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**COLLEGE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERCOLLEGIATE  
ATHLETICS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

by  
D. Nathaniel Parsley

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services and Leadership  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in Higher Education  
at  
Rowan University  
June 3, 2016

Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my tremendous parents. Without your unconditional love, guidance, and support, this would not have been possible.

## **Acknowledgments**

First, I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Burton Sisco. I am extremely grateful for all of the time you spent in helping me to prepare this final product. I thank you also for your guidance and support throughout my time spent in the program. You are a special person to me.

I would also like to thank the Rowan University athletic department; specifically Kim Wilson, Dave Naphy, and the members of the 2016 Rowan University softball team. This year has been especially challenging; however, your encouragement has lifted my spirits and fueled me to always give my very best.

## Abstract

D. Nathaniel Parsley  
COLLEGE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS  
AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
2015-2016  
Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.  
Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purposes of this study were to (a) analyze undergraduate residential student attitudes towards athletics at Rowan University; (b) discern differences between self-identified student-athletes and non-athletes with respect to athletic programs at Rowan University in regards to resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes; and (c) examine differences in attitudes of the student sample at Rowan University with previous studies. The survey tool that was utilized consisted of 44 items, which collected demographics and employed a series of Likert-style statements. The subjects consisted of 431 residential, undergraduate students at Rowan University enrolled in classes during the spring semester of 2016. The results of the study suggested that students at Rowan University are generally supportive of intercollegiate athletic programs. Results also indicated that there is an established difference of attitudes between the athlete and non-athlete sample toward intercollegiate athletics and that athletes report a more positive disposition. Finally, results conclude that student attitudes between athletes and non-athletes are similar between various institutions, regardless of size, NCAA division classification, or personal experience.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	v
List of Tables .....	viii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	3
Significance of the Study .....	3
Assumptions and Limitations .....	4
Operational Definitions.....	5
Research Questions .....	7
Overview of the Study .....	7
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	9
The History of Intercollegiate Athletics .....	9
The Union of Higher Education and Athletics .....	11
Expansion of Intercollegiate Athletics.....	12
Rationalizing Intercollegiate Athletics .....	13
Outcomes Related to Intercollegiate Athletics .....	14
Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Involvement.....	17
Attitude Theory.....	19
Summary of the Literature Review .....	20
Chapter III: Methodology .....	23
Context of the Study .....	23

## Table of Contents (Continued)

Population and Sample Selection.....	24
Instrumentation .....	25
Data Collection .....	27
Data Analysis .....	28
Chapter IV: Findings.....	29
Profile of the Sample .....	29
Analysis of the Data.....	31
Research Question 1 .....	31
Research Question 2 .....	42
Research Question 3 .....	47
Chapter V: Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	55
Summary of the Study .....	55
Discussion of the Findings.....	56
Conclusions.....	59
Recommendations for Practice .....	60
Recommendations for Further Research.....	61
References.....	62
Appendix A: Permission to Reproduce Survey .....	65
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter and Survey Instrument .....	66
Appendix C: Institutional Review Board Approval.....	72



## List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 4.1. Gender Breakdown (N=431) .....	30
Table 4.2. Year of Study Breakdown (N=431).....	30
Table 4.3. Athlete/Non-Athlete Breakdown (N=431) .....	31
Table 4.4. College Student Attitudes Toward Resource Allocation (N=431) .....	32
Table 4.5. College Student Attitudes Toward Corruption (N=431) .....	35
Table 4.6. College Student Attitudes Toward Relevance of Athletic Programs (N=431) .....	38
Table 4.7. College Student Attitudes Toward Academic Matters of Student-Athletes (N=431) .....	41
Table 4.8. Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Athletes and Non-Athletes (N=431) .....	43
Table 4.9. Comparison of College Student Attitudes at Rowan University vs. University of Nevada (N=431) .....	49

## Chapter I

### Introduction

In September 2015, nine leaders of NCAA Division I institutions joined together to draft an open letter to the public, offering a unified opposition to a newly-passed NCAA policy that permitted schools to cover scholarship athlete's "cost of attendance." "Cost of attendance" is defined as the monetary gap between what an athletic scholarship covers and other miscellaneous expenses incurred by the student-athlete. These expenses could range from transportation to daily expenses and annually cost \$2,000 to \$5,000 (O'Connor, 2015). In the open letter, Alger et al. (2015), argued that high profile, power schools with large revenue streams have the ability to finance the cost of attendance for their scholarship athletes, while smaller schools with less resources cannot feasibly do so, without adversely affecting the average student population. The group contended:

We care deeply about our student-athletes, but we also care deeply about all of our students and want to treat all students equitably at a time when overall aid is limited, costs are increasing, and the public financial support for higher education is diminishing. (para. 6)

As highlighted by this recent event, the relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education is one historically marked by speculation and scrutiny. Issues such as academic fraud, equity, underperforming student-athletes, misconduct, and unethical behavior cause concerns for the wellbeing of the general student population (Brand, 2006; Chu, 1989). Despite continuous controversy, intercollegiate athletic departments have established themselves within the walls of American colleges and universities with

very little anecdotal evidence on how and why they serve the general student population and the underlying mission of higher education.

Studies have demonstrated inconsistent findings in regards to the impact of athletics on the American university. For example, research by Brand (2006), Chu (1989), Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) suggest that athletics produce positive outcomes for both the student and institution. On the contrary, research by Bowen and Levin (2003) and Shulman and Bowen (2001) find athletics are a disruption to the mission of higher education. From a student development lens, research by Astin (1999) finds that students who either participated in athletics directly or attended events were able to experience the benefits of involvement, including persistence to attaining a degree, greater satisfaction with the institution's academic reputation, and greater personal development. When assessing athletics based on a range of attitudes, research shows that both students and faculty have a positive attitude toward athletics and support programs (Baumgartner, 2013; Feezell, 2005; Knapp, Rasmussen, & Barnhart, 2001; Noble, 2004).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Ultimately, while there has been considerable generalized research on the topic of intercollegiate athletics, student involvement theory, and faculty attitudes, there exist few studies that examine student attitudes, especially at the NCAA Division III level. If the mission of higher education is first and foremost to serve its students, it is the imperative to explore how this group's outlook, attitude, and perspective on their athletic departments.

Previous research by Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart (2001) focused on attitudes of college students who attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a NCAA Division I institution. Feezell (2005) demonstrated differences in faculty attitudes between Division I and Division III schools. Based on Feezell's varied outcomes between divisions, this study sought to close the knowledge gap and establish a vignette of the general student attitude toward athletics at Rowan University, a Division III institution. There has not been a study done in regards to student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics in Division III, nor at Rowan University.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to analyze undergraduate residential student attitudes towards athletics at Rowan University. The secondary purpose was to discern differences between self-identified student-athletes and non-athletes with respect to athletic programs at Rowan University. Student attitudes regarding resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes were examined. The final purpose was to examine differences in attitudes of the student sample at Rowan University with previous studies.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study examined student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. By taking a closer look into student attitudes, higher education administrators can better understand how athletics impact the student population. In addition, this study also provides outcomes associated with involvement in athletics, rooted in Astin's (1999) Involvement Theory. Finally, a great deal of revenue is provided to athletic departments by the university to support programs. In a time where university spending should

benefit all students, it is important to rationalize this expense and validate that the money ultimately brings about positive outcomes for the general student population. This knowledge can be used to create or improve existing policies. It can also assist in creating an improved environment where athletics can directly benefit a wider audience, outside of solely their athletes.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

There are several assumptions made in this study. First, the study assumes that the data collected from undergraduate students at Rowan University, a Division III school, would mirror student attitudes across the country at all levels. Secondly, the study assumes that, based on relevant literature, the majority of the student population would demonstrate a positive disposition toward intercollegiate athletics. Knapp, Rasmussen, & Barnhart (2001) establish that, when surveyed, students are generally supportive of athletic programs on campus. Next, the survey instrument, created by Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart (2001) is a major component of the study. The survey asks participants to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a set of statements on a scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). The third assumption is that the instrument would accurately measure student attitudes and cover the range of potential topics and issues through various statements concerning higher education and athletics. Finally, it is assumed that students responded truthfully and honestly to survey questions and that the approved study would yield a minimum 50% response rate.

The scope of this study was limited to a sample of students who were self-identified as full-time, residential, undergraduate students at Rowan University, enrolled in classes during spring 2016. The size was limited in hopes of reaching a 50% response

rate. The final limitation is the always-pervasive potential for researcher bias, as I am a proponent of intercollegiate athletics and believe that it to be personally beneficial to all students in higher education.

### **Operational Definitions**

1. Athlete: Undergraduate college student who participated in a NCAA Division III sanctioned intercollegiate athletic sport at Rowan University during the 2015-2016 school year; this student must have participated in one of the seven men's NCAA programs (football, soccer, cross country, basketball, swimming and diving, baseball, and track and field) or one of nine women's NCAA programs (field hockey, cross country, soccer, volleyball, swimming and diving, basketball, lacrosse, softball, and track and field).
2. Attitude: An attitude is a “mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all object and situations with which it is related” (Allport, 1935, p. 810).
3. Division III Athletics: NCAA-sponsored athletics where student-athletes are prohibited from receiving financial aid related to athletic ability; Division III athletics place “special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators” (National Collegiate Conference Association, 2015a, para. 3).
4. Intercollegiate Athletics: Athletic competition that occurs between two colleges or universities.

5. Intramural Athletics: Athletic competition that occurs within the college community between teams made up of students attending the same school.
6. Involvement Theory: Refers to the “amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1999, p. 518).
7. NCAA: The NCAA or National Collegiate Athletic Association creates rules and regulations to govern intercollegiate events for men and women. They are split into three distinct divisions that oversee a total 460,000 student-athletes, 1,200 schools, and 89 championship events (National Collegiate Conference Association, 2015b).
8. Non-athletes: Undergraduate college student who do not participate in a NCAA Division III sanctioned intercollegiate athletic sport at Rowan University during the 2015-2016 school year; this student may complete in an intramural league and/or club sport.
9. Standard View: The Standard View “conceives of intercollegiate athletics as an extracurricular activity” that may have “some redeeming developmental value for students” but not part of the formal educational experience (Brand, 2006, pp. 9-10).
10. Students: Undergraduate, residential college students who attended Rowan University and were enrolled during Spring 2016 semester.
11. Student-athlete: Used interchangeably with “athlete” in this study; see “athlete” for complete definition.

## **Research Questions**

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are college student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University in the areas of resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes?
2. Is there a significant difference in attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics between self-identified athletes and non-athletes at Rowan University?
3. How do Rowan University college student-athletes and non-athlete's attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics compare with the sample from Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart's (2001) study at the University of Nevada?

## **Overview of the Study**

Chapter II contains a review of scholarly literature pertinent to this study. This section covers a history of intercollegiate athletics, outcomes associated with athletics, attitude theory, and student development theory. The literature also demonstrates the continued debate over athletics and higher education by presenting a varied and historical view of attitudes, ranging from faculty groups, athletes, and non-athletes.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The section includes: the context of the study, the population and sample size, the data collection instrument, the data collection process, as well as a description of how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. Then, the information is broken down and assessed according to the context of the research questions.



Chapter V summarizes the study, discusses the major findings, and offers conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

Reform of intercollegiate athletics has been a topic since its original inception into higher education around the 1850s. Modern athletic reform centers on issues such as academic fraud, underperforming student-athletes, misconduct, and unethical behavior (Brand, 2006; Chu, 1989). In seeking reform, studies have frequently examined faculty attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics, but rarely gathered data from the perspective of the student or student-athlete. Similarly, while student development theorists have produced research on the benefits of student involvement, there has been little emphasis on outcomes specifically related to athletics. This literature review aims to provide an overview of existing literature on the topics of intercollegiate athletics, student attitude, and student development theory. The review also covers a history of intercollegiate athletics, the growth of athletics spawning the NCAA, outcomes related to intercollegiate athletics, student involvement theory, and attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics.

#### **The History of Intercollegiate Athletics**

While controversy has underpinned the existence of intercollegiate athletics throughout the history of higher education, athletics programs and teams have nonetheless continued to flourish. Today, amid a culture obsessed with sport, it is difficult to envision the existence of higher education without the subsequent inclusion of intercollegiate athletics (Crowley, 2006). While it is commonplace to find intercollegiate teams on American campuses, this was not always the case. In fact, there was a time where athletics had no place at colleges and universities. The ultimate emergence of athletics in higher education was accidental of sorts, impacted by a variety of factors,

including the evolution of higher education, changing economic needs, and the still-evident American love of the game.

Prior to the 1850s, it was common for student-organized intramural games to take place on select campuses. Competition was characterized by interclass or play dates, often held between classes, and featured a variation of football (Gerber, Felshin, Berlin, & Wyrick, 1974). In most instances, these competitions were not officially recognized or supported by university, as administrators viewed athletics as a distraction from “serious scholarly work” (Thelin & Edwards, 2015, para. 4). Despite administrative support, students continued their pursuit of athletic activity. Intramural sports eventually expanded to intercollegiate competition, where students from various universities would compete against members from another.

In 1852, Harvard University and Yale University took part in the first intercollegiate crew regatta, while the first intercollegiate football competition took place in 1869 between Rutgers University and Princeton University (Crowley, 2006). In addition to these events, by the end of the nineteenth century, competitions were held in baseball, track and field, tennis, ice hockey, and gymnastics, making athletics more prevalent among collegiate life for men. On the other hand, women did not compete at the intercollegiate level until 1896, when Berkeley University and Stanford University faced off in the first women’s intercollegiate basketball event. According to Chu, campus athletics mirrored American society’s “increasing enthusiasm for sport and recreation” (1989, p. 53).

As the nineteenth century came to a close, while society embraced athletics, many institutions still refused to acknowledge athletics as a staple of collegiate life. Students,

needing a way to support and fund their programs, formed athletic associations to assist in raising money, charging fees to athletes, sponsoring events, and selling tickets (Thelin & Edwards, 2015).

### **The Union of Higher Education and Athletics**

At the brink of the twentieth century, while it was not commonplace yet, some colleges and universities began to shift their perspectives in regards to athletics. As the needs of the institution shifted from a focus on student education to an emphasis on resource acquisition, college presidents began to implore strategies to attract more students, gain more money, and garner more prestige (Chu, 1999).

For example, in 1902, Swarthmore College President, John Swain, facilitated a transition to help “meet the needs of a more worldly environment” (Chu, 1999, p. 25). To do this, he married Swarthmore’s traditional liberal studies with social activities and sports that would appeal to students and help the institution survive in a competitive emergent market. William Rainey Harper, the President at the University of Chicago, shared a similar outlook on athletics. He believed that the growth of intercollegiate athletics would serve as an opportunity to “connect the campus to the greater community and thereby generate goodwill, revenue, and attention” for his institution (Thelin & Edwards, 2015, para. 9).

The growing popularity of sports, coupled with the institutional need for additional resource acquisition swayed many institutions to formally and indefinitely incorporate athletics into collegiate life. According to Chu (1989), while sport had been present in higher education in American since before the 1890s, it has been regarded as the “problem” rather than the “solution” (p. 57). The eventual integration of athletics

marked a significant shift in theory from the traditional American style of education that had been modeled on classical English humanities and German scientific education. This shift was radical, making the American higher education institution different from that of any other country at any other time in history (Chu, 1989). As colleges grew as businesses focused on resource acquisition, so did their athletic departments.

### **Expansion of Intercollegiate Athletics**

As athletic programs continued to emerge at colleges across the country, allowing intuitions to attract and gain more students, additional resources were pumped into revenue-generating sports, such as football, to sustain this influx. While money poured in to select programs, athletic competitions were still grossly under-regulated, thus creating a breeding ground for corruption and injury (Smith, 2000). In 1905, in response to 18 deaths that resulted from intercollegiate football play, President Theodore Roosevelt called for a national conference to review the rules, inviting representatives from the nation's major intercollegiate football programs (Smith, 2000; Thelin & Edwards, 2015). From this conference resulted in the formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association (IAA), which four years later, evolved into the governing body of collegiate athletics today, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In their constitution, they called for "studying college athletics and promoting measures to make college sport dignified and ethical" (Chu, 1989, p. 135).

While the NCAA began as an organization primarily dedicated to football, they eventually oversaw other sports for men and established rules for various athletic competitions (Smith, 2000). In 1921, they expanded their domain of control of college athletics and, that year, hosted the first NCAA National Championship in Track and Field

(Crowley, 2006). With each passing year, they took on additional responsibilities, modifying rules, adding sports, and hosting more national championship events.

By the 1960s and 1970s, amid exponential growth in athletics, it was impossible for the NCAA to serve the needs of both the big and small schools within one institution. The early origins of this issue surfaced in 1956 finally came to a head on August 7, 1973 when the NCAA split into three distinct bodies, Division I, Division II, and Division III (Schwarb, 2014). Each division was set to address specific needs of certain schools and help to manage the influx of athletics at this time.

Women made their entry into intercollegiate athletics in the NCAA with the passing of Title IX in 1972. Shortly after, the NCAA began to adopt policies to oversee female athletics in order to comply with the new federal law. As the NCAA made plans to expand, they voted to hold women's championships in five sports in 1981-1982 to include basketball, field hockey, swimming, tennis, and volleyball (Hawes, 1999). By 1982, the NCAA had completely taken over athletic administration for both men and women.

Today, the NCAA sponsors events for both men and women and is split into three distinct divisions that oversee a total 460,000 student-athletes, 1,200 schools, and 89 championship events (National Collegiate Conference Association, 2015b).

### **Rationalizing Intercollegiate Athletics**

While the NCAA oversees the athletic competition of 460,000 student-athletes, the *Condition of Education 2015* found that in 2013, there were 17.5 million undergraduates enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (Kena et al., 2015). These statistics suggests that, while intercollegiate athletics play a large role in higher

education, a small percentage of the collegiate population participate in intercollegiate athletics. Since the fascination with intercollegiate athletics began in the late nineteenth century, there have been inquiries regarding the rationale behind higher education and athletics. Chu (1989) contends:

Apart from athletic brutalities, improprieties in recruiting, and difficulties with athletes' eligibility, the following questions remained: should programs whose primary purpose was attracting resources be formally incorporated into the structure of the colleges and universities and rationalized as a legitimate part of higher education? Was sport a real responsibility of American colleges and universities? (p. 34)

Depending on the time frame and the group surveyed, the answer to these questions could significantly vary. For example, faculty from the late 1800s and early 1900s, greatly opposed the incorporation of athletics in the structure of American higher education (Lawrence, 2009). On the other hand, college presidents and administrators supported athletics because they brought in much-needed revenue to the institution (Chu, 1989). Today, despite decades of contentious debates over the rationalization of athletics, they continue to remain present.

### **Outcomes Related to Intercollegiate Athletics**

There are many outlooks and viewpoints in regards intercollegiate athletics in the United States, largely due to the varied and inconclusive findings of outcomes associated with intercollegiate athletics. Some researchers suggest that athletics serve the institution and the student (Brand, 2006; Chu, 1989; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006), while other researchers find that intercollegiate athletics impede the academic mission of higher

education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Brand (2006), a former college professor, college president, and president of the NCAA defines the most commonly held viewpoint of intercollegiate athletics as the Standard View. Those who share this view find that intercollegiate athletics are comparable to that of any other extracurricular activity and that athletics have “more educational value than fraternity parties, but less than the chess club” (Brand, 2006, p. 10). Furthermore, according to the Standard View, college sports are seen as having some redeeming developmental value for students, however, they exist outside of educational experience. The Standard View is a negative approach toward athletics and widely held by “faculty members, academic administrators, and many external constituents not closely allied with the university,” while “students, alumni, local community members, and national fans or governing-board members” do not support this view (p. 10).

The relevance of the Standard View stems from research that indicates negative associations with intercollegiate athletics, as studied by Shulman and Bowen (2001), Wolniak, Pierson, and Pascarella (2001), and Bowen and Levin (2003). Shulman and Bowen (2001) and Bowen and Levin (2003) find that student-athletes receive preferential treatment by the admissions department, earn lower grades throughout college, and create their own subculture on campus that separates them from the larger campus culture. Wolniak, Pierson, and Pascarella (2001) suggest that participation in athletics does not impact college outcomes such as learning for self-understanding, higher-order cognitive activities, and motivation to succeed academically.

While some research has found undesirable outcomes linked to athletic participation, Brand (2006) finds that this outlook misrepresents college sports and



overlooks the potential positive influence that athletics could have on campus life or undergraduate students. He indicates that athletics enhance campus life, provide educational value, and enhance a student-athlete's cognitive skills, critical thinking, and problem solving. Based on these positive outcomes, he suggests a shift toward an "Integrated View," which would posit that athletics should be part of the educational environment (p. 17).

Research by Chu (1989), Pascarella et al. (1999), Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) present positive outcomes associated with intercollegiate athletics and support Brand's view of athletics as a necessary part of the educational environment. From a holistic standpoint, Chu finds that the institution of athletics flourishes because it "fulfills the peculiar mission of higher education" (p. 158). He emphasizes that athletics provide a vehicle for a sense of community, promote student commitment to the institution, helps to label graduates as successful, and elevates individuals beyond the limits of "mundane realities to show them what they can be" (p. 158). On the other hand, Pascarella et al. (1999) suggest that participation in athletics benefits student-athletes, providing gains in internal locus of attribution of success during the first year of college. Finally, Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) report that student-athletes experience campus life in the same beneficial ways as their non-athletic peers and engage in effective educational practices at the same level as other students. These findings directly oppose earlier research by Bowen and Levin (2003), demonstrating just how varied and inconsistent findings are in regards to intercollegiate athletics.

## **Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Involvement**

Another area of research among intercollegiate athletics focuses on student involvement. In the early days of higher education, there was little understanding of the value of experiences outside of intellectual studies. During the 1960s student development movement, researchers helped build theoretical framework to explain the impact of extracurricular activity. Dreeben (1967), Feldman and Newcomb (1969), and Arnove (1980) found that the effects of schools ranged beyond a student's formal curriculum (as cited in Chu, 1989). As student development theories expanded, theorists further examined extracurricular activities to find out how it impacted students.

Astin (1999), a student development theorist, formally studied how students grow and develop outside of formal curriculum and is known for his research on the impact of student involvement. His framework establishes a rationale for the importance of extracurricular activity that exists outside of academic goals of higher education. Astin defines involvement as, "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). He defines a highly involved student as one who would devote energy to studying, spending time on campus, participating in student organizations, and frequently interacting with other students or faculty members. The theory also emphasizes active participation of the student in the learning process (Astin, 1999).

Based on Astin's work, involvement can take many forms, ranging from place of residence, honors programs, academic involvement, student-faculty interaction, student government, and involvement in athletics (Astin, 1999). The theory encompasses both student-athletes who participate in intercollegiate athletics, as well as spectators who

attend sport events on campus. Chu (1989) explains the connection between student involvement and sport saying:

It was through the happy accident of sport, however, that student involvement in the life of the institution was engendered. And it may be that school sport, not only for the athlete but also for the spectator, remains a particularly American means of gaining student involvement in the life of the college. (p. 161)

In various national studies conducted by Astin (1999), he finds that efforts to involve students in extracurricular activities, such as athletics, leads to persistence in college and a less likelihood of dropping out. In addition, student involvement leads to greater satisfaction with the institution's academic reputation, the intellectual environment, student friendships, and institutional administration. The only identified negative aspect associated with athletic involvement involves potential isolation of student-athletes from other non-athlete peer groups. This isolation is a result of long practice time, travel to competition, as well as living arrangements (Astin, 1999). Due to this isolation, student-athletes and non-athletes experiences may differ.

Iaconvone's (2007) independent research on Division III student-athletes involvement at Rowan University supports Astin's findings, marking a positive correlation between level of student involvement and amount of student learning and personal development. Overall, Astin (1999) and Iacovone (2007) demonstrate the powerful and positive impact of involvement on students in higher education, specifically in regards to college sport. While there are many facets for students to become involved, intercollegiate athletics have the potential to reach a vast audience, breaking down boundaries of diversity and allowing students to experience the benefits of involvement.

## **Attitude Theory**

Aside from the variety of outcomes related to intercollegiate athletics, including involvement theory, it is important to evaluate perspectives and attitudes toward athletics from relevant stakeholders in the higher education community. The theory on attitude is one of the oldest constructs in the field of social psychology and is used to understand and evaluate personal expression. Allport (1935) defines attitudes as:

An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all object and situations with which it is related. (p. 810)

Attitudes are viewed as a summary evaluation of a psychological object, ranging from positive to negative, good to bad, harmful to beneficial, pleasant to unpleasant, and likeable to unlikeable. Furthermore, attitude theory is closely tied with belief and opinion formation (Aronson, 1992; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Both opinions and beliefs are born of attitudes; however, opinions can change, whereas beliefs are more concrete.

In researching attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics, there is an extensive recorded history in regards to the faculty's perspective. Academic researchers have sought to evaluate faculty attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics throughout time at various institutions and across the varying divisions in the NCAA. On one hand, there are faculty members that greatly oppose the incorporation of athletics in higher education, just as they did in the early 1900s (Lawrence, 2009). Faculty athletic reform groups exist, such as the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), and the Drake Group. These groups do not support athletics and aim to generate greater faculty involvement in athletic reform (Lawrence,

2009). While such reform groups evidence dissatisfaction among faculty, current research indicates that a majority of faculty members, regardless of school or division, possess positive attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics (Baumgartner, 2013; Feezell, 2005; Noble, 2004).

While data exist regarding attitudes and faculty in higher education, there is a lack of research on athletics from the perspective of students, student-athletes, alumni, or parents of student-athletes (Kellenberger, 1992). In a lone study, Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart (2001) examined attitudes and beliefs of college students concerning intercollegiate athletics. Based on their findings, they suggest three conclusions. First, similar to faculty studies, they found that students were generally supportive of athletic programs, even if they did not attend games or have a general appreciation of athletics. Secondly, they found that students were skeptical of how serious student-athletes were about academic matters and were various if student-athletes received “favorable academic treatment by some faculty” (para. 10). Finally, they found little support for a proposed reform of intercollegiate athletics. Unlike faculty reform efforts, there are no national student organizations dedicated to athletic reform. Aside from this study, there is little empirical evidence about what college students have to say about intercollegiate athletics.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

This literature review reviewed relevant literature converging on the topics of intercollegiate athletics, related outcomes, student attitude, and student development theory. While intercollegiate athletics were not part of the original structure of higher education, they certainly are relevant today. With over 460,000 student-athletes

competing in 89 NCAA championship events, the market for college athletics has grown enormously, raising the scope of its impact on both students and student-athletes (National Collegiate Conference Association, 2015b). Underpinning the growth of athletics in the United States is a conversation regarding the validity and necessity of athletics in higher education, in a domain that was once marked exclusively for academia.

As student development theorists emerged in the late 1900s, subsequent research accumulated, providing a myriad of outcomes associated with intercollegiate athletics. Some findings suggested that athletics produced positive outcomes for the student and institution (Brand, 2006; Chu, 1989; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006), while other research found it served as a disruption to the mission of higher education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Based on the positive outcomes, Brand (2006) purposed that athletics are viewed as a viable part of a student's educational environment. Further research using Astin's (1999) Involvement Theory found that students who either participated in athletics directly or attended events were able to experience the benefits of involvement, including persistence to attaining a degree, greater satisfaction with the institution's academic reputation, and greater personal development.

Finally, faculty and student attitudes toward athletics were assessed, using Allport's Attitude Theory (1935). Overall, while there are faculty reform groups who do not support athletics, general research shows that both students and faculty have a positive attitude toward athletics and support programs (Baumgartner, 2013; Feezell, 2005; Knapp, Rasmussen, & Barnhart, 2001; Noble, 2004). Ultimately, there has been considerable research on the impact of intercollegiate athletics, student involvement

theory, and faculty attitudes; however, there has been little work done to examine student attitudes toward athletics. Student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics should be researched further to gain insight into how athletic programs impact their experience and in what ways athletic programs can reform to serve the students and the mission of the institution.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Context of the Study**

This study was conducted on the main campus at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University is a state research institution with two additional campuses located in Camden and Stratford, New Jersey. The Stratford campus houses the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine. In addition, Rowan University also has two degree-granting partnerships with community colleges that include Rowan College at Gloucester County and Rowan College at Burlington County. This public university emphasizes a big campus feel, combined with a small classroom dynamic with an average of only 22 students per class (Rowan University Media and Public Relations, 2014).

Based on the Rowan University Office of Institutional Effectiveness Common Data Set (2014) report, there are 12,022 students enrolled in one of the university's 13 academic colleges. Of the total undergraduate students, 87% are enrolled full-time and 4,385 students live on campus (Rowan University Media and Public Relations, 2014). There are 63 bachelor degree programs available at Rowan, offering students a wide range of course study.

Founded originally as a Normal School in the 1920s, designed only to educate future educators, Rowan has seen its share of advances, as well as name changes. The most notable name change was in 1992 when Glassboro State College became Rowan College, following a \$100 million donation from Henry Rowan and his wife Betty. At the time, it was the largest gift ever given to a higher education institution (Rowan



University, 2015). Since then, the school has gained in size and prestige, now recognized by several national organizations including the *U.S. News and World Report* and *The Princeton Review*.

In addition to academic prestige, Rowan University also has a strong tradition of intercollegiate athletics. The university is a member of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) and competes under National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III athletics. Throughout the years, Rowan has garnered 11 NCAA national championships and won over 130 NJAC titles. In addition, each year various sports are ranked in the U.S. top 25 for their respective sport, making the school a top tier Division III athletic institution. In 2014, there were 464 student-athletes reported at Rowan University, across 18 varsity athletic teams (D. Naphy, personal communication, October 20, 2015). The seven men's athletic programs include football, soccer, cross country, basketball, swimming and diving, baseball, and track and field. The nine women's athletic programs include field hockey, cross country, soccer, volleyball, swimming and diving, basketball, lacrosse, softball, and track and field.

### **Population and Sample Selection**

The target population for this study was undergraduate students enrolled at Rowan University during the 2015-2016 school year. The available population for this study was limited to residential, undergraduate students enrolled during the spring of 2016 at Rowan University. The survey sample size was generated with Creative Research System's (2015) sample size calculator using a 95% confidence level and confidence interval of 3%. Ultimately, out of approximately 4,385 residential, undergraduate students enrolled at Rowan University during the spring of 2016, the randomly selected

and representative sample size consisted of 858 students. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning generated a list of emails for students who met this criterion. A convenience sample was also used in order to gain greater participation. As a result of outreach efforts, 560 students responded to the survey.

In order to ensure the rights of each subject, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted on December 1, 2015. The application included a cover letter, consent form, and a copy of the survey instrument (Appendix B). The application was approved by the eIRB on January 8, 2016 (Appendix C). Subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form before completing the survey.

### **Instrumentation**

The data-gathering method used for this study was quantitative. The survey instrument used in this study was adapted with permission (Appendix A) from Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart's (2001) study, *What College Students Say About Intercollegiate Athletics: A Survey of Attitudes and Beliefs*. Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart designed and distributed this survey at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas during the spring and summer of 1999 in order to sample the opinions of college students about intercollegiate athletic programs and their participants. It also sought to discern differences in expressed attitudes of athletes and non-athletes.

The adapted survey (Appendix B) was broken down into two sections. Section I of the survey collected background information, while section II used attitude statements to assess student attitudes and beliefs in regards to intercollegiate athletics. In section I, there were five items that determined demographic information, including gender, age, college of study, year of study, and designation of athlete or non-athlete. These

background items were used to determine if there were any significant relationships between student attitudes the demographic variables. In regards to the designation of athlete or non-athlete, the following explanations were provided. Athletes were defined as students currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sport at Rowan University. Non-athletes were defined as students not currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sports at Rowan University. These students may still participate in either intramural and/or club sports.

The remaining 39 items included statements regarding intercollegiate athletes and student-athletes. Based on these statements, participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). Efforts were made to reach out to Knapp, the lead investigator of the original study, in order to confirm factor groupings used in the study, as they were not indicated in the published article. Knapp responded that she did not have the original documents anymore and was not confident about the factor groupings used (T. Knapp, personal communication, October 29, 2015). With no original factor groupings, I used all 39 original statements and divided them into four factor groups that represented specific areas of concern, as reflected by current research in the literature review. The areas include resource allocation (nine statements), corruption (11 statements), relevance of athletics to college experience (eleven statements), and academic matters of student-athletes (8 statements).

Rowan University's Institutional Review Board approved the instrument (Appendix C). A pilot test was administered to three undergraduate students at Rowan University to ensure face validity and reliability. The participants were asked to critique

the survey for appropriate content and design. Based off the pilot test, none of the undergraduate students in the trial expressed any issues with understanding the content. Each survey took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Following data collection, the survey was measured for reliability and internal consistency using Chronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency. Based on this measure, the survey garnered a .841, suggesting an excellent level of internal consistency of the 39 variables throughout the survey.

### **Data Collection**

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board at Rowan University, The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning provided me with a randomized list of 858 undergraduate student email addresses. This list only included students who lived on campus and were registered for the Spring 2016 semester. The survey (Appendix B) was administered to this representative sample through a mass email sent in February 2016. The email included an outreach letter, along with a direct link to the survey on Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Five reminders to complete the survey were sent out via email over a two-month time frame.

Outreach to the convenience sample was done through a variety of ways, including surveying students in the Student Center and reaching out to students from select residential halls. Additionally, I encouraged subjects to share the survey with fellow residential undergraduate friends to increase participation and provide a representative sample true to the sample population.

## Data Analysis

Five demographic factors were collected in the first section of the survey. Factors included gender, age, area of study, year of study, and designation of athlete or non-athlete. These demographics were collected to determine if there was any correlation between background information and student attitudes. In addition to the five demographic factors, 39 Likert scale statements were used to determine specific student attitudes toward a variety of issues related to athletics, including resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes. After the survey was administered, the results were examined using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency tables and charts. Frequency was used to analyze independent variables of gender, age, and status as athlete or non-athlete. Following that, descriptive statistics were used to gather mean and standard deviation data for each question and broken down by factor grouping. Mean and standard deviation scores for each question were also used in order to compare data with results from Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart's (2001) study at the University of Nevada. Finally, an independent samples *t*-test was used in order to assess statistical significance between athletes and non-athletes in regards to attitudes to the 39 statements.

## Chapter IV

### Findings

#### Profile of the Sample

The target population for this study was undergraduate students enrolled at Rowan University during the 2015-2016 school year. The available population was limited to residential, undergraduate students enrolled during the spring of 2016 at Rowan University. To survey students electronically, the instrument was created on Qualtrics, an online survey software tool. The link to the survey was first sent to the randomly selected representative sample generated by The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning on February 5, 2016. The link was also shared to a convenient sample of students in the Student Center during the month of March. The survey was closed on April 30, 2016. There were a total of 431 responses, resulting in a 50% response rate. Only the data from those who completed a majority of the survey were analyzed. The age of subjects ranged from 18 to 25 with the majority 18 (22%), 19 (29.55), and 20 (23.9%) years old, respectively. Students from all nine colleges within Rowan University were represented in the sample, with the highest participation from students within the College of Education (18%).

Table 4.1 contains demographic information based on the gender of those who participated in the survey. Of the sample, 193 were male (44.8%) and 238 were female (55.2%).

Table 4.1

<i>Gender Breakdown (N=431)</i>		
Gender	<i>f</i>	%
Male	193	44.8
Female	238	55.2

Table 4.2 examines the year of study for students who participated in the study. Most of the students were freshman (36.7%), followed by sophomores (32%). Junior and senior students represented the smallest portion of the sample.

Table 4.2

<i>Year of Study Breakdown (N=431)</i>		
Year	<i>f</i>	%
Freshman	158	36.7
Sophomore	138	32.0
Junior	79	18.3
Senior	56	13.0

Table 4.3 examines the breakdown of athlete and non-athletes of the sample. Once again, athletes were defined as students currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sport at Rowan University. Non-athletes were defined as students not currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sports at Rowan University. Non-athletes would also include students participating in intramural and/or club sports.

Table 4.3

<i>Athlete/Non-Athlete Breakdown (N=431)</i>		
Designation	<i>f</i>	%
Athlete	83	19.3
Non-athlete	348	80.7

### **Analysis of the Data**

**Research question 1.** What are college student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University in the areas of resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes?

In this section of the survey, 39 statements were used to assess college student attitudes toward four different areas of concern among intercollegiate athletics. The areas included resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of the student-athletes. The tables below are broken down by these distinct factor groupings and include mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). Likert-style scaling was used, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All statements were presented in order of their mean score, from the highest to lowest. This order reflects statements, which were most commonly agreed upon to statements, which were least commonly agreed upon.

In regards to college student attitudes toward resource allocation (see Table 4.4), which included nine statements, 67.1% of the respondents' agreed or strongly agreed that a winning athletic program increases financial donations to the university, while 64.8% reported that these donations primarily benefit the athletic program. Almost 66.3% of



students disagreed or strongly disagreed that it would be better if scholarships for athletes were discontinued. Finally, 81.9% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that a star athlete should expect that he or she should be provided a car.

Table 4.4

*College Student Attitudes Toward Resource Allocation (N=431)*  
*(Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5)*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
A winning athletic program increases financial donations to the university. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =.936 Missing=4	12	2.8	12	2.8	114	26.5	177	41.1	112	26.0
Donations to the university as a result of a winning athletic program benefit primarily the athletic program. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =3.74, <i>SD</i> =.892 Missing=4	9	1.9	25	5.8	115	26.7	199	46.2	80	18.6
Money spent on athletic programs would be better spent on the general student body. <i>N</i> =431, <i>M</i> =3.03, <i>SD</i> =1.070 Missing=0	31	7.2	104	24.1	163	37.8	89	20.6	44	10.2

Table 4.4 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
None of the student fees I pay should support intercollegiate athletics. <i>n</i> =429, <i>M</i> =2.93, <i>SD</i> =1.235 Missing=2	60	13.9	108	25.1	119	27.6	87	20.2	55	12.8
Intercollegiate athletics should be paid for wearing a product from a shoe or apparel company. <i>n</i> =429, <i>M</i> =2.67, <i>SD</i> =1.230 Missing=2	94	21.8	101	23.4	124	28.8	74	17.2	36	8.4
After graduation, I am likely to make a contribution to the athletic programs as an alumnus. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =2.49, <i>SD</i> =1.298 Missing=5	131	30.4	85	19.7	124	28.8	42	9.7	44	10.2
Student-athletes should be paid to play. <i>N</i> =431, <i>M</i> =2.46, <i>SD</i> =1.229 Missing=0	103	30.2	110	25.5	94	21.8	56	13.0	41	9.5
It would be better if scholarships for athletics were discontinued. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =2.20, <i>SD</i> =1.094 Missing=4	126	29.2	160	37.1	96	22.3	20	4.6	25	5.8

Table 4.4 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
A star athlete in a major sport should expect that he/she will be provided a car. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =1.61, <i>SD</i> =1.004 Missing=4	277	64.3	76	17.6	50	11.6	10	2.3	14	3.2

Table 4.5 shows the frequency and percentage in which college students agreed or disagreed with statements regarding corruption among intercollegiate athletics. This factor grouping included eleven statements. Of all the statements concerning corruption, 52.9% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that university athletics were more corrupt than the world of business; however, 25% of participants' agreed or strongly agreed that university athletics are more corrupt than other aspects of the university. Over 53.4% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that big time sport programs must break rules to achieve big-time status.

When comparing major sport programs, like football, to minor sport programs, 41.7% of students indicated that they believed the minor sports were less corrupt. Similarly, 32.9% believed that women's sport programs were less corrupt than male college sports.

Table 4.5

*College Student Attitudes Toward Corruption (N=431)**(Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5)*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
College teams play by the rules because of NCAA regulations. <i>n</i> =429, <i>M</i> =3.50, <i>SD</i> =1.034 Missing=2	20	4.6	42	9.7	145	33.6	149	34.6	73	16.9
Student-athletes receive more favorable treatment from the university than any other scholarship students. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =3.35, <i>SD</i> =1.156 Missing=4	35	8.1	61	14.2	121	28.1	140	32.5	70	16.2
Minor sports such as tennis and track are less corrupt than the major programs of football and basketball. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.32, <i>SD</i> =1.065 Missing=5	24	5.6	60	13.9	162	37.6	117	27.1	63	14.6
Major male college sports are more corrupt than female sports programs. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =3.14, <i>SD</i> =1.049 Missing=1	33	7.7	63	14.6	192	44.5	94	21.8	48	11.1

Table 4.5 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Student-athletes are not involved in campus violence (rape, assault) any more than non-athletes. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =2.91, <i>SD</i> =1.202 Missing=5	64	14.8	82	19.0	160	37.1	67	15.5	53	12.3
Intercollegiate athletic programs are more corrupt than other aspects of the university. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =2.78, <i>SD</i> =1.101 Missing=4	62	14.4	103	23.9	154	35.7	82	19.0	26	6.0
Violations of NCAA rules occur because the rules are too complex. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =2.60, <i>SD</i> = .984 Missing=4	61	14.2	125	29.0	181	42.0	43	10.0	17	3.9
Many intercollegiate athletes gamble on the games in which they play. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =2.40, <i>SD</i> =1.094 Missing=1	117	27.1	93	21.6	172	39.9	28	6.5	20	4.6
Big time university sport programs must break rules to achieve big-time status. <i>n</i> =425, <i>M</i> =2.40, <i>SD</i> =1.083 Missing=6	102	23.7	128	29.7	141	32.7	33	7.7	21	4.9

Table 4.5 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
University athletics are more corrupt than the world of business. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =2.38, <i>SD</i> =1.039 Missing=1	102	23.7	126	29.2	155	36.0	31	7.2	16	3.7
When an athlete leaves the university early to enter the professional rank, they cheat the university and community. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =2.20, <i>SD</i> =1.028 Missing=1	116	26.9	174	40.4	90	20.9	37	8.6	13	3.0

In Table 4.6, respondents reported the frequency and percentage in which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the relevance of athletic programs at higher education institutions. A majority of subjects agreed that intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the university (82.2%) and that athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of universities (73.3%). A majority also agreed that intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the general study body (57.1%), despite perception that less than half of all students are interested in athletics (46.6%). Similarly, only 47.6% of students' agreed or strongly agreed that their college memories were enhanced by college athletics.

Table 4.6

*College Student Attitudes Toward Relevance of Athletic Programs (N=431)*  
*(Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5)*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit universities. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =4.18, <i>SD</i> = .951 Missing=1	16	3.7	3	.7	57	13.2	165	38.3	189	43.9
I am a sports fan. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.96, <i>SD</i> = 1.263 Missing=5	34	7.9	27	6.3	63	14.6	100	23.2	202	46.9
Athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of universities. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =3.92, <i>SD</i> = .979 Missing=4	14	3.2	21	4.9	76	17.6	191	44.3	125	29.0
I am directly acquainted with several student-athletes. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.72, <i>SD</i> = 1.224 Missing=5	30	7.0	47	10.9	75	17.4	136	31.6	138	32.0
I would support an intercollegiate program regardless of its win/loss percentage. <i>n</i> =428, <i>M</i> =3.71, <i>SD</i> = 1.071 Missing=3	21	4.9	34	7.9	97	22.5	172	39.9	104	24.1

Table 4.6 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the general student body. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.59, <i>SD</i> =1.101 Missing=5	22	5.1	46	10.7	112	26.0	152	35.3	94	21.8
I have attended university athletic events other than football and men's basketball. <i>n</i> =430, <i>M</i> =3.39, <i>SD</i> =1.490 Missing=1	77	17.9	62	14.4	41	9.5	118	27.4	132	30.6
Most university students have an interest in intercollegiate athletic events. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.34, <i>SD</i> =1.069 Missing=5	26	6.0	61	14.2	138	32.0	145	33.6	56	13.0
Memories of my college years will be enhanced by intercollegiate athletic events. <i>n</i> =429, <i>M</i> =3.32, <i>SD</i> =1.330 Missing=2	53	12.3	67	15.5	104	24.1	99	23.0	106	24.6
My choice of college was based primarily on athletic reputation. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =1.89, <i>SD</i> =1.122 Missing=5	222	51.5	85	19.7	76	17.6	29	6.7	14	3.2



Table 4.6 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Universities should abandon intercollegiate athletics. <i>n</i> =423, <i>M</i> =1.75, <i>SD</i> =1.037 Missing=8	238	55.2	94	21.8	64	14.8	13	3.0	14	3.2

Table 4.7 illustrates the frequency and percentage of college student attitudes toward academic matters of student-athletes. The factor grouping consisted of eight statements. A majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements “Student-athletes are legitimate students” (73.8%) and “The primary goal of student-athletes is to earn their degree” (58.4%). While this majority believed that student-athletes were legitimate students and driven to earn their degree, they also reported that student-athletes were more likely to receive assistance than non-athletes (62%). They did not agree that freshman athletes should have to wait until their sophomore year to play (73.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed) or that student-athlete courses should be public information (55.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

Table 4.7

*College Student Attitudes Toward Academic Matters of Student-Athletes (N=431)*  
*(Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5)*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Student-athletes are legitimate students. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =4.03, <i>SD</i> =1.000 Missing=4	14	3.2	14	3.2	81	18.8	155	36.0	163	37.8
Student-athletes are more likely to receive assistance than non-athletes. <i>N</i> =431, <i>M</i> =3.63, <i>SD</i> =1.138 Missing=0	25	5.8	50	11.6	89	20.6	164	38.1	103	23.9
The primary goal of student-athletes is to earn their degree. <i>N</i> =431, <i>M</i> =3.61, <i>SD</i> =1.172 Missing=0	21	4.9	64	14.8	94	21.8	135	31.3	117	27.1
Some faculty members give student-athletes special treatment. <i>n</i> =426, <i>M</i> =3.44, <i>SD</i> =1.068 Missing=5	19	4.4	61	14.2	133	30.9	141	32.7	72	16.7
There is a proper balance between athletics and academics at most universities. <i>n</i> =428, <i>M</i> =3.18, <i>SD</i> =1.098 Missing=3	31	7.2	87	20.2	130	30.2	134	31.1	46	10.7

Table 4.7 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Student-athletes should not have to meet higher academic requirements than those required of the general student body. <i>N</i> =431, <i>M</i> =2.97, <i>SD</i> =1.325 Missing=0	82	19.0	78	18.1	99	23.0	113	26.2	59	13.7
The list of courses in which student-athletes are enrolled should be public information. <i>n</i> =429, <i>M</i> =2.46, <i>SD</i> =1.171 Missing=2	103	23.9	135	31.3	112	26.0	50	11.6	29	6.7
All freshman athletes should have to wait until their sophomore year to play. <i>n</i> =427, <i>M</i> =1.98, <i>SD</i> =1.066 Missing=4	175	40.6	142	32.9	72	16.7	21	4.9	17	3.9

**Research question 2.** Is there a significant difference in attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics between self-identified athletes and non-athletes at Rowan University?

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between athletes and non-athletes in relation to their attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. The test revealed that there was a

significant difference between athlete and non-athlete attitudes among 32 of the statements. Only seven attitude statements were not found to be significantly different.

Table 4.8

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Athletes and Non-Athletes (N=431)*

Statement	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Independent Sample t-Test		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	t	df	p
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit universities.	83	4.64	.655	347	4.07	.978	6.364	180.75	< .001
Money spent on athletic programs would be better spent on the general student body.	83	2.48	1.040	348	3.16	1.038	-5.309	429	< .001
The primary goal of student-athletes is to earn their degree.	83	4.06	.915	348	3.50	1.202	4.670	156.994	< .001
Student-athletes are more likely to receive assistance than non-athletes.	83	3.16	1.225	348	3.74	1.089	-3.971	114.859	< .001
Student-athletes should be paid to play.	83	3.05	1.343	348	2.32	1.250	4.689	429	< .001
Intercollegiate athletes should be paid for wearing a product from a shoe or apparel company.	82	3.01	1.149	347	2.59	1.236	2.852	427	<.005

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statement	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Independent Sample <i>t</i> -Test		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Many intercollegiate athletes gamble on the games in which they play.	82	1.88	1.159	348	2.52	1.042	-4.910	428	< .001
When an athlete leaves the university early to enter the professional rank, they cheat the university and community.	83	1.84	.876	347	2.29	1.044	-3.996	143.233	< .001
Intercollegiate athletic programs are more corrupt than other aspects of the university.	82	2.12	1.070	345	2.94	1.051	-6.308	425	< .001
None of the student fees I pay should support intercollegiate athletics.	82	2.12	1.047	347	3.12	1.200	-6.920	427	< .001
I would support an intercollegiate program regardless of its win/loss record.	83	4.06	1.004	345	3.63	1.071	3.490	130.705	<.001
I have attended university athletic events other than football and men's basketball.	83	4.33	1.072	347	3.16	1.489	8.183	166.726	< .001

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statement	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Independent Sample <i>t</i> -Test		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
University athletics are more corrupt than the world of business.	83	1.89	.897	347	2.50	1.038	-5.338	139.498	< .001
The list of courses in which student-athletes are enrolled should be public information.	83	2.22	1.071	346	2.51	1.187	-2.088	427	<.037
Memories of my college years will be enhanced by intercollegiate athletic events.	83	4.49	.817	346	3.04	1.276	9.900	427	< .001
There is a proper balance between athletics and academics at most universities.	83	3.63	.972	345	3.07	1.101	4.206	426	< .001
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the general student body.	82	4.11	.943	344	3.46	1.101	4.914	424	< .001
Some faculty members give student-athletes special treatment.	83	2.99	1.042	343	3.55	1.047	-4.354	424	< .001
Most university students have an interest in intercollegiate athletic events.	82	3.71	1.000	344	3.25	1.067	3.529	424	< .001

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statement	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Independent Sample <i>t</i> -Test		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Student-athletes receive more favorable treatment from the university than any other scholarship students.	83	2.60	1.158	344	3.53	1.082	-6.907	425	< .001
Big-time university sport programs must break rules to achieve big-time status.	82	2.01	.853	343	2.49	1.113	-4.247	154.239	< .001
Athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of universities.	83	4.17	.867	344	3.86	.996	2.617	425	<.009
All freshman athletes should have to wait until their sophomore year to play.	83	1.51	.889	344	2.09	1.075	-4.586	425	< .001
I am directly acquainted with several student-athletes.	83	4.59	.716	343	3.50	1.228	10.559	214.148	< .001
A winning athletic program increases financial donations to the university.	83	4.08	.829	344	3.80	.952	2.505	425	<.013
Student-athletes are legitimate students.	83	4.54	.754	344	3.90	1.013	6.436	161.641	< .001
I am a sports fan.	83	4.52	.888	343	3.83	1.304	5.762	178.163	< .001

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statement	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Independent Sample <i>t</i> -Test		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Universities should abandon intercollegiate athletics.	83	1.35	.833	340	1.85	1.059	-4.610	153.699	< .001
My choice of college was based primarily on athletic reputation.	83	2.80	1.134	343	1.67	1.005	8.892	424	< .001
Student-athletes are not involved in campus violence (rape, assault) any more than non-athletes.	83	3.25	1.238	343	2.83	1.180	2.896	424	<.004
It would be better if scholarships for athletics were discontinued.	83	1.84	1.018	344	2.28	1.096	-3.338	425	<.001
After graduation, I am likely to make a contribution to the athletic programs as an alumnus.	83	3.67	.989	343	2.20	1.199	11.634	146.262	< .001

**Research question 3.** How do Rowan University college student-athletes and non-athlete's attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics compare with the sample from Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart's (2001) study at the University of Nevada?

This research question compares results between current research findings at Rowan University and those at the University of Nevada (Knapp et al., 2001). Both



studies used the same survey instrument and presented mean ( $M$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD$ ) values for each statement, broken down between athletes and non-athletes. Table 4.7 presents research project results for Rowan University and the University of Nevada, including number of participants, mean scores ( $M$ ), and standard deviation ( $SD$ ) for each statement. Statements on which athletes and non-athletes from Rowan University and the University of Nevada differed significantly in their responses are indicated with an asterisk ( $p < .05$ ). Outcome variables are presented for both athletes and non-athletes. Statements are presented in their original order for comparison purposes between studies. Results from both studies were consistent in terms of differentiating athletes from non-athletes. There were 28 statements in which attitude statements between athletes and non-athletes were consistent with significant difference outcomes. Of these, 23 statements were identified in both studies as having significant difference between groups. Mean scores also demonstrated consistency between athlete and non-athlete attitudes at both universities. For example, athletes reported significantly higher mean scores on the statement “Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit universities” at Rowan University ( $M=4.64$  vs.  $M=4.07$ ) and the University of Nevada ( $M=4.38$  vs.  $M=3.81$ ).

Table 4.9

*Comparison of College Student Attitudes at Rowan University vs. University of Nevada (N=431)*

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit universities.	83	4.64	.655	347	4.07	.978 [*]	920	4.38	0.92	108	3.81	1.03 [*]
Money spent on athletic programs would be better spent on the general student body.	83	2.48	1.040	348	3.16	1.038[*]	920	2.81	1.28	108	3.42	1.04[*]
The primary goal of student-athletes is to earn their degree.	83	4.06	.915	348	3.50	1.202[*]	920	3.63	1.23	108	2.67	1.27[*]
Student-athletes are more likely to receive assistance than non-athletes.	83	3.16	1.225	348	3.74	1.089[*]	920	3.13	1.35	108	3.62	1.22[*]
Student-athletes should not have to meet higher academic requirements than those required of the general student body.	83	2.95	1.258	348	2.98	1.342	920	3.28	1.52	108	3.22	1.63
Student-athletes should be paid to play.	83	3.05	1.343	348	2.32	1.250[*]	920	2.56	1.33	108	1.83	1.18[*]
Major male college sports programs are more corrupt than female sports programs.	83	2.99	1.153	347	3.18	1.021	920	3.19	1.21	108	3.31	1.12

49

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Intercollegiate athletes should be paid for wearing a product from a shoe or apparel company.	82	3.01	1.149	347	2.59	1.236[*]	920	2.72	1.51	108	2.15	1.33[*]
Many intercollegiate athletes gamble on the games in which they play.	82	1.88	1.159	348	2.52	1.042[*]	920	2.44	1.21	108	2.82	1.02[*]
When an athlete leaves the university early to enter the professional rank, they cheat the university and community.	83	1.84	.876	347	2.29	1.044[*]	920	2.42	1.40	108	2.66	1.29
Intercollegiate athletic programs are more corrupt than other aspects of the university.	82	2.12	1.070	345	2.94	1.051[*]	920	3.41	1.13	108	2.83	1.13[*]
None of the student fees I pay should support intercollegiate athletics.	82	2.12	1.047	347	3.12	1.200[*]	920	2.84	1.42	108	3.27	1.28[*]
College teams play by the rules because of NCAA regulations.	82	3.68	1.076	347	3.45	1.020	920	3.60	1.13	108	3.39	1.08
I would support intercollegiate programs regardless of its win/loss record.	83	4.06	1.004	345	3.63	1.071[*]	920	3.79	1.27	108	3.45	1.17[*]

50

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I have attended university athletic events other than football and men's basketball.	83	4.33	1.072	347	3.16	1.489[*]	920	2.12	1.56	108	1.97	1.24
University athletics are more corrupt than the world of business.	83	1.89	.897	347	2.50	1.038[*]	920	3.59	1.29	108	3.42	1.14
The list of courses in which student-athletes are enrolled should be public information.	83	2.22	1.071	346	2.51	1.187[*]	920	2.24	1.42	108	2.35	1.40
51 Memories of my college years will be enhanced by intercollegiate athletic events.	83	4.49	.817	346	3.04	1.276[*]	920	3.37	1.08	108	2.64	1.41[*]
There is a proper balance between athletics and academics at most universities.	83	3.63	.972	345	3.07	1.101[*]	920	3.16	1.22	108	2.68	1.10[*]
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the general student body.	82	4.11	.943	344	3.46	1.101[*]	920	3.88	1.08	108	3.19	1.13[*]
Donations to the universities as a result of a winning athletic program benefit primarily the athletic program	83	3.75	.853	344	3.74	.903	920	3.63	1.16	108	3.85	1.06

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Some faculty members give student-athletes special treatment.	83	2.99	1.042	343	3.55	1.047[*]	920	3.66	1.19	108	3.99	1.06[*]
Most university students have an interest in intercollegiate athletic events.	82	3.71	1.000	344	3.25	1.067[*]	920	3.82	1.08	108	3.31	1.03[*]
Minor sports such as tennis and track are less corrupt than the major programs of football and basketball.	83	3.12	1.224	343	3.36	1.019	920	3.36	1.24	108	3.37	1.10
52 Student-athletes receive more favorable treatment from the university than any other scholarship students.	83	2.60	1.158	344	3.53	1.082[*]	920	2.92	1.26	108	2.28	1.11[*]
Big-time university sport programs must break rules to achieve big-time status.	82	2.01	.853	343	2.49	1.113[*]	920	2.49	1.33	108	2.45	1.18
Athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of universities.	83	4.17	.867	344	3.86	.996[*]	920	4.15	1.07	108	3.92	1.08
All freshman athletes should have to wait until their sophomore year to play.	83	1.51	.889	344	2.09	1.075[*]	920	2.13	1.39	108	2.37	1.32

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I am directly acquainted with several student-athletes.	83	4.59	.716	343	3.50	1.228[*]	920	3.83	1.46	108	2.48	1.47[*]
A winning athletic program increases financial donations to the university.	83	4.08	.829	344	3.80	.952[*]	920	4.31	0.98	108	4.00	.98[*]
Student-athletes are legitimate students.	83	4.54	.754	344	3.90	1.013[*]	920	3.96	1.15	108	3.38	1.07[*]
I am a sports fan.	83	4.52	.888	343	3.83	1.304[*]	920	4.32	1.10	108	3.54	1.40[*]
53 Violations of NCAA rules occur because the rules are too complex.	83	2.48	.929	344	2.63	.996	920	3.07	1.35	108	2.31	1.08[*]
Universities should abandon intercollegiate athletics.	83	1.35	.833	340	1.85	1.059[*]	920	1.65	1.21	108	1.78	1.12
My choice of college was based primarily on athletic reputation.	83	2.80	1.134	343	1.67	1.005[*]	920	2.30	1.40	108	1.34	.83[*]
A star athlete in a major sport should expect that he/she will be provided a car.	83	1.52	.888	344	1.64	1.030	920	1.68	1.18	108	1.34	.80[*]

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Rowan University (2016)						University of Nevada (2001)					
	Athlete			Non-Athlete			Athlete			Non-Athlete		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Student-athletes are not involved in campus violence (rape, assault) any more than non-athletes.	83	3.25	1.238	343	2.83	1.180[*]	920	3.36	1.24	108	2.84	1.23[*]
It would be better if scholarships for athletics were discontinued.	83	1.84	1.018	344	2.28	1.096[*]	920	1.26	1.26	108	2.05	1.12
After graduation, I am likely to make a contribution to the athletic programs as an alumnus.	83	3.67	.989	343	2.20	1.199[*]	920	1.37	1.37	108	1.96	1.48[*]

\*  $p < .05$

## Chapter V

### Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary of the Study

This study investigated college student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University in the areas resource allocation, corruption, relevance of athletics to the college experience, and academic matters of student-athletes; the difference between reported attitudes of self-designated athletes and non-athletes; and a comparison of current research results with the original study on student attitudes toward athletics at the University of Nevada. The subjects enrolled in this study were residential, undergraduate students enrolled in classes during spring 2016 at Rowan University.

The survey was comprised of two sections and began with an alternate consent statement. The first part of the survey collected demographic information, including age, college of study, gender, and self-identification as either an athlete or non-athlete. The second section included 39 Likert items to assess student attitudes toward various statements. The survey was adapted to Qualtrics, an online survey tool designed to gather survey data. Mixed-method sampling was used to obtain subjects. At a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 3%, the randomly selected and representative sample size consisted of 858 residential undergraduate students. A convenience sample was used in order to gain higher participation numbers. As a result of outreach efforts, 431 individuals completed the survey, garnering a 50% response rate.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the survey data, using descriptive statistics and an independent samples *t*-test to differentiate responses from athletes and non-athletes. Using these outcomes, the results



were compared with findings from the original study on college student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics by Knapp et al. (2001).

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The first factor grouping is related to resource allocation. Of the nine statements, students are generally supportive of current practices regarding resource allocation. While a majority (67.1%) of respondents believed that athletic programs increase financial donations to the university, 50.1% indicated that they were not likely to make a donation to the athletic program following graduation. This specific finding highlights differences in attitudes from the perspective of students and faculty, as Baumgartner (2013) identifies that only 26.9% of faculty think that athletic programs contribute to financial donations on behalf of alumni. Concerning resources and athlete privilege, students do not support athletes being paid to play, paid to wear certain shoes or apparel, or provided with a car. Findings are inconclusive in establishing attitudes toward athletic budgeting in comparison to other programs throughout the university, as 37.8% are neutral.

The next factor grouping is corruption in intercollegiate athletics. Attitudes indicated that students did not view entire athletic programs as corrupt; however, they did identify major male programs as likely to be more corrupt than female programs or minor programs. A majority of respondents (53.4%) did not think that corruption was necessary in order for programs to be successful. These findings imply that, while corruption in athletics is potential, students do not ultimately view this department negatively and recommend any reform. This finding is consistent with Knapp et al. (2001) who also did not find support for proposals involving reform in athletics.

In assessing the third factor group, relevance of athletics to the institution of higher education, students demonstrated an extremely positive disposition. An overwhelming 82.2% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the university. Another 73.3% of the population also agreed that athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of the university. These findings are consistent with faculty attitudes, which suggested that 79.8% of faculty agreed that athletics has a place on a college campus (Baumgartner, 2013). Despite positive disposition toward athletics, less than 50% of students reported interest in athletics (46.6%) or believed that their college memories will be enhanced by athletics (47.6%). Still, a resounding 77% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “Universities should abandon intercollegiate athletics.” Overall, students were generally supportive of intercollegiate athletic programs at Rowan University, even if their own attendance or interest was limited. This finding parallels the same conclusion from the University of Nevada, which similarly found students were generally supportive of intercollegiate athletic programs (Knapp et al., 2001).

The final factor group examines attitudes toward academic matters of student-athletes. Over 73% of college students reported that they believed student-athletes to be legitimate students, while 58.4% believed that the primary goal of the student-athlete is to earn their degree. Despite these findings, students believe student-athletes are more likely to receive academic assistance than non-athletes and receive special treatment, an attitude that is consistent with students from the University of Las Vegas (Knapp et al., 2001). Faculty attitudes at Rowan University differ from students, as only 39.5% agreed with the statement that student-athletes are given privileges not provided to other students

(Baumgartner, 2013). Overall, student attitudes reflect a positive disposition toward on athletes at Rowan University.

The study also examines reported differences of attitudes between athletes and non-athletes. According to an independent samples *t*-test, athlete and non-athletes reported significant attitude differences among 32 of the 39 statements. These findings indicate that athletes and non-athletes demonstrate significantly different attitudes toward their view of intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. The findings in this study support elements from Astin (1999) and Allport (1935). Astin (1999) observed that athletic involvement leads to isolation of student-athletes from the non-athlete segment of the campus population. In this case, isolation from other peer groups affects student experiences, a critical element of forming attitudes (Allport, 1935). As the experiences between athletes and non-athletes often differ, so do their ultimate attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics between athletes and non-athletes. These findings support findings by Knapp et al. (2001), which established attitude differences between athletes and non-athletes across the same set of questions.

In comparing the current study results at Rowan University with those from a study conducted at the University of Nevada, findings suggest that regardless of institutional differences, students reported similar attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics. Mean values between athletes and non-athletes were consistent between the two studies across 31 of 39 statements. There were also 28 statements in which attitude statements between athletes and non-athletes were consistent among significant difference outcomes ( $p < .05$ ). In general, statements in which athletes had higher mean values at Rowan University also had higher mean values at the University of Nevada.

In terms of differences, there were a few, which reflected variances in institutional environment. Athletes at the University of Nevada thought that their athletics were more corrupt than the world of business ( $M=3.59$ ), while athletes at Rowan University did not ( $M=1.89$ ). Athletes at the University of Nevada were more likely to believe student-athletes receive favorable treatment from the university ( $M=2.92$ ) than non-athletes ( $M=2.28$ ), while non-athletes at Rowan University reported higher mean scores on this statement ( $M=3.53$ ) than athletes. ( $M=2.60$ ). The final statement in which athletes and non-athletes differed involved contributions to the athletic program an alumnus. Athletes at Rowan University reported higher chances of donating than non-athletes ( $M=3.67$ ;  $M=2.20$ ), while University of Nevada non-athletes are more likely to donate than athletes ( $M=1.37$ ;  $M=1.96$ ). These numbers indicate that intercollegiate athletics may be valued more by athletes at Rowan University and non-athletes at the University of Nevada.

### **Conclusions**

The data from this study suggest three conclusions. First, it can be concluded that, based on the findings of the study, students at Rowan University are generally supportive of intercollegiate athletic programs. They agree with current resource allocation measures; they do not believe athletics are inherently corrupt; they support athletics in spite of attendance patterns or personal interest; and, believe student-athletes are legitimate students. While students claim to support athletics, there is still little evidence that non-athletes are engaged and involved in athletics on campus. A small group of the students reported that they attend athletic events. A majority group has no interest in athletics and finds that their college experience is enhanced by athletics.

Secondly, results indicate that there is an established difference between attitudes of athletes and non-athletes in relation to their perspective on intercollegiate athletics. Athletes also reported a more positive disposition. Based on this finding, it is important for intercollegiate athletics to explore ways to engage and involve non-athletes, seeking to enhance their perspective and outlook. If athletic departments aim to serve the institution mission, they must expand their reach beyond the student-athlete.

Finally, results conclude that student attitudes between athletes and non-athletes are similar between various institutions, regardless of size, NCAA division classification, or personal experience. These findings further the knowledge base surrounding college student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics and help to provide a rationale for athletics importance and continued presence on campuses across the country.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Based upon the findings and conclusion of the researcher, the following suggestions are presented.

1. Create programming within the athletic department targeted for the non-athlete population.
2. Encourage student involvement and engagement by seeking to increase student attendance at intercollegiate competition events.
3. Promote academic success of student-athletes to further dismantle the stereotypes surrounding athletes as “dumb jocks.”
4. Partner with other organizations on campus to create programming that appeals to diverse groups.
5. Reward attendance at games through an incentive program.

6. Establish a non-athlete student organization housed in athletics, designed to support athletes at various events.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the researcher, the following suggestions are presented.

1. Survey different institutions to measure differences in student attitudes based on institutional characteristics.
2. Implement recommendations (listed above) and re-survey population on student attitudes toward athletics to measure impact.
3. Replicate study in another year and measure the impact of athletic success on student attitudes.
4. Condense survey statements to ensure that a higher number of individuals who start the survey complete in its entirety.

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## Appendix A

### Permission to Reproduce Survey

From: **Terry Knapp** [terryk@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:terryk@unlv.nevada.edu)  
Subject: Re: What College Students Say About Intercollegiate Athletics  
Date: October 13, 2015 at 6:20 PM  
To: Parsley, Donald Nathaniel [parsley@rowan.edu](mailto:parsley@rowan.edu)

TK

Nate,

You have my permission to use the survey items and to reprint them as you need.

Best of luck.

Terry

On Tue, Oct 13, 2015 at 7:34 AM, Parsley, Donald Nathaniel <[parsley@rowan.edu](mailto:parsley@rowan.edu)> wrote:

Terry,

I had reached out to you regarding your work *What College Students Say About Intercollegiate Athletics* over the summer.

I am reaching out now to obtain permission to use and/or modify the survey instrument printed in the article for my senior thesis. I also would need permission to reproduce the survey in an appendix.

If you have any further questions, you can feel free to email or call my cell at [302.258.7673](tel:302.258.7673). I appreciate the help that you have provided thus far and look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

**Nate Parsley**  
Softball Assistant Coach, Rowan University

**33 All-Americans**  
**23 NCAA Appearances**  
**5 NCAA Regional Championships**  
**8 NJAC Championships**

---

**From:** Terry Knapp <[terryk@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:terryk@unlv.nevada.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 10, 2015 3:13 PM  
**To:** Parsley, Donald Nathaniel  
**Subject:** Re: What College Students Say About Intercollegiate Athletics

This might be the author of the reference you seek, in any event you would want to take a look at his textbook. He is at Illinois State University. I have none of our surveys, but the items are all as reported with the first numbered ones taken up with demographic information.

Wib Leonard is a Professor of Sociology in the Sociology-Anthropology Department. He typically teaches social statistics and the sociology of sport.

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Letter and Survey Instrument

Greetings!

My name is Nate Parsley and I am currently pursuing my graduate degree in Higher Education Administration. As a part of the graduate program, we are required to complete a thesis capstone project. In order to complete my thesis, I am reaching out to undergraduate, residential students enrolled in the spring 2016 semester at Rowan University to take a survey that should take five to ten minutes to complete.

For the past eight years, I have coached, competed, and worked closely with the athletic department at Rowan University. Through my extensive interaction with intercollegiate athletics, I always wondered about how Division III intercollegiate athletics impact the general student population. Now, as a senior graduate student in the Higher Education Administration program, I wanted to explore these topics in my thesis capstone project.

Ultimately, the purpose of this survey is to examine undergraduate, residential student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. In addition, the survey will examine factors that include compliance, integrity, privilege, and resource allocation. I would appreciate any information that you could provide.

While your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, I would appreciate any information that you could provide. You can access the survey online by following the link below. You may only take this survey once. In addition, the survey may only be taken by undergraduate students at Rowan University student who live on campus and are enrolled in classes during the spring 2016 semester. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [parsley@rowan.edu](mailto:parsley@rowan.edu).

***To take survey, please enter the URL exactly as it appears below into an Internet browser. Be sure to maintain capital/lowercase letters as shown below. This survey can be taken on any mobile device.***

<https://goo.gl/7JdVY>

Best,

D. Nathaniel Parsley

## Default Question Block

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled, "What College Students Say About Intercollegiate Athletics." As an undergraduate, residential student here at Rowan University, your status qualifies you as a potential participant. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 858.

The survey may take approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, do not respond to this online survey.

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. We expect the study to last four months.

The purpose of this research study is to examine residential, undergraduate student attitudes toward intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. With a great share of university resources allocated to support athletic activities, it is important to gauge student attitudes in order to assess the degree to which athletics impacts the student body at-large.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand how Rowan University and Rowan University Athletics can help to provide its students with a better experience.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact graduate student Nate Parsley at [parsley@rowan.edu](mailto:parsley@rowan.edu) or Dr. Burton Sisco at (856) 256-4500 ext. 3717 or [sisco@rowan.edu](mailto:sisco@rowan.edu).

Please complete the questions below to continue. Completing the survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in this research study.

Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes

No

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other (please specify)

What is your age?

Which college are you currently enrolled?

Rohrer College of Business

College of Education

College of Communications & Creative Arts

College of Health Sciences

Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering

College of Performing Arts

College of Humanities & Social Sciences

College of Science & Mathematics

School of Biomedical Science & Health Professions

Undecided

What is your current year of study?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Please designate whether you are currently a student-athlete at Rowan University.

Currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sport at Rowan University

Not currently participating in NCAA-sanctioned athletic sport at Rowan University; may still compete in intramural and/or club sports

Below are statements about intercollegiate athletics and student-athletes.

As you read each statement, please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### Example Question

A) Intercollegiate athletics should be banned from campus. 3

In the above example, I answered a "3" to indicate a neutral opinion toward this statement. I do not agree nor disagree that intercollegiate athletics should be banned.

	Rating Scale				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit universities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money spent on intercollegiate athletic programs would be better spent on the general student body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upon entering college, the primary goal of student-athletes is to earn their degree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student-athletes are more likely to receive assistance than non-athletes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student-athletes should not have to meet higher academic requirements than those required of the general student body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student-athletes should be paid to play.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Major male college sports programs are more corrupt than female sports programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intercollegiate athletes should be paid for wearing a product from a shoe or apparel company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many intercollegiate athletes gamble on the games in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

which they play.

When an athlete leaves the university early to enter the professional rank, they cheat the university and community.

Intercollegiate athletic programs are more corrupt than other aspects of the university.

None of the student fees I pay should support intercollegiate athletics.

College teams play by the rules because of NCAA regulations.

I would support an intercollegiate programs regardless of its win/loss record.

I have attended university athletic events other than football and men's basketball.

University athletics are more corrupt than the world of business.

The list of courses in which student-athletes are enrolled should be public information.

Memories of my college years will be enhanced by intercollegiate athletic events.

There is a proper balance between athletics and academics at most universities.

Intercollegiate athletic programs benefit the general student body.

Donations to the universities as a result of a winning athletic program benefit primarily the athletic program.

Some faculty members give student-athletes special treatment.

Most university students have an interest in intercollegiate athletic events.

Minor sports such as tennis and track are less corrupt than the major programs of football and basketball.

Student-athletes receive more favorable treatment from the university than any other scholarship students.

Big-time university sport programs must break rules to



achieve big-time status.

Athletic accomplishment increases the prestige of universities.

All freshman athletes should have to wait until their sophomore year to play.

I am directly acquainted with several student-athletes.

A winning athletic program increases financial donations to the university.

Student-athletes are legitimate students.

I am a sports fan.

Violations of NCAA rules occur because the rules are too complex.

Universities should abandon intercollegiate athletics.

My choice of college was based primarily on athletic reputation.

A star athlete in a major sport should expect that he/she will be provided a car.

Student-athletes are not involved in campus violence (rape, assault) any more than non-athletes.

It would be better if scholarships for athletics were discontinued.

After graduation, I am likely to make a contribution to the athletic programs as an alumnus.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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## Appendix C

### Institutional Review Board Approval

From: eIRB@rowan.edu  
Subject: Rowan University eIRB: Study Approved  
Date: January 8, 2016 at 1:20 PM  
To: parsley@rowan.edu

E



\*\* This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.  
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.  
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office \*\*

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111  
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman  
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy  
Effective Date: 1/7/2016

**eIRB Notice of Approval**

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**STUDY PROFILE**

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Study ID: Pro2015000686  
Title: College Student Attitudes Toward Intercollegiate Athletics at Rowan University

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	Study Coordinator:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Donald Parsley	Other Study Staff:	None
Sponsor:	Department Funded	Approval Cycle:	Twelve Months
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Review Type:	Expedited	Expedited Category:	7
Subjects:	4,385		

**CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS**

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Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	Submission Status:	Approved		
Approval Date:	1/7/2016	Expiration Date:	1/6/2017		
Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects Not Applicable	Pediatric Code:	Not Applicable No Children As Subjects	Prisoner Code:	Not Applicable No Prisoners As Subjects
Protocol:	Online Survey Consent Permission for Copyright Material Protocol Survey Instrument	Consent:	There are no items to display	Recruitment Materials:	Recruitment Letter

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**\* Study Performance Sites:**

Glassboro Campus	College of Education, James Hall Glassboro Campus 201 Mullica Hill Road Glassboro, NJ 08028
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**ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions :** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.
5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations :** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.
8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.
9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.
10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

Study.PI Name:  
Study.Co-Investigators: