director until they can develop those skills.

Related to intentionally planning out one's schedule to be more effective in how hall directors use their 40 hours, becoming more efficient in the tasks they are accomplishing came up often. Cindy, a hall director with years of experience in salaried roles prior to transitioning to hourly employment status, explained:

I think personally for me, it's forced me to be more efficient. I find that I'm trying to honestly stick to the 40 hours. I think, and leave my office at the time I say I'm going to leave my office. When I was salaried I didn't pay attention to the hours I was working. I just did the job based on my measurement of what students needed. I was challenged to really think about how to do what students need within 40 hours. I think at the beginning of the year I would have said it was not possible. I think at the end of the year I am leaning towards it is possible.

Cindy attributes a shift in perspective to her abilities improving and resulting in her becoming more efficient. As important as increased efficiency becomes, being more effective at prioritizing tasks is also required of hall directors.

Some hall directors spoke to an improved focus on prioritization as a way to manage the position's responsibilities within a 40-hour workweek. Erin talked about an emotional element connected with prioritizing job responsibilities:

I guess for me prioritizing is what needs to happen now versus what can be pushed off and maybe focused on later. Whereas being salaried, you have the opportunity to be like, "Well, this needs to get done still, I can take an extra hour to make sure it gets done in a timely manner and keep things on track." I guess for me learning from this transition is to try to not get personally upset with myself when I don't get everything done within that 40-hour week that I know, especially that first year where I'm like, "I know I could have got this done..."

Managing one's emotions regarding tasks left to accomplish at the end of the workday comes with experience and is a skill connected to the act of prioritizing tasks. An element of prioritization is meeting others needs in an acceptable timeline.

Bobby spoke about the importance of being organized because the impact on others in the department is magnified if people are not organized and in sync with one another:

We all use Outlook [interactive calendar tool for teams of people]. That's something that I've spent more time on versus when I was [salaried]. I remember the way you organized yourself was very much like, "Organize yourself however you want." But when you need to be more succinct, and you need everybody to be on the same page, it's important that the department utilizes the same [method].

Bobby has come to recognize that organization and time management, which create efficiency, does not happen in a vacuum, and that an entire team of hall directors' ability to manage their weekly work schedule successfully is interconnected.

In speaking about how time management impacts others on the team, Kat spoke to needing to become more effective at communicating about her schedule to her staff team:

I think time management and, especially communicating, or being transparent with your schedule with your staff and not necessarily being like, "No, I can't do it because I don't have the hours," but like, "Here's what I can do."

An improved ability by hall directors to communicate about their limitations helps manage the emotions of other staff that may not always be responding positively to the hourly status of the hall director. Amy spoke to this point too:

I've had to learn how to still allow things to happen, but not in the way that I used to... Now if they come to me and have [an idea for a program], I can say, yeah, how can I support you? But I have to in my head think, how can I support you within this 40 hours? Yeah, we can do this program, but I can't go shopping with you for it, you're going to have to do that by yourself. Or, I can't be the guest speaker at this banquet because I don't have time...and I intentionally don't say I don't have time or I don't talk about 40 hours with them. That's what I have to think about.

Amy, beyond being more considerate of the messages she sends to staff, also relies on delegation as a strategy that contributes to success. Erin described an improved ability to delegate as a skill to hone:

I learned how to delegate things more so that some of these things can still stay on a timely manner. My assistant hall directors, maybe I need to delegate more to them so that I can stay on track but then also give them a little more responsibility too.

Collaboration with other staff members to accomplish the objectives set before hall directors is a professional skill that hall directors are using to manage their work. Another professional skill that hall directors develop is self-advocacy.

Pam commented on learning that advocating for one's professional needs contributes to success in the role of being a hall director; Pam said:

I think that being in this role has taught me to know more of what I need as a hall director and to know what things to ask when I'm going into a future job...what the expectations are? I think that's something that I never really thought about until going through something like this.

Pam is learning to know what she needs to be successful in a position, and recognizes that understanding the expectations of the job is vital. Learning to have realistic expectations of what can be accomplished in a 40-hour workweek has been a moment of growth for some of the hall directors who participated in this study. Jenny described growth in establishing realistic expectations for what can be accomplished:

My expectations of myself, I'm a really creative person, and so...I like to have really big ideas and put them into motion. And there were definitely times this year when my supervisor was like: "That's a great idea, but that's not going to happen because of X, Y, and Z." And that's frustrating for me to hear even though I know that's the reality.

Learning new skills can be an emotional experience, fraught with frustration, reluctance, and eventually, a sense of accomplishment as a new commitment is made to a professional skill

necessary to better perform the job responsibilities of being a hall director in a 40-hour workweek. The job of a hall director is complex given the many intersecting connections that hall directors have across campus in order to serve students and help them be successful, which is why there are a number of professional skills that hourly hall directors appear to be honing in their first year of their transition to hourly status.

Impact related to other university staff, including peers. An impact on students, student staff, and on one's own professional skills is only the beginning. Hall directors who have transitioned from salaried employment status to hourly status also impact others on campus. This is due to the priorities that hall directors must establish to work within a 40-hour workweek. Sometimes priorities are in conflict, which impacts hall directors in interesting ways. Erin explained:

I still want to be involved...[I] still want to stay involved and be a part of meetings...that happen on the other side of campus. And so, when opportunities do come to be...on a committee or task force...I still want to have the opportunity to do that. But then on the flip side, then it impacts how I operate back here.

In other words, some of the hall directors, especially hall directors who have created a campus-wide presence for themselves when they were salaried, are still drawn to those involvements as hourly employees, but recognize their choices to continue to be involved impact other areas of their job. As a result, participants of this study gave the following examples of campus-wide involvements that they have withdrawn from as hourly employees, including: working as student advisors, stepping away from university committees, not participating in commencement, reduced opportunity to teach courses (such as College 101), and not getting involved in coaching student athletes.

While the examples above are formal campus-wide involvement opportunities that salaried hall directors had that hourly hall directors said were not priorities in a 40-hour workweek, there are also less formal involvement opportunities throughout campus that are being cut back by hall directors. As Bobby explained: “because I’m spending less time on those extra campus-wide things because they don’t necessarily fall under my position, our position has become even less visible.” Visibility with campus partners is one negative impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees that hall directors are concerned about. Adding to that issue is the timeliness of communication with campus partners that hall directors indicate may be reduced due to a limited workweek schedule.

A number of hall directors described having to “chunk” their daily schedule into segments of time they work and segments of time they do not work. These “chunks” of work time do not align with the standard workday of 8-5 pm. One impact of this is when others are trying to communicate with hall directors, there is a delay because staff from around campus have schedules that do not align with hall directors, a fact that is compounded by their hourly status. Erin explained:

Communication wise, it is difficult to get on the same page, a lot of phone tag, resorting then to emails back and forth, and of course when they’re high urgency emails...that could easily happen in a five or ten-minute conversation ended up being a three-day email chain.

When hall directors are not in the office consistently during standard business hours (8-5 pm), and float in and out in chunks of time, the response to inquiries by others may become delayed.

Brian spoke about email as well, and offered an example from earlier that morning:

I checked [my email] this morning and had an email from a staff member at the university who is salaried, and the email came at 11:30 pm. I’m not responding to that at 11:30, absolutely not, but also I checked that at 8 am, and I just think maybe they were

hoping for a quicker response, and they did not get it from me, and I think people on the campus whether that be faculty or staff, I think that they're mostly impacted by response times and emails.

There appears to be an impact on other staff, compounded by a more challenging approach to communicating with campus partners that has arisen for hourly hall directors. The impact is not limited to staff external to residential life. Hall directors striving to maintain a 40-hour workweek also impact their peers.

Cindy described how some priorities could not be deferred to a new day or new week just because a hall director has worked all their available hours. When this happens, peers get reassigned work, and then must rearrange their schedules as a result. Cindy explained this further:

I think there is this sort of trickle down or pile on principle where when something happens in one part of the department, it doesn't happen in the silo anymore where you kind of had time to sort of follow the wave of that work and fix it...Someone else is absorbing your workload in that moment...

Cindy spoke about how this contributed to work-life balance for her, because in the past, she would have worked extra hours with no outside support and under this new model, there is support when urgent things emerge. Peers needing to get involved in the work of another hall director who has exhausted their work hours begins to suggest that hall directors becoming hourly employees impacts departmental processes and operations.

Impact related to departmental processes and expectations. A residential life department needing to manage paying overtime to hall directors will certainly have an impact on how a department operates. Not that having hourly employees is new for a residential life operation, after all, many facility and maintenance staff have always been hourly employees, and senior housing officers have had to manage their schedules, including after-hours call ins that

necessitated overtime pay. Additionally, many student staff are hourly employees as well, which residential life leaders have also managed. Despite all these experiences with hourly staff, having hall directors become hourly has a different impact on departmental processes and operations. These differences will take time to adjust to, as Kristel shared:

Our department hasn't had a lot of opportunities to...[do] more of that big-picture thinking or working on bigger, department-wide collaborative initiatives or projects. It's very much in those silos at this point, where it's like, "Okay, this is the objective..."

Even as Kristel laments that there is a lack of strategic planning, there seems to be a sense that this is temporary as departmental processes and expectations adjust during the transition period.

The adjustment of expectations appears to have been almost immediate, as Bobby reflected on conversations with his supervisor, he said: "Our department said that we can't accomplish the same things in 40 hours that we did when we were [salaried]." As a result of these changing expectations, Bobby also commented that the yearly evaluation was impacted. While the actual evaluation form is similar, the approach that his supervisor took to evaluate his performance was impacted by the change in employment status. According to Bobby:

The [evaluation] form itself hasn't changed. The way that our supervisors have filled it out might have been what has adapted to [us becoming hourly]. But on paper it looks like the same form...I feel like there's a lot of visibility between what my supervisor saw and how I performed, so I was fortunate for that.

Bobby is speaking about feeling positive about how his supervisor approached the evaluation process within the context of him having less available time to perform. Everything a hall director is expected to do has a time value connected with that task, which must be recognized by supervisors.

Less capacity to take on extra assignments within the department. Pam commented on less ability to take on additional tasks without accounting for time:

Whereas if [I'm] salaried, I can do a bunch of little things, and that might take up five to ten hours, but that might just go unnoticed. But now it's more clear of, "Oh, this little thing takes a half hour of your time..." And so, I think it's more of working to recognize that the little things that we do take time also. So, it's not really undervalued, but I think it's bringing that value more to the forefront as we're working through it.

Pam recognized that in this new work context, there is a growing sense that departmental initiatives take time and the value of those initiatives must be considered when assigning hall directors other tasks. Hall directors spoke to having a voice in planning and expectation setting for how their time would be assigned to departmental processes.

Hall directors impact transition through communication with their supervisors. Pam said:

I think that my main role is: as things pop up, as things are happening, being someone who's comfortable asking questions and asking, "Why are we doing this?" Like, "What effect does this have?" Asking a lot of questions about...this is what it says in our job description that we need to be doing. Are we still fulfilling that now that we are cutting things out of our workweek to make sure that we're staying at that 40 hours a week, but still being flexible and understanding that we're in a learning period, and we are all figuring it out together.

The impact that hall directors have on what their job transitions into under the hourly context appear to be most influenced by the questions they expect their supervisors to answer. By asking questions about priorities throughout the transition, hall directors are impacting what is expected of them. As Amy said, as her supervisor works to answer questions a new path forward is established:

[My supervisor] helps seek out answers to questions that we have. I think our whole department has kind of been affected by that, including our associate director and director, because they do the same. We have a lot of questions and we often go to them and they are not experts in FLSA so they do their best to seek out answers and provide them to us.

These discussions and decision-making opportunities, which may begin with the hall directors asking questions, leads to an establishment of the priorities that hall directors have, which then are priorities supported by departmental leadership. This serves to provide direction for hall directors managing their weekly work schedule within the context of being an hourly employee limited to a 40-hour workweek.

Impact related to hall director work schedule: Establishing priorities. In order for a hall director to work effectively and meet the mandate of a 40-hour workweek, that hall director must track their time, which has resulted in chunking of their work schedule into times working and times not working on business days. Within those chunks of time worked, hall directors are favoring administrative tasks because there is an expectation that administrative tasks support someone else's work and hall directors do not want to be behind in ways that impact others. Administration, along with other priorities, means that contact with students that tends to be more informal is getting deprioritized within a 40-hour workweek. Other tasks that hall directors who are salaried tend to accomplish are also becoming non-priorities for hall directors working in an hourly context. Establishing priorities is fundamentally connected to tracking time for hourly hall directors, so tracking time becomes a priority in itself in ways that it is not for a salaried hall director.

Tracking time and chunking of the daily work schedule. Some hall directors explained that their schedules are more "chunked," a term that refers to blocks of time working and blocks of time not working during a single workday. Bobby referred to his schedule being "like a checkerboard on their calendar; it's not eight to five." Amy provided more detailed insight into her "chunked" schedule as a result of being an hourly employee:

It mandates me to just have to work in small blocks. I have to work 10-4 pm and then I have to take a break for two hours and then...I have a meeting from 6-8 pm and then I break...and then I have a meeting from 9-11 pm. That's just a random day.

Whereas before I could maybe just work that entire time and get a bunch done and then take a longer afternoon or a longer night completely off. Now I feel like I'm in choppy segments and so I may have two hours off, but what can I do in that two hours?

Amy's schedule demonstrates the preplanning that other hall directors described as becoming a necessary reality for them. Their work on a daily and weekly basis has to be planned out, in advance, in ways that exceed what is required of many salaried hall directors, as Hillary explained:

So, I'm working 10 hours on Wednesday so I have to take the two hours off. So that was really weird. Then, you throw duty in...we counted duty as four hours, so then, you lose four hours every week just for holding a [duty] phone. Just for being on call. That's just crazy. It was a lot.

Planning ahead is not as straightforward as one might hope, as Bobby explained in commenting about the uncertainty of how much time to devote to certain tasks:

Am I spending 20 hours a week on supervision when I could be accomplishing all those things in 10 hours or eight hours, you know? It's looking at where is the unnecessary time going in, the time that isn't accomplishing more than what it needs to.

Planning ahead does not always work out successfully and it can be as much guesswork as it is anything else, plus it takes time to plan ahead.

Pre-planning how to spend one's 40 hours each week takes time and seems to grate on the nerves of some hall directors, as Amy described:

We talk a lot about our hours. We have a lot of discussion about what we can do and what can't [be done] because of our time constraints. You can't give everybody overtime or just [have them] work as much as they want.

Kat added:

I think sometimes we use up too much of the 40 hours that we have talking about how much time we do or don't have that I don't think sometimes my hours are used super effectively.

The time it takes to manage a weekly work-schedule comes at a cost to the time hall directors have to perform. Additionally, the processes that hall directors must go through to request overtime and to explain their work-schedule to their supervisors makes tracking time important, but also a time-intensive task, as explained by Erin:

I know I can get overtime but then with budget constraints, with everything going on where it's like, well, you have to [ask]...before I can get overtime. You have to go through the process of getting it approved ahead of time.

Not only does prior approval to get overtime require a clearly established workweek schedule that can be communicated to a supervisor, which takes time to create, hall directors also must know ahead of time if they need overtime on a given week, which does not account for the emergent nature of some of their responsibilities. So, hall directors manage their daily and weekly work schedules as best as they are able, and in so doing, they start to establish priorities for themselves within their work schedules each week.

Administration becomes the priority. Hall directors reported that prioritizing the aspects of their job descriptions that they felt were being monitored by their supervisors impacts their work performance and others within their organization, as Brianna, a first-year hall director, explained:

The administrative things like budgets or payroll or conduct, those are very concrete things that have deadlines and get sent off to other people, and so those are always the things that get done first.

Many of the hall directors commented that administrative tasks and keeping up with the expected timelines for their student conduct meetings and conduct outcome letters were prioritized within their 40-hour workweek because they understood that those were important priorities. Amy described how this decision to focus on administration is rationalized internally, even though there is a preference to spend more time directly with students:

It's hard to say...I didn't get this done on time because I went to three programs last night because it seems [the programs] could be something that could be pushed off more than a hard deadline for something administrative.

Hillary's perspective on why administration is prioritized is a bit different, but the result is the same, administration over student interaction:

If there are projects or administrative work that's going to affect another person's job, I'm going to get that stuff done first because they can manage their own schedule. If they are just sitting there in their office...waiting for me to get my stuff done, that's not a good use...for their 40 hours either.

Brian indicated he had been given feedback to reprioritize student conduct after a few weeks where that aspect of the job was a secondary priority for him:

I prioritized community development pretty early on and was told, "Hey, you haven't done this yet." And I said, "You're right. It hasn't been a priority." And I was told, "No, this needs to be."

Kat commented on administrating conduct and why that becomes a priority:

Some of its administrative stuff that we have to get done, conduct, that usually has a more solid timeline that's established.

I think sometimes the community development relationships with students gets cut more 'cause it's not easier, but that stuff can get cut more than some of the administrative stuff that has to get done.

Administration becomes the priority because others in the organization are waiting for that information and, especially in terms of adjudicating student conduct, there is a process for hall directors to follow that is connected to timelines.

A structured conduct process, with strict timelines, becomes the priority, although that comes at a cost to other community development initiatives that hall directors are recognizing. There are other aspects of administration, as referenced by Kat, that are also prioritized over student interaction:

When I had [to write] my staff evaluations, and that stuff felt like [it] had a deadline that was a departmental expectation for the most part. Those were times I had to just get it done...when I maybe didn't go to any programs or floor dinners or anything those weeks, so I could get that stuff done.

While administration is prioritized, hall directors suggested that student interaction is then deprioritized. There is a sense that there is a true loss in time hall directors are devoting to student interaction. Hall directors spoke to other priorities, outside of administration, that also resulted in student contact being deprioritized.

Other priorities. These other priorities included crisis response (including after-hours duty/on-call) and one of the most passionately referenced priorities by hall directors: staff supervision. Bobby spoke about the role hall director's play in crisis as a clear priority:

Crisis...response is an important piece. I think having a role that serves as a knowledge base and as a student support role in those crisis situations [is important]. I'm thinking of being on duty. I think it's important to have somebody that works for the university in those situations that can help ambulance and police officers...I think it's important to have somebody in a role that can see a student in crisis during those situations. A student that needs support in those situations and being physically there to help them. I think that's something that's very important. I think it's easy for me to emphasize that over some of the other things we do.

Responding to these crises is seen as something that is more valued of hall directors once they become hourly, as Lindsey suggested:

I feel like duty is still something that has to be accomplished. I just feel like this year I was compensated more for being on duty versus in my previous role...

Cindy described how student crisis can also impact the workweek schedule of multiple staff members, which demonstrates the high priority put on this function of a hall director's job responsibilities:

[If] you have a super intense student situation that's happening up in your building, it has the capacity to kind of blow up other people's weeks, if your work has to be reallocated or redistributed in the time sensitive environment.

Having this level of support to continue to manage student crisis when the workweek schedule for hall directors is limited to a 40-hour workweek means not only do other priorities shift, potentially to others in the department, but the staff who are responding can make this crisis a singular focus and do so within the context of working a schedule that is manageable. Kristel spoke to the positive impact on a hall director's energy level during weeks with student crisis:

I think being hourly is also beneficial because when things like duty come up, or there's a student who's in crisis, or there's a community advisor who's in crisis, or things with the building just go totally awry, I have a little bit more mental energy and capacity...[due to] having...limits.

Student crisis and response, including the role that hall directors often play with regards to these types of issues while serving in an on-duty or on-call capacity, are a clear and unquestioned priority for many hall directors who manage a limited 40-hour workweek schedule. This is not the only unquestioned priority, as hall directors spoke passionately about their role as supervisors.

Supervising student staff is a top-tier priority for hall directors, which remains true for hourly hall directors. What is different is because supervision is a top-level priority, something lower on the list of priorities falls off the list of what a hall director can accomplish each week. Yet a focus on supervision also gives hall director influence over community development, which is an area hall directors have reduced direct impact within, as Jenny said:

Supervision is super important to me...and the connections that I make with my staff. I know there are people that have 30-minute one-on-ones with their staff. I'm not willing to give up my hour with them...because a lot of times they don't go an hour, but I want to give them that space to utilize the time as needed because sometimes they have a lot of stuff going on, on their floor and they need to talk about it. Or sometimes they got a bad grade on a test and they need to talk about it. I like to be a resource for them because their job is super hard too.

Bobby may have a more muted response, but still demonstrates that supervision is a priority:

I think with my supervision style, I do have slightly more...I don't want to say the word professional, but my supervision style is very work-oriented and I separate my personal and professional lives pretty intentionally. So, I think supervision is something that I do pretty well within 40 hours. I don't really get energized by spending extra time getting to know student staff. What I do like to do is make sure they feel supported within their role, that's something I do pretty intentionally.

Jenny and Bobby offered insight into how different people with different work styles and motivations still prioritize supervision. The impact of crisis response, being on duty or on-call, and spending time in supervision-related activities impacts other aspects of a hall director's job responsibilities, given hourly hall directors are limited to a 40-hour workweek. As hourly employees and their supervisors need to acknowledge, everything cannot be a priority with only 40 hours a week to work.

Informal contact and visibility with students gets deprioritized. Brianna described reluctance in giving up on her more informal connections and visibility with students:

I would love to be on the floors more, visiting with students, going to programs, and those micro events that pop up. But it's either one of those things where... I'm just all out of time...those softer side of things don't get developed quite as much.

Bobby connected reduced visibility as a result of his focus on other priorities:

What I don't do well in terms of a 40-hour week is visibility/community development. When there are things that pile up like those I talked about: the crisis...being on duty, [and] student issues. As those things pop up, I take away from community development, right? Because even though that's a larger part of our job, it's also something that's less critical in certain times of the year. Big picture, it's critical for us.

Megan simply asked, “How can you accomplish community bonding within the 40 hours?”

With some reluctance and even an understanding that what is being cut may not fit into “big picture” goals, hall directors are deprioritizing direct contact with students that does not fall under the umbrella of student conduct. Jenny spoke to having an expectation from her supervisor to invest in a community development initiative, but that goal was not accomplished:

I had a goal. We have this thing called President’s Council, and it’s where all of the floor presidents come together...and I had no time for that. None. Because, I, one, didn’t make it a priority, but two, because I didn’t have time for these additional meetings, plus the prep time outside of that...and so, that was an expectation that I just wasn’t able to meet this year; because, one, I was learning the new position, but additionally, I just didn’t...I didn’t have time.

Not having time to do aspects of the job that are expected of them creates opportunities for further deprioritization when mandated to work within a 40-hour workweek. It also can impact how hall directors feel about what they are accomplishing with students.

Other non-priorities. Beyond initiatives to develop community that position the hall director to directly build relationships with students being deprioritized, there are aspects of what salaried hall directors are likely accomplishing that become non-priorities too. Other deprioritized tasks named by hall directors included: involvement in student leadership, investment in professional development opportunities, reduced time mentoring student staff, and connecting with colleagues across campus.

In describing efforts to invest in hall government/leadership advising, Cindy said that this was being deprioritized “100%,” and said further, “I think my role in community council in our building and large-scale programming decreased.” Bobby pointed to his involvement in professional development being impacted by working as an hourly hall director:

If there's an organization I'm a part of, or a presentation that I was working on for a conference that's coming up, those are the things that get shoved off our plate. Things that aren't directly related to our institution, but could be related to our position. Those are also things that tend to be deprioritized.

Not only is there an impact on the professional development of hall directors, but their available time to develop and mentor their student staff is also impacted, as Kat shared: "I feel like there were some weeks where I had to cut my staff meetings from an hour and a half to an hour 'cause I had to use a half an hour to finish up a project."

Kat spoke to reducing one-on-one time to mentor staff more frequently. Along with reduced time for professional development, and reduced time offering mentorship to staff members, there is also reduced time to invest in fostering professional relationships with campus partners, as Brian described:

Going through grad school I knew student affairs specifically to be a very social field where it's okay for you to walk across campus to talk to your colleague...and within a salaried workweek they can do that...so I definitely see that as being impacted where I've never gotten coffee with a random colleague just to catch up because I don't have time to do that. I work when I work.

Hall directors are more aware of their time on task and the hours they need to be working, and they are clearly deprioritizing tasks that salaried hall directors may not consider limiting to the degree that hourly hall directors are limiting. Hall directors who must adjust their schedules to fit within a 40-hour workweek are impacting their overall performance in fulfilling their job duties; which leads to the second research question guiding this study.

Research Question Two: How Does Changing Hall Directors to Hourly Employment Status Impact Their Work Performance?

Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of work performance theorizes that work performance is impacted by the intersection of the following three elements: willingness,

opportunity, and capacity. To understand how changing hall directors to hourly employment status impacts their work performance, examining the narratives provided by the participants of this study through the lens of each component of Blumberg and Pringle's model of worker performance should suggest an answer.

Willingness. The willingness to perform, are the elements of the job and the context within which the job is positioned that have emotional characteristics to them. How favorable are the job characteristics or the context the job is performed in? The answer suggests an emotional response to said circumstances. As the narratives of each hall director were analyzed, codes and themes that connected to an emotional characteristic fall under the category of willingness within Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) worker performance model. The following aspects of a hall director's willingness to perform under the mandate of being hourly will be examined, including: the hall director's initial reaction to the transitioning to hourly status, the hall director's preference to be hourly or salaried, the desire to have a position that supports a positive work-life balance, the opportunity to benefit from overtime compensation, a feeling that one is losing control over their work schedule and ability to establish priorities, and a willingness to comply with the 40-hour workweek mandate. First, insight into the ways hall directors initially responded to learning that their position would be classified as hourly will be offered.

Initial reactions to the transition to hourly employment status. Initial reactions are categorized using some of the words the hall directors shared, including: cynicism, anxiety, anger, and excitement. However, Cindy's initial cynicism developed into something more positive:

There's always how we talk about our work, and then what realistically happens, and so I was very cynical on what that really would mean. Okay, I cannot work [over] 40 hours a

week now, or what does it mean if I work over? Are you going to know? Are you going to ask me to do it anyway? And so I think I sort of postponed that because I'm like, "I'm just going to wait and see how this plays out." I think in a lot of ways it can be a positive change...where it empowers employees to say, "I have 40 hours, what you're asking me to do doesn't seem possible in 40 hours. So here are your options: You have to pay me more, we have to chalk out my workload, or you have to provide me with more training for me to be able to do this work more efficiently."

Beyond describing her initial cynicism and commitment to "withhold judgment," Cindy also shared her perspective on the reactions of her peers:

My coworkers had a lot of anger. Well, half of them had a lot of anger, and half of them had a lot of excitement, and I think those two parties are kind of the people who were angriest about it, were the people who already maybe felt overworked or that there was an inequality in how time was spent and work was divided...[Others], instead of looking for solutions, they were using this moment as a way to politically leverage what other baggage they had within their role, or within their supervisor relationship, to force direction on other decisions that were unrelated...

While some may have been angry others may have seen an opportunity to improve their work conditions. Kristel initially expressed anxiety, which also developed into something positive:

I would've anticipated a little more anxiety and stress from hall directors overall about doing their job, fulfilling your job description in 40 hours. There really is less anxiety and stress...than I would've anticipated.

Then there's just been an ease I think, and I don't know if I'm surprised by this or not, I just recognize it as something that I'm noticing, that hall directors have, quickly, within a year, just accepted there are things they can't do and they're letting go of that.

Overall, the initial reactions, which most could be categorized as negative, relatively quickly turned positive. This positive perspective on being hourly contributed to an improved willingness to do the job. The initial reaction by hall directors was impacted by the quality and approach taken to communicate with hall directors that their positions would be transitioning from salaried to hourly.

Quality communication during the transition impacts how transition unfolds. Most of the departmental leaders at the majority of the institutions in which the participants of this study

belonged, spoke to ongoing communication about the transition to hourly employment status for hall directors for many months prior to the transition happening and throughout the year after the transition. These interviews with hourly hall directors took place the summer after the first academic year that hall directors were hourly. One institution's emphasis on discussing the impact on hall directors deviated from ongoing open dialogue, as Kristel explained:

We don't really have a lot of open discussion about it as a team of what [being hourly] means. I think, at the same time, there's only one hall director who came in under that old guard expectation of salaried. The rest...have all come in from this hourly concept, so I think it's also very natural and easy for us to frame it in that context.

Brianna, a hall director at this same institution, admitted to confusion about what it meant for her to be hourly, and said she was not even sure she was hourly until she asked her peers. When asked about where information had been coming about her being hourly, Brianna indicated more information came from her union than from her supervisor, and even then that information was limited to her role being on-call/on-duty:

See, the only things I see is when it comes to the duty, because something about duty recently is changing now in the way that they're classifying what it means to be on call...I'm not really sure what that's going to look like, but that's a discussion, the current way we're doing it is not in line with what the future's looking like, but if we switch to whatever it is that it's supposed to be, it's a budgetary issue that they can't really pay us...the way that you maybe are supposed to be paying on call, I don't know.

Brianna's confusion by her status as an hourly employee, and the limited information she has, suggests that more ongoing communication that clarifies what is mandated and involves the hall directors in exploring this impact, creates a work-environment that more successfully complies with the mandate. Hall directors at other institutions described more constant communication.

At most of the institutions in the Minnesota State University System returning hall directors had been involved in conversations leading up to the transition, during a time when

their shift to hourly was a possibility, but not a certainty. Then, upon it becoming a certainty, they had already started to consider the impact on their work. As Amy, who had experienced the transition from build-up through implementation said, “I think I felt we had just talked about it so much that this is going to be happening” that she did not specifically recall the exact moment she learned she would become hourly, as it was rather anticlimactic given the build-up. Hall directors at one institution who were recently hired and came into the job with it being hourly had a more vivid recollection of being informed on one of their first days on the job, and spoke to the ongoing conversations that followed.

Depending on when a hall director was hired they may not have known the position would have been hourly until they arrived to campus to start their new role. As hall directors were hired later in the transition they knew the position they were interviewing for would be hourly instead of salaried. Hillary described her reaction to learning about the transition upon arrival to campus:

So, when I applied and when I accepted, it was still salary. And I didn't know that it was hourly until...either the first or second day... We sat down with our associate director and he kind of laid it all out for us.

Hillary went on to describe that experience:

That was kind of reassuring...I came in with a cohort...so all of us were like: “How are we supposed to do this job in 40 hours?” And most of us came from grad school and we worked more than our allotted time and things like that. It was very reassuring that...we'll figure it out, everyone's going through this, even returning hall directors. It's going to be okay. It was very reassuring.

This open dialogue right from the start positively impacted the willingness of Hillary to accept the change and move forward. Relatedly, Kat shared:

They talked about what [being hourly] meant in terms of our daily work and how you would be doing things like duty and other things. A lot of it has been continual conversations throughout the year.

Brian spoke to the conversations that occurred beyond the initial one:

Talking about my work in a 40-hour week was something that was a continual conversation piece in my role throughout the year both with me and my immediate supervisor...and my department.

These ongoing conversations with incoming hall directors improved their willingness to continue to adapt to the new context of being a hall director. Lastly, Erin, a hall director at a different institution than those above, talked about a variety of places that communication continued to come from throughout the transition, communication that addressed aspects of the hall director role:

I think I learned through...the union about this coming up and how that would affect the members...and then [human resources] also communicated how or what their interpretations of it was...so they had a few meetings with...some of the directors of the areas that would affect those employees to try to answer questions and kind of come up with a game plan on how to prepare for this and try to make it a smooth transition. So, like I said, there was communication from the union, and HR and then my supervisor...

The frequency of opportunities for hall directors to discuss the transition and then discuss how to approach their job contributed to more positive experiences for the hall directors in being able to meet the mandate and perform in their role, all of which contribute to one's willingness to perform while working through a changing work situation.

While initial conversations were important for a successful implementation, more recent conversations proved to also improve the willingness of hall directors to perform in an hourly employment context. As Brian shared:

I can think about recently we did an exercise as a department to look at, what are the priorities of our position as a hall director specifically within a 40-hour week context to help the department better understand what we have had to prioritize now that we are 40

hours, and also for us to understand what the department would sometimes wish we would prioritize.

Willingness to perform in ways that align with the mandate on hourly employees is impacted by inclusive initial conversations with impacted hall directors and ongoing conversations to assess work performance and continue to modify priorities as everyone in the organization gains more experience with hall directors being hourly employees. As the year unfolded, so did the perspective of hourly employment status being preferred or not preferred by the hall directors.

Hourly versus salaried preference. There are a higher number of participants who preferred being a hall director when the position was mandated as hourly versus salaried, as shown in Table 3. With that said, the willingness to perform the job, even as hourly, is more nuanced than simple preference, as hall directors who preferred salaried commented that context matters when asked if they would accept another hourly hall director type job.

Table 3

Preference: Hourly vs. salaried

| Employment Status: | Hourly | Neutral | Salaried |
|--------------------|--------|---------|----------|
| Totals: | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| Percentage: | 61.5% | 15.4 % | 23.1% |

Hall directors who preferred a salaried position commented on being constrained within the role, as described by Erin:

When I was salaried, it gave me more freedom to do what I like to do [which] is talk to students versus having to worry, “Okay, hold on. How many hours do I have left? I want to make sure I plan for this.”

Beyond being constrained, Brianna shared a belief that hall directors were becoming less willing to spend time with students:

I started out in a place where there were no boundaries, you worked the best you could and tried to build your relationships and you weren’t clocking your hours. I think the clocking your hours makes you a little bit more critical of your time and that to me, isn’t a positive thing that’s come out of it because people are less generous then, of their time...because they know this could mean that I’m late on a deadline for something else which then puts me in a bad place...

While some may not willingly give of their time to connect with students once they are in an hourly position, another view from Lindsay, who preferred being salaried, is that there simply is not enough time to do the job, which impacts her willingness to be an hourly hall director:

To me it hasn’t been the greatest experience being an hourly employee ‘cause I often feel like I have to rush to do things or I can only be in my office at a certain time.... “If I do this with a resident will it look like work?”

The time, effort, and ability to manage one’s workweek schedule takes freedom away from hall directors giving of their time to perform the job in the way they see fit. Individual preferences and not previous experience weigh into whether a hall director prefers being salaried or hourly; a conclusion drawn given the varying experience levels in each group of hall directors. Some preferred being hourly (the majority group) and others preferred being salaried (the minority group).

For hall directors who preferred being hourly their comments focused mostly on work-life balance. Kristel explained how being hourly assists her in developing work-life balance, even though she felt she came into the role with solid time management skills:

I feel like being a salaried employee would've been very detrimental. I'm very good at priority management and time management, but when the work is never done and especially in this environment, not being able to fully disengage 100%...I feel like being a salaried employee would have, I just really would not have been able to shut that off.

It helps set everybody up for success if you don't have this expectation that you work until the work is done, because the work is never done in this type of position.

When hall directors work in an organization that follows the 40-hour workweek mandate strictly, as the FLSA mandates, even hall directors who are high performing and driven to do a good job see the value in having a clear standard related to hours they need to commit to the job. Other hall directors, who grew to like the position for similar reasons, came to appreciate the 40-hour-per-week mandate so much they became reluctant to search for salaried residential life positions in the future; as Kat shared:

I think it provided more of a balance...definitely took me a while to get there 'cause there was probably a bit at the beginning of the fall semester when I wished I had more time and wasn't a super big fan of being hourly, but now I don't think that I would go back. I don't think I would if I were to change jobs, I don't think I would go back to a salaried hall director position.

Willingness to be a hall director is clearly positive when hall directors remain in the position for extended periods of time and desire to find similar positions that are also hourly. This is a significant revelation; that job seekers may prefer hourly residential life roles.

The fact that over half of the hall directors preferred being hourly, and almost three-quarters of them if you consider the hall directors who were more neutral about their preference saw the hourly mandate as positive, one can conclude that willingness to perform is positively impacted for most hall directors in an hourly position.

Brian spoke directly about willingness, and said: "Being an hourly hall director makes me more willing to stay in the role longer....". Brian, who was especially enthusiastic about being

hourly, hit on a number of reasons for that preference that came up throughout the interviews with those who preferred or took a more neutral stance on being hourly, and said:

[I] absolutely do not want to go to another res life position, live-on, at salaried. Not something I'm looking for, because I've gotten a taste of this life and it's absolutely great, and I want to keep this balance, and I appreciate that I'm paid... The big piece is that I'm paid for the work that I do, that I do have the opportunity for overtime, and I'm given it here and there, and I like the fact that yeah, you're working hard right now we're going to compensate you for that. I absolutely love that, and so if I look for another res life live-on position the goal is that it'll be similar to this position where I am hourly... In any position I ever take [that is] salaried, the practice of being 40 hours is something that I would like to hold onto.

The willingness to perform the duties of the hall director position, for most hall directors who participated in this study, is positively impacted by their hourly employment status. This isn't universally true, as some hall directors mentioned learning disabilities, reduced ability to spend time with students, and increased levels of anxiety related to working hourly. However, even hall directors who prefer being salaried were able to speak to some positive aspects that made them willing to perform, the most prominent aspect being improved work-life balance.

Work-life balance is a satisfier. Ten of the thirteen participants in this study spoke at length about the value of work-life balance being a satisfier in working as an hourly employee. Only two hourly hall directors commented that they did not benefit from having work-life balance, as Lindsay said, "This really isn't a huge benefit because I would go home and be stressed that I didn't complete all these things or this to do list is really...long." While work-life balance was not the unanimous response, it was the most common and most often referenced benefit of hall directors being mandated to a 40-hour workweek.

While salaried hall directors could strive to limit their workweek to 40 hours, hourly hall directors faced a mandate, especially at institutions that communicated strict adherence to the 40-hour workweek. Pam commented on being accountable to a strict 40-hour workweek:

Just being conscious of how much time I'm spending in the office, because I know that if I was salaried, I would be in the office, or working, doing something work-related, much more than 40 hours a week...it keeps me accountable for what I'm doing and how much time I'm spending on stuff.

Multiple hall directors spoke to being warned about burnout by their supervisors, mentors, and professors while they were in student affairs graduate programs, so taking an hourly hall director position that mandates a 40-hour workweek was a positive, yet unexpected development in their careers; as Hillary shared:

I thought I was going to be burnt out after my first year. I think a lot of people, especially if you are a graduate assistant in housing, are told that. You're expecting that you are going to get really tired. You're going to work 50 to 60-hour weeks. I was that grad student that did work 30 instead of 20. I remember my previous supervisor telling me, "You need to stick to your 40 or 50 and not go over that."

Brian added:

I went through grad school expecting to be salaried in my first role, so as I went through my program, and professionals talked to us, whether they be professionals practicing or professors, we talked a lot about work-life balance, and the need for that to be a priority as a salaried employee, because of the potential for burnout in the field; knowing that burnout among student affairs professionals tends to be high in the first several years.

As hall directors began to recognize that they were having a professional experience in student affairs that was breaking away from the long hours they were being prepared for, some, such as Hillary, started to consider what that meant for future employment in student affairs:

I've talked to colleagues at other institutions and they're like, "You're going to be hard-pressed to find that. If you voice that in interviews, they might not hire you because they want to work people 50-60 hours." I'm like, "Well, good. If they don't want to hire me because of that then I don't want to work there."

Hillary suggested that departments with hourly positions might have an easier time recruiting staff in the future.

There is also a suggestion here that finding future hourly positions may be difficult for hall directors now accustomed to working within a 40-hour mandate. Another potential recruitment benefit of being an hourly hall director, beyond the promotion of work-life balance, is to promote opportunities to earn additional compensation through working overtime. Both work-life balance and overtime earning potential may positively impact a hall director's willingness to perform in the job.

Opportunity to benefit from overtime compensation. Hall directors repeatedly named the following as opportunities where they received overtime in order to fulfill their job responsibilities: responding to emergencies and student crisis, working on special weekends (such as homecoming), putting in extra hours during student staff training, working extra time during the opening and closing of the residence halls, interviewing students during student staff selection, taking on additional duties or projects (sometimes as the result of staff vacancies), and also when required to travel for extended periods of time (example: placement exchanges). Amy had many of these experiences, and shared:

I have been offered overtime for certain busier times such as training, like CA training...training for co-advising RHA, which was an additional assignment, then for attending a conference with students as their advisor.

Each of these opportunities to get additional compensation had a positive impact on those hall directors, as reflected by Megan's statement:

I think sometimes when we talk about...getting paid for what you've been working is nice because we work a lot of hours sometimes, and...again, I think of move-in, and the fact that compensation is nice, or at least comp time or something is nice to get back in the future.

Being paid to do the work, a statement that arose on multiple occasions, suggests an increased willingness to put in the extra time to perform one's tasks knowing that compensation, either monetarily or in additional time off, would benefit the hall director.

However, not all aspects of being an hourly employee led to overtime or led to circumstances that would improve the willingness of hall directors to perform. Hall directors described routine weeks during the course of the year where, despite a personal need, overtime would be unlikely to be granted if the hall director would request it (and most chose not to make the request). Erin described her thought process on these routine/average weeks where overtime would not be available:

When there's some weeks there's not training going on, there was no real medical emergencies going, it's just that there's a lot of things happening, like a lot of student questions or just...you know, it's just a busy week. Could I have planned better to get it done in a shorter amount of time...that is when they...usually denied overtime. I try not to abuse the system...so maybe is it something like.... "Should this have gotten done this week? Yes. But can it be pushed back to next week?" So...it's trying to be better [at] organizing and time management to get some things done.

While hall directors make every effort to be reasonable with overtime requests, knowing that there is a financial impact, and in some cases a department does not have the resources to pay overtime, hall directors must manage the impact of not having enough time in a workweek to complete the responsibilities before them; as Kat described:

There were some days where I was like, "If I had even a half an hour, an hour more, I could get this project done, but now, I have to wait." Some things that could've gotten done that day ended up taking another few days 'cause I had to squeeze it into other places.

Hall directors are finding that they must make choices about where they spend their time, especially during routine weeks when overtime is not an acceptable option due to priorities both

within and outside of their control. When priorities are established outside the control of the hall director, willingness to be in an hourly role may be negatively impacted.

Loss of control over work-schedule and priorities. Comments related to this theme have a negative impact on willingness to perform. While concerns over loss of control over work-schedule priorities was not commented on overwhelmingly, a couple participants made passionate cases for their reduced control over their schedule due to being hourly, as Erin explained, a hall director's freedom to manage their schedule impacts not just a sense of personal control one has, but also impacts work performance:

Kind of the freedom...how I personally would like to operate, but also at the same time, with that [lack of] freedom does put constraints on timeliness of when things can get done, thus, later down the chain, impacts a bunch of other people, unintentionally.

Megan felt strongly about a professional loss of control over how she spent time with students and the mixed message she received about the level of priority this is by her supervisor and concluded: "I'd rather be salaried... [and have] more control over my hours." As this statement suggests, for a small number of hall directors who expect more professional autonomy to perform, losing that level of control over one's schedule may adversely impact their willingness to continue in the hall director role. Alternatively, some hall directors spoke to disregarding the mandate to perform within a 40-hour workweek.

Willingness to comply with the 40-hour workweek mandate. Hall directors, either through personal choice or a lack of emphasis on the mandated 40-hour workweek for hourly employees by their supervisors, disregarded their status as hourly employees in order to perform as they saw fit.

Brianna shared that there is a need to work beyond 40 hours in order to keep ahead of the work. As long as Brianna only reports 40 hours on her timesheet, Brianna believed that her supervisor knew what was occurring and was not concerned given the preference by both to get the job done. Megan suggested that for some hall directors, there is both over-reporting and under-reporting of hours occurring; she shared:

I still feel like there's under reporting, or even not reporting enough. So I know peers who constantly are frazzled in the morning, and they're like, "Ah, I read my email at midnight, and I've done this" And...I know that's still a small instance, but I also know people who will stay up really late and work on maybe something for their committee, or will come in after hours and work, and say, "Oh, it's not after hours. I'm just finishing up some work that I'm just going to flex in the morning." And they don't end up flexing their time. And so, I think it's a little of both: of just not reporting the time that they've actually been working or over reporting it.

In some ways a loose-compliance, individually or through a lack of supervisor oversight, may increase one's willingness to work in an hourly position. Although an argument could be made as to whether the position is legitimately hourly at that point, and therefore may fall outside the scope of examining the impact of this hourly employee's work performance.

An employee's work performance is improved when the context of the job creates more willingness to perform by individual hall directors. That context suggests that most (but not all) hall directors have increased willingness to perform within an hourly context. The opportunity a hall director has to perform will be examined next.

Opportunity. According to Blumberg and Pringle (1982) workers need to be in an environment that supports their opportunity to complete the job tasks expected of them. For hall directors who found the context of their positions changing from salaried positions that offered an unlimited amount of time to perform their responsibilities, to an hourly position where the FLSA mandates hourly workers be paid overtime for work beyond 40 hours a week, this

transition reduced the opportunity for hall directors to have an unlimited amount of time to fulfill their job responsibilities. Initial reactions to being adjusted to hourly employment status showcased how hall directors experienced their opportunity to perform becoming more limited, even if a hall director had a preference for a more limited job.

Initial concern about a lack of available work hours. Throughout the institutions represented in this study, hall directors, whether they ended up preferring their hourly work status, initially believed that the amount of work they could accomplish would be impacted by shifting to hourly status. Hillary shared her perspective on how she and her peers first reacted:

I came in with a cohort, four other people, so there were five of us total. And the four of us, I believe, had worked in residential life. So all of us were like, “How are we supposed to do this job in 40 hours?” And most of us came from grad school and we worked more than our allotted time...

Erin, a hall director at a different institution, shared a similar idea; the opportunity to perform was limited by the mandated 40-hour workweek:

Well, [the hall director role] isn't a 40-hour-a-week job, so to try to make something that isn't a 40-hour-a-week job into one is definitely challenging. I mean I try my best to make it fall into all the guidelines people want but in the gist of it, it's not a 40-hour workweek job. It is a live-in job for a purpose...being a live-in position, it's hard to define those cutoffs...

An initial reaction by hall directors transitioning to hourly status is disbelief that the job responsibilities can be fulfilled in a 40-hour workweek.

Even for Hillary, a new hall director who viewed the limitations of working within a 40-hour workweek as positive (for work-life balance reasons), acknowledged the opportunity to perform the duties of the job was impacted: “I find it nice but it was also challenging. I was expecting myself to work 45 to 50 hours a week so then when you are losing 10 hours you think you are losing part of your job.” While all hall directors seemed to acknowledge that a hall

director who works within a 40-hour workweek has limitations upon their performance, each university represented in this study established a focus on emphasizing the 40-hour workweek to varying degrees, this variation impacts opportunity to perform.

Emphasis on the 40-hour workweek. The opportunity to perform is impacted by the emphasis on the FLSA mandated 40-hour workweek. This can be broken into two categories: (1) Department leaders (supervisors) emphasizing that hourly hall directors are limited to a 40-hour workweek otherwise they are due overtime compensation. (2) Individual hall directors making a personal choice to maintain the 40-hour workweek (or request overtime). Furthermore, each of those two categories (supervisors/individual hall director) can also get subdivided into promoting a: (a) strict adherence (b) loose adherence to the mandated 40-hour workweek. Opportunity to perform is impacted by the context of the supervisor's and the individual hall director's emphasis on maintaining this workweek standard.

Amy commented on her belief that her department has a strict focus on the 40-hour mandate:

We talk a lot about our hours. We have a lot of discussion about what we can do and what we can't do because of our time constraints. You can't give everybody overtime...[to] work as much as they want.

In this case, there is a collective discussion on job duties that will not be a priority given a focus on upholding the 40-hour mandate. The hall director's opportunity to perform is negatively impacted by a departmental adherence to the 40-hour workweek schedule. The opposite is true at another university where Cindy shared that the focus is more on getting the job done than monitoring the time hall directors spend doing that work:

Honestly...because there is a lot of space for us to keep working the way we were working if we wanted to. I don't think anyone is necessarily checking when we leave the

office. I mean, we're reporting our hours, and you're asked to do that, but at the end of the day if I'm in my office until 7:00 pm at night, my staff would know, but...I don't feel like if I went over hours I would be in trouble.

Cindy went on to share: "I think at the end of the day, the answer is 'Well we got to get it done, so how is it going to happen,' more than it is 'What do we stop doing?'" Given that supervisors are not monitoring time reporting, or recording all time actually worked, as Brianna, another hall director at this intuition shared, "our duty schedule, which we aren't recording, so you often work more than a strict 40-hour workweek," there is an increased opportunity by hall directors that work in this environment to perform.

It is not just departmental standards and the supervisor's focus on strictly or loosely adhering to the 40-hour workweek that impacts the opportunity for hall directors to perform, individual hall directors also make personal choices to adhere to the mandated 40-hour workweek strictly or loosely.

Brian described how he felt like he was making a choice to strictly adhere to a 40-hour workweek knowing that peers made different choices:

I think there are other hall directors on campus that probably attend events without being paid for it, and it has been my choice not to do that because I don't have to.

Brian is choosing to be in compliance with a mandated 40-hour workweek, yet other hall directors decide to work beyond those limits so they can fulfill more of the job duties that they feel are necessary. Megan talked about pressure to be accountable to fulfilling job expectations and doing it within a 40-hour workweek. Megan felt that was not possible:

I had two committees kind of bumping heads at the same time, and so when I asked: "What happens if I go past my 40 hours? What does that look like? Can I ask for overtime?" When I didn't appropriately plan it out that was stated to me that I could've had a work-based...work-performance...conversation. That made me realize that I have to fudge my hours a little bit, and so when I should've got overtime for going over 40

hours, I was reprimanded for asking for that...so I just, I lied about my hours. So, it's hard when we have these rules in place...but when sometimes there's no way for you to stay under 40, it's still frowned upon to go over.

Similarly, other hall directors speak matter-of-fact about going to events with students, and doing so without recording that as time worked, as Brianna said:

For me to get face-time with students it needs to be a lot more thoughtful and setting aside that time to be in an accessible space for them to see me. So, although there's these things in the evening that are not required, it's important to be going to those. But I'm not going to be logging those as flex time because now it's personal time. But I was like this is not personal time because if this wasn't my job, I wouldn't be doing that.

So, there are a number of elements that create or take away from the opportunity that hourly hall directors have to perform, elements within and outside the control of individual hall directors whose job has been impacted by a transition to a 40-hour workweek. Beyond a strict or loose view of the 40-hour workweek mandate, how hall directors and their supervisors define work also impacts one's opportunity to perform their job duties.

Defining work. In order to perform at a high level a hall director needs to understand how their supervisor is defining their work. Without an understanding of what the work is, hall directors are not in a conducive work environment through which they can take advantage of their opportunity to perform. Opportunities for hall directors to perform are numerous given their close proximity to students on a daily basis, a proximity that affords hall directors ample opportunities to engage with students in ways that promote their academic and personal success. An interesting result of asking hourly hall directors about their experience is a consistent question posed by hall directors on what is and is not considered work. As Amy, who had been a salaried hall director just prior to becoming hourly, said: "I think there's more scrutiny over work that's being done. I think we talk about it a lot in our staff meetings. Everybody's having

conversations about it.” Amy’s statement suggested that the answer to the question, “What is work?” is not one that is as straightforward as one might first presume it to be. Without a clear idea of what work is, hourly hall directors are having their opportunities to engage with students both scrutinized and limited.

Residential life leaders who are leading the transition of their hall director teams appear to be scrutinizing the work performance of their hall directors in an attempt to define work, yet in the first year of employing hourly hall directors, a clear definition of work has yet to be established. Perhaps that definition will always be vaguely defined. Amy said this about the lack of clarity on defining work:

I think there’s still a lot of gray area in that. I think sometimes the hard part is we never really get a black or white answer it feels like. There are things that are very clearly work, like sitting in your office doing a task, doing an administrative task, it’s pretty clear that’s work. But if I’m walking out to my car and I run across a student and they decide to tell me something, is that work or is that an incidental...?

Contact with students is at the crux of the question about “What is work?” A closer examination of the thoughts that hall directors had on the topic of connecting with students and the question of defining that as work offers two concepts in which one appears to be more often defined as work, and the other as less often defined as work.

The first concept related to student interaction will be referred to as “connecting,” which is time that hall directors tend to record as time worked. The second concept of student interaction will be referred to as “socializing,” and tends to be time that more hall directors do not record as time worked. There is not a clear line differentiating these two concepts, which appears to be contributing to hall directors sensing a lack of clarity on defining work. However, there is a loose boundary between these two concepts that may provide guidance in offering a

definition of what is work and what is not; a need that is being expressed by hall directors who participated in this study.

Hall directors described activities and interactions with students that they were more likely to record as time worked, and therefore fall under the category of “connecting.” Megan spoke about a number of campus-wide activities for students that happen at the beginning of the academic year. These activities provide an opportunity to connect with students in ways that Megan defined as work. Megan explained her view of attendance at these campus-wide student activities:

We’re also going there and building relationship with CAs, with other community members, so if it’s people in your hall or in your area, and still using that connection piece...I feel like it’s the hall director doing their work. I mean, it is building community, which is awesome, ‘cause you’re doing that while you’re having fun, but you’re still doing your role.

Megan did acknowledge there are limitations to the opportunity she had to attend those campus-wide events while considering her involvement work-related:

If you’re out of hours, I think of kickoff or move-in when they have all the campus events going...movies and different speakers. It’s not that you’re necessarily expected to go to all of the events, but if you wanted to go to all of them you can go as a community member, which means you’re a part of the...campus. And so you’re not going there to do work or check up on students or build those relationships.

For Megan, who referenced instruction she had been given as influencing her perspective on this, there is an understanding that has evolved where similar activities that create opportunities to build rapport and connections with students may be defined as work, but at other times, are opportunities not available to hall directors with limited work hours, and therefore, attendance is not expected as part of the performance of their job responsibilities.

Hillary offered insight into another opportunity to interact with students that is time that she would record as time worked:

[Hall directors] going to the dining hall or sitting in the lobby or going to the student union and having coffee with students is all a part of student development. A lot of us go to school learning that these conversations that we have with...residents, and how we approach these intentional interactions with them...actually help them...grow as individuals.

Finally, Brian offered insight into a personal effort to define work that serves as a good basis to understand the opportunities hall directors can take advantage of and, when doing so, can consider those opportunities work:

I will have conversations [with students], and if it is talking about life, and it's me building a relationship with them as a staff member and saying, "Hey, this is how my classes are going," and it's school related, it's work related. Those are conversations that are work related to me.

Brian suggested that the content of the conversation, and the purpose the hall director has in having that conversation with the student is relevant to defining that student interaction as work. It is clear that activities involving interaction with students are not always being defined as work when hall directors engage in those activities with students.

When hall directors engage in opportunities to interact with students that they are not likely to record as time worked, those interactions are best conceptualized as "socialization with students." Socializing with students is conceptually different than connecting with students, because, often, these interactions are not being recorded as time worked by hall directors. Brian, who previously said the purpose behind the interaction matters, explained that after speaking with students there must be a decision made on categorizing the interaction as work or socialization. Brian is guided by the intent behind the conversation, and explained: "No, that person didn't come see me as the hall director, they came to see me, Brian [pseudonym]." For

Brian, the context of the conversation is important in defining work versus socialization with students.

Megan described socializing with students as time not recorded as work: “If we’re completely talking about a music festival...” then it’s clear to Megan that this is not work.

Megan explained how socializing became defined as something that hall directors do with students that is not work:

I also know that it’s been made, a couple comments here and there about how, you know, “You have to figure out good ways to balance you actually doing work, and you just socializing with students.” So the word socialize is often used. And so, it’s figuring out when does the socialization count as work and when doesn’t it?

Kat offered insight into how to differentiate between socialization (not work) and connecting (work):

Am I choosing to be here? Do I feel like I have to be here? If I felt like I had to be here because of my position, then it probably should be work. But, if I was just, “I don’t want to be in my apartment right now, so I’m going to sit in the lobby,” I don’t feel like that necessarily was [work]. Sometimes, I also walked into situations where I had to put my hall director hat on and then I had to figure out how to adjust my hours, so I [hung out in the lobby] a little less in the spring.

Erin shared a similar thought, that sometimes an opportunity to work presents itself when the hall director had not planned to work, only to socialize with students. When this happens hall

directors need to rearrange their work schedule to maintain 40 hours, as Erin described:

There’s sometimes too, like talking to [students], I feel like, yeah, that’s definitely socializing type of a thing...probably not necessarily work. Then, there’s some conversations that on the other hand turn from socializing and to just, “Okay, now we’re actually having a serious conversation,” unintended, but [work related].

Because there are ample opportunities to engage in work related activities with students, it is up to hall directors, with guidance and training from their supervisors, to clearly define work. This is necessary given that otherwise hall directors would exceed the 40-hour mandated workweek.

Hourly hall directors whose schedules exceed 40 hours are mandated to be compensated overtime, which is regulated under the FLSA. Hall directors are not universally comfortable in requesting overtime, especially for aspects of their job that are not clearly understood throughout the organization as work.

Hesitation to ask for overtime. There appears to be a trend developing at universities where hall directors have been transitioned to hourly employees where asking for overtime is something that comes with great hesitation to many hourly hall directors. Reasons for this hesitation included: feeling judged by supervisors as incompetent, a belief that peers were denied overtime and therefore they should not request it, a belief that asking for overtime could result in negative employment consequences (such as a letter of reprimand), and a feeling that peers will think they are making a frivolous request in order to get more pay.

In an extreme example of the impact on hourly hall directors who are hesitant to request overtime, there are aspects of the job that hall directors do that should be recorded as time worked, but are not being recorded as such in all cases. As Brianna, a new hall director still acclimating to the position, shared:

It is a 40-hour workweek, but you live where you work, and our duty schedule, which we aren't recording [as time worked], so you often work more than a strict 40-hour workweek, and you just accept that it's part of the job. So those things, like a 10-minute duty call in the evening or counseling a student that is emotional after hours, I'm not recording that [as time worked].

While this is an extreme example of the impact of hall directors feeling hesitant to request overtime, it showcases that even a core function of most hall directors' job descriptions, being on duty after-hours, is a job responsibility that hall directors may not record as time worked. If this is the extreme example, the more routine examples of student interactions that hall directors have

are also very unlikely to result in requests for overtime. Supervisors need to examine why their hall directors are hesitant to request overtime and address other needs that impact a hall director's opportunity to perform.

Supervision needs. Supervisors establish the direction of any transition and doing so impacts opportunities for hall directors to perform. Supervisors also play a role in defining work and approving overtime requests, which became vital aspects of the transition as hall directors attempted to decrease their work hours to meet the mandated 40-hour threshold established by the FLSA. As Cindy said, rather succinctly, "I think in summary of what I need [from my supervisor] is strong communication, flexibility, and as much empathy as professionally appropriate." In naming empathy, Cindy alluded to the most common theme that hall directors said they needed when asked about their supervisor: understanding, flexibility, and support.

Hillary commented that understanding from her supervisor is what makes the transition to hourly succeed. She responded in the following way when asked what was needed from a supervisor:

Understanding...I think it also helps that my supervisor is [working] 40 hours a week so he understands that struggle. Understanding, flexibility. There are times that I walked into his office and I'm just like, "I can't get this thing done that you want done on Friday." Either working through my schedule to find time or just being like, "Yup! It can be due on Monday afternoon instead of Friday afternoon." I'm like, wonderful.

Understanding and flexibility are connected to hall directors finding themselves in a situation where they cannot accomplish what they used to, and a supervisor is there to help them manage both the tasks and the emotions of not completing what they believe is needed. By reducing opportunities to perform, hall directors need support to move forward positively in those circumstances. Pam shared a similar idea:

If I have a crazy busy week with conduct, I can talk to my supervisor about that...I was part of [a] search committee, and so there were very heavy times for that where I needed overtime. And so, being able to just bring all that information to my supervisor and explain... "These are the things that I have to get done this week. I don't think it's going to happen within my 40 hours. I need an extra hour here, or an extra hour here." And my supervisor's very understanding about that in helping me to navigate those things or helping take things off my plate for me. So that's been good.

The driving issue that connects to the understanding and flexibility that hall directors are saying they need from their supervisors is being asked to do more than is possible in a 40-hour workweek. The job descriptions did not change in the first year that hall directors transitioned to hourly status, so adjustments to what needs to get done happened concurrently. Again, reduced opportunity means guidance is needed to direct a hall director's work performance.

A supervisor is also expected to balance the support they offer their hall directors while offering their hall directors the professional courtesy and autonomy they expect as highly educated professional staff members. As Brian cautioned:

I need them to be understanding, I need them to allow for flexibility in what I do, and how I do it. Because I am still a professional, I just record my hours now, and so I need them to be able to provide support, and to provide context, and when I have a question...in terms of...questions on my hours. But then I also need them to...back off and let me do my job. I am a professional, and I know what I'm supposed to do, and I know what I'm doing, and this isn't saying that I haven't gotten that, I think I fully believe that I have gotten that, that my supervisor has said, "You go and do you."

Hall directors still have an expectation that they be allowed to carry out their job in the style they see as being professionally appropriate. The understanding, flexibility, and support that are needed come through supervisors being clear and open communicators who make themselves available to mentor, coach, guide, offer clarity, and problem solve as their hall directors navigate the transition to a 40-hour workweek.

Lastly, to offer the support that is expected by the hall directors who have transitioned to hourly employment status a supervisor needs to be present for their hall directors. Bobby spoke about the expected visibility that supervisors need to demonstrate:

I need visibility with my supervisor. I think I need them to see what we're working on. I think it's important for them to have knowledge of what that duty night was like. I think it's important for them to have intentional conversations with what our workweek looks like. I think without intentional supervision...it's hard to know what's being emphasized from a big-picture lens. The more visible a supervisor is, and the more they have knowledge of what their employees are working on, the easier it is to shift priorities. The easier it is to make sure the things we're emphasizing are the things we want to emphasize...because sometimes I lose sight of that big picture...It's important to have multiple people looking at the same thing.

As Bobby suggested, transitioning hall directors to hourly status is a significant enough transition that supervisors are needed to help prioritize the opportunities that hall directors have in fulfilling their job duties. Because the tasks that hall directors have to perform are vast, a supervisor needs to help establish the priorities by which the hall directors approach their work in order to maintain a work environment where hall directors have an opportunity to perform as expected. A hall director's opportunity to perform is limited by the hours in a workweek that the hall director has to engage with the vast number of tasks before them. To improve work performance the capacity of the hall director needs to be developed. Capacity will be examined next.

Capacity. According to Blumberg and Pringle (1982) capacity is included as one of the three conceptual frameworks, including willingness and opportunity, which impact worker performance. Capacity for hall directors is built through their initial experience, likely as an undergraduate or graduate student affairs practitioner, and then enhanced significantly while attending graduate school or in their first professional position pre-graduate school. Frequent contact with students offers ongoing experiential learning opportunities whereby hall directors

enhance their skills and increase their capacity to perform. Ongoing professional training and development and continuing education also increases the capacity of hall directors to engage with their students in meaningful ways that improves their work performance. Hall directors who participated in this study offer a look at the components that make up their professional identity that are impacted by a transition to hourly employment status. These components of their professional identity impact their capacity to perform. Hall directors, and their supervisors, must navigate their professional identities as they transition to hourly status. Planning and strategic thinking impact the capacity that hall directors have to perform within a workweek limited to 40 hours. First, a look at how hall directors see the 40-hour workweek intersecting with their professional identity and then an examination of departmental planning and its impact on capacity will be offered.

Professional identity. Hall directors, whether salaried or hourly, are almost always assigned an on-campus apartment in order to increase the time they are available to spend directly with their students. Transitioning hall directors to a limited 40-hour workweek fundamentally changes the opportunity hall directors have to interact with students, an opportunity that is vast for salaried hall directors given they “work where they live.” This phrase came up repeatedly by the participants of this study. As Lindsey said: “I think people who generally live where they work like what they do and are willing to invest the time and the energy into doing things like building community and working as a part of a team.” Other hall directors offered that limiting the time hall directors have to interact with students is beginning to impact their professional identity.

Lindsey described her image of hourly workers and spoke to the mental transition that was necessary to shift that view into something more motivating:

I think the concept of being hourly kind of connotes that someone manages over you and I don't think I necessarily like that. In positions where I have been paid hourly there's been someone else who at the end of my shift has...continued on the work that I am doing. So, [as a hall director] if I run out of hours and I have to leave at three o'clock, no one's going to continue the work on this project or no one's going to build relationships with the students for me for another two hours in that day.

The most common aspect of a hall director's professional identity for those who participated in this study focused on direct interaction and relationship building with students. Given that direct interaction with students is at the core of the identity of a hall director, and direct contact with students is being limited for hourly hall directors, capacity to perform needs to compensate for reduced time to perform under the hourly framework if worker performance is going to be maintained.

Hall directors are motivated, and often choose the position over other types of student affairs work because of their direct contact and ability to serve students in the student's living environment. Erin explained:

The reason why I came back to res life is obviously you live where you work, and I like that. And, this is the time in my life that it'd be great. I felt like I could actually help students, but help them when they need it most rather than... "Hey, I need to talk to someone. Oh, there's nobody here"...I could be there for them.

Kat spoke to the reaction from students as hall directors have less time to "be there" for their students, as described above. Kat spoke to the increasing occurrence of having to bounce a student off on someone else or off to another day:

I think it's hard. Sometimes more than others 'cause I think our students want us to invest our time in them and I want to be able to do that and...I think it's also hard too 'cause I don't want my students to feel like I'm tossing them off to somebody else 'cause I don't want to deal with it. Sometimes I just don't have the hours to.

These comments symbolize the time-limiting impact of being an hourly employee and also suggest that this is in direct conflict with a hall director's professional identity as a live-on staff member. In order to overcome this limitation a hall director's capacity needs to be increased so the hall director can carve out time within a 40-hour workweek to interact with students. Kat concluded her thoughts on how her time to serve students is impacted by saying:

I wanted to be a hall director 'cause I felt like that gave me the most direct access to working on a daily basis with students. It's why I wanted to go into student affairs. I think it's hard...the times when I have to sit in my office and not see students very often, but that also gives me more motivation to get that stuff done so I can get out of my office and go spend time with students....I want to at least find some way to get out into the communities and talk to [students]...

Kat's conclusion demonstrates how adaptable hall directors are and how their professional identity is impacting how their transition to hourly employment status is playing out. A hall director's professional identity is fundamentally based on direct service to students, and that identity is motivating hall directors to increase their capacity to serve students within a 40-hour timeframe.

The transition of hall directors to hourly status means they can no longer work indefinitely, as Jenny said: "I think typically in residential life people are used to just working until the work is done. And so, to have a time cap on that makes it a little bit more challenging initially to kind of wrap your head around." As they do adapt, their professional identity with its focus on: service to students, creating personal connections with students, investing in the development of student living communities, responding directly and immediately to students in crisis, advising emerging student leaders through student government, and counseling students in distress, are all within the professional identity of hall directors that are influenced by their

capacity to serve students. Improving the capacity of hall directors to perform is connected to how supervisors within each department position the hall directors to take advantage of and grow their professional skills. Doing so will assist hall directors in successfully performing within the mandated 40-hour workweek.

Departmental planning. Capacity to perform as an hourly hall director is impacted by the department's preparation to transition hall directors to hourly status, which seems to be a pretty straightforward idea, the more planning a department does, the more efficient the transition. Additionally, what was discovered through the interviews with hall directors is that two of the three institutions clearly instructed their staff to maintain the 40-hour mandated maximum work hours allowed during each workweek. It appears that one institution did not put an emphasis on this and instead hall directors were free to interpret the 40-hour mandate in their own way. Their interpretation was based on their own professional knowledge of the FLSA, which for new hall directors especially, was significantly limited.

The hall directors at the institution that loosely emphasized the 40-hour workweek for hourly hall directors showcased that the hourly limitation has the most impact on time to perform, as hall directors were less restricted at that institution, their work performance was less impacted due to their increased opportunity. In this scenario it was not necessary to focus on improving capacity because opportunity was not limited. Cindy shared that departmental leaders may have been intentional in their effort to limit their focus on hall directors transitioning to hourly status:

Supervisors had to decide how much power do we want to give this? How much do we want to have conversations about this, because some employees are going to take advantage of this moment, and so I think there was a lot, from leadership, it felt like there

was a lot of...as soon as it was real, there was a lot of neglect of conversations about what was going to happen.

Cindy's perspective demonstrates the meaning making that can arise when there is a lack of focus on an aspect of an employee's job that is changing rather significantly.

Brianna, a hall director at the same institution as the one above, was impacted more significantly due to her arrival at the institution which occurred after the transition when there was little reference to defining what being hourly would mean for how hall directors should approach their work. Brianna's confusion lasted well into the second semester:

I reached out to colleagues [just prior to this interview] asking clarification...are we salaried or are we not because I had some suspicion [that we were hourly]. Then, like I said, my direct supervisor recently told me to start submitting [a timesheet]. So I was like I guess to me that kind of sounds like hourly, and I asked a peer...

Brianna also provided insight into her work performance that suggested she approached her job as any salaried hall director would have and very loosely held herself to the 40-hour per week work maximum as defined by the FLSA.

Conversely, hall directors at the other two institutions represented in this study were very aware of the 40-hour per week maximum work hours and as a result, conversations throughout the department during the first year that hall directors became hourly were focused on managing that transition in ways that had the most desirable impact on increasing the capacity to perform. Comparing the work performance in both scenarios demonstrated that hall directors in hourly positions simply cannot achieve the work performance that hall directors without limits to their work time are able to, especially not without training and guidance to improve work capacity.

Planning took place within the other two departments so that hall directors had enough capacity to perform their expected work during times like staff training and student move-in.

Conversations took place related to when to flex time from day-to-day and when to use overtime. Training hall directors on how to structure their workweek also aided them in being most efficient with their time. New expectations were established based on an internal study on the time hall directors were spending on various tasks, as Bobby said:

After the time study, we had a bunch of conversations in terms of responsibilities. What responsibilities of our job were taking up the most time? Where were things that could get moved around? Then where would departmental expectations shift to meet that?

These types of departmental conversations focused on increasing the capacity of hall directors to perform in areas of priority for departmental leaders. These capacity-increasing exercises did not only happen at the onset of the transition. As Kat offered, at the conclusion of the academic year, additional conversations focused on increasing the capacity of hall directors to focus on the top priorities in their role:

[After the academic year concluded], we spent a lot of time talking about what priorities do we as hall directors have and what do we have to get done versus what we want to get done...how to make those things work within the time that we have.

Those ongoing conversations created a positive experience for many (not all) of the hall directors who came to value being hourly hall directors given the balance between being successful in performing their work responsibilities and also not being expected to work hours significantly beyond 40 in a workweek (at least not without additional compensation).

Erin spoke about the clear message that came from leaders within her department and her university about the transition to hourly employment status:

I remember before the switch...I remember it was very emphasized that I had to start tracking my hours and following the guidelines of 40 hours in a workweek.... From HR [Human Resources] I was told that again, you've got to start tracking your hours, stay within the 40 perimeter workweek, and if you need to take time off, you need to take time off to stay within that.

When hourly hall directors hear a clear message like that, it is clear that the opportunity they have to perform their work is reduced. However, as multiple hall directors suggested, through planning, training, and ongoing reflective dialogue on the experiences that hourly hall directors are having, capacity to perform can be improved as hall directors and their supervisors become more experienced, and more skilled, under the new paradigm of hourly employment status.

Summary

In answering the first research question, what is the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees, a number of themes emerged after interviewing thirteen hall directors at three institutions within the Minnesota State University System. Most importantly, there is an impact on students, who are at the foundation of the purpose for the hall director position. Hall directors are finding that there is less time available to interact, especially informally, with students. However, hall directors and their supervisors are finding ways to mitigate this impact by structuring their time to be more efficient and focused and therefore more effective and purposeful in their contact with students.

The questions asked by hall directors having limited time to perform led to the second research question guiding this study. To answer the second research question, how does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact work performance, the comments by hall directors were analyzed through the three conceptual frameworks of the definition of work performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982): willingness, opportunity, and capacity. In looking at how willingness to perform, opportunity to perform, and capacity to perform are impacted by hall directors transitioning to hourly employees, an understanding of the impact on work performance emerged.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter starts by offering insight into the inspiration to conduct this research project, a recap of the purpose of this study, and an overview of the findings from chapter four, which will serve as the introduction to this chapter. Following the introduction, this chapter will progress to offering a discussion of how the findings from this study connect to the literature that served as the starting point in preparing to collect narratives from hall directors throughout the Minnesota State University System. This chapter will also offer an opportunity to discuss the limitations that were encountered in carrying out this research project and implications for future research will be addressed. The theoretical framework that undergirds this study was offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982). Their research is the lens used to analyze the narratives offered by the hall directors. Implications for Blumberg and Pringle's theory of worker performance will also be addressed. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of implications for practice emerging from the results of this study. Recommendations for how the experience of hourly hall directors could be enhanced in ways that contribute to student success will also be offered.

During the development of this study the inspiration to research what the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees came as a result of: being a residential life practitioner, a leader within my institution's residential life department, the vice-president of my collective bargaining union, and being a direct supervisor to hall directors. During the build-up of the Obama administration's proposal to increase the salary threshold of the FLSA that would have significantly exceeded the salary earnings of many, if not most, hall directors in the United States, there was a need for scholarly research to help guide planning and decisions that went

into preparing for hall directors to transition to hourly employees. Yet there was very little literature, scholarly or otherwise, available to residential life leaders to help guide such a transition. Due to the implementation timeline for the salary threshold change offered by the Obama administration, residential life leaders were left to make decisions and create transition plans with a limited understanding of the impact of their staff shifting to a new employment status that included a workweek schedule limited to 40-hours.

The proposed changes to the salary threshold that would have had a nation-wide impact on higher education (in addition to workers in all work sectors in the United States) were halted just weeks prior to the implementation date established by the Obama administration. The Obama administration's changes to the FLSA were halted in federal court, initially through an injunction in November 2016 that came as a result of a lawsuit that included states, state university systems, and private businesses. Following the injunction, in August 2017, a federal judge struck down the proposed salary threshold increase. These legal decisions in federal court appeared initially to have a nation-wide impact in halting the transition of salaried hall directors to hourly employment status. However, in the Minnesota State University System, plans to transition many student affairs staff continued based on state-level decisions to reinterpret the duties test of the FLSA and apply the test differently to a number of state workers, including student affairs workers within the Minnesota State University System.

The set of circumstances that halted hall directors at a nation-wide level from being mandated by federal regulation to either have a significant pay increase or shift to hourly employment status did not end the planned transition of hall directors to hourly status in the Minnesota State University System. In the state of Minnesota it was a reinterpretation and

reapplication of the duties test that created a situation where hall directors in the Minnesota State University System would continue to transition to hourly employment status. The same transition did not occur on a national scale. This created an opportunity for research to be conducted on a population of hourly hall directors in the Minnesota State University System with the potential for the results of that research to become valuable context available to future higher educational leaders that was not widely available to leaders in the Minnesota State System in 2017 when their staff began to transition to hourly employment status.

In addition to benefiting future higher education leaders who may find themselves leading a transition of student affairs staff from salaried to hourly employment status, the results of this study will hopefully provide insight to current student affairs administrators and supervisors about what the impact has been from hall directors recently transitioning to hourly employment status. These results offer insight into how becoming hourly employees has impacted hall directors and what the impact of that transition to working a workweek that is limited to 40 hours has had on their work performance. Given that the work performance of hall directors is connected in significant ways to the experience that college students have, understanding the results from this study provides information about the experience that students who live on campus are having as a result of their hall directors shifting from salaried to hourly status.

The results of this study emerged from interviewing over 80% of the hall directors in the Minnesota State University System that had been transitioned to hourly employment status. The participants in this study came from multiple institutions and offered rich narratives about their experiences as hourly hall directors. These narratives offer an opportunity to begin to answer the

two research questions guiding this study: (1) what has been the impact on hall directors who transitioned to hourly employees, and (2) how does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact their work performance? The answers to these questions provide a planning starting point for future leaders working with hall directors and other student affairs staff. The answers to these research questions also offer an opportunity for reevaluation by leaders in the Minnesota State University System interested in understanding the impact of this staffing change and exploring how to adapt to that change in ways that positively impact hall directors and their work performance. Ultimately, doing so could improve the experience that students have whose success as college students is supported by hourly university employees.

The participants in this study often commented that a hall director's work is focused directly on students and their experiences. What became clear in analyzing the narratives offered by the hall directors was that the work hall directors do related to responding to student safety, crisis, and critical issues is a top priority for hall directors within their 40-hour workweek. In some cases, time spent in these areas even leads to overtime compensation given that student safety is a top-tier priority. Other interesting findings related to student interactions by hourly hall directors suggest that a hall director's role in adjudicating student conduct also remains a priority. What has emerged as a need that hourly hall directors must invest energy in is a communication approach with students that continues to offer support and a willingness to serve them instead of a focus on time limitations. The narratives offered by the hall directors related to student staff supervision are similar in nature.

Supervising student staff at the undergraduate and graduate level remains a significant priority and focus for hourly hall directors. Hall directors are reluctant to cut back their

supervision responsibilities in ways they deem would significantly impact the experience of their student staff. The narratives offered by some of the hall directors also suggest that student staff are being delegated additional responsibilities as a result of hall directors needing to prioritize their time and scale back some of what they are attempting to accomplish. Student staff taking on these opportunities are able to grow their skills as employees and leaders, giving them more elevated experiences as student staff members. These experiences may boost marketability for future employment opportunities because these student staff members will have more experiences to highlight on their resume and in an employment interview.

While student staff members may be benefiting in some ways by hall directors being hourly, involvement with other staff across the university is becoming more challenging for hall directors to prioritize in a limited 40-hour workweek. Some hall directors suggested that they are reducing their involvement in projects, committees, and shared governance roles given that involvement in these functions comes at the expense of direct involvement with students. Relatedly, those who work with hall directors, including those who supervise hall directors, need to shift their expectations of what can be accomplished by hourly hall directors. Taking on superfluous assignments or responsibilities, simply for the sake of the experience, is weighed against other priorities and values in ways that is not as direct for salaried hall directors.

Prioritization becomes a key aspect of an hourly hall director's job, and many of the participants suggested that managing their time by deciding what is a priority and what will get deprioritized, are professional skills they are honing in order to effectively perform their job duties within the context of being limited to 40 hours in a workweek. Hall directors impact the prioritization of their job responsibilities through the questions they ask of their supervisors,

department leaders, and university leaders, including human resources staff. The narratives offered by the hall director participants indicate that hourly hall directors spend time managing their schedules and chunking out their time in ways that allow them to fulfill their priorities. What becomes a lower priority for hourly hall directors is informal contact with students. In order to have time to continue to have less-formal contact with students, hall directors must master skills required to plan ahead, intentionally use their available time meaningfully, and adapt to the changing context of the workday/workweek. Hall directors with these skills are best positioned to support student safety, be timely in the student conduct process, be present and engaged supervisors to their student staff, and meet the important needs of others they work with. Strong administrative skills can contribute to efficiencies and produce time that can be recommitted to connecting directly with students. The work performance of an hourly hall director is built on a framework of limited time, which results in relying on skills differently than a salaried hall director must.

In order for hourly hall directors to meet their professional obligations to support student success and fulfill the other major aspects of their job descriptions, the transition from salaried to hourly employment status also begins a transition of professional skills enhancement. Hourly hall directors are experiencing a growth in their professional skills as a result of having less time available to devote to their roles, and therefore they are learning to approach their work differently. In so doing, hall directors are honing a new set of skills that is improving their capacity to perform. Hourly hall directors are benefitting from improved skills as the transition runs its course. Those improved skills include:

- Increased skills in managing their schedules and available time.

- Enhanced ability to prioritize multiple commitments.
- Overall improved organization skills.
- Stronger, clearer communication with supervisors, student staff, and students about needs, limitations, and expectations.
- Improved skills in delegation.
- More realistic sense of what can be accomplished and expected of themselves and others within a limited time framework.

These skills are valuable skills for hall directors to enhance as they are mandated to work within a strict 40-hour workweek. These improved skills improve capacity and serve to reduce the negative impact of hall directors having less time to perform. The second research question gets to the heart of the work performance question.

To understand how changing a hall director's employment status from salaried to hourly impacts work performance, Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) framework for work performance offers three tenants to explore this, including: willingness to perform, opportunity to perform, and capacity to perform. The narratives offered by the participants of this study addressed each tenant. Next, an examination at how the willingness of hall directors to perform when their employment status shifted to hourly status will be offered.

Most hall directors said their willingness to perform shifted. Their initial reaction was one of concern and even anger, however, those initial emotions shifted significantly within a few months after becoming an hourly hall director to something more positive. Most hall directors shared that they felt very positive about their experience being hourly, primarily for what they called "work-life balance" reasons. The long-term benefit of reduced work hours improves the

quality of life for hall directors, which is having a positive impact on their willingness to perform. Less than 25% of the hall directors participating in this study preferred being salaried after having at least a semester of experience as an hourly hall director. This may be a surprising statistic at first, but given that hall directors see being hourly as: being paid for their work, having to work less, and being paid additionally for work beyond 40-hours in a workweek, it becomes easier to understand that ultimately, a hall director's willingness to remain in the position in the context of the role being hourly is positively impacted by becoming an hourly employee. While willingness to perform is positively impacted by hourly status, the opportunity to perform is impacted differently.

While work-life balance is repeatedly named as contributing to their willingness to perform, hall directors recognize that there is a limited opportunity to perform job tasks they see as foundational to the role of being a hall director, especially direct and informal contact with students on a regular basis. The reduced opportunity to connect with students is a professional challenge hall directors face. The more emphasis on the mandated 40-hour workweek by supervisors, the more significant the reduced opportunity available to hall directors to interact with students becomes. Hall directors are also, overwhelmingly, hesitant to request overtime, which results in further opportunity-loss for hall directors to engage with students. The definition of what qualifies as work, which is also impacted by how invested a supervisor is in holding hall directors accountable to a 40-hour workweek, also impacts the opportunity for hall directors to perform. Most hall directors suggested, that at times, there is a lack of clarity on what activities are considered work. Generally, hall directors must define their work without significant involvement from supervisors. The role of the supervisor is impactful in creating or

diminishing capacity to perform, and hall directors express a need for supervisors to provide understanding, flexibility, support, autonomy, and presence. A supervisor who offers these to their hall directors may contribute to an improved capacity to perform despite a reduction in time (opportunity) hall directors have to perform.

A hall director's opportunity to perform is limited, as one hall director put it, unlike most hourly positions, there really isn't anyone to come in and take over doing the work after hours expire. As a result, when hall directors have reduced availability for students, they are not performing at the level that salaried hall directors are able to perform. However, over time, the capacity hall directors have to perform may be increased as supervisors spend time planning and adjusting the positions and offer training for those who take hourly hall director positions. Doing so improves effectiveness and efficiency. Supervisors need to clearly define work expectations and offer the appropriate training tailored specifically to hourly hall directors. Doing so improves capacity to perform. Hall directors, within a semester or two of being hourly, are already seeing the path forward to improving their capacity within the hourly framework they work within; a sign that initial negative impacts to their work performance will be mitigated in the long term.

The answers to the two research questions guiding this study suggests that the long-term outlook for hourly hall directors in terms of job satisfaction and work performance is positive. The experiences hall directors have had when transitioned to hourly employment status will be examining and discussed further.

Discussion

The goal of the discussion is to review the findings of this study with the literature reviewed in chapter two. An effort is made to identify how the assertions by other researchers identified in chapter two are supported, contradicted, or expanded on by the results from the interviews with hourly hall directors. This section starts by exploring how the anticipated impact of adjustments or reinterpretations of the FLSA corresponded with the experiences of the hall directors participating in this study. Then, the elements included in the profile of a hall director will be discussed in relationship to the narratives provided by hourly hall directors. Expanding beyond the specific profile of the hall director role by examining the literature on worker performance that includes organizational culture and the elements of managerialism and deprofessionalization will be compared and contrasted with the narratives provided by the participants in this study. Next, an examination of the concept of job embeddedness and how that theory played out in the transition of hall directors from salaried to hourly status will be explored. Finally, the theory of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) and expanded upon by Kezar (2013), which guided this study, will be assessed through the results that emerged from the interviews with hall directors. First, an examination of the anticipated impact and the actual impact that emerged in the Minnesota State University System launches the discussion.

The FLSA's anticipated impact on hall directors. Dishman and Murphy (2007) and Asimou and Adams (2016) all explained that defining work and distinguishing work from *de minimis* activities that are not compensable under the FLSA is a complex issue for hourly employees. Hall directors participating in this study, who needed their supervisors to be able to

give clear guidance on this point, supported this statement extensively. The 40-hour workweek, which is challenging to maintain without going over, has resulted in hall directors needing to account for all of their time worked. In order to account for time worked, hall directors have to be able to differentiate between work and *de minimis* activities that are not compensatory work. Dishman and Murphy further explained that it is the employer who has the responsibility to monitor the 40-hour workweek threshold. If the definition of work that emanates from the employer is not accurate, it is the employer who would ultimately be responsible for not adhering to the FLSA.

The narratives offered by hall directors in this study highlight a discrepancy among varying departments of residential life, and even discrepancies among supervisors within those same departments, on what activities are work and should be counted toward the 40-hour workweek, and what activities are not work-related or are *de minimis* in nature. As suggested by Dishman and Murphy, defining work becomes a complex and relevant activity that hourly hall directors and their supervisors must engage in. For example, going to student leadership events is work related if it falls within the role that hall director plays as an advisor to a residential life student organization. Serving as a committee chair on a professional organization's board would be a professional activity but not necessarily work. Clear definitions of work support hall directors being able to manage their schedule in ways that comply with the 40-hour workweek.

The findings suggest that compliance with the 40-hour workweek limitation by the hourly hall director is impacted not only by the degree to which a supervisor clearly defines work but also by the degree to which a supervisor and a hall director can draw a distinction between work and professional activities that would fall beyond the job expectations a hall director has as

outlined in their position descriptions. There has not consistently been clarity on which professional activities a hall director performs that fall outside of their role as hall directors (such as involvement in professional organizations or volunteering to serve a student organization as its advisor) and which of those activities are related to their role as a hall director. There are questions that are going unanswered for hall directors on which activities are related to their job responsibilities and which activities more broadly fall within their professional identity as a residential life professional, but are not work that should be counted within the 40-hour workweek. In addition, compliance with the 40-hour workweek limitation is also a choice that individual hall directors make.

Some hall directors are choosing to work more than 40-hours to fulfill their job responsibilities (and therefore are choosing to be noncompliant with the 40-hour workweek limitation) because they deem their work responsibilities vital and are motivated by their professional identity to continue to serve students, even if they must do so “off the clock.” Other hall directors described feeling pressured by their supervisors to perform to a greater degree even through their work-hours had expired. For some hall directors, they are choosing to not comply with the 40-hour workweek limitation instead of requesting overtime. The rationale for some hall directors making this choice to not comply with the 40-hour workweek limitation is due to a desire to be seen by their supervisor as a high performer who does not make excessive requests for overtime. The decision to comply with the 40-hour workweek limitation has both internal and external elements that ultimately impact whether a hall director complies with the 40-hour workweek.

Related to hall directors maintaining a 40-hour workweek, Banks and Hanvey (2016) offered a series of anticipated impacts that would be felt by workers transitioning to hourly status, some of which aligned with the experiences of hall directors in this study. Banks and Hanvey suggested the following that are generally in alignment with the hourly hall director experience:

1. Adjustments will be made to the hours per week that are worked. Hall directors overwhelmingly found that they had to reduce their work hours once they became hourly in order to maintain a 40-hour workweek.
2. Adjustments to work responsibilities would become necessary. This is at the core of the experiences hourly hall directors described, an experience where tracking hours and adjusting schedules becomes a major work task. Hall directors describe this aspect of the role as, at times, being overwhelming. Some hall directors speak to frustration in needing to focus on adjusting their work schedule regularly.
3. Timekeeping becomes a requirement. This aspect is related to making scheduling adjustments, which is a core part of an hourly hall director's experience that differentiates an hourly hall director from a salaried hall director.

While Banks and Hanvey offered these as impacts that would be experienced, they also suggested some issues that would not emerge for hall directors in the Minnesota State University System.

Banks and Hanvey (2016) offered impacts that hourly workers would experience that were not supported through the experiences that the participants of this study described, including: new procedures for break time would emerge and an increase in personnel would

occur to make up for lost productivity. Neither of these were results that emerged in the Minnesota State University System, at least though the first year of implementing the transition to hourly status for hall directors. Banks and Hanvey spoke to status and prestige, which generally did not emerge as an issue that hall directors spoke about when they became hourly employees, although one hall director did compare her role as an hourly hall director with that of an hourly employee at a retail location. However, the focus of that comparison was on having others come in to complete the work at the end of the retail shift and not specifically about a feeling that her role as a hall director was no longer prestigious. There were other authors who addressed the impact on performance by shifting staff to hourly status.

Oah and Jan-Han (2011) offered that hourly employees would spend more time on task and less time off task, which would result in a more efficient employee who was able to perform at a similar level. The idea that there would be less time spent on off-task activities is supported by many hall directors who spoke specifically about tracking their time carefully and not counting time that was spent on outside activities from what they considered to be their primary responsibility as a hall director. Going beyond what Oah and Jan-Han found in their study, hall directors not only spent more time on task, they also cut work activities from their weekly schedules in order to fulfill their top priorities. Ultimately in this study, hourly hall directors, due to being limited to a 40-hour workweek, were especially critical of how they spent their time and were motivated to be efficient in their roles, so they could continue to meet the expectations for performance that they had for themselves and that their supervisors had for them. In many ways hourly hall directors did not have the flexibility or autonomy to spend time in activities that go beyond their primary duties as they once did as salaried employees.

Ulman and Thomson (2015) addressed: employee flexibility, ability to meet the expectations of the job, and career advancements as limitations that hourly employees would face. Career advancement was not addressed in the interviews specifically, but the other two assertions by Ulman and Thomson align with the narratives offered by hall directors. Hall directors spoke to having to establish clear priorities, priorities that were influenced as much by others in their organizations as by themselves. Veering from those priorities was not common, as certain aspects of the job including: student safety and crisis response, fulfilling their role as conduct hearing officers, and meeting the administrative expectations of others were almost always top priorities. Many of the hall directors spoke to deprioritizing aspects of the role, such as informal connections and relationship-building activities with students, which for salaried hall directors were likely activities that time is invested in to a greater degree. Generally speaking, Ulman and Thomson's findings are at the core of the experience that hourly hall directors described. Other researchers also offered anticipated impacts into the hall director experience.

Asimou (2016a), in interpreting a straw poll of residential life leaders just prior to hall directors becoming hourly employees, offered a number of issues that leaders were anticipating by hall directors transitioning to hourly employment status. Many of those findings were supported by the experience of the hall directors participating in this study, including:

1. Hall directors would be limited to a 40-hour workweek. This was generally supported, although hall directors did name times, including hall opening, closing, and during staff selection, when overtime or compensatory time would be offered. On most workweeks hall directors reduced their work time in order to maintain a 40-hour workweek.

2. Hall directors' job responsibilities need to be reduced and optional tasks and assignments need to be limited. These experiences are both generally supported. While hall directors described becoming more efficient, spending more time on-task (versus on off-task activities), and accomplishing their top priorities to the degree they would have as salaried employees, there were components of the hall director job description, which tended to revolve around informal contact with students and student staff, that were not accomplished to a similar degree as salaried hall directors would have accomplished. A reduction in time spent informally connecting with students is a significant finding because the salaried hall director position has at its core, informal contact with students on a regular basis. Informal contact, such as eating meals with students, attending campus events with students, and spending time with students in the residence hall lobby and at residence hall activities, all serve an important purpose in hall directors developing relationships with students. As this informal contact with students diminishes there is less opportunity for hall directors to develop supportive relationships with students; and these supportive relationships that hall directors establish with students is the foundation from which hall directors contribute to student success and retention.

Some hall directors were deprioritizing activities such as serving on committees outside their department including activities related to shared governance and activities that supported professional organizations (such as UMR-ACUHO) because these activities by many (but not all) of the participants in this study were seen as extra, or outside the top priorities of the hall director job description. A reduction in participation in shared governance further erodes a hall director's contribution to the greater university community.

Hall directors, who have frequent and direct contact with students, have a valuable role to play in shared governance activities on a university campus. The result of hall directors further limiting their role in shared governance serves to disconnect professional staff with valuable insight into the student experience from university decision makers. In an era where university leaders are challenged to improve the retention rate of students, further limiting hall directors from these conversations may contribute to further challenges related to student retention.

3. Hourly hall directors will have a more flexible work schedule, so they can meet their expectations each week. Hall directors spoke to needing to “chunk” their daily schedule, meaning working some hours, followed by extended breaks (without pay) during each day, in order to accomplish responsibilities at times when students are available or in need of support. Hall directors spoke to each workday being one in which there is flexibility to work and go on break. The idea of working 8-4:00 for a 5-day period of time is not the schedule that hall directors described working.

While many of Asimou’s (2016a) assertions about the experience of hourly hall directors were accurate, there were some assertions that were not supported by the narratives offered by the hall director participants of this study, including:

1. Residential life leaders would hire more full-time staff and more student staff. While hall directors spoke to giving student staff more elevated work responsibilities, there was no indication that departments had the financial resources to increase the number of staff members. At one institution in particular, numerous hall directors spoke to the residential life staff shrinking, despite the additional limitation of work hours.

2. Asimou concluded that there would be a reduction in the requirement of hall directors to live on campus. Hall directors did not speak to this as an impact of their transition to hourly status, nor did they speak to this being a consideration that was being named by their supervisors. It is difficult to understand how this would positively impact the experience of the hourly hall director in a way that would save a significant amount of time that hall directors would devote to work. If anything, given the “chunking” of schedules that hall directors are doing in order to be most effective with their work-hours, moving off campus would make long periods of non-paid breaks less appealing to hall directors who would no longer be simply a short walk to their on-campus apartment.
3. Lastly, one impact that Asimou said would occur frequently would be paying overtime and compensatory time. This is both supported and contradicted based on the experience of the hall directors involved in this study. While there are select periods of time when additional compensation is offered to hall directors, overall, hall directors are only given overtime for top-tier priorities (such as student safety and crisis response activities) and not to increase time connecting less formally with students (such as attending an evening program or a meal in the dining hall with a group of student leaders).

Additionally, Asimou (2016b) followed up on the first straw poll with a second. There were some new findings from the second straw poll that are supported by the experiences of the participations of this study. Asimou found that residential life leaders believed that institutions would need to limit the work hours to 40 to avoid paying overtime. Hall directors being on-duty in order to respond to critical student issues at a moment’s notice would be time that would be defined as work and count toward the 40-hour workweek. With one exception, in which a new

hall director was not clear that she was hourly due to vague information offered by a supervisor, hourly hall directors who participated in this study were given a message from their supervisors to strive to achieve a 40-hour workweek without going over. Some hall directors would choose to follow this more strictly than others, but even those few hall directors who (at least occasional) followed the 40-hour workweek loosely, did so knowing they were expected to limit their work hours and they would not be granted overtime. Hall directors at two of the three institutions very clearly identified that their time on duty and their time responding to critical issues while serving on-duty for their department was time that needed to be accounted for within the 40-hour workweek. While one institution appeared to underplay the role of crisis response by hall directors, there was still compensation available to hall directors who needed to provide critical issue response outside of the anticipated workweek schedule. It became clear that hall directors serve unique and vital roles that enhance student safety and support, and generally speaking, hall directors are experiencing work environments where those efforts are prioritized and being compensated for in order to not reduce service to students as hall directors shifted to hourly employment status.

Both Asimou (2016a) and Asimou's (2016b) research projects offered opportunity to plan prior to hall directors transitioning to hourly status, and the results of this qualitative study enhances those findings in ways that future residential life leaders should find valuable. The reason that both of Asimou's studies are important to have built upon with this study is that both studies coordinated by Asimou were focused specifically on the hall director role.

Understanding the hall director role is important to be able to understand the impact of hall

directors transitioning to hourly employment status after a long history of being salaried employees.

Profile of a hall director. The literature related to profiling the role of the hall director addressed their job description, their developmental and training needs, the work schedules of salaried hall directors, their presence throughout campus, and their investment in professional development and networking initiatives beyond campus, and issues related to their recruitment and retention in the position. These aspects of the hall director role relate with the narratives offered by the participants of this study. Literature on the primary responsibilities of a hall director will serve as a starting point in discussing the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees.

St. Onge et al. (2008) offered three primary responsibilities of hall directors, which included: (1) supervision, (2) discipline, and (3) programming. The first two align specifically with the priorities espoused by the hourly hall directors participating in this study. However, the impact on programming is more nuanced. Hall directors spoke about their responsibilities carrying out a community development curriculum in their building, at the same time many spoke to their direct involvement in those activities being reduced and instead delegated to student staff. While programming is still a responsibility within the job description of many hall directors, programmatic efforts are being reduced due to the limitations of a 40-hour workweek. Training and development is an opportunity to support hourly hall directors in fulfilling their primary job duties given the new context of being hourly

Henning et al. (2011) found that salaried hall directors needed further training and development in areas involving administrative skill development and also in the area of time

management. Hall directors spoke to administrative skills being a much relied upon professional skill given the multiple competing priorities combined with a time-limit by which to accomplish those competing priorities. Many hall directors spoke to administrative responsibilities being a top priority because these responsibilities involved producing information that was being depended on by other staff, and because those other staff were depending on hall directors to produce that information hall directors would prioritize administrative functions. Many acknowledged that doing so involved reduced informal contact with students. Managing a weekly work schedule became a primary task for hourly hall directors out of necessity in managing their work within 40-hours. Hourly hall directors, either quickly developed their administrative and time management skills, or they were not successful as hourly hall directors. One hall director, who did not return to the position for a second year, named specifically that administration and managing multiple priorities within a 40-hour workweek contributed to her lack of success as an hourly hall director. This hall director shared that having unlimited time to complete the responsibilities of the hall director role would have contributed to long-hours on a daily and weekly basis, but it would also have contributed to her fulfilling the expectations of the position. Long-hours is not an option for hall directors navigating a typical workweek and for some hall directors, they will not be successful working in a role that is hourly.

Collins and Hirt (2006) described the typical workweek schedule of salaried hall directors as a fair mix of nights and weekend work along with what most would consider typical workday hours (morning and afternoon). This holds true based on the explanation of the workday schedule offered by hall directors participating in this study. Hall directors continue to work periods of time throughout the day, evening, and weekend. Going further, the hall directors in

this study suggested that their workday schedules are more “chunked” than they were as salaried hall directors. Hall directors described taking extended periods of unpaid time off throughout the mornings, afternoons, and evenings in ways that salaried hall directors would not. One hall director specifically said this did not contribute to work-life balance because a chunked schedule was not conducive to quality personal downtime. Chunking one’s schedule did allow a hall director to maintain a presence on campus that was conducive to fulfilling their responsibilities.

A hall director’s presence on campus-wide committees, according to Collins and Hirt (2006) was lower when compared to other student affairs staff. This trend will remain the same, likely even increasing, as many of the hourly hall directors spoke to needing to deprioritize campus commitments. Those hall directors who named campus committee involvement as an important professional development opportunity for them seemed to acknowledge that while that remained a professional priority in some cases, the time they spent serving took away from other important functions in their role as a hall director, namely informal contact and relationship building with students. Relatedly, Collins and Hirt said that hall directors were more likely to invest in external opportunities for professional development in order to connect with other residential life professionals from other campuses. The findings from the qualitative interviews with hall directors suggested that this level of involvement might also be reduced. Again, some hall directors named professional association involvements as a continued priority, while others named specifically that they were reducing their involvements in order to meet the primary expectations of their roles as hall directors. The long-term impact resulting from the choices hall directors have to make in this regard remains unclear, but indications of reduced involvement in external professional development opportunities seems to be emerging. This could result in hall

directors not having the extensive professional networks that Collins and Hirt suggested was a priority for salaried hall directors. Clarity should be offered to hall directors that outlines which type of professional development opportunity would be job related and which would not be and could therefore occur outside a hall director's paid work hours. Professional networking is an important aspect of hall directors transitioning into other residential life and student affairs roles.

Hall directors searching for new positions, including new hall director positions, as well as elevated roles in residential life and student affairs operations, including leaving the student affairs field, have been examined by others profiling the hall director role. The retention of hall directors has been of some concern in the residential life profession, which causes the recruitment of hall directors to be a major aspect of a residential life operation. Scheuermann and Ellet (2007) found that 14% of hall directors turned over each year. The turnover rate, or the retention rate, will continue to be of interest as more hall directors become hourly employees. Scheuermann and Ellett indicated that quality of life is a factor in hall director retention. St. Onge et al. (2008) found that salary impacts retention and were also interested in how quality of life impacted retention of hall directors. There are indications from hourly hall directors who participated in this study that quality of life is being impacted in significantly positive ways. All hall directors participating in this study discussed work-life balance and almost unanimously comments about work-life balance were positive and indicated a significant improvement. Numerous hall directors shared their plans to continue to look for positions with workweek schedules limited to 40 hours while continuing to work in the residential life field. Some hall directors specifically referred to the concept of "being paid for the work I do" as having a positive impact on their work-life balance and also positively impacted their salary earnings.

Hall directors, many of whom were anxious of making the transition to hourly status, spoke very positively about being happy with how the hourly hall director role complemented their life, provided a fair salary, and did so without overly consuming their life. Comments about finding time to explore personal interests while being a hall director were common.

All of this suggests that the retention of hourly hall directors will be stronger than in hall director roles that are salaried. There are opportunities for departments with hourly hall directors to use this information to better recruit quality hall directors, as there may be a real and marketable advantages to promoting the concept of work-life balance during hall director recruitment season and then hire the most highly qualified candidates to work on their campuses. Davidson (2012) found that attracting and then retaining high quality hall directors would promote student learning and development. While the narratives from this study cannot absolutely make that claim, given other factors, including time spent directly with students also having a positive impact on student learning and development (and time spent directly with students is being reduced in the hourly model), this finding offers hope that the highest quality hall directors may be able to navigate the limitations of being hourly in ways that successfully allow them to invest in student learning and development. This makes the positive impact upon retention, and the opportunity that it affords the hall director recruitment process, a major and significantly positive impact of hall directors transitioning to hourly status. Davidson called for more qualitative research on the profile of the hall director role. This study fills that need while also echoing the need to continue to research how improved job satisfaction by hourly hall directors is impacting student learning and success.

Organizational culture, managerialism, and deprofessionalization. The literature on organizational culture implied caution in trying to make meaning of worker performance based on culture (Martin, 1992; Marcoulides and Heck, 1993) while managerialism, a variable within organizational culture, is found to be on the rise within higher education according to the literature (Kolsaker, 2008). A move away from collegiality towards managerialism may be a move away from professionalism towards the deprofessionalization of aspects of higher education. These assertions from the literature have some bearing on the experiences that hall directors described in transitioning to hourly employment status.

In support of Martin's (1992) and Marcoulides and Heck's (1993) assertions that there are too many variables that make up an organization's culture, and therefore culture is not a strong indicator of worker performance, the hall directors participating in this study came from three separate institutions with varying organizational structures, supervisory lines, personnel, strength of economic resources, and longevity of experience at the senior leadership levels of their organizations. In other words, some of the more obvious aspects of culture at each of the three organizations were vastly different among the three institutions. Yet, the narratives offered by hall directors from all three institutions had more similarities than differences. Those similarities included: a general feeling that being hourly improved work-life balance, a similar ranking of priorities for the position (student safety response, a focus on staff supervision, and prioritizing administration), and a deprioritization of informal student contact and relationship building. If organizational culture had a significant impact on worker performance one would hypothesize more differentiation in the narratives offered by hall directors from three institutions diverse in their departmental cultures. That was not the case. Just as the results from the

qualitative interviews in this study aligned with the assertions made by Martin and also by Marcoulides and Heck, the movement of hall directors to hourly status is a situation that serves as an example of Beck and Young's (2005) and Kolsaker's (2008) assertions that managerialism is on the rise in higher education.

Kolsaker (2008) warned that increased managerialism reduces collegiality in the higher education environment. Collegiality, the idea that hierarchies are not relevant and power is shared among faculty, is reduced when structures are put in place that mandate how service faculty, in this case, hall directors, need to limit their work time. The limiting of work time is forcing professional hall directors to prioritize their time and supervisors in the organization's hierarchy are having influence over those priorities. Hall directors made clear that while they have a professional value to connect with students both formally and informally, focusing on administrative responsibilities, many of which are departmental versus individual priorities, is taking time away from hall directors being able to choose to spend time establishing supportive relationships with their students to the degree that they were doing as salaried hall directors. Hall directors spoke to spending significant amounts of time discussing their status as hourly employees in order to be able to successfully navigate the structures being erected to contribute to their success in fulfilling the priorities established of their work performance. All of this suggests a more managerialist work environment and slipping away is the autonomy and collegiality that may have existed when hall directors were salaried employees.

In a study related to teachers, Fitzgerald (2008) offered that a more managerialist work environment, a result of increased state regulation, interrupted the professional work of teachers, a product of their professional training and acculturation into teaching. As noted, hall directors

shifting to hourly status as a result of governmental regulations and system policies, is shifting the professional focus of hall directors slightly away from the students, a move contrary to a hall director's professional acculturation. Teelkem (2012) suggested the less professionalized workers who find themselves in more managerialist work environments are not more productive. This concept is expanded upon after analyzing the narratives offered by the hall director participants of this study. Instead of saying that productivity is not improved, as Teelkem asserted, for the hall directors in this study, they described productivity being high in priority areas and productivity being limited in areas that are deprioritized. This suggests that the breadth of areas where hourly hall directors can be highly productive is narrower. Those areas of high productivity include responding to critical student issues, supervising staff, and fulfilling the administrative expectations that others expect of them; often at the cost of time being spent with students participating in campus activities, spending time with student leaders, or connecting with students informally in their residence communities during evenings and weekends. The impact of a hall director's time being dictated by their priorities, priorities that they do not always have the autonomy to establish and priorities that move them farther away from a focus on building relationships with students, does not have the impact on their job embeddedness that might be expected.

Job embeddedness. Factors beyond a reduced level of collegiality and professional autonomy that an hourly hall director has in their role are outweighed by hall directors being extremely satisfied with the impact that being designated hourly has on their work-life balance. Work-life balance is a feeling that hall directors have that they can invest time in their professional careers and also have ample time remaining to invest in pursuing personal interests.

Due to work-life balance arising as a major theme, a response to becoming hourly that is generally viewed as positive by hall directors, the literature on job embeddedness is not strongly associated with the experience of hourly hall directors. According to Burton et al. (2010) workers that experienced shocking events in the workplace would be more motivated to leave the organization. If that theory held true for the hall directors who participated in this study, findings should have revealed that hall directors would be looking to leave their positions as hourly hall directors. This was not the case. Burton et al.'s definition of a shocking event appears too broad given the experiences of the hall directors participating in this study.

While hall directors' initial reactions to the shocking concept of becoming hourly seem to be compatible with Burton et al.'s (2010) definition of a shocking work event, the experiences of hall directors into their second semester in an hourly employment status were viewed more positively than initial reactions. This may suggest that Burton et al.'s (2010) theory is more fitting for shocking work events that are sustained over a longer period, which was not the experience of hall directors in this study. Their initial shock disseminated by their second semester. The experiences of hall directors becoming hourly employees did not follow the path suggested by Burton et al.'s theory, so the impact on work performance of hourly hall directors who became focused on leaving their positions could not be explored given that participants, generally speaking, came to view their status as hourly employees, while shocking at first, to be an overall improvement in their lived experience. Other theories would connect more clearly to worker performance than the concept of job embeddedness offered by Burton et al. and expanded on by Holtom et al. (2012).

Theories of worker performance. While the theory of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) and expanded upon by Kezar (2013) serves as the theoretical framework for this study, another theory that attempts to explain an impact on worker performance is worth mentioning. Calvert et al.'s (2011) theory about the impact of professional identity and the impact that has on performance falls within the framework offered by Blumberg and Pringle. Calvert et al. asserted that professional identity influences the prioritization of the multiple tasks workers have on their time. Time falls within the opportunity aspect of Blumberg and Pringle's theory and time is central to the issue of hall directors becoming hourly employees. Hall directors spoke at length about needing to prioritize their work and acknowledged that the result of this prioritization was that items became deprioritized, and in some cases, significantly so. Calvert et al. inquired as to what participants believed they were mandated to do and what did they feel they needed to do as impacted by their professional identity. These questions emerged as considerations for the hall directors in this study as they navigated their tasks through prioritization.

Calvert et al. (2011) suggested that the first obligation of the worker was influenced by professional identity and the second obligation stemmed from expectations by outside authority. While both of these considerations arose for hall directors, the ordering is less clear. Hall directors spoke to three major priorities, critical issue response often encompassing student safety, supervision of their undergraduate and graduate staff, and fulfilling the administrative expectations put upon them by external authorities. While the professional identity of a hall director very much drives their priority to invest time in responding to critical student issues and engaging in supervisory functions with their student staff, hall directors prioritized the needs of

external authorities to a greater degree than Calvert et al. seemed to suggest would be the case. A factor that may be impacting this divergence in results, among many, is the fact that in Calvert et al.'s study, time for academic staff was not fixed (staff were salaried), and in this study prioritization became more strictly required as time was fixed at 40 hours in a week. This makes a direct comparison complicated. It is noteworthy that prioritization and professional identity are common themes between these two studies.

In addition to a shared theme of prioritization, Calvert et al. (2011) explored how efficiency impacts available time on task. This emerged as a concept influencing worker performance for some hall directors as well. Specifically, one hall director who had been hourly for only the past year of a multiple-year experience as a salaried hall director at the same institution explained that the ability to manage many tasks came as a result of experience and the efficiencies that were developed due to that experience. A number of hall directors suggested that informal student contact, a high-value obligation stemming from their professional identity as student affairs practitioners, was deprioritized in an hourly work environment. More time could be spent with students if hall directors could become more efficient in completing other priorities. This study expands upon Calvert et al.'s findings that efficiency impacts worker performance and is connected to professional identity. As Calvert et al.'s qualitative study of the work performance of academic staff exemplifies, work performance is a useful framework to view phenomena impacting workers in a university setting.

The findings that emerged from the narratives of the participants of this study can be viewed through the framework offered by the theory of worker performance, a theory by Blumberg and Pringle (1982). Viewing the responses offered by hall directors through this

theory created an opportunity to bring a more meaningful understanding of how a hall director's work performance is impacted by being hourly and having the mandated 40-hour workweek.

Willingness, one of the three tenants of Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance, connects to the aspects of being hourly that contributes to or detracts from a hall director's ability to perform. One of the first conclusions drawn from conducting and analyzing the interviews was that a majority of the hall directors preferred being hourly for reasons related to improved work-life balance. Hall directors who are happy with the context of their job, in this case, being designated hourly employees and therefore limited to a 40-hour workweek, was overall a positive contributor to hall directors being willing to continue to do the job in the future. Additionally, there were opportunities for hall directors to occasionally earn overtime compensation, which was also positively received by hall directors who spoke to a sense of value that their time performing was recognized by additional compensation as a result of working in excess of 40-hours in a single workweek.

Conversely, hall directors expressed feelings related to loss-of-control and a feeling that they did not have an ability to establish their own performance priorities that impacted their weekly work schedules in ways that were expressed in negative terms by a majority of the hall directors. This negative reaction to these aspects of the work context negatively impacts one's willingness to perform. What remains unclear is if these aspects of being an hourly hall director have an actual impact on a hall director's work performance given that other aspects improve willingness, such as work-life balance, which likely has a mitigating impact on reducing one's willingness to perform.

Opportunity, the second of three tenants of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), is the one tenant of their model of worker performance that is most clearly and directly impacted by hall directors becoming hourly employees. The simple reason that opportunity is most significantly impacted is that a salaried hall director has complete discretion to devote as many hours as they deem necessary to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of their job while an hourly hall director, given the mandates within the FLSA, is limited to a 40-hour workweek in most cases (or given overtime on occasion when approved to work beyond 40 hours in one week). So, in a residential life department that employs hourly hall directors, and does so in ways that remain true to the standards mandated by the FLSA, a hall director has a lack of work hours to devote to the job, as such, their opportunity to perform is constrained.

Additionally, a lack of understanding how work is to be defined impacts the opportunity hall directors have each week to perform. Narratives suggest a lack of understanding and consistency throughout the Minnesota State University System in clearly defining what is considered work. Defining what should count towards a 40-hour workweek, and what is considered incidental or *de minimis*, and therefore would not count towards the 40-hour workweek is a factor impacting performance. There is a clear and significant hesitation on the part of hall directors throughout the Minnesota State University System to request overtime, so the opportunity to work primarily falls within a 40-hour workweek, and that timeframe becomes a focal point for hourly hall directors.

Lastly, it became clear that supervisors either create or detract from a hall director's opportunity to perform by their level of presence and through the level of support they offer during the transition. Being clear with their expectations for performance and offering a clear

definition of the work that is expected of hall directors also impacts the opportunity hall directors have to perform. Hall directors spoke to needing flexibility and support, but also needing autonomy to be able to navigate the framework that accompanies being an hourly employee. Hall directors also need work to be clearly defined; such as what counts as work and what activities would be more associated with professional identity, such as leadership involvement in professional organizations.

Capacity, the third tenant of Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance relates to the professional identity of a hall director, an identity that is impacted by hall directors "working where they live" (a phrase used by multiple participants) in order to directly engage with students. A hall director's professional identity also has at its core a drive to connect directly with students through relationship building activities. Hall directors are motivated to connect with students in ways that contribute to their success as college students. Given that hourly hall directors have more limited opportunities to connect with students in a 40-hour workweek, the capacity of the hall director needs to grow in order for hall directors to perform at a high level in areas that satisfy their professional identity.

Departmental planning can improve a hall director's capacity at the initial planning stages of a transition to hourly employment status. Planning can also improve capacity beyond the initial transition so that the work that is expected of hall directors can be performed as efficiently as possible. Efforts by supervisors to improve the skills of hall directors to perform their responsibilities, and that offer the necessary coaching to hall directors to increase efficiency in carrying out their expected responsibilities, contributes to increasing the capacity of the hall directors. This improves their ability to perform in their roles in ways that align with the

professional identity that has been instilled in hall directors through the professionalization process over the span of their combined graduate experiences and professional careers.

To understand the impact on hall directors who have become hourly employees in the Minnesota State University System, hall directors were asked to explore and discuss with the researcher their perspective on how their ability to perform was impacted by changing to hourly employment status. Previous research that also focused on worker performance, most importantly the meta-analysis of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), offered a framework to view the experiences of the hall directors who participated in this study. That analysis revealed that willingness has improved, but opportunity has declined. Blumberg and Pringle asserted that all three elements of worker performance, including willingness, opportunity, and capacity intersect and worker performance must be understood by examining it through all three lenses. Given that assertion, to strive to maintain a work performance by hourly hall directors that is on par with salaried hall directors, increasing the capacity of hall directors to perform in a more limited 40-hour workweek, in conjunction with the increased willingness that hall directors expressed having regarding their hourly status, may be key to compensating for the decrease in opportunity that hourly hall directors have to perform.

Supervisors and leaders who find they are navigating a salaried-to-hourly staffing change in the future should understand that a focus on increasing the capacity of their hall directors would be key to minimizing a lack of performance by their hourly hall directors. Increasing capacity includes improving schedule management skills, communication skills, and prioritization skills, along with a focus on improving the efficiency of hall directors in high priority tasks. While there are certainly limitations regarding transferability of the findings of a

qualitative study, the context offered should serve the residential life profession in ways that contribute positively to the impact that hall directors continue to have on the students they serve.

Limitations

A hope for this study has been that it would produce results and analysis that would contribute to understanding the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees. The transferability of this study, as noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), is based off the thick description of the narratives provided by the hall directors participating in this study that should allow others to make extrapolations from those narratives and apply them to the context of their situation. Future changes to the FLSA could necessitate transitions by other salaried higher education administrators to hourly employment status.

This study was impacted by the ongoing adjustments to the FLSA that occurred throughout the early stages of this study and varying interpretations of the FLSA by Human Resource Professionals in the Minnesota State University System. This created uncertainty at the hall director and supervisor levels within the Minnesota State University System in how to implement transitioning staff from salaried to hourly status. The lack of clear direction caused supervisors at different institutions to implement the transition with varying understandings of the FLSA. Participants in this study were not all working from the same understanding of what was expected of them in order to comply with their new hourly employment status at the time that interviews occurred. Without a uniform understanding of what was expected of hall directors in complying with their new hourly employment status, differences in the experiences of hall directors at one school versus another within the Minnesota State System were apparent during the interview stage of this study.

Another limitation relates to the population that was initially identified for this study and the sample that was ultimately involved in the qualitative interviews conducted. Delays to carrying out the new duties test reviews throughout the Minnesota State University System took place and resulted in a much slower pace than was initially anticipated. As a result, by June 2018, at the time the interviews were conducted, instead of having six universities with hourly hall directors, there were only three. Of the three institutions that did not have hourly hall directors, the cause at two of those institutions was that the Minnesota State University System had not yet carried out the duties test. The result of this delay likely decreased the participation rate since those two institutions are likely to have hourly hall directors in the future.

Regarding the population of this study that was available in June 2018 to be interviewed, the sample of hall directors who participated from the three institutions that had hourly hall directors had job descriptions, departmental cultures, and supervision teams that were different from one another. One institution, in particular, had a number of hall directors who participated in this study representing it. Based on comments by each of those hall directors, there were university-wide financial issues coming as a result of dropping enrollment that may have had an impact on the experience of those hall directors that transitioned to hourly status that may impact the transferability of their experiences. As an example, in an institution in financial crisis, the availability of additional funds to pay staff overtime does not align with the potential desire to offer overtime pay so that hall directors could perform with increased opportunity. Compounding that issue was a sentiment expressed by participating hall directors that during the financial crisis that had been persisting for multiple years, staffing levels had been on the decline. Being a hall director in a department that is understaffed and then also having work-

hours cut as a result of transitioning to hourly status, compounds the opportunity to perform in ways that impact the transferability of their experience as hourly employees to other institutions. With that said, what is reassuring is that the narratives offered by these hall directors were consistent and reached a saturation point that aligned with the participants of this study from the other two institutions. This should improve the ability to extrapolate from the findings in this study despite the extenuating financial crisis at one of the represented institutions.

Finally, the research questions for this study focused narrowly on the impact on hall directors and on the work performance of hall directors. This limited the scope of the interviews to a degree that did not bring focus to the impact on students to a more significant degree. That creates an opportunity for future research that would connect this study to students in more direct ways. There are other implications for future research that emerge from this study.

Implications for Research

There are a number of questions that arose in analyzing the narratives offered by the participants of this study. The narratives were rich in detail and demonstrated that all of the hall directors were still making meaning of their experience as hourly hall directors. As such, the qualitative interview setting served as a reflective opportunity; so much so that a couple participants commented on valuing the opportunity to take time to reflect about their experience due to their participation in this study. Twelve of the thirteen participants had completed their first academic year (two semesters) as hourly hall directors and one had completed one semester as an hourly hall director. The perspective of all participants in responding to the questions asked is that of individuals still in transition. The same interview protocol used at a future point, 3-4 years in the future, would offer an opportunity to analyze the experience of hourly hall

directors who were accustomed to the experience of being hourly. It would be interesting to compare the narratives when being hourly was more commonplace than it is currently. There are additional opportunities for research that would build on what has been explored in this study.

Regarding the impact on hall directors, there would be benefit to exploring how the professional development of hall directors is impacted. Relatedly, is the level of involvement in professional organizations and attending professional conferences impacted by being limited to a 40-hour workweek? Early indications suggest there may be an impact in these areas, however, that sentiment is inconclusive given that hall directors who commented on professional development opportunities were speculating what their involvement would be in the future. In 3-4 years, it would be valuable to the residential life profession to have a sense of the long-term impact on a hall director's professional development and professional engagement levels.

Beyond exploring the impact on professional development and engagement, examining what the impact will be on the retention of hall directors in the role and building on previous studies that addressed retention would be valuable. A look at retention, a few years in the future, will address concerns currently suggested in the literature regarding the recruitment and retention of hall directors. Comments made by hall directors in this study suggested that being hourly may positively impact retention. Testing this hypothesis in a quantitative study a few years in the future would be a straightforward and beneficial study.

Moving beyond the hall director role, future studies examining the impact on mid-level managers in the residential life field would offer valuable insight into how to better support a hall director's work performance. Mid-level residential life staff may also transition to hourly status, as is already emerging as a reality in the Minnesota State University System, which creates

opportunities to explore the impact on staff in those positions and their work performance using the same framework that undergirds this study. Additionally, mid-level supervisors impact the work performance of hall directors given their role in capacity building (such as training efforts), opportunity-creating/limiting (such as increasing or decreasing work output expectations), and even willingness influencing (such as establishing a positive work environment). In order to have a more complete picture of the impact on work performance (and in turn, the impact on students), exploring the experiences of those who supervise hall directors would be beneficial. There is also an opportunity to let Kolsaker's (2008) assertion that managerialism is increasing in higher education guide a study on those who supervise hall directors.

Lastly, Kezar's (2013) study of the work performance of non-tenure track faculty explored the impact of cultural elements of the organization and how each of her four categorical themes that serve to position the culture of a department into a category (such as: destructive, neutral, inclusive, or learning) was not addressed through this study. A follow-up examination of the experience of hourly hall directors could build more specifically from Kezar's framework of worker performance, which includes the afore mentioned cultural classifications, to make-meaning of the experience that hall directors are having in a specific department. A qualitative case study would be an appropriate research method by which to explore this further. Comments were made by at least two hall directors (at two different institutions) that downplayed the impact on some elements of their work performance as resulting from being hourly, and instead suggested that cultural elements within their department were more impactful on their experience as hall directors than their status as hourly workers.

Departments that can promote a positive culture, such as Kezar's (2013) "learning culture" and promote the work-life balance aspect of being hourly that emerged in this study as a positive aspect of being an hourly hall director, have opportunities to market their positions in ways that would positively impact the recruitment and the retention of hall directors in their organization. Finding the highest quality hall directors to serve their students is often a priority for residential life leaders. Understanding how to promote an organizations culture combined with promoting the positive experiences that hourly hall directors have is an opportunity to market one's department to hall director candidates in ways that would contribute to hiring a strong staff.

This study has resulted in the emergence of a number of new implications for future research focused on both the hall director position and on residential life operations. Implications for the underlying theory guiding this study also emerged.

Implications for Theory

The theory of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) and expanded upon by Kezar (2013) is relevant to understanding how worker performance has been impacted by hall directors becoming hourly employees. By using this framework to understand how limiting the workweek of hall directors would impact work performance is also useful in the creation of a strategy to attempt to mitigate the impact on hall directors spending less informal time with students, a result of hall directors prioritizing other areas of their role. Kezar expanded an understanding of Blumberg and Pringle's original theory of worker performance in ways that fit with the experience that hall directors had while also addressing cultural elements that impact opportunity to perform. However, Kezar's expansion, which included classifying an

organization's culture into one of four categories (destructive, neutral, inclusive, and learning), did not bear out in the interview data.

Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) assertion that worker performance can be understood by breaking down the examination of worker performance into three elements, including willingness, capacity, and opportunity, was useful in guiding the exploration of the experience of hall directors during the interview stage of this research project. New interpretations of the duties test of the FLSA by the Minnesota State University System clearly impacted the opportunity that hall directors had to perform and fit with Blumberg and Pringle's assertion that environmental changes impact the opportunity element of worker performance. Kezar (2013) flushed out an understanding of the opportunity element further by connecting internal policies, practices, and procedures to the opportunity element of this model. The change made by the Minnesota State University System clearly impacted opportunity by limiting the workweek of hall directors to 40 hours. Kezar further asserted that organizational leaders influence the implementation of policy, the experience at one institution, where there was a change in the supervision team above the hall directors between the planning and implementation stages of the transition of hall directors to hourly supports this assertion. This was driven home by the apparent lack of attention of the shift to hourly status for one hall director in particular, who was new to the organization and missed the planning stages of the transition. That hall director experienced the transition differently due to her varying level of understanding of the shift given the decreased level of attention of the supervisor in addressing how the transition should impact the work hours available to hall directors.

With an understanding that the opportunity of hall directors to perform had been limited by the decreased work hours available to them, brings a shift in focus to how Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance can be used to develop strategies to overcome deficiencies in one element of worker performance by improving aspects of the other two elements of worker performance. Using Blumberg and Pringles theory in this way to develop a supervision strategy that improves the capacity of hall directors to perform, a recommendation that has emerged from the finding that hall directors have less opportunity to perform which is having a negative impact on their ability to build informal relationships with students, may create research opportunities to further expand this theory of worker performance.

Additionally, expanding on Kezar's (2013) contribution to understanding worker performance is also an opportunity for future research. The focus of the interview questions and the resulting narratives offered by the hall directors participating in this study did not elicit narratives that connected in specific ways to the culture of the department and the resulting impact that various cultures would have on the opportunity for hall directors to perform. While Kezar suggested that culture would impact opportunity, that conclusion did not connect to the experiences hall directors had at the three institutions represented in this study. While this might suggest that Kezar's assertion that culture impacts opportunity is not as relevant for the hall director experience in this situation, it may also suggest that the interview questions were not aligned well with exploring this aspect of the opportunity element of the worker performance model that Kezar expanded in her research on non-tenure track faculty.

Blumberg and Pringle (1982) cautioned that worker performance could not be understood simply by looking and the relationships of a few simple variables and then drawing conclusions

from those simple comparisons. This is why Blumberg and Pringle rejected notions such as performance = F(ability x motivation), a widely accepted notion in the research of worker performance at the time of their meta-analysis of research on worker performance. The experiences of hall directors transitioning to hourly employment status support the concept that understanding work performance is complex. Blumberg and Pringle's theory of worker performance offers a broad framework to explore worker performance through the lenses of capacity (which includes ability), willingness (which includes motivation), and opportunity (which is fundamental to the experience of hourly hall directors being limited to a 40-hour workweek). Using their broad theory, as Kezar (2013) did, contributes to the understanding of each of the three elements of worker performance (capacity, willingness, and opportunity). Future researchers interested in basing their study of work performance of other groups of workers on the theoretical framework offered by Blumberg and Pringle will continue to expand an understanding of what factors impact work performance and in what ways those factors do so.

Implications for Practice

Blumberg and Pringle (1982) said "the act of performing gives one experience on the job, which over time may improve the individual's skills or abilities (elements of capacity)" (p. 565). What has come to be understood through this study of the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees is that increasing capacity of hall directors to perform more efficiently and effectively in a 40-hour workweek will create opportunities for hall directors to invest more time building connections with students. The connections that hall directors have with students have a meaningful impact on a student's college experience. Students who are well connected to their university, through the connections they make with professional staff including hall directors, are

more likely to be successful and be retained at a university. This is especially true for low-income, first-generation, and students from minority backgrounds.

The narratives offered by the hall directors suggest that students are being impacted by hall directors being limited to a 40-hour workweek, as regulated under the FLSA for hourly employees. Hall directors reflecting on their limited work hours suggested that they needed to be more intentional about their time to account for a diminished physical presence with students and an increased reliance on student staff to connect with students in ways that hall directors can no longer afford to given limited work hours. Within the first year of hall directors becoming hourly employees they are recognizing a need they have to increase their capacity to perform. The motivation to do so comes from a recognition that while hall directors continue to invest time in student safety and in following up on student conduct and discipline, those and other higher priorities are coming at the expense of less informal contact and relationship building activities with students, such as attending campus events with students and advising students in hall government-type organizations. Hall directors spoke to increasing incidents of referring students to other staff more quickly than they did prior as well as “bumping” a student in need of attention to another day; in both cases hall directors have concerns with this new reality regarding their ability to spend time with students when students are seeking them out. Student staff, like students, are also experiencing a decreased level of contact with their hall directors.

Hall directors are prioritizing supervision activities with their student staff, including investing time in one-to-one meetings with student staff. Yet, hall directors are spending less time at programs and activities, which is resulting in undergraduate and graduate student staff managing those activities more autonomously, without the higher level of presence that salaried

hall directors were having at these activities. Hall directors are more reliant on student staff to inform them of student issues that are arising in a hall director's residence community because hall directors themselves are less physically present to engage with students in their residence community in the same way that a salaried hall director could. This is increasing the vitality of the student staff role and therefore serves to position staff supervision efforts (including staff meetings and one-to-one supervision meetings) to be of high priority for hall directors. This is an example of hall directors having an increased capacity to monitor their residence community through more targeted supervision efforts with the undergraduate and graduate staff who are at the front lines when it comes to direct contact with students living in a residence community. A hall director can maintain a satisfactory level of oversight of a residence community through clear and open communication with student staff, including setting clear expectations for student staff for what is required of them related to community development and communication with the hall director. Hall directors who position their student staff effectively are impacting the opportunity the hall director has to be engaged with the residents that live in their residence community, despite the reality that a hall director is less physically present within the residence community and less able to devote unlimited amounts of time directly with student staff. As hall directors navigate these new supervision strategies they are developing new professional skills.

Hall directors who have recently been designated to an hourly employment status spoke to a number of skills that they have learned to enhance in order to perform effectively while being limited to a 40-hour workweek. Hall directors commented on a more intense focus on managing their schedules, prioritizing tasks, and assigning tasks allotments of time while pre-planning out their workweek, all in order to be able to address student needs and fulfill their

work responsibilities in a 40-hour workweek. Additionally, hall directors commented on how they needed to manage their emotions regarding their work performance by letting go of incomplete tasks, projects, and initiatives as available work hours expired. Hall directors also said they were learning to communicate their limitations to students and others in ways that sent a caring message. In order to meet work performance expectations those hall directors either had of themselves or that were expected of them by others, delegation became a more necessary skill that hall directors needed to develop in order to manage their work performance successfully. Delegation is one reason why the impact of hall directors becoming hourly employees was not confined to hall directors and their students, but also included peers and other university staff.

Peers are likely the first to experience a change in how the workload of one hall director can have an impact on another hall director. Instead of a hall director absorbing critical issues into their workday, regardless of hours worked that day as was often the case for salaried hall directors, now the workload of one hall director may impact another when a critical issue demands attention and the initial hall director involved does not have the time to see that critical issue to a reasonable conclusion. Beyond peers being impacted differently by a hall director's hourly status, others on campus may be impacted as well.

Hall directors acknowledge a desire to continue to build relationships across campus, a challenge that even salaried hall directors have faced, which is now compounded for hall directors limited to a 40-hour workweek. Some hall directors also acknowledge a trade-off that occurs when devoting time to participating in campus-wide committees or other shared governance activities. Time spent on those activities results in the deprioritization of other aspects of the hall director role in order to maintain the 40-hour workweek. For some hall

directors this means further isolation from others across campus. In addition, other faculty and staff may have a more difficult time communicating in a timely manner with hall directors, given strict-work hours and the priorities of a hall director on a particular day. University personnel are impacted as are departmental and university processes.

At least during the first year, hall directors commented on a lack of time and ability to be involved in long-range strategic planning and other collaborative planning efforts at the department and university level. In some ways, this is problematic as hall directors also commented on the need for the position description and the evaluation process for hall directors to adjust given the new reality of their hourly employment status. Yet, without time to engage with these strategic initiatives, the needed adjustments were not forthcoming. Hall directors taking on extra duties or assignments will require overtime hours that come at a cost to departmental and potentially other university budgets. Every task that a hall director is expected to accomplish has to be connected to a factor of time to do that task in ways that fit within a 40-hour workweek or that increases the hours available to the hall director by offering compensatory time. The process of navigating time on task, examining position descriptions in order to right-size the role given new time constraints, and adjusting evaluation processes to reflect a limited opportunity to perform, are all processes that may involve human resource staff and other university leaders beyond the residential life department. The work schedule of a hall director is very clearly having an impact beyond the hall director role itself.

In analyzing the narratives of the thirteen hall directors who participated in this study, three priorities for where hall directors devote time has become clear, as has one major area of deprioritization. It appears that some hall directors are “chunking” their schedule in order to

accomplish these top priorities. Chunking of their work schedule means that hall directors are taking long periods (such as one to two hours) of time off as unpaid time throughout the day and early evening in order to be available during times when they can fulfill the priorities of the role. Some (not all) hall directors suggested that this chunking of the work schedule does not contribute to positive work-life balance, as the unpaid time off during the day stretches out workdays throughout the workweek. Building the capacity of hall directors to manage their work schedules in ways that mitigate this daily chunking of their schedule is an opportunity for improving the experience of hourly hall directors in the future.

The priorities that hall directors are building their workweek schedules around include time to be available to respond to student crisis and critical issues, time spent supervising student staff, and time spent administrating processes with clear timelines and deadlines, such as the university conduct process that many hall directors have a role in. With these areas being top priorities, where hall directors aim to achieve a high level of performance that would be similar to that of a salaried hall director, the most common area of deprioritization for hall directors includes involvement in activities and spending time making contact with students more informally. While hall directors are finding ways to mitigate the impact of less time spent connecting with students (such as through delegating these activities increasingly to undergraduate and graduate staff) the long-term implication on student success is worth monitoring. Additionally, given that hall directors are engaged in prioritization and schedule management in increasing amounts of time, a portion of the 40-hour workweek is set aside for planning, adjusting, and recording of time. Growing the capacity of hall directors' skill development in these areas is needed so that more time can be devoted to student contact that

happens beyond the formal functions of crisis response, staff supervision, and administrating various processes.

Moving forward, to mitigate the loss of opportunity that hall directors have to connect with students, and to accompany the increase in the willingness of hourly hall directors to continue in these roles, supervisors should look to improve the capacity of hall directors to perform. An increase in this element of work performance may contribute to overall positive gains in worker performance. Specifically, targeting increased efficiencies in the three main priorities that hall directors indicated they spend their available time working on (critical student issue and safety response, staff supervision efforts, and administrative efforts) may increase the capacity of hall directors and create increased opportunity to spend more time on areas that have been deprioritized, including informal contact and relationship building with students.

While there have been some downsides with hall directors becoming hourly employees, such as reduced time connecting directly with students in the more informal opportunities available to hall directors to do so, the reaction to this change by hall directors has been positive. An implication for the residential life profession is learning to leverage the work status of hourly hall directors to improve the recruitment and retention of those in the hall director position. Given that less than 25% of hall directors in this study preferred to be salaried, there is a real opportunity for departments with hourly hall directors to market hourly positions. The marketing strategy deployed should focus on the benefits to potential employees such as an ability to have a strong work-life balance in the hourly hall director position. Additionally, when hall directors are expected to work beyond 40 hours in a workweek, promoting the fact that they receive overtime compensation for working beyond 40 hours is a marketing advantage that institutions

filling salaried hall director roles do not have. Given that a number of hall directors commented on their preference to remain in hourly residential life roles in the future, there is a real possibility that the long-term impact of hall directors being hourly will positively impact the retention of hall directors in these roles. Given that hall director retention has been a focus and at times a concern that has emerged from previous research on the hall director role, the experiences of hourly hall directors could be noteworthy regarding the issue of retention within the hall director role.

Once hall directors have been hired into hourly roles the findings from this study suggest that supervisors need to work to clearly define what is considered work and supervisors also should put a strict emphasis on the 40-hour workweek, as is demanded by the FLSA. There seems to be a lack of clarity at times when it comes to understanding what is work and there appears to be varying degrees of focus on the 40-hour workweek for hourly hall directors in the Minnesota State University System; both of these findings are concerning and could open a residential life operation up for litigation under the FLSA. Residential life leaders who oversee hourly hall directors need to further define how socialization with students while participating in campus activities as a member of a university community, and certainly how responding to unexpected student issues, intersects with the definition of work that falls within the guidelines of the FLSA. Supervisors who do this while being engaged with their hall directors, striving for visibility to be aware of the work performance of their hall directors, and offering those hall directors flexibility and understanding as they navigate their role under an hourly employment status, are necessary functions of a supervisor of a hall director in hourly employment status. While there are certainly new challenges for the residential life profession to overcome due to an

increasing number of hall directors becoming hourly employees, overall, there is real optimism that these changes will have an overall positive impact on the profession. Certainly, the hall directors participating in this study expressed more optimism than pessimism regarding their new status as hourly employees.

Overall, hall directors favored being hourly employees which is mostly due to the improved work-life balance that hall directors experienced over what they experienced or what they expected to experience as salaried hall directors. With that said, hall directors belong to a profession that values direct student contact. Hall directors and their supervisors are struggling to navigate informal contact with students within the forty-hour workweek. Although these challenges do not supersede the gratification many of the participants of this study expressed as it relates to not working extended periods of time without getting paid, there is still a sense of loss experienced by most hall directors regarding professional activities they are declining.

More clarity is needed so that hourly hall directors have a clearer understanding of activities that are defined as work and activities that are more aligned with their professional identity as a residential life professional. Turning down invitations to advise or speak at student organization-related events, limiting professional development opportunities (especially ones that require extensive traveling), and limiting attendance at campus activities are all reductions that hall directors are making so their professional activities fit within a 40-hour workweek. However, many of these activities are driven by their professional identity and are not necessarily activities specific to their job descriptions. Clarity offered to hourly hall directors that broadly defines activities that fall within their professional identity and narrowly defining their job responsibilities would enhance the ability of an hourly hall director to comply with the

40-hour workweek while still engaging in activities more broadly related to their professional identity. There is room for hall directors to engage as residential life professionals in professional development and even campus activities that are not job related and therefore could take place outside the confines of the 40-hour workweek.

Hall directors and their supervisors must continue to learn more about the expectations outlined by the Department of Labor through the FLSA. Ongoing consultation with university and system-level legal counsel, university and system-level HR professionals, and reading and reviewing the literature available from the Department of Labor and other sources are helpful to hall directors and their supervisors in navigating this professional transition in ways that align with regulations yet also afford hall directors an opportunity to engage in activities that align with their professional identity. As Dori Leland, the Enterprise Director for Employee Classification and Compensation with Minnesota Management and Budget, said, “if one person files a complaint it is very easy for it to become a class action lawsuit” because the State of Minnesota can be sued by private parties and legal fees are covered in successful suits (D. Leland, personal communication, May 2, 2018). Defining work in ways that align with the FLSA needs to become a new priority for residential life department supervisors. It is no longer appropriate to simply continue treating hall directors as they once did. It is also no longer appropriate for supervisors and residential life leaders to avoid addressing issues related to defining work, as doing so leaves the institution open for litigation that has the potential to reach extraordinary levels of cost. Another potentially negative outcome of avoiding addressing the intersection of professional identity and defining work that should fall within a 40-hour workweek is that many hall directors may hamper their engagement in professional development

activities; the long-term impact of a new generation of hall directors deprioritizing their professional development and activities associated with their professional identity could very well become a barrier to future career growth. Salaried hall directors who engage more in activities related to their professional identity could be more successful in obtaining career advancements. This long-term implication is an important consideration as supervisors and hall directors navigate complying with the 40-hour workweek by clearly defining work in ways that offers a distinction between work and professional activities.

Hall directors who are left to define work with little guidance from the leaders of their institutions and supervisors who do not actively seek guidance on standards they need to communicate with their staff regarding work hours and defining which activities are considered to be compensable work time are putting their institutions at great financial risk. According to Dori Leland, a legal expert who now represents the State of Minnesota in FLSA related matters, and who previously represented clients who successfully sued the State of Minnesota under FLSA grounds, stated, “employers, who often do things wrong unintentionally” are liable for litigation and “every hour of work performed must be paid” (D. Leland, personal communication, May 2, 2018). Dori Leland also explained “there is no provision in the law to allow [an employee] to volunteer for work.” According to Leland, in the case of a successful suit under the FLSA, an employer is responsible for back pay, and if clear records of time worked were not kept, as is often the case, the back pay is established simply based off the memory of the employee.

Given the success rate of litigation under the FLSA and the change in culture being experienced by hall directors and those who supervise them, a high level of engagement in the

process of transitioning hall directors to hourly employment status is encouraged. Together, employees and supervisors must work in consultation with other campus, system, and state-level personnel experienced in navigating the “grey areas” of the definition of work so that newly established hourly employees are successfully navigating a new work-status while also being free to engage in their professional activities as student affairs practitioners.

Conclusions

The basis of chapter five is to discuss the answers to the research questions guiding this study, which include: what has been the impact on hall directors transitioning to hourly employees and how does changing hall directors to hourly employment status impact their work performance? Analyzing the narratives offered by the thirteen participants of this study, all of whom had been an hourly hall director for at least the previous one semester at minimum, and most for a year, revealed key findings about the experience hall directors have as hourly employees.

Work-life balance was a common response by hourly hall directors, an aspect of being a hall director that significantly differentiates the experience an hourly hall director has when compared to a salaried hall director. This finding suggests a revolutionary impact on the hall director experience, given previous research findings that suggested concerns regarding the retention challenges that are faced by departments that employ salaried hall directors. It appears that work-life balance quickly shifts from being a dissatisfier for salaried hall directors to a satisfier for hourly hall directors. This reality certainly creates an opportunity to positively market the work-life balance aspect of the hourly hall director position, especially during search and hiring processes. Additionally, the long-term impact of this positive outcome raises

questions since hall directors socialized into residential life as hourly employees will eventually be taking on more advanced roles in residential life and student affairs that are salaried. How will these individuals react to the shifting framework of performing one's job until time expires to performing one's job until the job is done? Examining the long-term impact of this, especially if the hourly hall director position becomes more common nation-wide, is an opportunity for future research.

Other key findings emerging from the narratives offered by the hall directors involved in this study showcase what become the top priorities for hourly hall directors and what becomes deprioritized given that the FLSA mandates hourly employees work a 40-hour workweek. The FLSA stipulates that working beyond 40 hours means hall directors would become eligible for overtime compensation at 1.5 times the regular rate of pay. Paying hall directors additional compensation, although occurred occasionally, was not normative of the experiences of the hall directors at the three institutions represented in this study. As a result of primarily being required to limit work hours to 40 in a workweek, hall directors prioritized student safety and critical issue response, staff supervision, and fulfilling administrative obligations, especially when others were reliant on the hall director to complete certain work tasks in order for them to proceed with their own work tasks after the hall director. While these top priorities may very well be the same for salaried hall directors, what became clear in this study, and what differentiates hourly hall directors from salaried hall directors, is that hourly hall directors must also deprioritize aspects of their job descriptions and professional responsibilities. While serving students and having significant contact with students falls within the professional identity of all hall directors, hourly hall directors are deprioritizing informal contact with students in order to

maintain the mandated 40-hour workweek. This finding suggests that if hourly employment status becomes more prevalent nation-wide, a shift in the professional identity of a hall director is likely to occur. Direct and frequent student contact will have a less prominent place within that new professional identity.

Increased managerialism in higher education, at a cost to autonomy and collegiality, is another aspect that emerged in analyzing the experiences of the hourly hall directors participating in this study. Given that hourly hall directors must prioritize aspects of their roles and deprioritize other aspects of their job descriptions, overall the result is more limited work performance in these areas of deprioritization. Supervisors could become more involved in priority setting and adding structures to how hall directors fulfill their priorities. Supervisors could also become more involved in monitoring work performance. While managerialism did not emerge as a factor in reducing the willingness of individuals to continue to work as hall directors in hourly roles, this finding does suggest that the professional identity of hourly hall directors could morph over time in ways that are not likely to align with the professional identity that salaried hall directors have been acculturated into up to this point. One hall director associated being hourly after having been salaried as being similar to an hourly role in retail. That association should suggest caution to residential life leaders who are becoming more managerialistic, to not lose the aspects of the higher education environment that have historically celebrated collegiality over managerialism. Students being served by hall directors who start to see their professional identity aligning more with retail workers and less with faculty members raises serious concerns about the future of the residential life profession and the ability of the profession to meet the increasingly complex needs of the students it serves.

The theory of worker performance offered by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) offers residential life leaders and supervisors a framework to move forward in molding how hall directors should perform in the future that is in keeping with the professional identity of the hall director role that has been historically familiar. It is clear that the opportunity to perform has been limited, by either changes to the FLSA or changes in interpreting the FLSA that results in hall directors transitioning from salaried employees to hourly employment status, due primarily to the mandated 40-hour workweek and the potential for litigation holding universities accountable to making sure their employees receive overtime compensation for any time worked above 40 hours in a given workweek. For hall directors to continue to serve students to the degree espoused within their professional identity, where connecting with students and helping them achieve academic and personal success is at the core, Blumberg and Pringle's theory offers a path forward by building the capacity of hall directors to perform to help overcome a loss of opportunity to perform due to the limited hours in a workweek. The narratives offered by the hall directors in this study suggest that willingness to perform has already been improved due to the positive reaction hall directors are having as it relates to work-life balance. The framework offered by Blumberg and Pringle to understand worker performance can be interpreted to suggest a narrow focus on helping hall directors perform does not necessarily need to result in increased managerialism and further deprofessionalization of the hall director role.

In offering caution to react to a changing employment status from salaried to hourly, leaders overseeing a change in exemption status should consider focusing on clearly defining what is work and what is professional development activities that fall outside the job description of new hourly employees. While the FLSA does not afford workers the opportunity to volunteer

to do work, the FLSA does not prevent hourly workers from engaging in their profession in ways that are not associated with the job description. It was clear that some of the participants of this study struggled with deciding how to participate in professional development experiences while being an hourly employee. While it is not so clear as to assert that professional development should not occur on paid time, as there are many instances where professional development may be associated with the job responsibilities of an hourly worker, there are opportunities for professional improvement activities that are within the boundaries of one's identity as a professional and outside the confines of the job description. Therefore, workers should have the latitude to freely participate in professional development activities as unpaid time. For example, taking courses for credit to advance one's career, taking on responsibilities in a professional organization, or serving as a keynote speaker by invitation at a conference are all examples of professional development activities that may not fall within the confines of an hourly employee's job responsibilities and therefore an hourly worker could freely choose to participate in outside their paid workweek.

While most participants in this study found work-life balance to be an overwhelmingly positive satisfier and therefore about three-quarters of participants would choose to remain in an hourly residential life position after having experienced such a position for more than a semester, most participants also lamented the loss of informal contact with students. Capacity improving activities such as training and professional development experiences aimed at new hourly employees that help hourly employees learn skills to better manage their work schedules will create capacity to give them more contact with students. This will increase the overall job satisfaction of hourly student affairs workers. In some ways there is a paradox that exists with

hourly employees in a student affairs setting: a desire for increased work-life balance that comes from no longer needing to work extended hours (45, 50, 55 hours per week), versus a frustration in not being able to spend time doing the sort of activities with students that they are driven to do given their professional identity as student affairs practitioners. Student contact related activities, at least initially, become lower on the list of priorities in a 40-hour workweek. While this paradox is paramount at the onset of one's transition from salaried to hourly status, the experiences of the participants in this study suggest that hourly workers find ways to navigate the frustrating aspects of this over the first few months and emerge with an overall positive view of their status as hourly employees.

The residential life profession and the identity that residential life professionals espouse will be impacted more positively by the shift to hourly employment status by entry-level professionals to a greater extent than initial reactions to the idea of becoming an hourly employee might suggest. Initial fears of deprofessionalization, overt managerialism (such as that found in the retail profession), and a diminished lack of autonomy and collegiality are not likely to become reality. Instead, the residential life profession will be one that has a focus on efficiency for the sake of not losing a core piece of that identity that currently exist—direct contact with students. The participants in this study displayed a motivation to improve their performance so that they could regain some initial lost time spent informally with students. The more experienced hall directors participating in this study commented on improved capacity that allowed them to focus time on students. All of this occurred while hall directors maintaining a 40-hour workweek or were compensated for overtime during select times of the year that are especially busy (such as staff training and student arrival to campus). As demonstrated in the

literature regarding hall director job satisfaction and high turnover rates, the residential life profession stands to gain by more entry-level professionals transitioning to hourly employment status. Many participants in this study commented that they foresaw themselves working in hall director roles longer. Some even commented that they would no longer consider these types of roles if they were salaried. These initial reactions (within the first year of being hourly) suggest long-term benefits to job satisfaction and turnover rates.

A goal in developing a study using a qualitative approach was to understand the experiences that hall directors had in transitioning to hourly (non-exempt) status and to offer research that would help future higher education leaders who suddenly found themselves needing to navigate a staff transition from salaried to hourly employment status. This study draws attention to the benefits of having an increased work-life balance. This finding is likely to be generalizable to other classifications of university employees shifting from salaried to hourly employment status. Having carried out this study from initial inception, through to data collection, then onto data analysis, and finally in offering a discussion of those results; I believe I have been successful in achieving the goal of exploring the experience of hourly hall directors that is generalizable to other roles.

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Appendices

A: Interview Guide

Introduction

Explain that interview will be audio recorded. Verify they are comfortable being recorded.

- Establish rapport, **introduce myself** (name, doctoral candidate at SCSU, working towards my dissertation)
- Explain **Purpose of Study**: To explore the impact of hall directors (-type roles) becoming hourly employees.
- **“The Why:”** Hall Directors in the Minnesota State University System, unlike many (not all) hall directors nationally are becoming hourly employees. I’d like to capture the impact of this for the benefit of future residential life and university leaders.
- Explain **Next Steps**:
 - Approximately a 1-hour interview, which will be recorded.
 - A written transcript of the interview will be created after our interview together.
 - You will be emailed a copy of the transcript. You will have 1 week to edit or strike out any statements you made that you do not want used for this study.
- **Confirm willingness to participate**: have interviewee read and sign *informed consent*.
 - To protect your anonymity, a pseudonym will be used instead of your real name.

Themes

Demographics and Background: Let’s start with some basic information about you and your role in residential life.

- What is your name, title and position, and the university you currently work at?
- How many years have you worked in your current role?
- Are you currently an hourly employee?
- How long have you been an hourly employee?
- Have you been in this position, or a similar position, as a salaried employee?
 - How long were you in this role as a salaried employee before becoming hourly?
- Describe your work history in Residential Life.

Transition Experiences

- In your department, what steps were taking to facilitate the change from salaried to hourly status?
 - When and how did you learn that your position would be transitioned to hourly status?
 - In what ways were you part of the planning process?

- How is your current experience as an hourly employee different than when you were salaried?
- Are there ways your current experience as an hourly employee is better because you are an hourly employee? Please describe.
- Are there ways your current experience as an hourly employee more difficult because you are hourly? Please describe.
- In what circumstances (if any) have you been offered overtime compensation in order to complete your duties?
 - In what circumstances have you been denied overtime?

Knowledge

- What aspects of the job do you accomplish well within a 40-hour work week?
- What aspects of the job have you had to de-prioritize given a 40-hour work week?
- What have you had to learn about being a successful hall director that you believe is different given the 40-hour work week schedule?
- In what ways are students impacted by you needing to work within a 40-hour workweek?
 - How does this make you feel?
- In what ways are other staff impacted by you needing to work within a 40-hour workweek?
 - How does this make you feel?

Feelings

- **Has being an hourly hall director (instead of a salaried hall director) impacted your willingness to remain in the position in the future?**
- In what ways do you feel that your role as a hall director is valued?
- In what ways do you feel that your role as a hall director is undervalued?

Opinion and Values

- **Do you believe hall directors should be hourly or salaried employees?**
 - **What are the reasons for your belief?**
- What about being a hall director is important to you, and that you do not want to give-up during the course of your 40-hour work week?
- What do you need from your supervisor to be successful within a 40-hour workweek?
 - Have you been offered this support?

Closing

This interview is wrapping-up. I have just a few more items.

- First, thank you for participating!
- Would you be agreeable to receive a call or email from me with follow-up questions?
 - What is your phone number?
- What is your email address so I can email you a copy of the transcript of this interview?

- Do you have any questions?
- Thanks again, our interview is now over. (*Turn off recording device*)

B: Informed Consent

The Impact of Residential Life Staff Becoming Hourly Employees in the Minnesota State University System *Consent to Participate*

You are invited to participate in a research study about live-on residential life hall director staff who shifted from a salaried employment status to an hourly employment status as a result of a reinterpretation of the duties test of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for these positions. Transitioning live-on residential life staff to hourly employment status occurred at institutions in the Minnesota State University System resulting in an unusual employment status for hall directors in the Minnesota State System compared to the national norm. Residence hall directors who became hourly employees will serve as the population targeted for this basic qualitative study.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact on work performance resulting from the transition to hourly employment status. Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) theory of worker performance serves as the theoretical framework guiding this study. Kezar's (2013) expansion of this theory of worker performance also contributes to the theoretical underpinning of this study.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an oral interview. Your responses will be recorded and transcribed.

Reviewing Your Transcript

After this interview concludes you will be given the opportunity to review the transcription of your interview and omit or adjust that transcription. You will be emailed that transcript and given a week to strike out or adjust any of your responses and resend me your updated interview transcript. It'll be assumed that if you do not respond by the deadline, that you approve of the information that was transcribed from your interview being used for analysis. Direct quotes may be used in the final manuscript, but your name and other identifying information will not be connected to your quotes used in the final manuscript. You are free to strike out any statements you made in the interview transcript, if you do so, those quotes will not be used.

Participating in Follow-Up Discussion

At the end of this interview you will be asked if you wish to receive a phone call or email with follow-up questions. You are free to decline further participation at any time, including when called or emailed follow-up questions. Follow-up discussions could consist of being given an opportunity to provide more information by answering follow-up questions. Follow-up conversations could also be used as an opportunity for me to share information about my analysis process with you and offer you the opportunity to correct any misunderstandings that I have made about your experience as an hourly hall director. Again, you are free to participate in or decline these opportunities at any time.

Benefits of the research

The purpose of this study is to offer context and insight on the impact when changes are made to the FLSA that cause university staff to switch classification from salaried to hourly employees. The narrative that emerges from this qualitative study will provide context for future higher education leaders faced with the changing employment status of employees who have historically been salaried and then must transition to overtime-eligible status. Non-exempt (overtime-eligible) professionals in a higher education setting are likely confined to performing their duties in the context of a 40-hour workweek. The impact of this on professional residential life employees will be explored.

Risks and discomforts

It is theoretically possible that comments made by participants of this study could be recognized by their closest colleagues and/or supervisors due to the unique way that the transition of residential life staff from salaried to hourly status is likely to have unfolded at each of the six campuses serving as the population for this study. Because this study is examining the impact of this transition through the theoretical framework of worker performance, it is possible that a supervisor who reads this study may make assumptions about the work performance of their staff. However, this risk is mitigated by the idea that supervisors should have a fairly accurate idea of how their supervisees perform to begin with. Supervisors having a prior understanding of the performance of their staff should limit the risk of any revelation that a supervisor might have if they read this study.

To mitigate the risk to you, you are free to omit any statement you made from the transcript of this interview that will be offered to you in the coming weeks.

Data collected will remain confidential.

Your name or the name of the institution you work for will not be included in the transcript, the manuscript, or any journal article produced from this research. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, your name will not be disclosed nor will identified direct quotes be used. During the interview you may refuse to answer any questions. After the completion of the interview you will receive your transcribed responses. At this point, if you wish to expand your responses or note omissions to the transcription, you may.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Jamie Van Boxel or his faculty Advisor, Dr. Steven McCullar.

Primary Investigator

Jamie Van Boxel

jlvanboxel@stcloudstate.eduFaculty Advisor

Dr. Steven McCullar

Director of Higher Education Graduate Programs

920-321-6316
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320-308-0908

Results of the study can be requested from the researcher or can be obtained from the St. Cloud State University Repository upon completion of this research project.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read the information provided above, and you have consent to participate.

Signature

Date

C: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: Jamie Van Boxel
Email: jlvanboxel@stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Expedited Review-1

Project Title: The Impact of Residential Life Staff Becoming Hourly Employees in the Minnesota State University System

Advisor: Steven McCullar

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Chair:

IRB Institutional Official: