

RUNNING HEAD: ENABLING MANAGER SUCCESS THROUGH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Manager Success Through Learning and Development

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Executive Summary

This study focuses on the experience of managers within the Division of Student Life at a mid-size, research-intensive university located in New England. Initial conversations with staff from the Division's Human Resource Office about challenges they faced included a lack of clarity around what it means to be a successful manager. Our client believes this lack of understanding of *what it means to be a manager* and *how managers come to this understanding* has affected manager learning and development within the Division. Further, our client believes this lack of clarity has contributed to role confusion for managers and inequitable supervisory experiences for employees while also limiting the Human Resources Office's ability to support managers' success effectively.

Our investigation aimed to articulate what it means to be a successful manager in the Division of Student Life, understand how managers learn, and explore existing learning opportunities for managers. This study aims to provide the Division of Student Life's Human Resource Office with recommendations for how they can best support manager success through learning and development.

The conceptualization of manager learning and development touches on many research fields, including human resources, psychology, education, and business. Traditional approaches to manager development often include one-time onboarding or isolated training programs designed to teach managers various content. Recent criticisms of these approaches have shifted some researchers to consider critically how people learn most effectively and apply those concepts to manager development (Watson, 2001). Researchers propose that instead of focusing on training managers on various skill sets, manager development should also consider how managers begin to know what it means to be a manager within their work's organizational context (Cunliffe, 2008). Thus, we focused our study on understanding how a manager, through formal and informal educational opportunities, learns to *become* and *know what it means* to be a manager within the Division of Student Life.

This study used employee interviews, existing artifacts, and survey data to investigate what it means to be an effective manager within the Division of Student Life through three main questions:

1. What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?
2. How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?
3. What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?

We found that, although employees of all levels share a similar perception of the necessary capacities of managers, employees use different language than the organization to describe the essential capacities for managers. Additionally, while managers articulate that they have difficulty learning what is expected of them, we found evidence that they learn informally through relationships and networks. We learned managers desire an increase in formal learning opportunities. While the organization offers opportunities at the institutional level, Division of Student Life managers feel they need opportunities specific to the DSL organizational context. Finally, although most managers feel encouraged to pursue development opportunities, they perceive they do not have sufficient time to dedicate to such activities.

We recommend our client develop tools, such as standardized job descriptions and a competency document specific to managers in the Division of Student Life, which clarify expectations and facilitate manager success. We also recommend our client design learning opportunities that lead toward manager knowing, ideally in the form of an integrated learning system that includes ongoing opportunities for formal and informal learning. Finally, we recommend developing policies and practices that ensure managers have dedicated time to engage in learning and development.

Introduction

When an employee becomes a manager, either as a new external hire or through internal promotion, they must learn not only what it means to be a manager from a technical perspective of skills, but also what it means to be a manager within their organizational context. Traditional manager development programs often focus more strictly on developing skill sets in isolated, one-off training sessions. However, considering a socio-historical approach to manager learning, those bureaucratic approaches often are insufficient for holistic manager development (Reynolds, 1999). Manager development is an ongoing process through which managers continually develop their understanding, expectations, and practices within an organization (Watson, 2001). This perspective considers manager development as an ongoing, developmental process (Park & Faerman, 2019).

A manager is successful when they begin knowing what it means to be a manager within their organizational context. Knowing is about understanding who one is in that context and how one relates with others in certain situations (Cunliffe, 2008). As such, a manager is most successful when they know their role, expectations, identity, relationship with others, and relationship with their organization. Understanding a manager's organizational context and how the manager comes to know that context can aid organizations in their endeavors to support managers (Cunliffe, 2008). Organizations can facilitate and support this process by designing intentional learning opportunities that consider the continual way managers learn.

This explorative quality improvement study focuses on managers' experience, specifically on exploring what a manager needs to be successful within the specific context of our client organization. Our client was interested in discovering what capacities lead towards manager success within their organization. Therefore, we focused our inquiry on *what it means to be a manager* and *how managers come to this understanding* within our client organization. We also explored employee perceptions of

development opportunities to provide our client with recommendations on how to best support managers.

Organizational Context

Our client organization is a mid-size, research-intensive university located in New England. The university has a diverse student body that includes students from every U.S. state and 118 foreign countries. Our client organization has always prioritized supporting students outside the classroom. Like most universities, our client organization's Division of Student Life focuses on supporting student development. The Division of Student Life works towards its mission of helping our client's diverse student body community thrive.

The Division of Student Life collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to support the university's diverse student community by developing enriching environments and experiences that promote students' knowledge, wellbeing, and independence (CU, 2017). The Division of Student Life also has an employee-focused mission to attract and retain diverse and talented employees and provide them with the knowledge, skills, tools, and support needed to excel in their roles (CU, 2018). The Division of Student Life employs nearly 800 full-time employees in areas, all of which report to the Vice President and Dean for Student Life.

The Division of Student Life has six departments: Administrative Operations; Athletics; Diversity and Community Involvement; Student Support; Residential Education; and Housing. Since the current Vice President and Dean for Student Life's arrival in 2016, there has been a substantial organizational change, including multiple reorganizations, which have led to shifting roles and responsibilities and turnover, especially among managers and senior leaders. During this time of evolution, the departments and offices within the Division of Student Life have been engaging in self-reflection activities to ensure alignment with the division's new mission and determine how they can best support its vision.

Our capstone client is the Human Resources Office in the Division of Student Life. In recent years, the Vice President has devoted additional resources to employee development and effectiveness. Accordingly, the Human Resources Office within the division has expressed a desire to develop a focused effort to provide staff with the support they need to achieve the Division's mission. Given the size and complexity of the Division of Student Life, the Human Resources Office serves a large number of employees with widely varying roles across a broad range of functional areas. Our client identified supporting managers as a top priority because of the impact managers have on employee satisfaction and success. Through involvement in this project, our client hoped to learn how they could better support managers by clarifying expectations and offering appropriate development opportunities.

Our research team comprises two doctoral students from Vanderbilt University's Leadership and Learning in Organizations Doctor of Education program. Both researchers have a background in student life and work in administrative positions at STEM-focused universities in the Northeastern United States.

Problem Overview

As mentioned previously, the Human Resource Office in the Division of Student Life hopes to learn more about the management experience and improve how they support managers. From our earliest meetings, our client shared they were concerned about a lack of shared agreement around what it means to be a successful manager within the Division of Student Life. Our client believes this lack of clearly articulated expectations could lead to role confusion for managers and inequitable supervisory experiences for employees while simultaneously limiting the Human Resource Office's ability to enable manager success. Our client noted it has been difficult for them to provide centralized support for managers due to the widely varying managerial roles within the Division.

Our client acknowledged they were not currently offering many manager-specific development programs. At present, while there are some manager development efforts at the broader organizational level, manager-specific development efforts are limited within the Division. Development efforts exist;

the Human Resource Office currently supports an employee development opportunity called the Staff Advisory Board. Volunteers from the division participate on the Staff Advisory Board, which has a subcommittee focused on professional development. However, this initiative is focused broadly on developing all types of employees, not just managers, as the volunteers come from all employee levels. Our client shared that while the Staff Advisory Board has been successful, it is not enough to support managers. Most manager-specific development efforts are thus constrained to what managers' direct supervisors provide and any individual coaching provided by the Human Resource Office when needed or requested.

Our client hoped that through our study, they could generate a set of competencies for managers within the Division of Student Life and learn how to better support managers in general. Accordingly, this study aims to explore what it means to be a successful manager in the Division of Student Life by investigating the perspectives of relevant stakeholders and understanding how managers in the Division of Student Life come to learn what is expected of them. This study explores current learning opportunities for managers and provides the Human Resources Office with recommendations about enabling manager success.

Literature Review

Given the nature of our problem, we reviewed a range of literature on manager development and synthesized the relevant findings below. First, we provide an overview of the history of human resource management and manager development. Then, we explore what it means to be a manager and how managers understand what is expected of them. Next, we discuss how organizations typically conceptualize and approach manager development. Finally, we discuss the limitations of the traditional, bureaucratic approach to manager development and present an alternative approach that considers how people learn. Although many things impact manager success, we chose to focus our literature

review on these topics because they directly correlate with our client's needs, study focus, and research questions.

Human Resource Management

Before exploring the literature on manager development, we provide a high-level overview of the history of human resource management as an area of theoretical study and practical application because manager development is a specific area of human resource management. The concept and research of management were born out of the industrial revolution when businesses and other organizations grew more extensive and required more effort and oversight to ensure efficiency (Reed & Gusdorf, 2021). In 1911, Frederick Taylor introduced scientific management, which focused on improving workers' efficiency in manufacturing settings by manipulating the production process. In the 1920s and 1930s, the human relations movement was born through a series of studies that explored how non-production factors, such as rest periods, work hours, workgroups, and wage incentives, influenced worker productivity (Reed & Gusdorf, 2021). By the middle of the twentieth century, the behavioral science movement brought attention to the impact of behavioral interactions on employee performance (Uddin & Hossain, 2015).

The current view of human resource management emerged in the mid-1980s as a specialized field focused on employees' management and development (Rotich, 2015). According to the Society for Human Resource Management, human resource management pertains to the arrangement of an organization's functions and focuses on identifying and developing the organization's human resources (SHRM, 2021). Human resources management units serve many functions, including enabling manager success, which is the focus of our study (SHRM, 2021). A research study that surveyed human resource leaders found that the most significant problem facing human resource units is identifying and developing the leadership talent needed to grow and expand their respective organizations (Fegley, 2006). Naquin and Holton (2006) found that investment in manager development has a tangible and

lasting impact on both the individual manager and the organization, so it would hold that organizations benefit from dedicating resources to enable manager success. Novičević and Harvey (2004) posit that human resource professionals can be change agents that affect the implementation of an organization's mission. Further, human resource professionals serve as communicators across multiple levels of an organization and aid in employees' development (Novičević & Harvey, 2004).

Expectations of Managers

Research on how managers "become" a manager shows that expectations of managers are most often formally heightened during the transition into the role (Hay, 2014). Managers and organizations have the shared burden of determining what is expected of a manager with the organizational context. Often, as exemplified by the literature, organizations and researchers have focused on the characteristics, virtues, and abilities deemed necessary for managers to succeed (Parker, 2004). Parker (2004) explains that this approach often examines manager expectations from the outside and, while productive, can fall short of fully articulating the contextual expectations of managers.

When a manager enters their role, they assume the challenge of understanding what it means to be a manager and what expectations their organization and others have of them. Hay (2014) argues that the discourse surrounding who and what managers should be centered on an overly idealized and external view of managers, eliciting impossibly high expectations. Similarly, Grey (2004) asserts that management education and development efforts commonly promote "grandiose" concepts of what managers need to know, do, and be. Managers are often portrayed as *something*, whether it be someone who has a particular set of skills, attitude, characteristics, and can be taught and learned. However, Parker (2004) contends that, instead, the expectations of managers are situated in social constructs of what a manager knows, their capacities, and how they behave.

Of course, social and organizational contexts influence how people understand what it means to be a manager in a given setting. Humans build expectations on understanding who they are and how

they relate to others and situations, extending to managers navigating their organizational contexts (Cunliffe, 2008). Hay (2014) argues this point by placing manager development in a socio-historical framework, suggesting what it means to be a manager changes and is influenced by “socially available managerial identities” within particular contexts (p.510).

Learning Expectations

Managers come to understand what it means to be a manager through a process of socialization, negotiation, and learning. Berlew and Hall (1966) describe a new manager’s entry into their role as similar to a child’s socialization. Like a child, new managers observe enduring attitudes, which have long-standing impacts on their future behavior (Berlew & Hall, 1966). New managers begin to learn what it means to be a manager within the organization’s context during the transition into their new position (Park & Faerman, 2019). From their first day, managers receive social cues about expectations and performance quality (Berlew & Hall, 1966).

People have a substantial influence on what it means to be a manager in a given context. Berlew and Hall (1966) argue that others’ expectations could be among the strongest determinants of behavior. Using role theory, they suggest that those who most strongly influence the behavior of a new manager are in a position of significance to the manager. They speculate that organizations reinforce the value of expectations because when managers meet the expectations placed on them, they are rewarded, either intangibly, with approval, or tangibly, with a promotion or raise (Berlew & Hall, 1966).

A qualitative study by Hay (2014) found that there is significant internal and external pressure on those in managerial positions to “be successful immediately” in their new role (p.517). This expectation of rapid assimilation creates tension between a manager’s understanding of whom they need to be as managers versus whom they were before assuming that role (Hay, 2014). Additionally, managers are often hesitant to ask for help, not to be “thought a fool” (Hay, 2014, p. 517). Further, Hay (2014) noted that even seasoned managers retained tension between a manager's perceptions as being

someone who “gets it right” and *their perception of their own identity as a manager*. Hay (2014) found that this tension appeared heightened when a manager experienced new challenges.

Research by Korte, Brunhaver, and Sheppard (2015) found that managers expected senior leaders to provide more direct communication that would help them understand their role. Fursman’s (2014) survey research suggests “there has never been 100 percent agreement on the directions that should be given to the new manager” (p. 14). The lack of directness and consistency often leads to a misalignment between senior leaders and managers regarding what it means to be a manager. Additionally, Park and Faerman (2019) argue it is the responsibility of organizations to help new managers understand their roles.

Manager Development

Manager development combines both the practical acquisition of knowledge and the application of manager learning as an existential experience (Bolander, Holmberg, & Fellbom, 2019). Most organizations seek to develop managers by offering educational opportunities, but there is variability in how these efforts approach manager development. Collins and Holton (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of 83 studies conducted from 1982 to 2001 and found that manager development programs varied widely in efficacy. Researchers have explored manager development through many pedagogical approaches, including technocratic and utilitarian perspectives and socio-historical learning perspectives.

Bureaucratic Approach to Manager Development Programs

Burke and Day (1986) found that managerial training in organizations primarily focused on improving individual skills and on-the-job performance. In many companies, manager development typically consists of completing the necessary documentation, allocating resources, and providing mandatory training required for legal compliance (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017). Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) argue that this bureaucratic way of conceptualizing manager

development, while sometimes necessary, is insufficient because it does not orient managers to the cultural and political contexts of their organization.

Some researchers have gone so far as to suggest that so-called traditional management training programs (i.e., instructional training, MBA programs) neglect the relational concepts of “learning as becoming” and only serve to give managers appropriate language fluency in management concepts (Sturdy et al., 2006). Sturdy et al. (2006) argue that such programs only boost a manager’s self-confidence and social privilege by facilitating a space where managers learn to mimic.

Criticisms of Bureaucratic Approach to Manager Development Programs

The bureaucratic approaches to manager development are helpful mechanisms for certain types of learning. They can make available information to managers, but there is little evidence that such approaches effectively facilitate the process of becoming a manager (Sturdy et al., 2006). Bolander, Holmberg, and Fellbom (2019) suggest that managers have the intellectual capacity to learn more from training programs than Sturdy et al. argue. Yet, managers do not learn in training programs because they are often isolated, limited in length, and do not incorporate the complexity of managers’ lived experiences (p.284). Manager success is dependent on both capability and context, yet organizations often neglect to take a personalized approach to manager development (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017).

Being a successful manager is about much more than knowing definitions, understanding rules, and following established procedures. Research on manager development has grown to incorporate the concepts of “becoming” and understanding manager learning (Bolander, Holmberg & Fellbom, 2019), which contribute to the complexity of what it means to become a better or at least different manager. As Parker (2004) described, the conceptualization of manager development is deepening “to consider whether management can be more fruitfully thought of as a becoming, or learning, that can be endlessly questioned and reflected on” (p. 46). This change in manager development conceptualization mirrors

the academic literature on human learning in the sense that the limits of an individually focused and narrowly information-oriented conception of education have become increasingly apparent (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Greeno, 1998). Increasingly, the literature shows a growing demand for management educators to apply a critical perspective to their curriculum and include socio-historical orientations toward learning that highlight the interactive aspects of management practice (Reynolds, 1999).

Knowing, Learning, and Education

The limitations of bureaucratic views of manager development reviewed above and the expansion of this scholarship reflect a broader shift in learning science around theories of knowing or epistemology (Greeno, 1998; Sfard, 1998). Knowledge has historically been conceptualized as a discrete 'thing,' either encoding patterns of conditioning (Skinner, 1938) or as a set of subjectively constructed realities (Piaget, 1936) applied to practice as an individual makes their way in the world. While this conceptualization of knowledge predominates in the popular perception of knowledge, another way to consider "knowing" is that people "create meaning, understanding and social realities between themselves in their everyday responsive interaction, then knowing lies within action, and action also lies within knowing" (Cunliffe, 2008, p.132). Knowing is about understanding who we are and how we relate with others and situations (Cunliffe, 2008).

Given a socio-historical perspective of knowledge, learning to be a manager is a continual process of becoming and engaging with the organizational context to negotiate and discover what being a manager means within the situated context of those involved (Greeno, 1998; Scribner, 1973). As learners interact with their community, they engage norms of practice, values, and available resources. They begin to participate by engaging in the actions of other practitioners. To observe learning is to watch the activity system where participants are involved in the practice. An activity system includes the individuals interacting with the resources, people, material, and environment present in the setting

(Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008, p.170). Reynolds (1999) continues that managers learn by creating knowledge through the transformation of experience, which encompasses social, institutional, and cultural aspects.

Considering a socio-historical approach to learning, it follows that manager education would need to identify ways to provide insight into managers' lived experiences and facilitate the informal mechanisms of learning (Hay, 2014, p. 520). Reynolds (1999) has argued that management educators should focus on the lived experiences of managers and design education such that managers have a space to think about the challenges of their work without the distraction of having catch phrases, mission statements, and skill lists continually placed before in lieu of opportunities to participate actively in the practices, values, norms, and resources of the given community. The milieu surrounding learning initiatives reflects a complex interrelationship where managers negotiate knowledge within the organizational context (Reynolds, 1999). Further, the structure, procedures, methods of education are themselves a learning source, as are the relationships developed within the educational initiative (Reynolds, 1999).

Learning Approach to Manager Development

Manager development is an ongoing process through which managers continually develop their understanding and practices of how they exist within an organization through mutual negotiation with the organization (Watson, 2001). This perspective considers manager development not as an isolated incident but instead as a continual, developmental process (Park & Faerman, 2019). Several researchers have discussed approaches to manager development through a socio-historical and situated lens.

Bolander, Holmberg, and Fellbom (2019) argue that manager development often occurs when someone may not expect it, usually when managers are engrossed in their everyday lives and through interactions within their organizational context. Watson (2001) conceptualized this developmental process as "the emergent manager." He asserts managers do not suddenly "become managers" at a discrete point, but rather that so-called "management learning" begins before and continues after an

individual assumes a managerial role (Watson, 2001, p. 222). Watson (2001) further explains that managers learn through processual, relational, discursive, and constructionist experiences and are constantly in the process of 'becoming' managers (Watson, 2001).

Byford et al. (2017) explore the concept of integration, which describes manager development as providing the information, resources, and support to ensure that a manager becomes a fully functional member of the team. Unlike traditional onboarding activities, which occur at the start of a new role, integration is an ongoing process that emphasizes learning at all levels, identifies and mitigates transition risks, and grounds learning within social processes. Byford et al. (2017) argue that successful integration is critically dependent on an organization's systematic support. After reviewing approaches of different organizations, they found that less than 2% of organizations use integration strategies to onboard managers, and those that did experienced increased organizational effectiveness (Byford et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Based on the literature, we created a framework to understand how organizations can support manager success by designing and implementing educational opportunities that effectively facilitate manager knowing. As discussed above, a manager is successful when they understand what it means to be a manager within their organizational context. Knowing is about understanding who one is and how one relates with others in that particular context (Cunliffe, 2008). As such, managers are able to be successful when they understand their role, identity, relationship to others, and relationship with their organization.

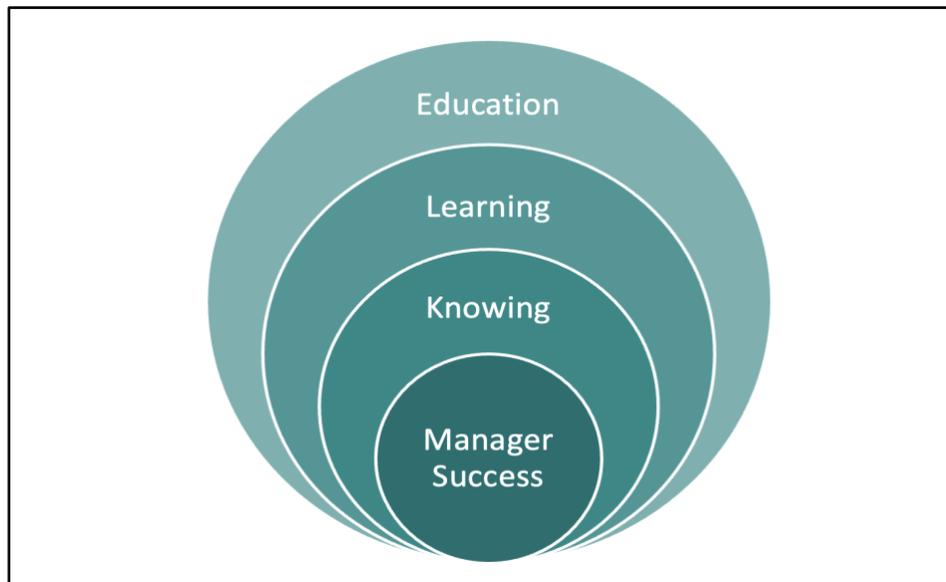
Organizations can facilitate manager knowing by designing and implementing effective learning opportunities for managers. As discussed above, formal and informal education efforts have varying degrees of success, depending on their format and content. A manager may (or may not) learn by

attending a seminar sponsored by their organization. Depending on the educational initiative's design, they may learn in a way that contributes to knowing how to be a manager. However, research on learning indicates that while some formal educational initiatives are helpful, some of the most robust learning occurs through informal mechanisms and when organizations design educational initiatives with an intentional conceptualization of human learning (Park & Faerman, 2019). Organizations cannot rely solely on isolated training at the beginning of a managerial role to effectively educate managers because those efforts fail to capture the processual nature of human learning (Byford et al., 2017; Watson, 2001).

As indicated in the figure below, we frame manager success as the eventual outcome of education, learning, and knowing, which are all parts of the continual manager development process. We conceptualized manager development as the process by which an organization can intentionally and thoughtfully design education initiatives with an approach that considers the inextricable nature of learner and context. From formal programming and informal learning opportunities, which we conceptualized as education, managers begin to learn from their environment and relationships with others as they negotiate their understanding of what it means to be a manager. Through those educational opportunities and the learning process, managers learn about themselves, their role, their colleagues, and their organization. *Knowing* what it means to be a manager in their context ultimately leads towards competent managers, who can then be agents of success for the organization.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Research Questions

We have identified the following research questions that will guide our exploration of what it means to be a successful manager within the Division of Student Life at our client's organization:

1. What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?
2. How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?
3. What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?

Design and Methods

Data Collection

Our conceptual framework involves understanding how a manager comes to know and understand what it means to be a manager at our client organization. We chose to use various data sources — some preexisting, some new, some qualitative, some quantitative — to generate comprehensive and reliable answers to our research questions. Accordingly, we conducted interviews; analyzed existing artifacts, including job descriptions and employee competencies; and reviewed survey

data to develop a comprehensive database to investigate the questions above. Our data collection was sequential: first, we conducted interviews; second, we reviewed job descriptions and an employee competency document; and finally, we reviewed existing quantitative survey data. In the subsections below, we detail our data collection methods by source.

Interviews

Design.

We conducted in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of employees from the Division of Student Life. To elicit responses that would address the research questions, we developed targeted, semi-structured questions for our interviews (Brenner, 2006). The chart below illustrates the relationship between our research questions and our interview questions.

Table 1

Interview Design

Research Question	Interview Questions
What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?	What do managers need to know, do and be to be successful?
	What <u>knowledge</u> do managers in DSL need to be successful?
	What are the desired <u>skills</u> of managers in DSL?
	What <u>characteristics or behaviors</u> do managers in DSL need to be successful?
	Describe a particularly successful manager that you’ve observed. What made them successful?
	Describe a particularly unsuccessful manager that you’ve observed. What made them unsuccessful?
How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?	How are the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors that you outlined communicated to managers in DSL? How do managers learn what is expected of them?
What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?	What opportunities for learning (either formal or informal) exist for managers?
N/A: Used to support future recommendations	What opportunities for learning (either formal or informal) would enable managers to be successful?

Sampling.

We used non-probability voluntary purposive sampling to ensure that our sample was roughly representative of the division at large, in terms of both employee level and functional area. We started with a list of all employees and categorized employees into seven functional areas and three groups. We used existing departmental divisions to determine functional areas. We determined level classification by evaluating whether the employee was an individual contributor (“individual contributor”), someone who supervises individual contributors (“intermediate manager”), or someone who supervises intermediate managers (“senior manager”). For the purposes of our study, we consider both intermediate managers and senior managers as managers because both groups supervise others and are involved in management at our client organization. We excluded two of the Division of Student Life’s six departments from our list of prospective interview invitees due to their proximity to one of our researchers.

Once we had a list of eligible employees sorted by functional area and level, we used stratified random sampling selection to identify potential interview participants. We sent personalized invitations via email (Appendix A-C) to 21 employees, including nine individual contributors, eight intermediate managers, and four senior managers. Interview invitees included seven employees from Student Support, five from Administrative Operations, six from Athletics, and three from Diversity and Community Involvement. We sent follow-up emails to all invitees ten days, 22 days, and five months after the initial invitation email.

We conducted all interviews from July to December of 2020. The Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 pandemic (Covid-19) affected staff members' availability and willingness to participate in interviews, and we were not able to recruit as many participants as we hoped. We interviewed ten participants from four departments, including five individual contributors, three intermediate managers, and two senior managers. The specific breakdown of interview invitees and interview participants is in Table 2.

Table 2

Sampling Strategy

Department	Individual Contributors	Intermediate Managers	Senior Managers
Administrative Operations	Invited: 1 Participated: 1	Invited: 3 Participated: 1	Invited: 1 Participated: 1
Athletics	Invited: 4 Participated: 0	Invited: 1 Participated: 1	Invited: 1 Participated: 0
Diversity & Community Involvement	Invited: 1 Participated: 1	Invited: 1 Participated: 1	Invited: 1 Participated: 0
Student Support	Invited: 6 Participated: 3	Invited: 5 Participated: 0	Invited: 1 Participated: 1
Housing	Excluded from interviews		
Residential Services	Excluded from interviews		

Procedure.

When we invited employees to participate in the study in June 2020, we gave participants a clear statement that their participation was optional, confidential, and will not impact their employment. Once an invited employee agreed to participate in the study, they selected an interview date and time using Calendly, an online scheduling tool. The interviewer then confirmed the meeting by sending an Outlook calendar invitation, including a meeting link via the Zoom video conference platform. Once a participant scheduled an interview, we assigned them an alphanumeric identification code to record and store interview data. The alphanumeric identification codes indicated participants’ job categories (individual contributor, intermediate manager, senior manager).

All interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom from June 2020 through December 2020. At the start of each session, the interviewer recited the interview preamble (Appendix D). The preamble reiterated the purpose of the interview, shared important information about their

participation, prompted the interviewee to certify their understanding of the information, and asked the interviewee for permission to record the interview for data collection and analysis purposes. The interviewer then started the recording and proceeded to ask the interview questions (Appendix E) and clarifying questions, as required in semi-structured interviews. The interviewer used Zoom's auto transcription feature to generate audio transcripts for each interview and took typed notes during each interview. Immediately after each interview, the interviewer wrote an analytical memo based on the typed notes.

Interview audio transcripts and interview notes were labeled with and stored by participants' numeric identification numbers. Once all interviews were completed, the interviewer reviewed each audio transcript for transcription errors and made corrections where needed. Then, we anonymized all audio transcripts and analytical memos.

Existing Artifacts

Our client provided us with publicly available information in the form of artifacts. These artifacts included nine managerial job descriptions within the Division of Student Life and the university's Central Human Resources "Employee Competencies" webpage, which lists eight core competencies for employees. The job descriptions articulated examples of Director, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, and Senior Associate Dean positions. The Central Human Resources Competencies document provides examples of how each specific competency could be demonstrated by "all employees" and "managers and leaders." The Central Human Resources Competencies document is intended to be used by employees and managers as part of the performance review process.

Survey

Every four years, the Institutional Research office at our client's university administers a Quality of Life survey to all faculty, staff, and postdoctoral scholars. The survey administered to staff employees includes more than 50 multiple choice and Likert scale questions. Employees are not required to

complete the survey, and responses are kept confidential. The survey results are presented to relevant institutional leaders at division, school, department, lab, center, and unit levels. Additionally, institute-wide results are available to the public on the Institutional Research website (CU, 2020).

The 2020 Quality of Life survey was sent to 462 employees in the Division of Student Life in January 2020 and yielded a 47% response rate (total N = 219). Our client provided us with a subset of the survey results for the Division of Student Life, including questions relating to stress at work, mentoring, climate, growth opportunities, communication, and feedback. Initially, the survey data that our client provided did not separate responses by employee level, so we asked our client to provide the same data, segmented out between managers and non-managers. At our client’s request, Institutional Research provided the data segmented out between employees who supervise others versus those who do not supervise others.

We distinguished between three levels of employees for our interview sampling: individual contributors, intermediate managers, and senior managers. However, the survey data is separated into two categories: those who supervise others — which includes the groups we defined as “intermediate managers” and “senior managers” — and those who do not supervise others — which consists of the group we described as “individual contributors.”

Table 3

Connection Between Research Questions and Survey Questions

Research Questions	Survey Questions
What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?	I know what is expected of me in my position.
How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?	I know what is expected of me in my position.
	My unit’s leadership has communicated a clear direction.

	My supervisor provides me feedback that helps me understand my strengths as well as areas to develop.
	My performance reviews are conducted regularly.
	My unit does a good job of keeping employees informed about matters affecting us.
What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?	I am given the opportunity to serve on important committees.
	I have been given growth and learning opportunities during the last year.
	I have the resources (equipment, training, budget, etc.) I need to do my job well.
	While at the organization, do you feel as though you have received adequate mentoring?
	While at the organization, have you had one or more formal mentors?
	While at the organization, have you had one or more informal mentors?
	My supervisor supports me in pursuing learning and professional development opportunities.
	My supervisor allows me to take enough time to receive the training required for my job.
	My supervisor/advisor values my service/committee work.
Other - environment	I feel recognized for my contribution to the organization.
	How stressful are challenging relationships with colleagues or supervisors?
	How stressful is abrasive behavior by colleagues or supervisors?
	My supervisor (department) creates a collegial and supportive environment.
	My supervisor seems to care about me as a person.
	My supervisor/advisor values my input.

Data Analysis

Although we initially planned to analyze existing artifacts (job descriptions and employee competencies) and survey results before conducting the interviews, we were not able to obtain access to those materials until December, so we completed the interviews first. Our multiple data sources provided a rich understanding of our research questions and enabled us to triangulate our findings across sources.

Interviews

We made a first analytical pass at the interview transcripts as we anonymized them and cleaned up transcription errors. Then, we created a coding framework (Appendix G) based on our research questions and theoretical framework (Bogdan & Bilken, 1997). After that, we reviewed the interview transcripts and analytical memos again, highlighting excerpts according to the coding categories that we established. As we highlighted excerpts, we took the approach that no detail is too trivial. Each remark from our participants has the potential to reveal a more profound comprehension of our research questions (Bogdan & Bilken, 1997).

Initially, our coding framework contained four categories, including 1) what do managers need to know/do/be (“KDB”); 2) how are expectations communicated (“EC”); 3) what opportunities exist for managers to grow (“OE”); and 4) recommendations offered by participants (“REC”). As we progressed through the coding process, our data revealed a need for more specific subcategories. For example, the know/do/be category elicited robust specifications for each part of the triad: knowing, doing, and being. Similarly, we found that participants spoke just as frequently about how expectations are not communicated as they did about how they are communicated, which led us to bifurcate that coding category. When discussing the types of learning opportunities for managers, interviewees spoke in general about the opportunities that exist and about both a presence and lack of learning opportunities, which also necessitated the creation of sub-categories. Finally, we created an “other” category to

capture relevant comments that did not fit neatly into any other coding categories. In total, we used eleven coding categories (Table 4).

Table 4

Coding Categories

Code Descriptor	Code	Research Question
Know/Do/Be - General Know/Do/Be - Know Know/Do/Be - Do Know/Do/Be - Be	KDB_G KDB_K KDB_D KDB_B	RQ1: What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?
Expectations Communicated - Yes Expectations Communicated - No	ECY ECN	RQ2: How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?
Opportunities Exist - General Opportunities Exist - Yes Opportunities Exist - No	OE_G OE_Y OE_N	RQ3: What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?
Recommendation	REC	To inform recommendations
Other	OT	N/A - Other - interesting for the client, but not about RQs

After coding each analytical memo and transcript, we then grouped the highlighted excerpts by coding category. Then, we read through all of the excerpts in each category to see what patterns and themes emerged (Appendix G). Those observations became our preliminary findings that we sought to test by triangulating with other data sources.

Job Descriptions

We used an inductive approach to analyze the nine job description documents that our client provided. Specifically, we reviewed all nine documents and noted common elements and trends. All of

the job descriptions were relatively long and detailed, with an average word count of 940. There was little consistency of content and format across the job descriptions that we reviewed. All nine positions included a summary of the role, a list of duties and responsibilities, and a list of required qualifications. Some of the job descriptions contained contextual information, such as details about the organization, the division, and the unit, while others did not. We compared what we learned from the job description documents to what we heard from employees during interviews and the survey data.

Employee Competencies

The university's Central Human Resources Employee Competency document lists eight core competencies: collaborating and building relationships; communicating with influence; demonstrating strategic agility; developing the potential of self and others; exercising integrity and credibility; focusing on the customer; fostering an inclusive community; implementing proactively and decisively (CU, n.d.). Beneath each competency, there are examples of the competency, separated into two categories: "Examples for All Employees" and "Examples for Managers and Leaders" (see Appendix H).

As we reviewed the employee competencies, we used an inductive and deductive approach (Merriam, 2001). We noted what this document articulated that we had or had not learned from interviews and sought to answer questions raised from our understanding of our research questions from analysis of the interviews. We compared this document to what we had learned in interviews and noted any discrepancies or corroborations. For example, interview participants also mentioned that they found the Central Human Resources webpage challenging to navigate and they wished more resources were available to them. With that in mind, we also evaluated the difficulty of finding the Competency document on the webpage. As we noted comparisons like this, we wrote memos to test these comparisons against our more extensive body of evidence, including the job descriptions and survey data.

Survey

We reviewed the survey data that our client with a primary goal to seek out insights to further our understanding of the experience of managers within the Division of Student Life. We reviewed manager responses, specifically, and have outlined the data our client provided us below (see also Appendix I).

Relevant Data

Opportunities for Growth. 75% of survey respondents “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that their supervisor supports them in pursuing learning and professional development opportunities. 71% “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that they have been given growth opportunities within the last year, and 65% “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that their supervisor allows them to take enough time to receive the training required to do their job.

Mentoring. 41% of manager survey respondents indicated that they had received adequate mentoring while employed by the Division of Student Life. 24% of respondents specified that they had a formal mentor while at the university. Of that 24%, respondents indicated some mentors were assigned (5%), by choice (13%), and a mixture of both appointed and by choice (6%). 65% of respondents indicated that they had an informal mentor while at the university. Of that group, mentors were from within the university (22%), external (13%), and 30% reported having an informal mentor, both internal and external.

Communication. 69% of respondents “strongly agree” (37%) or somewhat agree (32%) that their unit’s leadership has clear communication and direction. 67% of respondents “strongly agree” (33%) or somewhat agree (34%) that their department does an excellent job of keeping employees informed about matters affecting them.

Expectations and Feedback. 84% of managers “strongly agree” (52%) or “somewhat agree” (32%) that they know what is expected of their position. 62% of respondents “somewhat agree” (30%) or “strongly agree” (32%) that their supervisor provides them with feedback that helps them understand

their strengths and areas to develop. 65% “somewhat agree” (32%) or “strongly agree” (33%) that their supervisor conducts performance reviews regularly.

Findings

Overall, our findings indicate that managers come to learn the expectations of their role through informal mechanisms. We found there is a shared understanding of manager expectations and capacities across all levels of employees. While managers are learning by way of informal mechanisms, we heard that they feel those mechanisms are not well supported or supplemented with formal development opportunities. Many managers expressed a desire for more development. We learned that employees perceive few manager development opportunities in the Division of Student Life, and there is widespread agreement that more support should be offered and, possibly, required. Finally, managers feel they do not have the bandwidth to engage in formal development programming and informal, job-embedded opportunities even when such options are offered. In the following sections, we detail our findings by the research question.

Research Question 1: What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?

Our first research question, driven by our client’s requests, focuses on the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life. To answer this question, we considered two perspectives: that of employees and that of the institution. We evaluated employees’ attitudes based on interview and survey data and the institutional perspective based on Division of Student Life job descriptions and the Central Human Resources Competency Document. Two main findings emerged from the data.

Finding 1A: Employees of all levels shared a similar perception of the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life, with organizational awareness being the most frequently described capacity.

First, we used interview data to understand employees’ perspectives on how managers participate fully within the Division of Student Life. In our interviews, there was strong consistency

across all three levels of employees regarding the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors of managers. Nine competency domains emerged from our interviews: organizational awareness, emotional intelligence, developmental approach, self-awareness, effective communication, strategic action, content knowledge, flexibility, and integrity. Organizational awareness and emotional intelligence were the two most frequently mentioned competency domains in the interviews.

Across our interviews, we found participants repeatedly referenced what we would call organizational awareness. Organizational awareness includes the knowledge of the institutional culture and priorities, both formally and informally. Interviewees referenced unwritten rules, “go-to people,” and unofficial communication lines as essential to manager success.

All interview participants mentioned the organization’s “unique” organizational culture and seemed to agree that organizational awareness is a prerequisite for success. One employee asserted that “to be able to do your job successfully, you have to be able to navigate that [culture]” while another warned that a manager could be “eaten alive” without knowing the organizational culture. As one interviewee described, “past success means nothing here... the organization is a merit-based mentality, and current, or future success is what matters.”

Additionally, interviewees consistently articulated the need to understand organizational priorities. Employees of all levels agreed that managers need to know senior leaders’ priorities and relate their team’s work to those priorities. Similarly, managers shared that managers need to quickly pivot their team to ensure their work maintains alignment with the Dean’s goals when priorities shift.

We created a set of nine thematic categories based on employees’ descriptions of the expectations of managers within the Division of Student Life. The table below lists each capacity along with a general description and a specific example from our interviews.

Table 5

Description of Thematic Capacities

Organizational Awareness	
Understanding and making effective use of formal and informal relationships, roles, and structures in an organization.	<p>“They need to know the organization’s culture, first and foremost. You know, our organization has its own unique culture in order to be able to do your job successfully, you got to be able to navigate that. You've got to know the people.”</p> <p>“To be good managers, they have to have a lot of what you would call organizational awareness. They have to become aware of how the Institute's processes and procedures work because they will be called on.”</p>
Emotional Intelligence	
Being aware of, harnessing, and managing the emotions of yourself and others.	<p>“They have to have a lot of what you would call softer skills emotional intelligence...they have to recognize sort of what the person they're managing is going through.”</p>
Developmental Approach	
Believing and acting as though employees can improve through opportunities for learning and development.	<p>“So you may have to navigate yourself into a more of a coaching role at times.”</p> <p>“I think the best managers bring out the best in people that are working for them.”</p>
Self-Awareness	
Having a clear view of oneself and an accurate view of how others view you.	<p>“Making sure you develop a very good sense of who you are.”</p> <p>“I think they have to have insight into who they are as human beings, what their biases are, what their blind spots are, do that they know kind of what they bring to every interaction.”</p>
Effective Communication	
Sharing information with others in a way that both parties have a shared understanding of the message.	<p>“Well, once again, a good manager has to be a really good communicator...We're setting the tone by your communications so you get some people that are really great at the interpersonal are really great at the written”</p>
Strategic Action	
Taking action in a way that achieves relevant goals.	<p>“I think at our organization, in particular, there's so many things going on. And it moves so quickly that managers need to be assertive to take it upon themselves to know what's going on, but also be bold enough courageous enough tactful enough to ask questions.”</p>

Content Knowledge	
Facts, concepts, theories, and principles related to a given topic or position.	“Of course, you need to know best practices in higher education...that sort of content about higher education.”
Flexibility	
Being adaptable to change, managing the unexpected, and accommodating individual employees' styles, preferences, and needs.	“You have to be somebody who flexes more like a tree, knowing, though the roots and the things that are important to the organization, the division your particular area and your own sense of ethics, but at the same time recognizing the situations are fluid.”
Integrity	
Being honest, having strong moral principles, and acting in accordance with one’s values.	<p>“I think loyalty and integrity are critical, no matter where you are or what position you have any university but I think it's key for managers in terms of employees, seeing them as consistent figures and colleagues.”</p> <p>“A manager needs to have integrity. So definitely within our organization, but really within DSL. It's your reputation is one of the highest things that you need to sort of establish and maintain.”</p>

Finding 1B: Employees in the Division of Student Life use different language than the organization does to describe the necessary capacities for managers.

We compared the employee perspective that we gathered through interview data to the institutional perspective, as demonstrated through the Central Human Resource Competencies. As previously stated, our interview analysis revealed nine capacity domains for managers within the Division of Student Life. The Central Human Resource Competencies document lists the eight competencies without definitions. Still, there are examples of the competency beneath each competency, separated into two categories: Examples for All Employees and Examples for Managers and Leaders (see Appendix H).

In the table below, we mapped the nine competency domains that emerged from our interviews to the eight competencies outlined by Central Human Resources. As indicated in Table 6, there are direct matches between the employee perspective and the institutional perspective on six

competencies. One of the competency domains that emerged from employee interviews does not directly compare the Central Human Resources competencies: content knowledge. Two of the Central Human Resources competencies lack counterparts among the employee-generated competencies: focusing on the customer and fostering an inclusive community. These language differences are, of course, subjective. For example, while employees did not say “fostering an inclusive community” directly, we heard that respecting diversity and promoting inclusion was necessary to a manager’s success. Similarly, while we did not hear employees speak about clients, we heard them talk about students.

While most of the capacities aligned in some way with the competencies, this comparison shows that employees in the Division of Student Life use different terminology than the organization. This language difference reflects the specific contextual environment within the division. Understandably, employees within the Division of Student Life may have a different language framework than employees in another division.

Table 6

Comparison of Employee and Institutional Perspectives of Manager Capacities/Competencies

Manager Capacities/Competencies	
Employee Perspective	Institutional Perspective
Organizational Awareness	Collaborating and building relationships
Emotional Intelligence	Collaborating and building relationships
Developmental Approach	Developing the potential of self and others
Self-Awareness	Developing the potential of self and others
Effective Communication	Communicating with influence
Strategic Action	Implementing proactively and decisively
Content Knowledge	<i>No direct match</i>

Flexibility	Demonstrating strategic agility
Integrity	Exercising integrity and credibility
<i>No direct match</i>	Focusing on the customer
<i>No direct match</i>	Fostering an inclusive community

Finally, we compared the employee perspective that we gathered through interview data to the institutional perspective, as evidenced by job descriptions. Our interview data showed that employees highly value organizational awareness. Nevertheless, only one of the nine job descriptions included contextual information about the organization and the Division of Student Life. Only one position mentioned, “organizational awareness,” explicitly as “the ability to understand and learn organizational relationships and dynamics and use them to achieve objectives” (CU, n.d.).

When we compare employee interview data to employee competencies and job descriptions, a disconnect emerges between the contextual expectations in the Division of Student Life and the larger organization. In the next section, we consider how managers learn about these expectations and capacities.

Research Question 2: How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?

Our second research question explores managers come to learn how to be a manager in the decision. To answer this question, we considered interview data, survey data, and job descriptions.

Finding 2A: Many managers feel it is challenging to learn what was expected of them, and resources that exist to articulate the expectations are difficult to find.

Our interview data revealed that employees perceive difficulty when trying to learn what is expected of them in their role. When asked, “how do managers in the Division of Student Life learn what is expected of them?” many interviewees took a long pause before responding, and several responded with “that’s a good question” or some variant of the phrase. When asked, “how are the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors communicated to managers?” one interviewee said simply, “not well.”

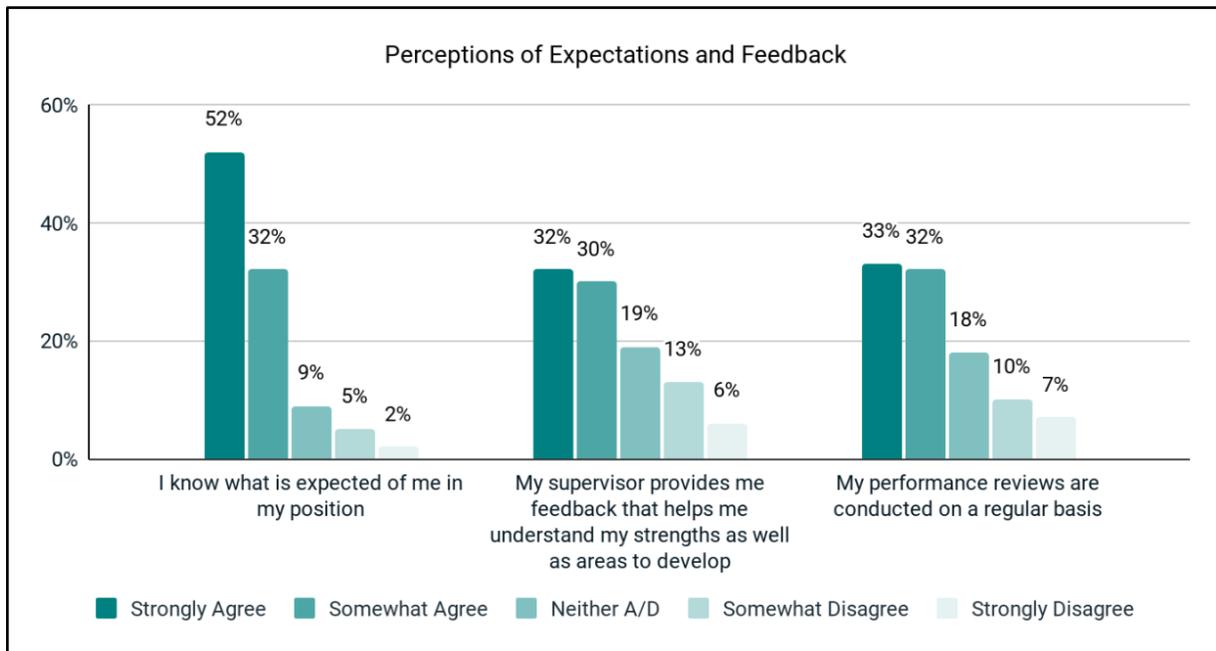
These responses demonstrate that employees are not aware of any existing mechanisms through which the Division of Student Life communicates expectations to managers. One interviewee shared “that [learning what is expected of you] is a slow, almost painful process” while another said that they “wish more things were written down.” One interviewee acknowledged that there are “unwritten goals and expectations [that] you’re always trying to decipher, like ‘do I need to make this part of my job this year?’.”

Our survey results corroborate the interview findings, which indicate employee ambiguity around expectations. According to the survey results, 48% of managers indicated they either do not know what is expected of them in their position (16%) or somewhat agreed that they knew (32%). While 52% of managers indicated they strongly agree that they know the expectations of their role, the reality that almost half stated some level of uncertainty about the expectations placed on them in their position substantiated what we found in our interviews (see Figure 2).

In addition to having uncertainty around expectations, 17% of managers said that their supervisor does not conduct performance reviews regularly, and 30% of managers “somewhat agree” that their supervisor provides them with feedback that helps them understand their strengths and areas to develop (Figure 2). One interviewee explained that “feedback comes once a year in the performance review and not really at any other time.” As indicated in some of our other interviews, a lack of feedback can perpetuate role ambiguity. Additionally, one interviewee mentioned a desire to have feedback about their performance as a manager, and not just their job responsibilities or organizational goals.

Figure 2

Responses on expectations and feedback



Multiple employees expressed frustration at not finding resources online and suggested that a manager has to hunt for information actively to be successful. Others explicitly referred to the Division of Student Life’s website and the university’s central human resource website, claiming they are “really difficult to understand.” The existing artifacts we reviewed corroborated these concerns around access to information.

For example, The Central Human Resources’ Employee Competencies document is indeed challenging to find online. The document provides an introductory statement explaining supervisors should use these competencies during an employee’s performance review process. Yet, a user cannot find a link to the document from the university’s performance development or performance reviews web pages. Instead, to find this page, a user must utilize the search feature on the university’s central human resources webpage or an external search engine. The document does not explain how to apply the competencies within the performance review process. This missing information leaves out the context for a manager needs to consider how to use the competencies.

Across all of the job descriptions, less than 20% of the text was about supervision or staff management. Only one position includes a link to the Central Human Resources' Employee Competencies webpage. Not a single employee brought up position descriptions or the university's employee competencies as potential sources of information about expectations, suggesting that employees do not put much, or any, weight in those artifacts or are unaware of them as tools.

Finding 2B: Informal learning happens in the Division of Student Life through relationships and networks.

Informal Learning

While managers expressed it was challenging to learn how to become a manager within the Division of Student Life, we found evidence that *learning was happening*. When taking our theoretical framework to our interviewees' answers, we heard accounts of continual learning occurring through informal, unprogrammed, and job-embedded activities (Bolander, Holmberg & Fellbom, 2019). One interviewee described how managers would help each other out and show a new manager how to do things within the Division. This interviewee started by saying, "There is no manager training in DSL," but then continued to state, "it's [learning] really is probably on-the-job training and a lot of it, you probably learned from the other managers. So we have existing managers, often when you come into the organization, they will train you."

As so many interviewees described, relationship building in the Division of Student Life is one essential factor for manager success. Inherent in this relationship building, we heard participants share that they learned how to succeed from those relationships. One interviewee said that "when someone takes a personal interest [in a new manager], that absolutely makes the difference." Another interviewee noted, "people get to know each other. Informally, and they learn something."

Our survey data supported the concept of consistent opportunities for "on-the-job" learning. When asked, "I am given the opportunity to serve on important committees," 67% of managers

responded with “agree” or “strongly agree.” Further, 71% of managers indicated that their supervisor values their contributions and participation on committees (see Figure 3-4). While committees are not the only venue for informal learning, they represent an example of when a manager can engage in informal and continual learning.

Figure 3

Responses from Managers on Committee Work Value

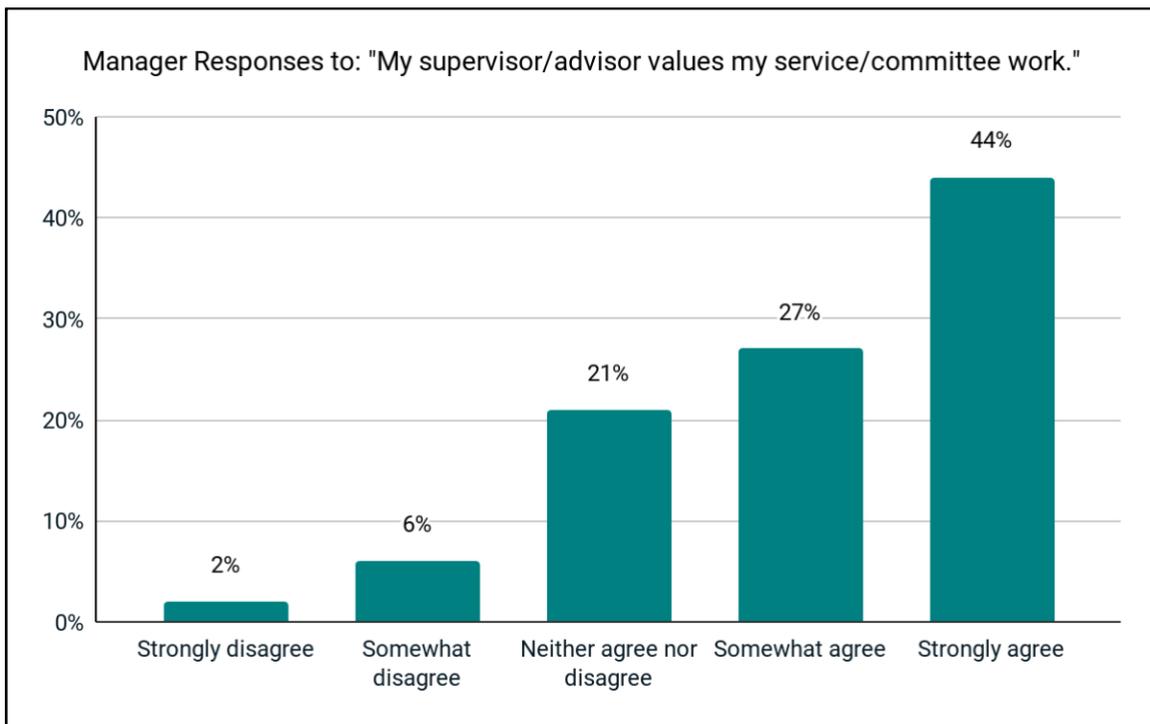
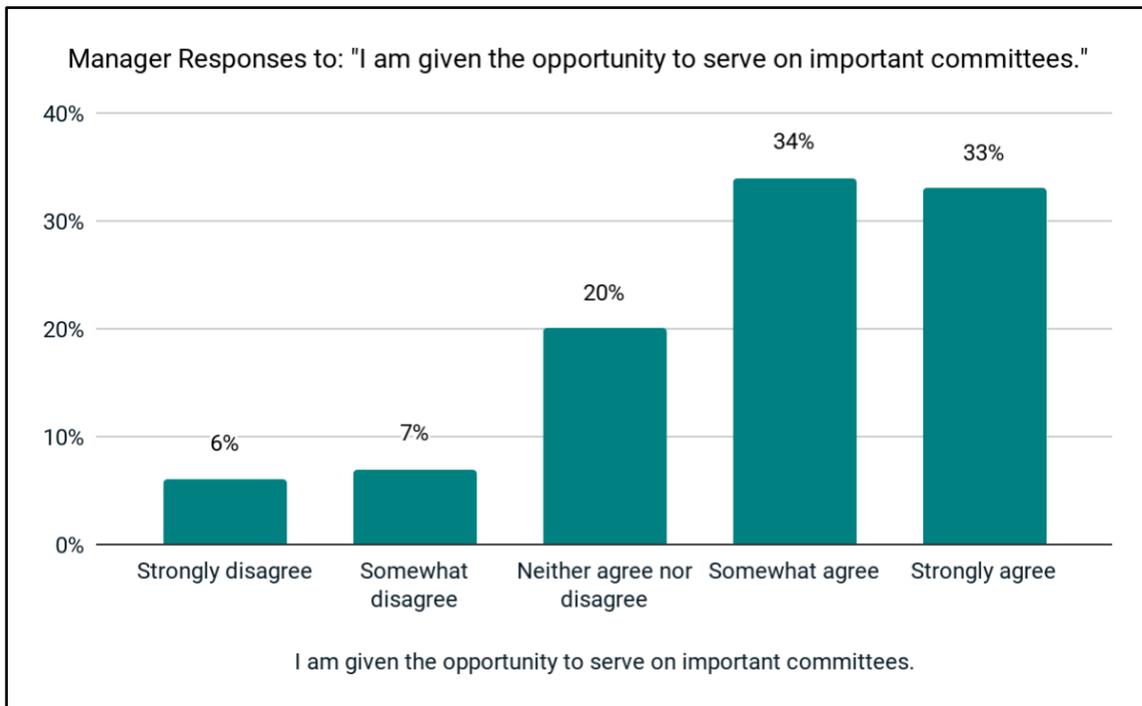


Figure 4

Responses from Managers on Committee Work Opportunities



Informal learning is further evidenced by survey results relating to mentoring, though the results indicate there could be some room for improvement. When asked, "While at our organization, do you feel as though you have received adequate mentoring?" 41% of managers responded "yes." Further, when asked if they had received informal mentoring, managers' responses were mixed, as shown in Figure 5-7. For the question below, the survey defines an informal mentor as "someone not officially assigned to you who advises on career issues and advocates for you in your discipline or area; this could include someone within or outside the organization."

Figure 5

Responses on Adequate Mentoring

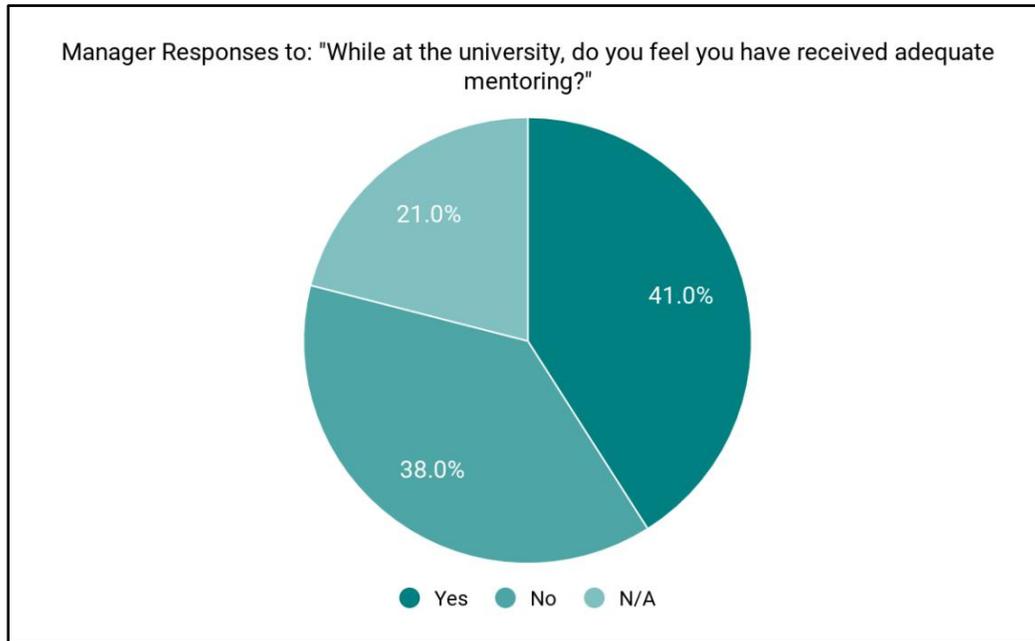


Figure 6

Responses on Informal Mentoring

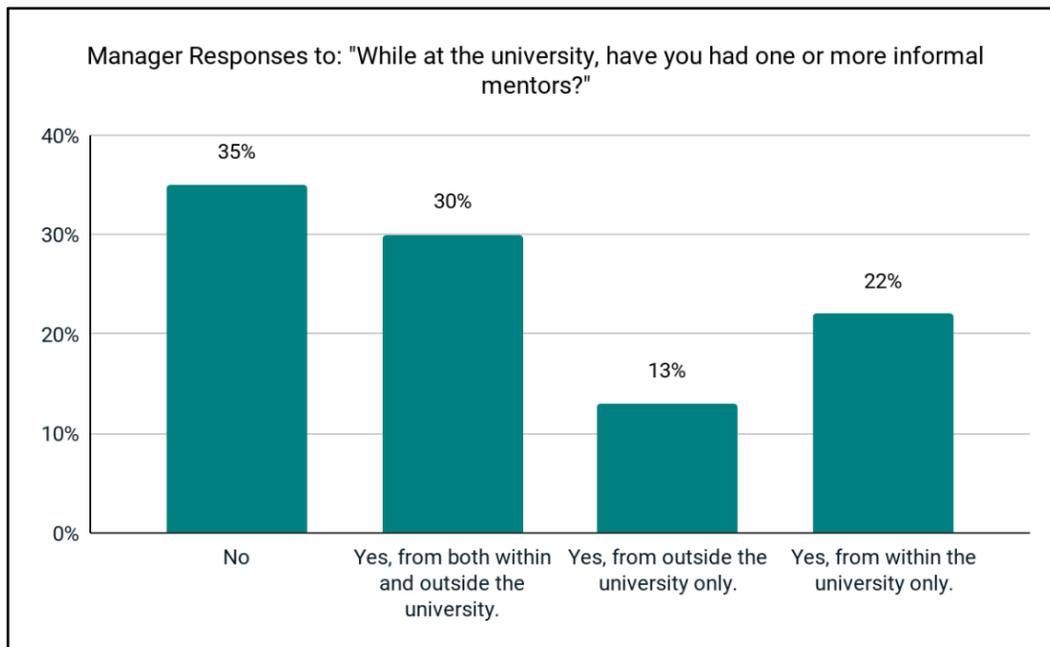
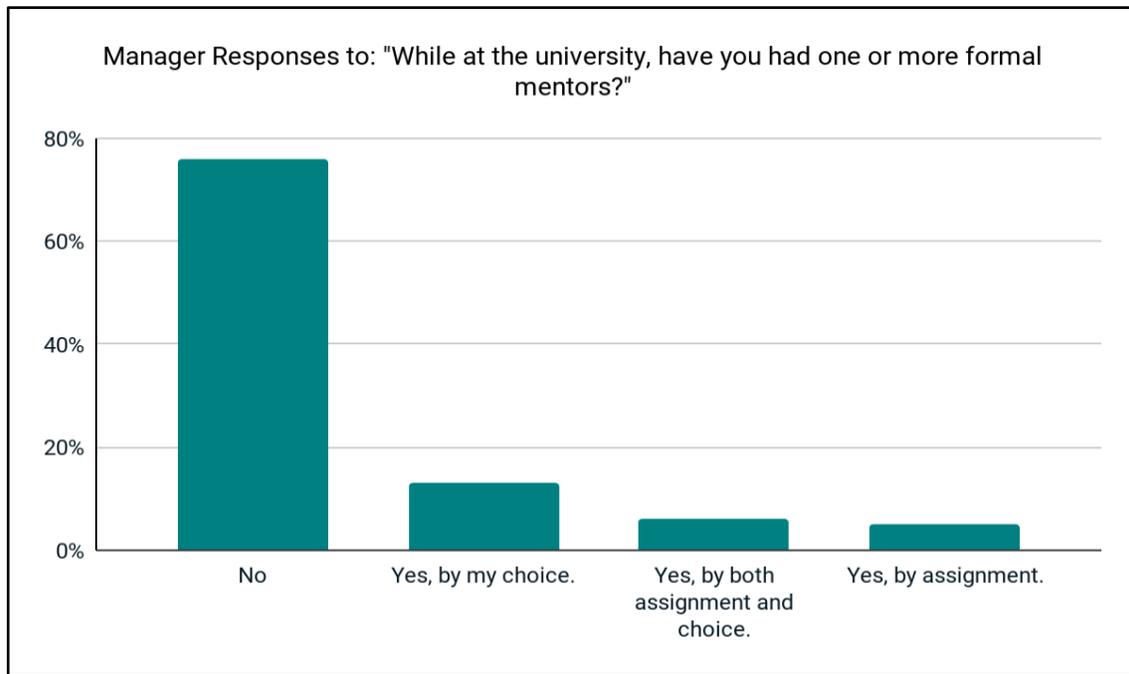


Figure 7

Responses on Formal Mentoring



Research Question 3: What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?

Our third research question explores the current learning opportunities and affordances for managers within the Division of Student Life. We used all data sources to understand what opportunities exist and how employees perceive those opportunities.

Finding 3A: Employees believe that existing formal learning opportunities are infrequent and not designed for managers in the Division of Student Life.

When asked what opportunities exist for manager development during our interviews, most participants said that “they didn’t know.” Employees described manager development within the Division of Student Life as sparse and inconsistent. Some referenced “random workshops” or “one-off sessions” but stated that there “is no curriculum.” All but one interview participant agreed there are few development opportunities for managers within the division. One interviewee said that, in the Division

of Student Life, “new managers are just thrust into their position, and they either sink or swim...they don’t really get any training at all on how to manage or on how to lead.” The same interviewee explained that this poses a problem because “most people who are new managers have been doing, doing, doing their whole career and all of a sudden they have to manage budgets and manage people and they get very quickly dragged down to the minutia.”

Some employees mentioned the Central Human Resources office offers opportunities but noted that those opportunities are not required and are not well advertised. One interviewee referenced a special leadership program provided by the university’s Central Human Resources but noted that “you have to be invited to that, so it’s not something that everyone does.” Our research into artifacts revealed that this special leadership program is not a manager training program, and potential program participants must apply to the program. Some employees referenced employee engagement opportunities within the Division of Student Life, including a mentoring program and book club, with the caveat, those opportunities are not specific to managers.

Multiple interviewees asserted that the onus is on the individual to seek out development opportunities, but, as one participant noted, “the managers who need help aren’t the ones who seek it.” Many participants agreed that the Division of Student Life could do more to support managers’ development. One interviewee compared the organization’s staff development offerings to that of other institutions that they have worked for, saying, “public institutions seem to do a better job in supporting staff with professional development ... our organization can do better.”

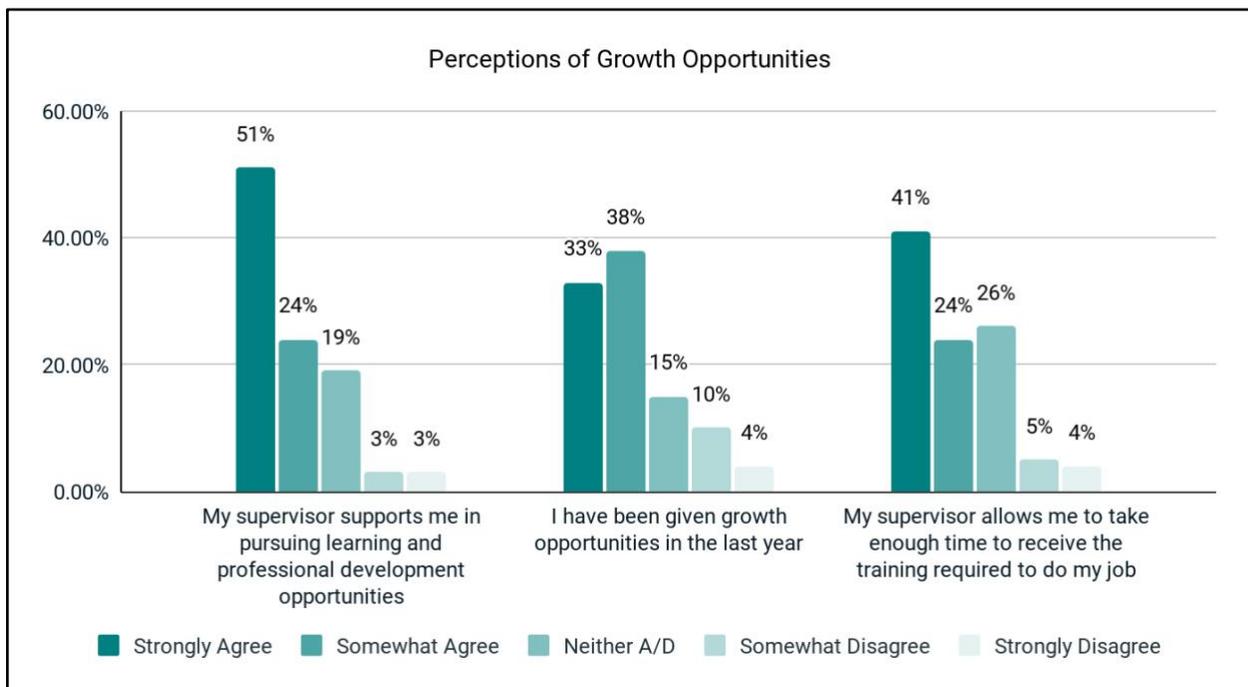
This sentiment was pervasive in our interviews, even though employees often described learning opportunities while simultaneously articulating that none existed. Employee’s views of what constitutes learning and development appeared to differ from what the literature describes as continual learning (Watson, 2001; Reynolds, 1999).

Finding 3B: Managers feel encouraged to pursue development opportunities, but they perceive they do not have the time to do so.

A majority of managers who responded to the survey indicated growth opportunities, such as educational workshops or conferences, were available to them within the last year (71%). Further, over half (75%) reported that their supervisor supports them in pursuing learning and professional development opportunities.

Figure 8

Responses on Growth Opportunities



Although managers felt supported in pursuing growth opportunities, interview participants frequently expressed they felt they did not have the time to step away from their work to engage in reflection or development opportunities. The interview data represented in Figure 8 shows only 41% of managers “strongly agree” they have the time to engage in training.

One interviewee framed the problem as a lack of “bandwidth” to participate in development opportunities and suggested that if supervisors explicitly stated “everybody’s expected to be there,” participation in development opportunities would increase. Two interviewees indicated managers should be required to participate in development opportunities. One said, “many opportunities are there; they should just be more expected or required,” and another suggested, “managers should be expected to participate in HR’s opportunities.” These suggestions to require training stand out given that almost all interview participants also stated, “nothing is mandatory” in our organization. One interviewee reiterated this point: “but because our organization doesn’t mandate anything when you have a job to do, it’s tough for people to take time away from their job to attend those types of things.”

While we could not evaluate a manager’s day-to-day time management or delegation of responsibilities, regardless of the truth of this finding, the reality is that managers perceive they either do not have time or are unable to take time for development. Development opportunities are only helpful if employees are able to take advantage of them.

Recommendations

Based on our study’s findings and a situated understanding of how people learn, we will recommend below that the Human Resources Office in the Division of Student Life develop specific tools, design learning opportunities, and create practices to enable manager success. Specifically, we recommend that our client 1) create tools to facilitate conversations around the expectations of managers and manager success, 2) design integrated learning opportunities that facilitate manager knowing, and 3) enact policies that set aside time for managers to engage in development activities.

Recommendation 1: Create tools to facilitate conversations about manager success.

During interviews, managers expressed difficulty learning and discovering their expectations. This difficulty presents an opportunity for the Division of Student Life’s Human Resources Office to help

better facilitate this process of learning for managers. When reviewing existing artifacts, including job descriptions and the employee competencies put forth by Central Human Resources, we observed a lack of consistency across job descriptions and a lack of relevance of the Central Human Resources competencies to roles within the Division of Student Life. Accordingly, we recommend that the Human Resource Office in the Division of Student Life create minimum standards for job descriptions and develop employee competencies that are particular to employees within their division. These tools can be a starting point for conversations as managers learn within the organizational context.

Create Standardized Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are a communication tool that organizations use to identify the right employees for a job and communicate expectations, including necessary competencies and performance standards (Brannen, 2016). The Society of Human Resource Management describes a job description as a plain-language tool to help an employee understand the tasks, responsibilities, and expectations of their position and understand how their work relates to the organization (SHRM, 2021). When well-written, job descriptions can guide job performance, evaluation, and management activities (SHRM, 2021).

We recommend the Human Resources Office in the Division of Student Life undertake an effort to systematically review and improve the job descriptions for all roles, using a process prescribed by the Society of Human Resource Management. The Society for Human Resource Management provides a how-to guide for developing job descriptions, including performing a job analysis, establishing the job's essential functions, and organizing the job data clearly and concisely.

Develop Employee Capacities for Managers in the Division of Student Life

Employee capacities generally are conceptualized as knowledge, skills, and abilities that can help an employee understand what behaviors they need to do to perform their role effectively (SHRM, 2021). The Society for Human Resource Management (2021) asserts that organizations can use competency

models to articulate what is necessary for effective performance in a specific role and organization. Clear, accurate, and effectively utilized employee competencies are helpful to communicate expectations and guide employee behavior. Further, they can inform employee evaluation, talent management, and development activities.

Our client's goal for our project was to develop a list of competencies to help managers. While our framework generally argues against defining a set of specific traits for managers, through our interviews, we articulated a set of capacities that can help managers consider what they need to know, do, and be in order to be successful at the organization. The organization can use these capacities or competencies as a tool to enable conversations between managers and their supervisors and employees.

Instead of relying on the employee competencies put forth by the Central Human Resources, we recommend that the Human Resources Office in the Division of Student Life develop employee competencies specific to managers within their division. A tool composed of the organizational culture and terminology will give both organization and managers shared language around managers' experiences. This task of aligning institutional tools with the organizational context is supported by our finding that organizational awareness is necessary for success at our client university.

If all employee levels are involved in the development of this tool, it will also provide an opportunity for an inclusive model of development. The Design Justice Network advocates for rethinking design processes by focusing on people who are typically marginalized and using collaborative practices to creatively address community issues (Design Justice Network, 2018). Based on the Design Justice Network Principles, the development of this tool can be collaborative by assembling a group of individual contributors and managers to center the voices of those directly impacted by the outcomes of the design process. This working group can decide how to approach the process and determine what activities should take place.

After developing their organizational-specific competencies, the organization can use them in many ways to facilitate manager development. For example, Naquin and Holton (2006) discuss the benefits of competency-based training models and how to build a competency-based professional development program. Naquin and Holton recommend that organizations establish what competencies are needed to succeed in their roles and then use those competencies to assess the employee. Once gaps in an employee's abilities are identified, the employer can utilize a targeted training model to fill those gaps.

Recommendation 2: Create learning opportunities that lead toward manager “knowing,” by designing formal educational opportunities and structuring informal learning spaces.

Participants consistently suggested that the Division of Student Life could offer more and better development opportunities to managers. Given what we heard from participants during our interviews and what the literature says about how managers most effectively learn (Watson, 2001), we propose that the Human Resource Office design opportunities that integrate formal and informal learning to facilitate manager development.

Acknowledge the Desire for Formal Learning Opportunities

Throughout interviews, participants repeatedly articulated a desire for formal learning opportunities, as illustrated by one interviewee who stated, “if we want our managers to be set up for success and to be good managers and to learn and grow and have the same ability to support their employees, I think it’s only reasonable to expect people to go through some sort of new manager training or onboarding relating to the soft and hard skills that we want managers to have.” When asked what types of support the Division of Student Life should offer to managers, our interviewees had plenty of suggestions. One suggested providing managers with training on essential skills, such as feedback, supervision, expectations, and boundary settings.

Given the strong desire expressed by participants, the Human Resources Office could create visible development opportunities to respond to managers' requests and desires. In addition to the formal learning opportunities created by such a program, our client should also cultivate the environment and conditions necessary for managers to engage in informal learning.

Cultivate Informal Learning Opportunities

During our interviews, participants discussed several informal ways that the Division of Student Life could enable managers to succeed. One interviewee discussed the value of a supportive environment where people could feel comfortable asking each other questions and making mistakes. Another suggested providing managers with more structured time with their own or another experienced manager to learn from their experience. Individual contributors, intermediate managers, and senior managers suggested providing managers with mentoring or coaching, creating peer learning groups, and building feedback loops across levels.

Further, theoretical trends in the study of management learning have transitioned towards merging organizational theory and psychology to develop a continuous framing of learning to be a manager and "becoming" (Watson, 2008). As discussed in our literature review, context is critical to manager development. Based on our interviews, context plays a crucial role towards manager success in the Division of Student Life. Interviewees repeatedly referenced our client's "unique culture." Our interviewees' emphasis on organizational awareness aligns with a situated perspective of learning, which asserts that participants learn by observing an activity system or organization (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008).

One concern about informal learning interviews that we did not see in our data, but did not explicitly ask about, is access and affordances to informal learning. As we observe learning in an activity system, we wonder who is afforded the opportunity to learn and who has an advantage over others (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008)? Intersecting identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality could impact who

and how someone can learn in an environment. Their informal learning opportunities can further be compounded by social capital, relationships with others, and systemic issues. Thus, as a means to help address access inequities to informal learning opportunities, we recommend structuring opportunities that create a space for and facilitate informal learning, articulated below.

Design Integrated Learning Opportunities

To integrate formal and informal learning opportunities to effectively facilitate the “becoming” process of managers (Watson, 2001), our client could create an integrated learning program that balances formal structure with informal learning. Leskiw and Singh (2007) suggest that organizations begin developing any learning program design by first conducting a thorough needs assessment and designing an appropriate infrastructure to support the initiative. Then, organizations can create and implement a learning system (Leskiw & Singh, 2001).

Managers’ lived experiences are a part of the learning milieu and are, therefore, knowledge content themselves. The conceptualization of a learning system should reflect not only formal programming, but also the interpersonal relationships between learners, the organizational values and constraints, and the reaction of learners to the content as it unfolds (Reynolds, 1999). The way an organization designs for learning, *or does not design for learning*, is a source of learning itself and reinforces the organization's values, beliefs, and discourse. “Not only through the curriculum but from the educational environment as a complex whole, students and trainees find out about the behavior that is expected of them and are exposed to the social, political, and cultural values that underlie these expectations” (Reynolds, p. 542).

Therefore, we recommend that the integrated learning system utilize the following design concepts, supported by both interview data and the literature: facilitating experiential learning and designing learning communities.

Offering Experiential, On-going Learning Opportunities

Focused job assignments, developmental relationships, and on-the-job experiences are practical tools to facilitate learning (Collins and Holton, 2004). Interview participants gave several suggestions for learning development programming, including manager-specific mentoring, manager-specific feedback mechanisms, and exposure to senior leadership. Further, Cacioppe (1998) puts forth a set of successful practices for developing leaders that include competency evaluation, strategic team projects, job rotations, simulations, and including trainees in strategic planning sessions. Cacioppe (1998) also posits that project work, team problem-solving exercises, role plays, leadership models, 360 feedback surveys, coaching, and learning journals help facilitate the learning process.

Implementing Learning Communities

Reynolds (1999) puts forth the idea of using learning communities for manager education. Learning communities use a socio-historical approach in both the content and process of learning. Learning communities, as described by Reynolds, function on the core belief that learners “should be able to exercise choice in the direction and content of their learning by sharing in the decision making through which, for example, topics, methods, and membership of learning groups are determined” (1999, p. 546). For a learning community to thrive, each individual takes responsibility for identifying their learning need and is responsible for contributing to the learning community and helping others identify and meet their needs (Reynolds, 1999).

To create a learning community, our client should identify prospective participants and facilitators. Given the learning community is much more participatory than traditional manager training opportunities; the facilitators may need to create a shared understanding of the community by explaining the benefits and method and establishing an open exchange between facilitators and learners. Learners and facilitators should jointly establish preferences for how they intend to work

together as a community and a respect for the mutual expertise that each member brings to the community (Reynolds, 1999).

While the learning community is intended to be flexible, Reynolds (1999) provides a loose framework for implementation. Facilitators and learners can begin by mapping and brainstorming their mutual interests and ideas for experiential learning. Reynolds (1999) suggests having each participant summarize the topics or practices they want to learn and list out the ideas for how or methods for how they can contribute to learning. Then, everyone weighs in on each other's desired topics and potential contributions so that the facilitator, or even a smaller group of learners, can begin to develop a timetable for sessions and planning (Reynolds, 1999). This process can be natural and does not have to follow Reynold's suggestion, so long as the learning community members are mutually selecting their topic and method for learning.

As the learning community develops, managers should become increasingly involved, as the curriculum is emergent and not imposed. Sessions can be leaderless, involve smaller groups of the community, or be reflective of lived experiences. A learning community can promote shared problem solving on day-to-day challenges and foster a safe space for managers to ask each other questions, seek help, and learn about unspoken expectations within an organization.

Recommendation 3: Enact department-specific policies that set aside time for managers to engage in development activities.

Our interviews and survey data revealed that, although managers feel encouraged to pursue formal development opportunities, they perceive they do not have sufficient time to do so. As we discussed in our findings, this perception was pervasive and tied to a lack of understanding of what constitutes development and learning. Regardless of the reality of this perception, it presents an opportunity for the Human Resource Office to tackle the issue and engage in a culture shift.

To address this perception issue, we recommend that the Human Resource Office work with leadership in the Division of Student Life to enact policies and practices that set aside time for managers to engage in development activities. We also encourage leadership within the division to create a mechanism by which managers feel they can speak to their supervisor reprioritizing their workload to engage in development. Hopefully, these steps will show managers that the division wants to prioritize development and give them a platform to speak to their supervisor if they feel they are unable to engage in learning activities. Further, this policy provides an opportunity for community education around learning and development. The policy could articulate both informal and formal learning as a mechanism for manager development, which could help shift the cultural perceptions of learning.

Conclusion

We conducted this project to provide the Human Resources Office in the Division of Student Life with recommendations on enabling manager success through learning. We used document analysis, employee interviews, and survey data to explore the experience of managers in the Division of Student Life. This study's goals were to articulate what it means to be a successful manager in this context, understand how managers learn what is expected of them, and explore the currently available learning opportunities for managers.

We found that while managers express they have difficulty finding and learning expectations, informal learning is happening through relationships and networks. We found that institutional documents around the capacities of managers somewhat align with employee perceptions but that employees are using different language than the institution. We also found that managers desire more formal learning opportunities. Though learning opportunities are offered at the institutional level, Division of Student Life managers feel they need options specific to their organizational context. Finally, although managers feel encouraged to pursue formal learning opportunities, they perceive they do not have the time to do so.

Limitations to our findings include our small number of interview participants and the timing of our study. While we desired a higher number of participants, we obtained fewer than expected. We attribute this to the fact that our data collection period coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which was exceptionally burdensome to student affairs staff at America's colleges and universities. Both client and researchers had to place our study as a lesser priority while managing the effects of this national crisis. In addition, our research is limited by self-reported data, which naturally includes slight bias.

We recommended that our client develop tools that can facilitate the learning process for managers to understand expectations. For example, standardized job descriptions and clearly articulated competency documents specific to the context of DSL could help managers begin conversations with their supervisors and teams to set and manage mutual expectations. We also recommended that our client design an integrated learning system for managers, including formal and informal learning mechanisms. Finally, we recommended reviewing policies and practices that inhibit managers from taking time and prioritizing their participation in learning opportunities.

Our client is responsible for determining if and how to implement the recommendations outlined above. The Human Resources Office will need to consider how these tools, programs, and policies will relate to those already existing at the institutional level. Additionally, the Human Resources Office will need to ensure that their efforts to 1) create tools that clarify what it means to be a successful manager in the Division of Student Life, 2) offer opportunities for learning that enable manager success, and 3) enact policies that ensure managers will have time to engage in development activities are aligned with the mission, vision, goals, and priorities of the Division of Student Life.

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Appendix A

Interview Recruitment Emails: Senior Managers

Subject: Invitation to Interview - Manager Success within DSL

Dear [First Name],

I am contacting you as a doctoral student in Vanderbilt University's Leadership and Learning in Organizations program to request your participation in a quality improvement project that explores manager success within the Division of Student Life.

This project will include analysis of existing quantitative data and collection of original qualitative data, in the form of one-on-one interviews with current DSL employees. Ultimately, this project will provide DSL Human Resources with recommendations about how to best enable manager success.

I am contacting you for this study because, as a senior leader in the Division of Student Life who supervises at least one manager, you can provide key insight into the expectations, performance, and development of managers. It is important to note that these interviews are not about the manager(s) you supervise, *specifically*, but instead is about managers in DSL *in general*.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information collected will be kept confidential. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. You may cancel or stop the interview at any time without penalty.

I am collaborating on this project with a fellow Vanderbilt student affiliated with your organization, who will contribute to the analysis of only *anonymized* interview data. Your participation (or lack thereof) is confidential will not be known to anyone other than me.

If you are willing to participate, please [click here to sign-up for an interview](#).

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Interview Recruitment Emails: Intermediate Managers

Subject: Invitation to Interview - Manager Success within DSL

Dear [First Name],

I am contacting you as a doctoral student in Vanderbilt University's Leadership and Learning in Organizations program to request your participation in a quality improvement project that explores manager success within the Division of Student Life.

This project will include analysis of existing quantitative data and collection of original qualitative data, in the form of one-on-one interviews with current DSL employees. Ultimately, this project will provide DSL Human Resources with recommendations about how to best enable manager success.

I am contacting you for this study because, as a manager in the Division of Student Life, you can provide key insight into the expectations, performance, and development associated with your role. It is important to note that these interviews are not about you, *personally*, but instead is about managers in *DSL in general*.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information collected will be kept confidential. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. You may cancel or stop the interview at any time without penalty.

I am collaborating on this project with a fellow Vanderbilt student affiliated with your organization, who will contribute to the analysis of only *anonymized* interview data. Your participation (or lack thereof) is confidential will not be known to anyone other than me.

If you are willing to participate, please [click here to sign-up for an interview](#).

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Interview Recruitment Emails: Individual Contributors

Subject: Invitation to Interview - Manager Success within DSL

Dear [First Name],

I am contacting you as a doctoral student in Vanderbilt University's Leadership and Learning in Organizations program to request your participation in a quality improvement project that explores manager success within the Division of Student Life.

This project will include analysis of existing quantitative data and collection of original qualitative data, in the form of one-on-one interviews with current DSL employees. Ultimately, this project will provide DSL Human Resources with recommendations about how to best enable manager success.

I am contacting you for this study because, as someone who reports to a manager in the Division of Student Life, you can provide key insight into the expectations, performance, and development of managers. It is important to note that these interviews are not about your *specific* manager, but instead is about managers in DSL *in general*.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information collected will be kept confidential. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. You may cancel or stop the interview at any time without penalty.

I am collaborating on this project with a fellow Vanderbilt student affiliated with your organization, who will contribute to the analysis of only *anonymized* interview data. Your participation (or lack thereof) is confidential will not be known to anyone other than me.

If you are willing to participate, please [click here to sign-up for an interview](#).

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

The investigator will review the following with participants prior to beginning the interview/focus group:

Interview Preamble

First and foremost, thank you for agreeing to be a part of this project! Before we begin, there are a few things that I must review with you. As you know, this project is focused on manager success within the Division of Student Life. In addition to conducting interviews with staff across the division, my partner and I will also be reviewing artifacts, like position descriptions, and analyzing existing survey data. Ultimately, this project will provide DSL Human Resources with recommendations about how to best enable manager success. As an employee/manager/senior leader within DSL, you can provide key insight into the expectations, performance, and development of managers. It is important to note that these interviews are not about your *specific* manager, but instead is about managers in DSL *in general*.

As stated in the invitation to interview email:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may cancel or stop the interview at any time without penalty.
- All information collected will be kept confidential.
- I have assigned all participants a numeric identification code that will be used to store your information.
- Neither your name or any other personally identifiable information will be used in data entry or referenced in findings that result from this study.
- Your participation (or lack thereof) is confidential will not be known to anyone other than me.
- There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.
- If we learn something new that may affect the risks or benefits of this study, you will be told so that you can decide whether or not you still want to be in this study.

Certification of Understanding

After reciting the information above, the interviewer will ask the participant “Do you have any questions about the above information?” and will answer any questions that they have.

Requesting Permission to Record

Finally, recording interviews is tremendously helpful when it comes to analysis and coding. If you’re amenable, I would like to record this session, using just audio of you and both audio and video of me. Do I have permission to record our conversation?

Appendix E
Interview Questions

Theoretical Framework	Research Question	Interview Questions
Knowing/ Learning	RQ 1	What managers need to know, do and be to be successful?
	RQ 1	What <u>knowledge</u> do managers in DSL need to be successful?
	RQ 1	What are the desired <u>skills</u> of managers in DSL?
	RQ 1	What <u>characteristics or behaviors</u> do managers in DSL need to be successful?
Knowing	RQ 1	Describe a particularly successful manager that you’ve observed. What made them successful?
	RQ 1	Describe a particularly unsuccessful manager that you’ve observed. What made them unsuccessful?
Learning	RQ 2	How are the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors that you outlined communicated to managers in DSL? How do managers learn what is expected of them?
Education	RQ 3	What opportunities for learning (either formal or informal) exist for managers?
Education	RQ4	What opportunities for learning (either formal or informal) would enable managers to be successful?

Appendix F
Summary of Data Collected

Research Question	Data Collected	Framework Element
What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts: Position descriptions; Central Human Resources Competencies • Interviews • Survey 	Learning, Knowing
How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts: Position descriptions; Central Human Resources Competencies • Interviews • Survey 	Learning
What opportunities for learning exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts: Position descriptions; Central Human Resources Competencies • Interviews 	Education

Appendix G
Code Book

Category	Code	Color	Research Question
Know/Do/Be - General Know/Do/Be - Know Know/Do/Be - Do Know/Do/Be - Be	KDB KDB_K KDB_D KDB_B	yellow	RQ1: What are the necessary capacities of managers in the Division of Student Life?
Expectations Communicated - Yes Expectations Communicated - No	ECY ECN	green	RQ2: How do managers come to learn what is expected of them within the Division of Student Life?
Opportunities Exist - General Opportunities Exist - Yes Opportunities Exist - No	OE OE_Y OE_N	blue	RQ3: What learning opportunities exist for managers within the Division of Student Life?
Recommendation	REC	pink	N/A but helpful for recommendations.
Other	OT	purple	N/A - Other - interesting for client, but not about RQs

Appendix H
Central Human Resources Employee Competencies

Collaborating and building relationships	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds productive work relationships • Is cooperative and a team player • Works well with others to solve challenges • Seeks opportunities to collaborate with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns team members to shared goals and creates opportunities for teamwork • Builds relationships with key stakeholders and grows a trusted network inside and outside • Promptly and effectively manages conflict. • Champions and enables cross-organizational, multiple stakeholder initiatives that need collaboration
Communicating with influence	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailors communication style and method for others • Writes, speaks, and presents effectively • Makes suggestions in a way that others understand • Welcomes and actively listens to others' feedback, ideas, and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a timely manner with others about changes that may impact them, including the context and/or reasons for the changes • Steadfastly and diplomatically motivates others for results for the collective benefit of the organization. • Develops and communicates a clear and compelling vision that moves others to act
Demonstrating strategic agility	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the work of the department and how it contributes • Demonstrates flexibility when there is a need to change, reprioritize, or shift focus or goals • Anticipates consequences of actions, problems, and opportunities; acts accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps develop, shape, and articulate a compelling long-term vision • Ensures that others' work is prioritized to align with the vision • Creates and/or implements objectives and strategies (may include breakthrough strategies) • Champions the Institute's initiatives and decisions
Developing the potential of self and others	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seeks opportunities to improve, learn, and grow. • Participates in learning opportunities and applies the learnings to the work • Shares knowledge, assistance, and guidance to help others learn while getting the job done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a culture of development through coaching, delegating, providing stretch assignments, giving meaningful feedback, etc. • Distributes assignments to promote team learning and shared success • Enables career development and movement inside and outside the department

Exercising integrity and credibility	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is trustworthy and widely trusted • Responds directly, promptly, and sensitively to unethical behavior; escalates if necessary. • Admits mistakes and/or lack of knowledge • Speaks openly, candidly, and honestly about issues • Takes responsibility for one’s safety and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models the same behavior for which he/she holds others accountable (“walks the talk”) • Provides guidance in ethically complex situations • Communicates the organization’s values and ethical norms to staff, stakeholders, clients, and the external community • Creates a culture of safety and well-being and is a role model for both
Focusing on the customer	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes responsibility for meeting customers’ needs and holds self-accountable for follow-up • Takes extra steps and demonstrates creativity to meet others’ needs • Provides courteous, timely, and professional service even in difficult situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively holds staff accountable for and dedicated to meeting customer needs. • Models all aspects of superior customer service, including measuring that service • Forecasts and meets complex and diverse customer needs
Fostering an inclusive community	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful of differences • Is aware of and manages own bias(es) • Takes action in response to behaviors that diminish our organization as an inclusive and caring community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes a vision for a climate of respect and inclusion • Proactively seeks, hires, and develops diverse candidates. • Encourages staff to build community and acknowledges those who do
Implementing proactively and decisively	
Examples for All Employees	Examples for Managers & Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates action to address underlying causes of problems and patterns • Recognizes barriers, solves where possible, and escalates when necessary • Seizes opportunities and contributes new ideas • Takes ownership and holds oneself accountable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates organizational change and improvements • Creates a culture that enables and recognizes others who take calculated risks to advance goals and experiment with new approaches • Effectively brings together people, funds, and space required to advance organizational goals.

Appendix I

Managers Responses to Select Questions from the 2020 Quality of Life Survey

Figure I-1

Managers responses to questions about sources of stress

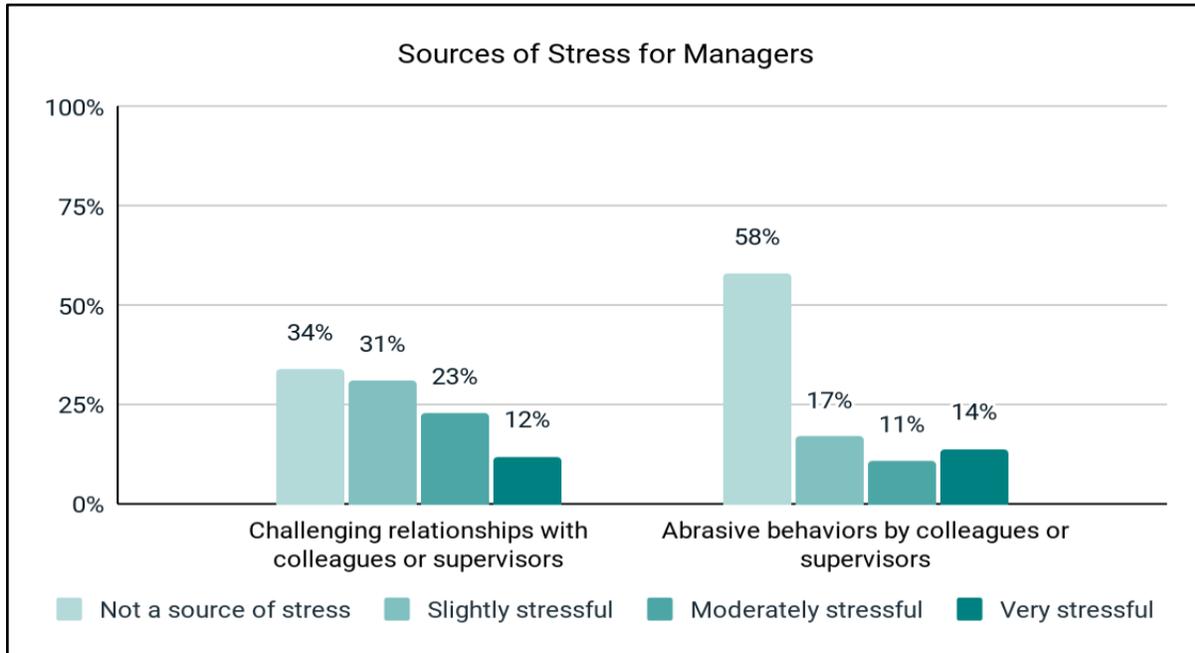


Figure I-2

Managers responses to questions about growth opportunities

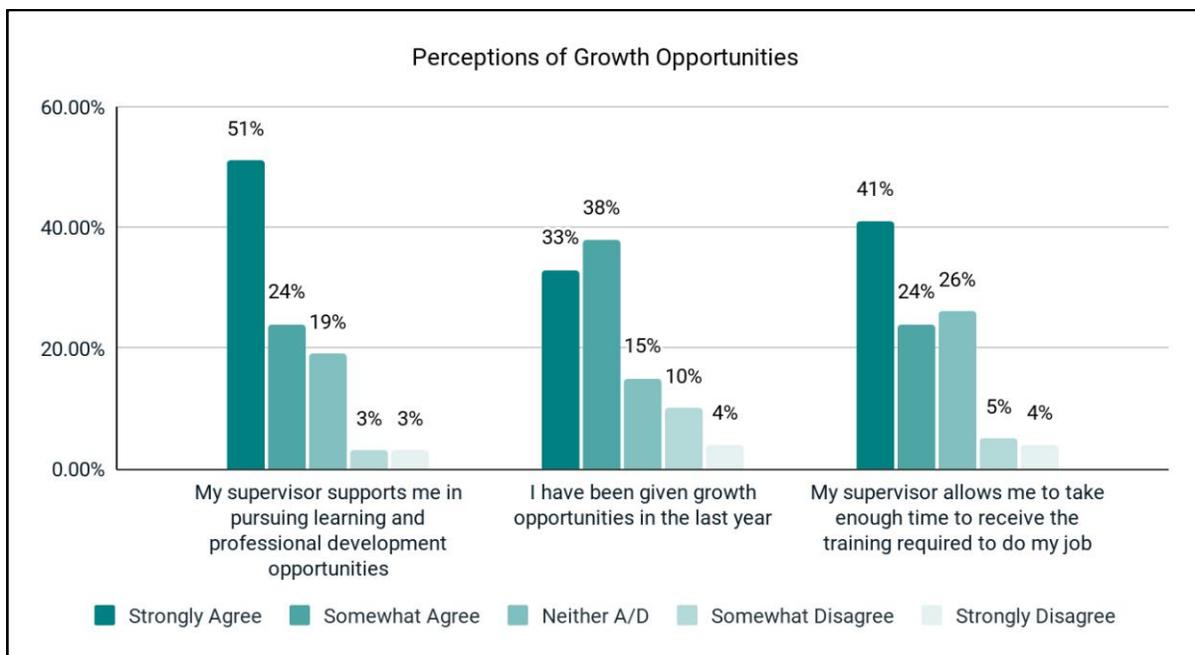


Figure I-3

Managers responses to questions about mentoring

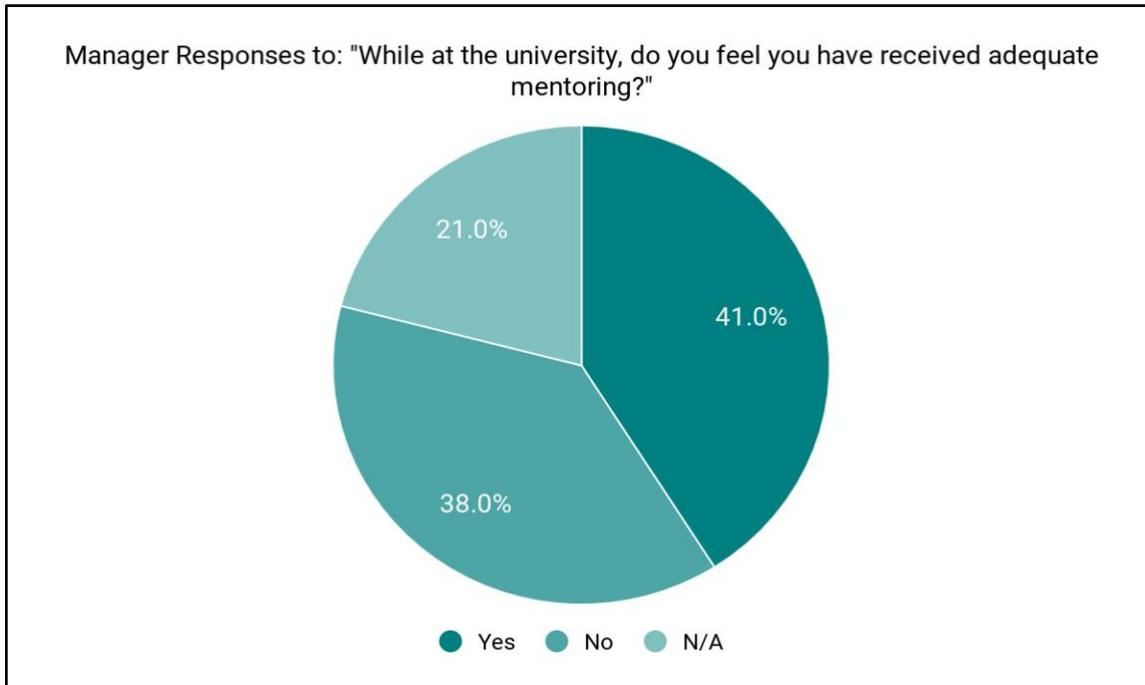


Figure I-4

Managers responses to question about informal mentoring

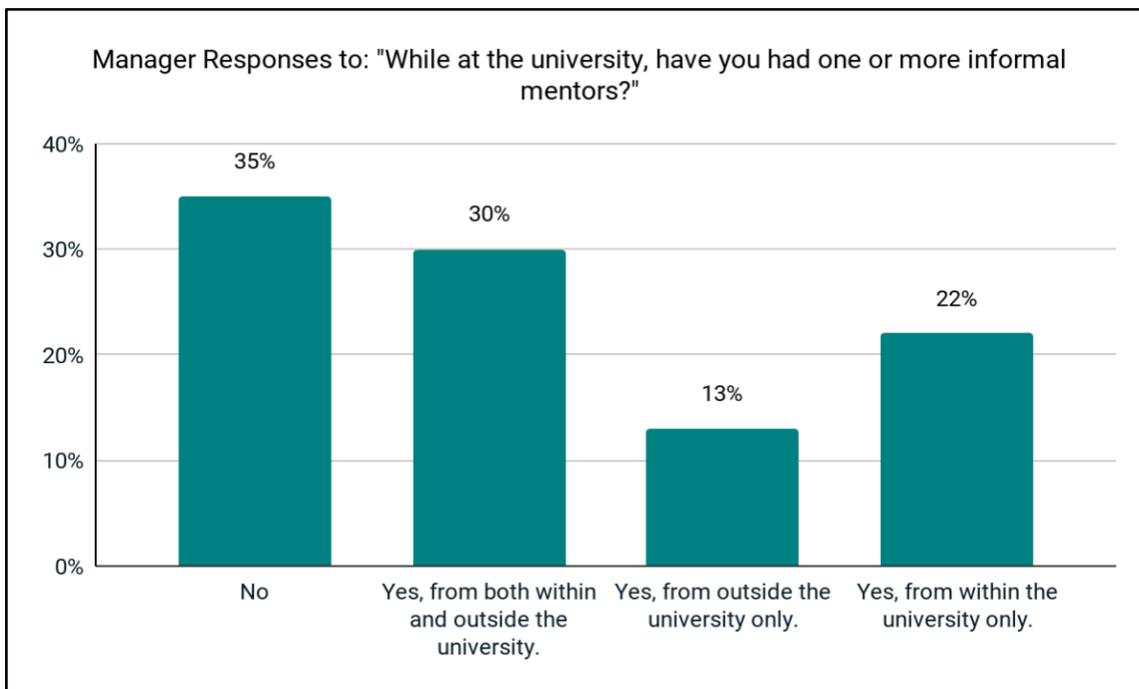


Figure I-5

Managers responses to question about formal mentoring

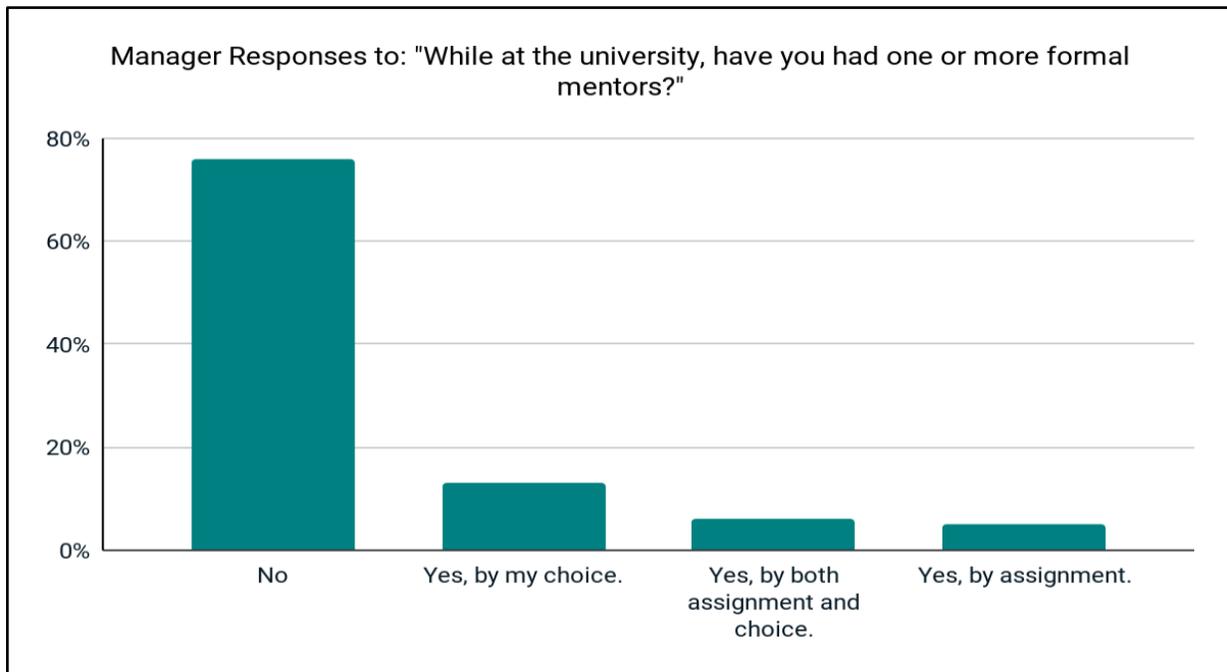


Figure I-6

Managers responses to questions about communication

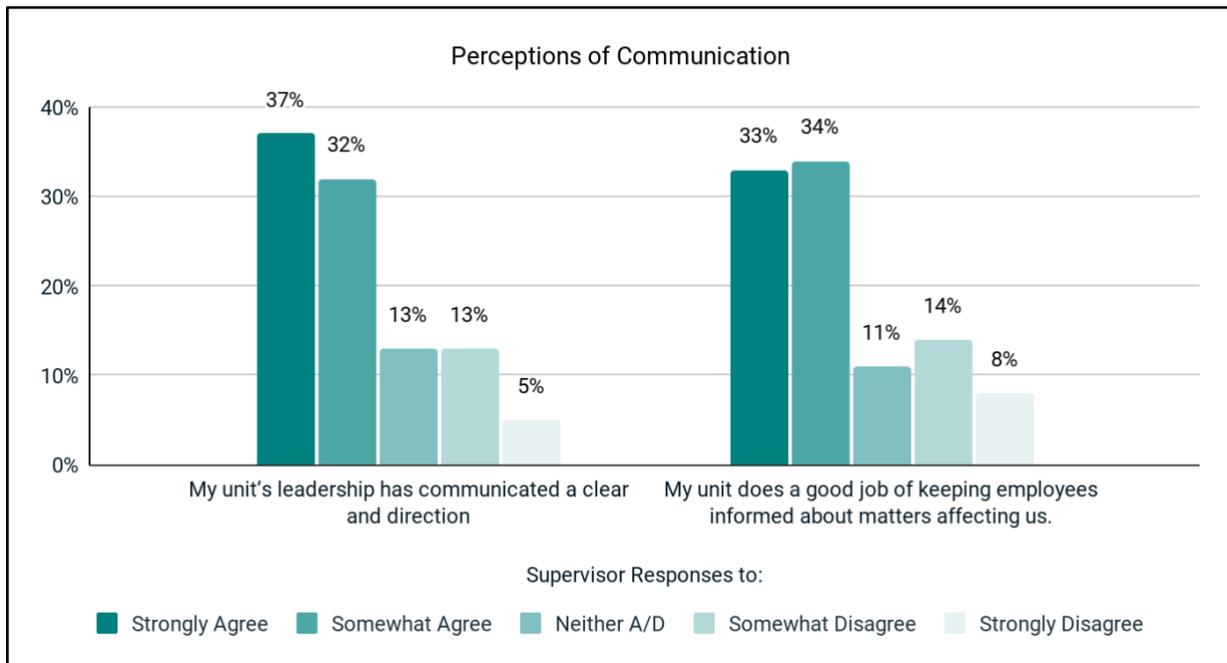


Figure I-7

Managers responses to questions about expectations and feedback

