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Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of Student-Athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution

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FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARDS COLLEGE ATHLETICS AND THE ACADEMIC COMPETENCY OF STUDENT-ATHLETES AT A NCAA DIVISION-I INSTITUTION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Abstract

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The purpose of this investigation was to examine faculty attitudes towards the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution. By analyzing faculty attitudes, this study contributes to a better understanding of factors associated with how educators view athletics in higher education and how they develop their attitudes towards student-athletes from an academic perspective. Though prior research indicates quantitatively that faculty possess distinct views of these concepts, there was a gap between measured attitudes and known factors that contribute to these attitudes. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative results, this investigation advanced the knowledge base of what factors, themes and trends exist in relation to faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes. Furthermore, by identifying relevant factors, this study may serve future practitioners by helping them hone techniques for successful and perceived change of the college experience for student-athletes in higher education.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background for the Study

As athletics programs have grown on college and university campuses over the past 120 years, debates have ignited over their legitimacy in higher education. Critics perceive college athletics as an entity characterized by underhanded practices used to perpetuate an institution's status in a society that competes on an annual basis for students, faculty and financial rewards (Funk, 1991). These criticisms are not recent developments. Early on in the history of college athletics, individuals began to fear that the desire to win was eroding the foundation of amateur athletics in favor of revenues (Watterson, 2000). The debate over the balance between athletics and academic excellence in higher education has continued through present day.

Defenders of college athletics attempt to promote what they perceive as positives borne of the relationship between education and athletics, including social and educational development of the student body and increased success for the educational institution itself. Supporters of college athletics point to the student-athlete who possesses qualities of dedication, teamwork, respect for authority, and mental and physical discipline. These supporters also call attention to a rise in community pride, connections with alumni, an increase in applications for admission, and larger revenues for the college or university. All of these elements are considered positive signs that the experiment of athletics on college campuses has been prosperous and mutually rewarding for all involved.

As the collegiate community has moved in the direction of seeking common ground between athletics and academics, relevant issues and questions in relation to the perceived role of college athletics, the academic competency of student-athletes and the preferential/non-preferential treatment of student-athletes, have been raised. Most specifically, faculty members and administrators face the challenges of integrating a unique and diverse population into the traditional classroom setting to provide them with a meaningful educational experience while also being charged with the responsibility of determining the appropriate balance between athletics and academics at their universities.

The academic competency and perceived preferential/non-preferential treatment of student-athletes represents the crux of the issue. Issues of diversity and inclusion play a significant role. Higher education has sought to increase the number of individuals who are capable of completing college-level work, but who lack the required means to attend. In the 1930s and 1940s, this challenge was addressed through the personal generosity of alumni:

> During the 1930s and early 1940s, it was not uncommon for an alumnus to adopt a local high school athlete and put him through college. The alumnus, proud of his own school, came to know a gifted high school prospect, established a friendship with the young man's parents, and helped the youngster attend the sponsor's alma mater. It was considered a decent thing to do…The colleges then banned this practice claiming it was pay for play (Byers, 1995).

As a response, athletics scholarships have been used by universities to provide potentially promising students an opportunity for higher education. Because higher education has chosen to place an emphasis on athletics for purposes of school identity, obtaining revenue and student-body recreation, educational institutions have rewarded the efforts of student-athletes by providing them resources allowed under NCAA rules to attend college. These allowable resources include (1) tuition and fees, (2) room and board, and (3) books (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2009). Universities claim to have made the commitment to provide student-

athletes with meaningful life skills and an education that will facilitate the accomplishment of lifelong aspirations. Others, however, are not convinced that the athletics scholarship is genuinely altruistic in nature.

Many faculty members and administrators who do not believe in the concept of the student-athlete fear that most student-athletes use college solely as a means of being scouted by professional teams (specifically in revenue producing sports) and that universities knowingly benefit from this arrangement. This is an understandable viewpoint when one examines the historical record.

In a famous, oft-quoted statement, former National Football League (NFL) and University of Miami player Deion Sanders replied to the question of whether he wanted to be in college by saying, "No, but I have to be," (Putnam, 1999). There is a popular conviction that the refusal of some major professional sports leagues to admit players before reaching a certain qualifying age has turned many college campuses into a "farm system" for the major leagues.

Statements such as Sanders' have been used as evidence to demonstrate that the "dumb jock" stereotype is factually-based. Some faculty members possess attitudes that suggest the typical student-athlete is a sub-standard student incapable of doing acceptable academic work and for the most part, may be disinterested in the educational system. Furthermore, many in academia argue that college presidents knowingly allow academically unqualified athletes to become students in order to increase the school's chances of winning games and gaining the exposure and financial gain that accompany a national championship (Duderstadt, 2000). It is argued that universities have no ability or intent to develop both the student and the athlete in an equitable manner.

Evidence exists that supports the claim that star student-athletes have benefited from lenient admissions policies and "soft" grading practices. Dexter Manley, a former NFL standout with the Washington Redskins who played football for four years while attending Oklahoma State University, admitted later that he was functionally illiterate (Zimbalist, 1999). Sadly, Manley is just one in a long list of individuals who played big-time college athletics and either graduated without a true education or did not graduate at all.

In an attempt to rectify these issues, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and other groups have traditionally sought ways to realign the relationship between athletics and academics. The issue of balancing academic ideals and athletics dominance has become a daunting challenge for the NCAA which possesses two distinct goals.

On one end, the NCAA is committed to the growth of college athletics which it achieves by securing television contracts and other revenue streams. On the other end, the NCAA is responsible for regulating college athletics to ensure that academic and amateur ideals are upheld (Sperber, 2000). This operational paradox has not changed to present day. The chasm between the classroom and locker room has reportedly grown and the revenue generated through college athletics has reached a record high.

Overview of the Study

This investigation examined current faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution. With a large body of research that has described college athletics from a quantitative tradition, it is clear that attitudes towards the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes are powerful and varied. The quantitative literature examines and describes a significant amount of negative stereotyping associated with the student-athlete in academic settings although additional

studies have demonstrated that graduation rates amongst the student-athlete population are equal to or greater than those of the general population of college students (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2006). Regardless, student-athletes still carry a negative stigmatization among some members of the faculty population.

Based upon these findings, this investigation included a series of face-to-face interviews with faculty members designed to isolate factors associated with how faculty members develop their attitudes towards student-athletes from an academic standpoint. Because of the quantitative nature of most past studies conducted in this field, many of these factors remained largely unknown. It was thought that faculty attitudes may be influenced by many factors including their individual beliefs associated with the role of college athletics in higher education, whether they participated in sports, the number of exposures the faculty member has to student-athletes as well as additional demographic variables. This mixed methods study was conducted to provide a better understanding of the predominant recurring themes and trends that faculty use to describe their attitudes and experiences.

Overview of the Literature

Research indicates that attitudes towards the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes differ significantly based on samples studied in prior investigations. These investigations have utilized samples that have included non student-athlete, faculty and student-athlete populations. Based on historical models used to study these distinct realms, researchers now possess the ability to synthesize prior research in an attempt to describe how they work in tandem.

The Role of College Athletics

Literature related to this realm of the study focuses on two distinct goals in relation to college athletics. The first goal is to use sport as an effective tool for positive social and educational development. The second goal is to generate funds and engender feelings of pride within the student body and alumni circles. Some argue this has led to issues of commercialization and professionalism within college athletics and that the two goals are incompatible (Sperber, 2000).

This notion of incompatibility has been affirmed in several later studies. In an article published in 2007 by Benford, it was reported that one of five significant problems identified by faculty based on attitudes of the impact of intercollegiate athletics is that college athletics have a degenerative effect on the academic integrity of higher education.

Academic Competency

Two models for assessing academic competency have been developed over the past decade. The first is the Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS) currently being used at Western Washington University. WELS is a self-administered student assessment used to measure social and educational realms associated with academic competence. The data are collected and analyzed to target and address incoming freshmen and transfer student needs (Hartsoch, Clark, Krieg, McKinney, & Trimble, 2009).

The second model is referred to as the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES). This model is designed to elicit reliable and valid data that measure concepts directly related to the construct of academic competency (DiPerna & Elliott, 1999). The developers have determined (as is the case with WELS) that a variety of factors, both social and educational, play

a significant role in the development of academic competency. These factors were the basis for the development of their academic competence conceptual model presented later in the study.

Preferential/Non-Preferential Treatment of Student-Athletes

In an article published in 2005 by Lawry, it was stated that universities have spent enormously on student-athletes in an attempt to aid them in achieving scholastic benchmarks. This spending includes facilities, staff, advisors and tutors that are not readily available to the average student on campus. As a result, the question of academic integrity has been challenged in relation to the student-athlete because additional expenditures and resources are seen as unfair advantages offered to the student-athlete.

Contrasting this research, however, Thomas (2008) contends that there are additional pressures that student-athletes face to succeed at the college level. Of the significant factors listed, many were associated with the inequitable treatment and requirements that student-athletes must endure. Some issues listed were: time required to achieve all athletic and academic demands, physical and emotional strain and academic competition with traditional students. The author suggests that additional resources that are currently being offered to student-athletes are not only required, but are indispensible to level the academic playing field. If these "perks" are not provided, student-athletes are at risk to fall further behind traditional students (Thomas, 2008). In this way, what some perceive as preferential treatment, may be conversely argued as accommodating a unique population in need.

Theoretical Sociological Frameworks of Sport

Jay Coakley, considered widely as one of the world's leaders in the field of sport sociology, indicates in his book, *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies (2004)*, that there are six major theoretical frameworks that have been used to understand the phenomenon of sport

within specific social and cultural contexts. They are: (1) Functionalist Theory, (2) Critical Theory, (3) Conflict Theory, (4) Feminist Theory, (5) Figurational Theory, and (6) Interactionist Theory (Coakley, 2004). These theories have been applied to understand sport in specific social and cultural contexts in order to gain deeper insight into how sport has been used to promote and perpetuate systems of power.

Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to examine faculty attitudes towards the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes in a higher education setting at a NCAA Division-I institution. By analyzing faculty attitudes, this study contributes to a better understanding of factors associated with how educators view athletics in higher education and how they develop their attitudes towards student-athletes from an academic perspective. Though prior research indicated quantitatively that faculty possess distinct views of these concepts, there was a gap between measured attitudes and known factors that contribute to these attitudes.

By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative results, this investigation examined statistical data as well as themes and trends that exist in relation to faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes. The long-term goal of beginning to understand relevant factors associated with these concepts was achieved. Furthermore, by identifying relevant factors, this study may serve future practitioners by helping them hone techniques for successful and perceived change of the college experience for student-athletes in higher education.

Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in knowledge between measured faculty attitudes of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes and ways in which faculty develop these attitudes.

Many quantitative studies indicated that faculty members hold certain beliefs as to the appropriate purpose of athletics in relation to the academic mission of higher education.

Research also indicated that certain percentages of faculty attitudes towards student-athletes and their ability to perform academically differ from those of traditional students. However, little was known about the factors associated with these attitudes and what experiences have shaped faculty attitudes. Because of this, mixed methods research was required to seek a deeper understanding of the issues involved.

Research Questions

1. How do faculty members rate the academic competency of student-athletes in comparison to other students at their college or university?

2. How do faculty members describe the "typical" student-athlete?

3. Which factors do faculty members present as a hindrance/benefit to academic achievement for student-athletes at their institution?

4. How do faculty members describe the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport illuminated in the literature review including; commercialization, professionalism, entertainment, nationalism (school pride), the amateur ideal, educational development and social development?

Design and Methods

A mixed methods research design was employed for this investigation to elicit measurements, trends and themes associated with faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution. Quantitative measurements were analyzed through a series of descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data were coded both categorically and thematically to report emergent trends and themes

associated with both the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes. The mixed methods research procedures and guidelines that were employed were taken from, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Cresswell, 2003), and are summarized in the following sections.

Research Setting

This study was conducted at a large urban university referred to herein as State College University. The school boasts an enrollment of approximately 32,000 students. There are approximately 1,900 instructional faculty members. The university offers sixty undergraduate programs as well as a wide range of graduate and professional programs. The university is dedicated to promoting diversity at all levels. State College University is classified as a NCAA Division-IAAA school. This classification is used to designate NCAA Division-I institutions that do not sponsor a football program. The university has approximately 225 student-athletes participating in sixteen sports and is considered a "mid-major" institution in relation to athletics.

Population and Sampling

The population for this investigation was faculty members who were currently serving as educators at State College University. Participants for the study included any faculty member who was currently in a teaching role at the university. Demographic variables were gathered to clarify results such as faculty rank, age, gender, race, discipline taught, known exposures to student-athletes in classes they have taught and primary level of instruction (undergraduate, graduate or mixed). These data were gathered based on the belief that faculty members have varied attitudes and knowledge of the hindrances/benefits that student-athletes experience in an academic setting as a result of their simultaneous participation in the educational and athletics realms. Following the quantitative analysis of the results, ten faculty members were purposively

sampled for 1-hour follow-up interviews to discuss the role of college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a deeper level to develop common trends and themes associated with the two concepts.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through web survey questionnaires and by conducting face-to-face interviews with participants that were audio recorded. The survey was designed using the ACES College Edition questionnaire in a modified capacity. Questions containing language specific to students were altered to include language specific to student-athletes. This resulted in an overall rating of academic competency of a specific population that was analyzed using accepted statistical analysis procedures including one-way ANOVAs and independent samples *t*-tests. The interviews utilized structured interview protocols bounded by the concepts of interest previously presented. A copy of the interview protocol is located in Appendix E. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length. Following each interview, the recording was listened to and transcribed verbatim.

During the listening of the recorded interviews, notes and memos were kept to begin developing preliminary ideas about categories and relationships of data. The strategy of coding and thematic analysis was later employed to fracture the data to begin developing theoretical concepts and to organize the data into broader themes as trends emerged. This analytical technique was employed because the study sought to understand similarities and differences that may be associated with how faculty members perceive college athletics and the student-athlete.

Definition of Terms

Role of College Athletics - This term is used to describe what faculty members believe the defining components are that make up college athletics in higher education. Examples

include an individual's beliefs in relation to the primary motivations for sponsoring college athletics and an individual's understanding of challenges that face universities in sponsoring athletics program.

Furthermore, the term is used to describe whether faculty members possess positive or negative attitudes towards the role of athletics in higher education. Research exists indicating that faculty members possess varying attitudes towards the role of college athletics and the subsequent effects they have on a university's academic mission. Therefore, it is important to describe whether any perceived benefits associated with athletics in higher education offset the any perceived liabilities that may have a negative academic impact on the collegiate community.

Academic Competency - This term is used to describe whether faculty members believe that student-athletes are capable of meeting the demands of the average college student. It relates to whether student-athletes can succeed in the classroom and fulfill their obligations in a satisfactory manner or if they are unprepared to meet expectations from an academic perspective.

Preferential/Non-Preferential Treatment of Student-Athletes - Research indicates that student-athletes face greater demands on their time than traditional students. Additional research indicates that student-athletes may benefit from unfair advantages in academia because universities expend extensive resources targeted at athletes to assist them in their academic endeavors. Faculty attitudes suggest that student-athletes may succeed in college through soft grading practices and by completing "easy" majors. Lastly studies have indicated that student-athletes are negatively stereotyped by some faculty members as being subpar students. Based on these findings, the preferential/non-preferential treatment of student-athletes is used to describe whether faculty members believe that student-athletes are subjected to treatment that either benefits or hinders their progress in higher education.

Student-Athlete - An individual who participates in college athletics and is subject to all rules and regulations governing participation at the university including eligibility and academic standards set forth by the NCAA.

NCAA Institution - Membership in the NCAA is a voluntary commitment. Institutions that wish to participate in NCAA sanctioned events must comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the organization. This voluntary membership is a requisite for the institution being studied.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The Role of College Athletics

Athletics play a significant role in the extracurriculum of higher education in America. Because of this, the foundation and progress of sport in the context of higher education was examined. Ancient Greek themes for an historical perspective of sport as a social and educational tool were explored to elicit common themes associated with sport and education in modern America as well as the stated reasons justifying the separation of sport and education in the current European institutional configuration.

By exploring the foundation of sport in ancient Greece and the development of sport and education within America and Europe, competing views towards the role of college athletics and associated themes were illuminated. These views and themes were discussed with faculty members during interview sessions. A conceptual model depicting common themes associated with sport and education as illuminated through this portion of the literature review is located in Appendix A.

The Homeric Legacy and Associated Values

Perhaps the earliest detailed descriptions of athletics in ancient Greece appear in the books of Homer. The twenty-third book of the *Iliad* is the most thorough. This book in its entirety is dedicated to describing the athletic contests held at the funeral games of Patroculs (Sansone, 1988). Because these events are centered around a funeral, it has been opined by some scholars that Greek athletics in Homeric times must have existed as religious ritual. In Greece

during this period, some evidence of religious ties to sport can be found. The most common forms of sport as spectacle were the regional and national athletic festivals. The most notable of these festivals was held in honor of the Greek god Zeus at Olympia. Lawrence Hatab, in his essay *The Greeks and the Meaning of Athletics*, states definitively, "A link between athletics and a religious ideal can be clearly seen in the *Iliad.*" (Andre & James, 1991). However, this theory is strongly debated. Norman Gardiner, in *Athletics of the Ancient World* disagrees:

> Sports in Homer are part of the daily life and purely secular. Any important occasion would be a natural excuse for holding sports, the gathering of an army for war, the wedding or the funeral of some great chieftain. For where people are gathered together, something must be done to entertain them, and the most natural form of entertainment is some form of competition (Gardiner, 1967).

In actuality, within Homer's *Iliad* one finds evidence to support both claims. Though the events are described as funeral games, there appear to be no other religious overtones. However, the mere fact that the people of ancient Greece were known for their dedication to appeasing the Gods cannot be ignored. It is possible that athletic games served both purposes. A connection between sport and other significant events can be found throughout history, from the tradition of Thanksgiving football to the stories of soccer games played between German and British troops stationed on the Western Front of World War I during the famous Christmas truce in 1914. Why these events are linked to sport is oftentimes left to interpretation.

During the expansion of Greek civilization across the entirety of the Mediterranean, athletics were especially recognized as practical applications of physical prowess. The very existence and perpetuation of Greek culture required able bodies to defend homelands and conquer neighbors. This can be seen as a fundamental need during ancient times and as one of the greatest reasons athletics remained important to societal goals (Gardiner, 1967). Greece's military proficiency could, in part, be attributed to skills acquired through forms of traditional

sports of the time. These sports consisted of chariot racing, tossing the discus and javelin, boxing and wrestling. The definition of sport as a remnant of ancient wartime tactics, however, is insufficient. It is more appropriate to acknowledge this practical application of physical fitness in an historical context and by doing so, discover the deeper meaning of sport in the cultural context of past and current civilizations. It is more possible that athletic competitions were not passed down as simple traditions of strength training but rather evolved with the ebbs and flows of civilization, taking on new meaning as times of desperation gave way to times of celebration.

Nonetheless Homer's work is of great value as an historical account of sport for a different reason. It provides evidence that sport fulfilled a societal need for diversion. Homer was not a contestant himself, but the clarity with which he described the events of wrestling, chariot racing and boxing is evidence that he was learned in sport. In *The Iliad*, one finds detailed accounts of the monetary value and significance of prizes for both winners and losers, the first hints of professionalism and personal gain by sports contestants. There are also explanations of the rules of various contests and the techniques used by the competitors to gain an advantage. There is significant mention of equipment (Gardiner, 1967). Through Homer's description, it becomes apparent that participants in athletic competitions required skill, knowledge of standardized regulations and respect for etiquette during the games. When it is taken into consideration that these events were performed in a stadium occupied by a massive audience, it becomes clear that these detailed particulars of ancient Greek sport developed out of an intensity fueled by spectators. Competitions and the presentation of awards did not occur in closed quarters, like an interview, with only interested parties and judges present. Ancient Greek athletes triumphed or failed in front of a sea of people. The magnitude of the games as a colossal social event is unmistakable.

The very inclusion of athletics in literature proves the cultural value of sport in ancient Greek civilization. Homer's extensive account of the games not only illustrates the magnitude of athletics in ancient Greece but also demonstrates a rich relationship between art and athletics, as it describes the pursuit of physical excellence with vivid literature. It is difficult in modern days to place art and literature in the same cultural plane as sport, but in ancient Greece this was indeed the case (Sansone, 1988). The value of athletics is evidenced not only by literature, but in sculpture and other graphic arts as well, many of which still exist today.

At its base components, the Homeric model of sport may best be described as a form of entertainment. This form of entertainment is based on the professionalism and commercialization of the games and the participating athletes. This form of sport as ritual is believed to develop a sense of nationalism within the citizenry. Sport in this way is highly specialized and includes rewards and benefits awarded to those who participate and support athletics for financial gain.

The Platonic Legacy and Associated Values

By the middle of the Classical Period, philosophers such as Plato considered athletics in a new way, one that was deeply embedded in education and that was dedicated to the development of moral fiber and maturation of character. Though young men continued to be trained in the art of war through athletics, physical education was expanded to apply to other aspects of life and past conceptions of a good soldier were abandoned. To understand Plato's dialogue in terms of athletics and education, skills requiring physical training will be referred to in this section as gymnastics, as they are in Plato's writing. In Plato's *The Republic,* the social stratification of citizens is broken into three classes. To discuss the educational requirements and goals of gymnastics training, the education of the Guardian class, or middle class, will be examined.

In Plato's writings, the educational structure of the Guardian class incorporates the two components of music and gymnastics. The mastery of these practices collectively creates a foundation to develop the soul. The initial component of music is actually comprised of what could be more accurately described in modern terms as arts and literature. This is the primary component of the Guardian class education because it was perceived that youths needed additional time to develop physically before entering formal training in gymnastics (Nettleship, 1966). In *The Republic*, neither music nor gymnastics holds more importance and both are equally necessary to produce a well balanced individual of virtue, (Cornford, 1968).

It is remarkable that by gymnastics, Plato suggested a form of education that taught concepts of health, well-being and high moral standards. In this way, Plato's version of an athlete was very different than that of Homer's. According to Plato, physical power was to be utilized only for ethical pursuits and protection of the republic and the citizens contained therein. Because a proper education created men of virtue, a man properly trained in gymnastics was one of good moral standing, health and controlled temperament. Plato disregarded men who performed physical activity simply for reward and entertainment. He perceived that professional athletes were complacent men who ignored health and diet only to be consumed by earthly pleasures and disease (Nettleship, 1966).

Another noteworthy element of the educational system created by Plato was that social class was not dependent on birth right, but rather merit. Those who excelled in the Guardian class were afforded the opportunity to further refine their education past the age of 20 when most schooling ended. By taking advantage of this opportunity, a select few from the Guardian class could work towards being members of the Ruling class (Cornford, 1968). Mobility through social ranks is taken for granted in modern democratic societies, but was not the case throughout

most of antiquity. Within Plato's extremely strict and meticulously thorough ideal of education, premium physical fitness was imperative to mental, spiritual and social success.

At its base components, the Platonic model of sport may best be described as a form of social and educational development. It is from Plato that the socialization efforts of developing character through sport are elicited. In addition, sport is viewed in Platonic terms as serving a valuable and essential educational component to develop an individual in a way that harmoniously blends the mind and the body to create a whole. The reward for sport participation in Platonic terms thus means that an individual is capable of achieving mind and body unity, a requirement for the proper development of the citizenry.

Synopsis of the Homeric and Platonic Legacies

From a brief study of ancient Greece we see two models for sport. Homer's *Iliad* describes a society where physical talents are showcased. Regardless of the origin or other purposes of athletic skill, sporting competition is highly valued as societal entertainment and worthy as a subject of cultural expression. This is the foundation for the modern commercialization and professionalism associated with sport, a model in which rewards are reaped for performance levels achieved.

Contrasting the Homeric legacy is the Platonic legacy. Athletic training is essential in Plato's educational system in order to mold students in mind and body to become educated and productive citizens of high moral standing. In this way, sport is not viewed as a means of entertainment that may be used as an exploitable commodity. Rather, the Platonic model of sport emphasizes the social and educational development of participants rather than the entertainment that may be associated with contests.

European Model of Sport and Education

The current structure of European sport is defined as a pyramid system that at its apex serves the highest trained and specialized athletes and at its base serves the general public. The structure is progressive, meaning that individuals have the ability to rise through the four levels offered within the pyramid. These levels from the base to the apex are Grassroots Federations/Clubs, Regional Sports Federations, National Sports Federations and European Sports Federations (European Commission, 2000).

The base level defined as the grassroots or club level is the point of entry for all athletes in Europe. Many support the notion that this level is one of the most important in terms of socialization in European nations. Because deliberate and obtainable goals have been established at the club level, participants need no motivation for playing the sport other than pure interest in the game. Furthermore, those in charge of these clubs perform their duties at no cost. This distinct feature guarantees that all participants are genuinely amateur.

The reasoning behind this decision is justified in the European Commission report *The European Model of Sport*. Since the club level is open to all and because those organizing and operating these clubs do so on a voluntary basis, there is no danger of jeopardizing the amateur ideal. The importance of amateur sport according to the European Commission is based on the belief that sports contribute to the healthy socialization of the community and positive character development in individuals (European Commission, 2000).

Above the club level of sport, the tiers are less oriented towards promoting these ideals due to financial incentives and other benefits offered to talented athletes who have risen from the club ranks. These levels begin with regional team participation and culminate with international participation in the European Federation. The highly competitive European Federation is where

the top athletes from the entire European Union compete. Like all professional sports, it is based on a financial structure that is linked to entertainment.

In regard to athletics as they relate to the educational structure in European nations, the pyramid operates independently of any institution of learning. Though physical education is included in the school curriculum for young children for reasons of maintaining health, the pyramid structure is at no point included in elementary, secondary or post-secondary education. Those individuals wishing to participate in competitive sport must do so on their own time and at their own expense. Even so, sport is recognized as a valuable part of the education of youth in Europe.

Because universities in European countries do not compete in athletics, financial considerations are not a factor nor are the disadvantages that accompany the pursuit of talented players and staff. There are no coaches' salaries, aggressive recruitment or disputes over student professionalism. In fact, through the pyramid system, students attending a university in Europe have the ability to receive financial returns for their athletic efforts while maintaining status as a student. In the United States this would be perceived as a violation of the rules since athletes are expected to uphold a strict amateur status.

For European athletes, however, tying a professional career together with student life can lead to a grueling schedule. In speaking with an international athlete currently attending an American university, it was intimated that, "The reason that coming to the States is such an attractive opportunity for young European athletes is because everything is built into the schedule. You practice, go to class, work out…In my country you must attend school all day, travel some distance to a club, have long practices and go all the way back home. The transportation and practices make for a long day." Reflecting on these words, one has a clear

sense of the difficulties that exist in European sports clubs, leaving young athletes with limited time and energy for studies. Furthermore, there are no guarantees that practice and game schedules will not compete for time with a student's class schedule. In this way, sports and school can become a conflict of interests.

Once an individual receives money to perform, a vast amount of time is required for training. Expectations are greater on behalf of the clubs because of the financial commitment made to players. The lure of money makes it difficult for the student-athlete to focus on education. Because the window of opportunity to join professional sports is very narrow, oftentimes the financial appeal is too inviting to refuse. In this way, young European athletes who pursue professional athletics careers in lieu of an education can be compared to students in America who leave the college ranks to play in the professional leagues. However, the American athlete leaves behind the world of college sports, coaches, teammates, fans, as well as structured assistance in completing an education as a student-athlete. The realization of success in college sports is an appealing situation that can be difficult to turn away from. A young European athlete simply leaves school for sport. In short, the commitment required for both an education and a job as a national level professional athlete is oftentimes too overwhelming to handle simultaneously.

Sport has been credited by the European Union for contributing to social stability and cultural identity (European Commission, 2000). European citizens experience national and regional pride by associating with teams that represent their culture. While these values may be substantiated at the national level in Europe, athletics do not serve this function in the university system. The "school spirit" resulting from dedicated support of a home team against a rival visitor acts as a social glue between students, faculty and alumni in an American school. The lack of rivalries between European schools hampers the elements of loyalty and unity long

attached to the American university system. Though the elimination of school rivalries can be viewed as a strong deterrent from the perversion of academic ideals on campuses, the bond displayed by countless people dressed in school colors on game day is absent in the European campus atmosphere.

European nations have stated definitively that sport can be educational when used to influence individuals by building positive character traits. On the other hand, the European Commission has established that sport is a social experience that involves highly trained professionals for the entertainment of citizens. The grassroots level of sport in Europe serves the purpose of character development, but only if young people pursue sport independently.

Moreover, the European Sports Model does not completely alleviate the hazards of professionalism of student-athletes because of the financial windfall that is received through sport as athletes move past the initial stage of club sports. The European Sports Model is vastly different than the collegiate model established in the United States in terms of blending the educational experience with athletics. The concept of incorporating sport in a collegiate setting through the use of business practices is foreign. Because of this, European nations have been able to avoid issues associated with the commercialization of sports in the university system, but the benefit of school support for the education of student-athletes is absent.

American Model of Sport and Education

The entry point for athletics in the lives of Americans is not dissimilar to that in the system currently employed in European nations. Though athletics are introduced into education at the inception of schooling, the physical education component generally includes standard exercises for the benefits associated with healthy living. In terms of competitive participation, many clubs exist such as the American Youth Soccer Association, Pop Warner Football and

Little League Baseball, but children must be enrolled in these clubs by their parents, as they have no connection with schools. In this way, the European and American systems are the same. It is after the elementary school level that the organization of sports begins to differ between the two cultures.

It can be safely stated that the structure of sport in America is also based on a pyramid system, though the levels are vastly different than the levels of the European Sports Model. The American levels can be defined as middle school, high school, college and finally the professional leagues. Like Europe, these individual tiers feed into those above and individuals who excel in sport move up through the ranks. Because of this system, children begin to specialize at an early age in hopes of finding their best fit athletically. While elite club sport programs exist for the most talented of youth in America, with examples including private mentoring and coaching for gifted individuals who will play professionally while still school-aged, the primary option for athletics participation is offered through the educational system.

From middle school on, sport in America is sponsored by educational institutions. These institutions invest money and other resources to ensure that children have opportunities to play organized sport. In this way, children learn that there is no separation between education and athletics. To encourage continued commitment to sport, institutions of higher education offer scholarships to those most athletically gifted. This can be defined as a quid-pro-quos relationship. The student offers their services as an athlete to the university in exchange for the benefit of a subsidized education, an arrangement which is distinctly American.

However, the awarding of athletics scholarships is not normal practice for all colleges and universities. Institutions classified as Division-I or Division-II offer athletic-based scholarships. However, some institutions have opted out of this arrangement as is the case with

Ivy League schools. Most athletics departments do not generate a profit for their colleges and universities. In these instances, the ulterior objectives for sponsoring athletics must be investigated. The existence of sport in American colleges and universities can be endorsed through three distinct justifications which exist under a common umbrella.

Personal character is enhanced through sport. This is the first justification for athletics in higher education. However, some have attempted to prove that the promotion of individual integrity through sport is a myth. In an essay by Sharon K. Stoll and Jennifer M. Beller, *Do Sports Build Character?,* research performed in the 1950s is described in which the relationship between sport and character development was studied. It is also stated that the principal challenge of the study was the dilemma of how to scientifically define character and measure moral growth (Gerdy, 2000). In spite of getting tangled in the technical dimensions of human decency, it was strongly concluded that participation in sport has no influence over the development of character. The study is not wholly convincing though because it is premised largely on the assumption that cheating and winning at any cost is the primary goal of athletic competitors.

The second justification for college athletics is the cultural influence of sport. Supporters of college athletics believe that sport plays an integral role in perpetuating the common culture of a specific university and society as a whole. This unifying factor is an outgrowth of the extracurriculum developed on college campuses prior to the Civil War and expanded greatly thereafter through the industrial revolution. Men like Theodore Roosevelt expounded the virtues of a strenuous life and of the pioneering spirit in America. The rise of college sport fit nicely into this cultural outlook and athletics on college campuses grew rapidly as a result. Following the Civil War, land grant colleges also began to grow quickly. As a result, schools grew in diversity

as higher education began to serve a larger student population. One occurrence that was viewed as a positive experience of alliance for this diverse student body was the fielding of competitive sport teams. Not only did it allow students an opportunity to support their school, but it provided an occasion to bridge gaps that existed due to social stratification. Sport was viewed as a way to bring this diverse collection of students together in support of a central cause (Riess, 1995). This cultural component has steadily grown on campuses across the country, as students are fiercely enthusiastic about their colleges or universities.

The last justification for college athletics is that they generate revenue and exposure for the university. This justification is the primary source of debate between supporters and opponents of college athletics. The commercialization and professionalism with which college sport is supported in America is viewed by some as a degenerative force on the amateur ideal of college athletics. Nevertheless, for "big time" college athletics, funds have been earned by employing business models. Disapproval of this practice is described with examples of intense recruiting, high salaries for coaches and allegations of special treatment for star student-athletes such as lowered entrance requirements. The synthesized historical context in conjunction with modern models of social and educational development through sport was further examined with participating faculty members during face-to-face interviews.

Academic Competency

The construct of academic competency has evolved significantly over the past decade. Two distinct research studies that have attempted to isolate and describe factors relevant to academic competency are the Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS) and the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales for higher education students (ACES-College). These

studies have made strides towards understanding and operationalizing the construct of academic competency and were relevant to the goals of this research initiative.

Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS)

WELS was developed and implemented in 2003 to begin gathering data based on self-assessment surveys administered to incoming freshmen and transfer students at Western Washington University (Hartsoch, Clark, Krieg, McKinney, & Trimble, 2009). The subsequent years of studies conducted continuously from 2003 are referred to as cohorts, thus each class has been tracked since inception to measure the changes in self-reported assessment surveys of students over time as they mature through the higher education system. The goal of the research is to ascertain and attend to the needs of students making the transition from secondary education to higher education or for those transferring in from other educational institutions. WELS is a longitudinal study that seeks to

1. Assess student needs based on their self-reported characteristics, attitudes and concerns

2. Provide data that can be used to better assess academic and co-curricular programs by providing baseline entry data that can be used as statistical controls in analyses to offset the inability to conduct randomized studies

3. Maintain an ongoing record of student knowledge acquisition, ability levels, and other general education outcomes to address concerns of accountability and accreditation

WELS is a survey research study that is administered every two-three years to assess students at different points in their academic careers at Western Washington University. Though WELS is not a generalizable model that can be used to understand the academic competence needs of students nationwide, it has provided evidence required by administrators and faculty to tailor programs and services for students at the university. The survey topics included in the

study are: (1) Summer preparations and expectations, (2) High school engagement and wellness

(3) Academic self-attitudes of students, and (4) College preparedness, concern and motivation.

Each topic is comprised of a subset of questions perceived to be directly related to describing

these concepts. By tracking this data, the Office of Survey Research at Western Washington

University is attempting to:

1. Provide data that will be more relevant to program evaluation and improvement, and student outcomes assessment

2. Aid departments, offices, colleges and organizations in exploring issues that are particularly timely and relevant

3. Enable issues of retention and graduation efficiency to be more carefully explored

4. Adhere to Western's Strategic Action Plan, and connection to evaluation of the four state mandated accountability measures Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning, Information Technology Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Writing

These goals and objectives are directly related to gathering a deeper understanding of

academic competency issues that may exist for students at the university and are congruent with

many of the concepts associated with understanding academic competence as set forth by the

Academic Competence Evaluation Scales developed by DiPerna and Elliott over the past decade.

Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES)

The development of ACES began in the late 1990s with the first study being published in

1999. This research study conducted by DiPerna and Elliott sought to achieve two distinct goals.

The first goal was to synthesize studies of academic competence based on student achievement

and ability and additional studies conducted on social skills and behavioral measures of students.

The concept reported indicates that both realms ultimately lead to a better explanation of the

overall construct of academic competency. Thus, previous studies relegated to a single realm may not portray the overall picture of what academic competency is. Synthesizing the traditional academic achievement and ability realm with the social and behavioral realm may therefore best describe the construct of academic competency (DiPerna & Elliott, 1999).

The second goal of the study was to develop a valid and reliable instrument capable of measuring the two distinct realms and define characteristics associated with existing deficiencies and struggles that students may face in an educational setting. By eliciting these factors faculty members, administrators and students may gain a better understanding of which areas of improvement are necessary to enhance and develop the overall academic competency of students. This was viewed as critical based on the inconsistency with which academic competency has been reported in past research studies The result has indicated that, "Academic competence is a multidimensional construct composed of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of a learner that contribute to academic success in the classroom," (DiPerna, 2004).

The development of ACES began as a study of students grades 1-6 and morphed to include an operationalized model of higher education students. The design is based on research that indicates distinct components work congruently to best describe the overall academic competence of students. These components are broken down into two distinct realms within the ACES research model. These two realms are labeled as "Academic Skills" and "Academic Enablers."

The Academic Skills realm is comprised of (1) Reading/Writing skills, (2) Math/Science skills, and (3) Critical Thinking skills. The Academic Enablers realm is comprised of (1) Motivation, (2) Engagement, (3) Study skills, and (4) Interpersonal skills. These two realms of skills are used to understand the academic competence of students and are defined in the

following operationalized terms. The conceptual model of academic competence developed by

DiPerna and Elliott is depicted in Figure 1:

Figure 1 - DiPerna and Elliot's Model of Academic Competence
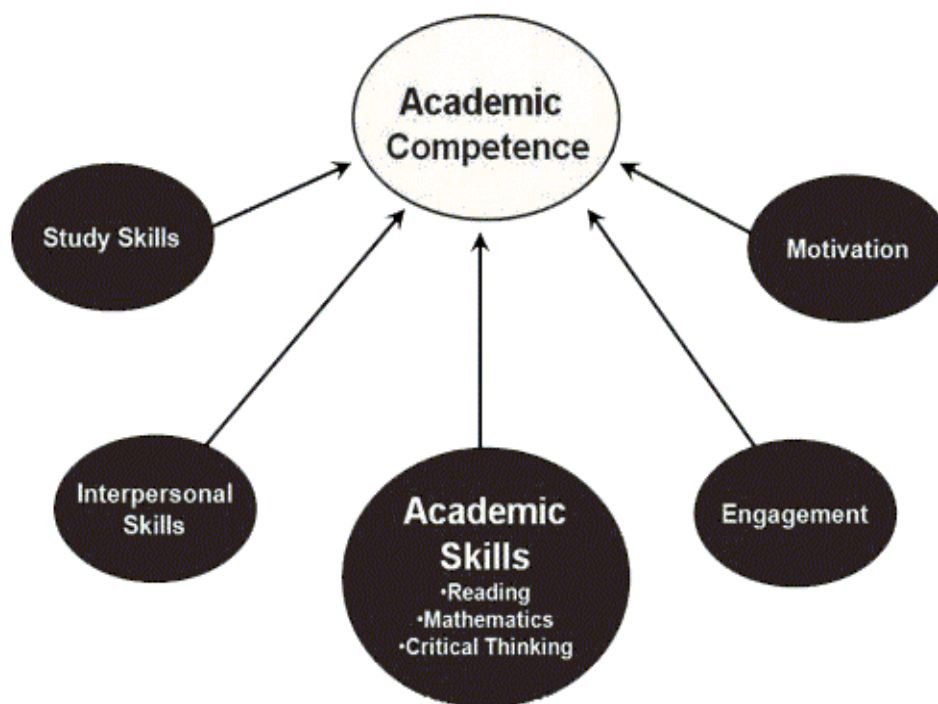
Academic Skills - (Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills and Critical Thinking skills)

 The realm of academic skills is based on traditional methods associated with

understanding academic achievement. Academic achievement refers to student performance

based on accepted levels of educational attainment that are specific to grade level or are

comprised of what is expected of the student to pass through the educational system. Specific

levels of proficiency in the three main listed areas are used to describe whether a student

possesses or has attained the necessary level of academic prowess to proceed to the next level.

Thus, if a student is struggling with basic required proficiencies at a certain level, it would be an

indication that the student does not possess the academic skills required to continue or advance in a specific educational setting.

Academic Enablers – (Motivation, Engagement, Study skills and Interpersonal skills)

Motivation, is defined as, "A student's approach, persistence, and level of interest regarding academic subjects." This enabler is directly related to a student's desire to persist and achieve in an educational setting. If a student does not possess the required fortitude or desire to maintain and achieve at the collegiate level, their level of academic competence may be compromised. Thus, if a student has become disinterested or lacks the motivation and focus to achieve academically, they may be deemed to lack this component of academic competency.

Engagement, is defined as, "Attention and active participation in classroom activities." This enabler pertains to in-class attentiveness, participation and active learning. If the student has become disengaged or withdrawn from the process, specifically in relation to classroom performance, their level of academic competence may be diminished. Active participation is viewed as a cornerstone of learning. Without active participation, a passive student may be perceived by others as being academically incompetent. Non-participation and lack of attention in the classroom are viewed as signs of disengagement.

Study Skills, are defined as, "Behaviors that facilitate the processing of new material and taking tests." This enabler pertains to a student's ability to be organized and comprehend new material in a systematic manner in which they review and retain pertinent information. The ability to comprehend and demonstrate knowledge is directly related to the study habits and skills of an individual. A poor approach to studying and retaining information pertinent to academic achievement is viewed as a deficit of academic competence. These are skills that can be targeted and remediated if the student has an interest in improving their performance.

However, if no remediation occurs and the student persists with poor study skills, their performance is sacrificed

Interpersonal Skills, are defined to include, "Cooperative learning behaviors necessary to interact with others." This enabler pertains to a student's ability to work within groups towards common goals. Students lacking in cooperative behaviors or that are unable to work in groups are incapable of achieving educational objectives that are based on social skills required to enhance or alter the outcome of group learning goals. The development of social skills is viewed as an important requisite for learning in higher education. The development and application of social behaviors required to perform one's role in cooperative learning contexts is a mandate of academic competency.

WELS and ACES both emphasize many of the same core components related to the construct of academic competency. These components include attendance, attentiveness, engagement, study skills, motivation, interpersonal skills and basic core academic skills including abilities associated with reading, writing, mathematics, science and critical thinking. These realms of knowledge form the foundation for researchers to understand faculty attitudes of academic competency in a higher educational setting.

Preferential/Non-Preferential Treatment of Student-Athletes

A critical element of higher education is accommodation for individuals who have long been relegated to the fringes of society. Higher education has been tasked with the enormous responsibility of integrating individuals hailing from secondary school districts lacking in adequate resources required to prepare students for the next level. Opening the doors of opportunity for these students has been a tremendous struggle. Many students, depending on their background, arrive unprepared and initially incapable of completing college level work. In

some instances, educators have succeeded in working with these students to make up for the skills not received in high school and helped them obtain their educational goals. In other cases, these students have simply "passed" and moved on to the next level without honing any of their deficiencies.

The continued practice of awarding athletics scholarships, particularly to low-income minority students, is a major justification for educational administrators to serve the community by including as many individuals as possible in higher education (Gerdy, 1997). Inclusion of minority populations in higher education has been a longstanding goal of many if not all institutions of higher education in America. The athletics scholarship system has provided student-athletes with funds and much needed structure required to succeed at the college level. Many college athletes are first generation college students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds and substandard secondary educational settings. As school faculty leaders have argued for raising the standards required for admission and matriculation on college campuses nationwide, the population that has traditionally suffered from enacted proposals has been minority students.

Minority leaders have long argued that raising the standards for an athletic-based scholarship results in de facto segregation. They point to literature and studies that demonstrate the historical underachievement of minority students on standardized exams (Byers, 1995). With SAT and ACT scores serving as central components of qualification for an athletics scholarship and admission to college, the existing criterion is believed by some educational reformists to be overt racism and discrimination. Indeed, by narrowing the gates of admission to college through standardized test scores, those students hailing from low socio-economic backgrounds will continue to diminish in number. Therefore, reducing opportunities through raising academic

standards is not perceived as a responsible solution. Rather, integrating minority students from less privileged backgrounds and committing to their success may be the better option, even if it means extra attention to a student-athlete who may be struggling.

Student-athletes live a structured life. Their success as students and growth as individuals is greatly enhanced though their rigorous schedules, the physical demands to stay healthy and in shape, and the elevated expectations of coaches and peers. Extensive research conducted by the NCAA has demonstrated that graduation rates are equal to or greater for student-athletes than they are for non-student-athletes (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2006).

Despite these statistics, studies have demonstrated that student-athletes receive different treatment in higher education and are viewed differently from traditional students, not only by the faculty, but by their peers in relation to academic competency. One of five significant problems identified by faculty based on attitudes of the impact of intercollegiate athletics is that college athletics cause damage to the academic integrity of higher education (Benford, 2007). Additionally, research indicates that non-student-athletes possess negative attitudes towards student-athletes, especially in areas related to academic performance (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991).

In a quantitative survey research study of faculty attitudes towards intercollegiate athletics, results indicated that 73% of faculty indicated that it is, "Not at All to Slightly Characteristic," of faculty in their department to stereotype student-athletes negatively, dismissing them as serious and capable students (Lawrence, 2007). In a separate study conducted on the athlete stigma in higher education, 538 student-athletes were surveyed. 33% indicated they are negatively perceived by faculty and 59.1% indicated they are negatively perceived by

non-student-athletes. Additionally, 370 of the 538 surveyed indicated that faculty members have made negative remarks about athletes in class (Simons, 2007).

Theoretical Sociological Frameworks of Sport

Sport is a social and cultural phenomenon. The meaning and application of sport varies depending on what form it takes, what outcomes are desired, and how individuals interpret their participation. A rationale that justifies sport participation, particularly in higher education settings, is that sport may offer individuals an opportunity to develop a positive social and educational identity. Participation in this conceptual model fosters and promotes increased social interaction amongst groups of individuals. Thus, if sport is implemented and sustained in a way that promotes meaningful social interaction, the social and educational identity of an individual may be influenced through participation. Sources indicate there is a strong positive correlation linking participation in sport to positive social and educational development (Edwards, 2003; Drever, 2002; Harrington & Dawson, 1997).

Though some studies conducted by sociologists have suggested that participation in sport may be linked to positive social and educational growth, the issue has always been, and continues to be, how to analyze the social phenomenon of sport. Is sport an influencing factor in social and educational development or an expression of current power structures within social systems? Many social theorists have attempted to analyze the phenomenon of sport through a varied set of lenses. Studies date back decades as individuals who have sought to explain sport as a socialization tool attempted to first explain sport in its then current social configuration. Sport in this way is not identified as an outside force of social and educational development, but rather an integral force to be viewed in the context of power-relations within a specific social and cultural context.

What follows is a description of the various theoretical sociological perspectives most commonly used in traditional studies of social systems and sport. These studies rest upon the concept of gathering a greater understanding of what sport is within specific social and cultural contexts, rather than what sport should or can be. Studying the historical record through a variety of approaches allows for a deeper understanding of how sport may be used in higher education settings wishing to harness the associated positive benefits.

Jay Coakley, considered widely as one of the world's leaders in the field of sport sociology, indicates that there are six major theoretical frameworks that have been used to understand the phenomenon of sport within specific social and cultural contexts. They are: (1) Functionalist Theory, (2) Critical Theory, (3) Conflict Theory, (4) Feminist Theory, (5) Figurational Theory, and (6) Interactionist Theory (Coakley, 2004). These theories have been applied to understand sport in specific social and cultural contexts in order to gain deeper insight into how sport has been used to promote and perpetuate systems of power and to describe how individuals have developed an identity as an athlete.

Because of the numerous social and cultural components that exist in any given society or community, an examination of these six theoretical sociological models is required. Understanding the socio-cultural context of a given community and how sport has traditionally been used in that context allows individuals interested in seeking change to target those who have been traditionally marginalized.

Functionalist Theory

The underlying assumption posited by functionalists is that culture and social systems may be examined empirically (Coakley, 2004). The central tenet is that society, like an organism, is made up of distinct parts which serve a function for the greater good of the whole. In relation

to an organism, these parts may be subdivided in any number of ways, most commonly as interdependent systems of tissue. In this way, specific functioning parts perform tasks necessary for the systems of tissue and these systems contribute vitally to the whole. In applying functionalism to sociology, the collective sum of the groups within which people exist constitutes the organism, which possesses specific needs for continued existence. Different groups of agents perform different tasks to accomplish this outcome (Chilcott, 1998).

The focus of functionalist theory is therefore the existing, observable realm of the social and cultural context of a given community. This context is comprised of a series of beliefs, values and norms (Hargreaves, 1982). It is argued that understanding a social system leads to an understanding of how all parts are actively involved in the process of maintaining and perpetuating the concepts of the system. By doing this, functionalists believe that individuals within a community come to understand their assigned roles. This is a deductive approach in which understanding an individual's role in society is directly achievable through understanding what the culture requires from the group to which an individual belongs.

The functionalist theoretical framework ignores the independent value of self and social struggle because individual agents are irrelevant. If an independent agent does not perform their role, another will. Individual agents are replaceable so long as the general consensus is maintained. This model may be described as utilitarian in practice and lends itself well to analyzing and understanding social policy that is designed to create the greatest good for the greatest number of people. According to functionalist theory, individuals learn what is expected of them to maintain a well-functioning system through the beliefs, values and norms of the community.

One of the ways in which beliefs, values and norms may be transmitted is through sport. This is no different than the transmission of these ideals through education, family or religion (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). The dissemination of ideals through sport has led to many functionalist studies on the phenomenon of sport as a social and cultural requirement for maintaining the status quo of a given community. It is of relevance to functional sociologists who study sport to understand the values being transmitted, who the values are being transmitted to, and why.

If sport is used as a transmission point for societal ideals, then those who participate in sport are receiving the data. This becomes a point of contention because not all individuals participate in the phenomenon of sport. Some do not participate by choice and others are actively excluded. For functionalists, however, this in-depth analysis provides a preliminary understanding of social roles. It further allows for an analysis of the social consensus that has deemed it necessary to exclude certain groups in favor of maintaining the social system as a whole. Lastly this analysis allows functionalists to understand how specific transmission vehicles of ideals, such as sport and education, work to actively support and promote the system that has been created. Functionalism seeks to create an identification of how all transmission points of beliefs, values and norms are interrelated. Functionalists look to connect traditional cultural systems such as sport and education to assess the way in which the perpetuation of social order is achieved (Leonard II, 1998).

Criticisms of functionalist theory are generally two-fold. The first criticism is that by marking social systems as existing to perpetuate the status quo of a presumably well-functioning society, functionalist struggle to explain changes in culture when they occur. If prevailing beliefs, values and norms are transmitted through trusted social systems such as sport and

education *and* individuals are irrelevant and easily replaced in favor of those supporting the consensus, then social systems should defy change. The second criticism is that functionalism does not describe or explain systems in which transmission of beliefs, values and norms are operating improperly and are thus malfunctioning (Chilcott, 1998). Again, with the first criticism, this should not occur, yet history shows us that it does.

Though many have abandoned functionalism as a dominant theoretical framework, there are those who still believe it to be valuable. This, according to Coakley, may be due to the fact that functionalism closely resembles what most individuals studying sport would be accustomed to believing. The model of functionalism fits squarely with the concept of sport as a positive tool for socialization (Coakley, 2004). Others, such as Chilcott, further believe that functionalism is still valuable as a social problem-solving mechanism (Chilcott, 1998).

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory examines issues of power and exploitation within the social and cultural context of a given community. Conflict theorists perceive emerging trends indicating that social order is determined by the groups in society who possess the most power. In the case of higher education and sport, these groups are varied and include administrators, faculty members and even alumni donors. Departing from functionalism, conflict theory maintains that social and cultural norms do not exist harmoniously to produce a self-perpetuating system based on a consensus of beliefs, values and norms. Because subgroups within societies exist that possess alternative ideals and goals, they directly oppose one another (Horton, 1966).

In many cases, power is derived from an economic class struggle in which the upper class seeks to manipulate the lower class by promoting beliefs, values and norms that actively limit the power that the lower class possesses. Class struggle is based on the inequitable distribution of

labor and economic resources as well as participation opportunities that may lead to upward mobility. This class struggle leads to a fragmented set of social standards accepted by individuals and groups within a community.

It is argued that sport has become a repository for class conflict on the basis of economic resources expended on sport and those associated with sport. Furthermore, the rise of mainstream media outlets promoting sport and reaping large returns has led to a growing chasm between those who play sport, and those who exploit their labor (Chorbajian, 1993). American Western culture has been particularly prone to issues raised by conflict theorists based on lack of participation opportunities for those struggling in a capitalist economy (Luschen, 1980). Because of this, the professionalization and commercialization of sport in higher education is viewed as a capitalist structure that perpetuates the power structure promoted by the elite.

Conflict theorists associate social stratification with opportunities to participate. In this way, those in power control the social sphere of athletics by determining who can play and under which conditions. By making specific sports inaccessible to individuals representing the lower classes, specific groups will be granted opportunities for participation based on social qualifications. Those not possessing the required qualifications are excluded (Luschen, 1980). This argument is the foundation of observable behavior such as the phenomenon that African-American athletes are seen frequently playing basketball and football while rarely being seen on a golf course, tennis court or ski slope, domains traditionally reserved for the social elite.

A central tenet of conflict theory is that sport is used to promote and maintain the social arrangements enjoyed by the elite. Since the social elite are capable of controlling sport from a participation standpoint as well as an economic angle through revenues and expenditures, it is

difficult for those disempowered groups to escape oppression. Oppression through conflict theory may include norms associated with class, race and gender (Frey & Eitzen, 1991).

A common criticism with conflict theory is that it focuses heavily, if not exclusively, on the importance of economic power. It leaves little room for the analysis of individual perspectives and motivations for participating in sport. Furthermore, because of the focus on the inequitable distribution of wealth and power associated with sport, it fails to take into account any positive benefits (Coakley, 2004).

Lastly, sport is not a highly developed and commercialized enterprise across all cultures. Conflict theorists work under the assumption that an economic interest or power relationship is at stake at all times. Sport for many institutions of higher education that do not compete at the highest level or produce significant revenues may be classified as a practice that is more amenable to reducing social stratification depending on the aims and attitudes towards sport based on specific values, norms and beliefs held by the institution.

Critical Theory

Critical theory and conflict theory are often confused because both concentrate on issues pertaining to power relations within societies. Primarily, critical theorists are concerned with how power results in the systematic oppression of individuals on the basis of social and cultural differences within communities. At its core, critical theory is based on understanding the relationship between social norms, cultural norms and systems of power (Coakley, 2004). In its broadest sense, critical theory describes a theoretical framework aimed at empowering marginalized individuals to achieve previously unattainable goals based on a social structure which denies them access to social mobilization. It raises questions of justice and democracy and whether these institutions in practice reflect intended goals (Bohman, 2005).

Critical theory, however, has been used in a variety of contexts and in different ways. A critical analysis may be applied to any system that represents or perpetuates oppression. Because of this, critical theorists have examined social institutions to determine whether they reflect the needs of the individuals they serve or if they merely justify reasons for institutionalizing oppressive practices. Oppressive factors that have been critically analyzed include; race, gender, disability status, socio-economic status, religion, and political ideology.

While critical theory has been used extensively by postmodernists who believe that social and cultural phenomena cannot be studied empirically due to the subjective nature of ever-changing norms and "truths," recent developments have questioned this position. It is argued that critical theory may best be suited for understanding issues related to observable power and oppressive relationships that exist to achieve the broader goal of emancipation by combining critical theory with empirical analysis for the purpose of creating and implementing policy (Kellner, 1990).

Critical theory is traditionally also viewed as an action theory designed to understand problems and provide solutions that are fair and democratic representing liberal beliefs associated with participation (Coakley, 2004). This fits squarely with Kellner's earlier assertion that critical theory may be used in tandem with empirical studies to produce justice. However, knowledge claims of justice, democracy and liberalism are subjective as concepts as well since they may vary from culture to culture.

The application of critical theory to sport has usually been positioned as the development of a system of participation that represents all equally. In this way, the capitalist formation of competitive sport prevalent in higher education at the elite level continues to oppress individuals systematically by perpetuating the existing system. Sport is therefore considered a microcosm of

society in that it embraces and reproduces values and norms associated with modern capitalist practices (Hargreaves, 1982). Unlike conflict theory that places the entire onus of oppression on the inequitable distribution of labor, funds and participation opportunities, critical theory seeks to understand the relationship between sport participation and culture. Social scientists may examine the ideas central to understanding the social and cultural components produced by sport. Critical theorists examine the relationship of these values to sport in order to define how sport is used to create and reproduce societal beliefs, values and norms.

Critical theory is criticized from the vantage point that it has failed to produce any real solutions to issues of oppression. The overall tenet of emancipation is not a practical application within itself. Because there are many approaches to critical theory, there is no singular result. While critical theorists viewing oppression through a Marxist lens may see capitalist ideals as the mode of oppression, those using a postmodernist lens may argue that understanding the social system empirically is untenable because it is ever-evolving. Because critical theory approaches many factors associated with oppression ranging from age to socio-economics, it becomes difficult to focus on specific socio-cultural limitations and offer viable solutions.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is used to examine norms and roles associated with gender in a social and cultural context. Feminists seek to understand and eradicate oppression on the basis of gender and therefore examine social systems to understand relationships of power that exist. Feminist theory analyzes systems that perpetuate institutionalized forms of male dominance. This leads to the maintenance of an inequitable distribution of power within society. Feminists challenge traditional male domains of power including sport and higher education to increase their societal

role in an equitable manner. Two readily accessible forms of feminist theory are liberal feminism and Marxist feminism, though many other forms exist.

Liberal feminists believe that men and women have equal abilities and talents. The traditional patriarchal power structure, however, has limited the ability of women to achieve their rightful position in the social system. Because of this, liberal feminists seek to obtain equity through representation in existing structures such as the workplace. Representation through increasing numbers is the basis for affirmative action initiatives. Liberal feminists are not generally interested in deconstructing the current system, but rather seek to be included in an equitable manner (Flynn, 1995). Liberal feminists are therefore concerned with policy initiatives that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender. Liberal feminists believe that they can achieve an equitable position of power if granted opportunities traditionally withheld.

Marxist feminists believe that an alteration of the current structure through increased participation opportunities fails to achieve equity. Systematic oppression based on gender is the result of economic interests that maintain a class structure within a given social and cultural context. In this way, Marxists feminists believe in the underlying tenets of conflict theory. Women are therefore, only one of many groups oppressed by a class system (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). The capitalist democracy developed by men of status representing patriarchal power relationships leads to the creation and sustainability of a class system through an inequitable distribution of wealth and opportunity.

Liberal and Marxist feminist theory have been employed extensively in relation to the social phenomenon of sport in higher education. Some sport studies authored using the lens of liberal feminism have discussed issues pertaining to the enactment of Title IX. Although Title IX is not a sport-specific piece of legislation, it has been used liberally in America for the

advancement of women's sport. This has been achieved by increasing the numbers of women actively participating in sport programs traditionally reserved for men. Because participation opportunities are central to liberal feminist perspectives, this may be viewed as a sign of progress.

Marxist feminism has also been used to study the traditional male dominance of sport. Though liberal feminists may view an increase in participation as a sign of positive growth, Marxists feminists believe that the power structure of sport has remained relatively static. Males still dominate the economic landscape of sport (Hargreaves, 1994). Furthermore, traditional male power structures controlling and governing sport have been slow to include women in positions of power. College athletics departments continue to be predominantly male. Lastly, sexism in sport remains a large obstacle. Because women traditionally did not participate in sport, their inclusion has not been embraced. The gap between distribution of resources for women and men in sport remains significant.

A common criticism with liberal feminist theory is that an increase in participation numbers through affirmative action does indicate a change in the power structure. It does little to explain whether this participation is of sustentative value. Title IX is an example of this. While women are actively participating in sport more vigorously, the value of that participation may only be of relevance to the actual participants. Being included in the system is not equitable to being included in the controlling class of the system.

Marxist feminists have made strides in examining and understanding the social and cultural context of sport but have been unsuccessful in changing the values and norms associated with sport on the basis of gender. Marxist feminists, however, do not expect this to change. They believe that the system may not be altered under its current capitalist configuration (Hargreaves,

1994). For many, this is considered a weakness of applying Marxist feminist theory to the phenomenon of sport.

Figurational Theory

The foundation of figurational theory is that individuals and groups within social systems depend on one another for existence. These relationships and social networks change over time. The interdependence exists as individuals strive to fulfill needs. The fulfillment of these needs is dependent on individuals or groups who can provide them. Because of this, human beings are constantly in a position of giving and taking on the basis of their social networks. Some individuals and groups are capable of giving more because they possess greater amounts of resources required. In this way, some groups and individuals possess power over others (Quintaneiro, 2004).

Though behavior remains relatively autonomous in a system of figurations, the outcomes may change depending on those relying on specific needs from specific actors. Simply stated, figurational theory posits that an individual does not join a pre-existing group that serves the purpose of promoting and maintaining a social system exclusively as theorized by functionalists, nor does an individual independently ascribe meaning to behaviors and outcomes to develop a subjective self-identity as theorized by interactionists. Instead, figurational theory argues that both occur simultaneously and in a perpetual manner.

Groups that comprise the social system are dependent on the individual, just as the individual is dependent on the group. The result is a matrix of social interaction that helps shape social and cultural norms as interdependent groups and individuals strive to fulfill needs. Thus power tends to change and evolve over time in conjunction with a shift in needs (Coakley, 2004). Because of this it is important to examine the historical trends relevant to the shift of power

within communities and to understand how individuals change and mature as they process knowledge. The attitudes of needs that individuals possess change over time. So too do their social networks.

Because of this structure, an intended social consequence is unachievable. This is due to the fact that interdependent relationships perform a dualist role that both empowers and constrains those involved in a simultaneous manner (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). In describing this give and take theory in relation to power as understood through a figurational approach, Wilson (1992) offers the example of individual liberty and equality in the context of capitalist societies. In this example the two concepts are incompatible. An increase in liberty requires a decrease in equality (Wilson, 1992).

The application of figurational theory in sport is most pertinent in terms of context. This is based on the knowledge and understanding that the social structures vary from culture to culture. These social structures may produce how national and personal identities are formed as has been the case in South Africa where politicized forms of sport that systematically oppressed individuals have changed dramatically since the collapse of the apartheid system. The relationship of sport to the new social structure in South Africa is different from what previously existed, and thus new interdependencies have been formed (Jarvie, 1992). Relationships and social networks of power have been altered through an historical context making it an ideal site for understanding how power structures change over time along with the social customs associated with them by replacing old interdependencies with new interdependencies.

A criticism of figurational theory is that it does not adequately address contemporary issues. Because of its reliance on historical foundations it requires long-range analyses to be performed. In this way it fails to be a predictive model as demonstrated with the case of South

Africa in which the system of apartheid may now be juxtaposed with a new power structure in an attempt to explain how the range of interdependent social relations have evolved. Prior to change in South Africa, however, the alteration would not have been evident to figurational theorists, because figurational theory lacks an active quality that works with everyday social issues in their present state (Coakley, 2004). When significant time has elapsed figurational theory becomes useful in explaining the changing relationships of individuals and groups within a specific social and cultural context and the resulting needs and goals of the community's individuals.

Interactionist Theory

Interactionist theory places a weighty significance on the individual and the subjective meanings ascribed to behaviors, actions and consequences. Regardless of the fact that individual interpretations may not always reflect the true meaning of an event, the interpretation is the true way in which social reality is perceived. In this way, there are no fixed social facts. The interpretation is always the singular truth for the individual involved (Leonard II, 1998). These constant interactions and resulting consequences are the mechanisms through which individuals develop their identities and shape how they view and interpret the social system in which they live. Identity building is the core component of interactionist theory which posits that self-ascribed subjective identity is the structural foundation for understanding an individual's role in the larger context of the environment created and built by the individuals who live within.

Within interactionist theory, an individual's concept of identity is derived from constant social interaction and the way in which people interpret these interactions. In turn, the identities shaped by individuals form values and norms that make up the social and cultural context of the host community. The social subjective outlook which develops an individual's identity may also be in a constant state of flux. If individuals begin to receive messages that their roles may be

changing, they will act accordingly. If a person begins to receive different messages associated with one's behavior, one's path may be altered temporarily or changed permanently based on the individual's interpretation of the meaning of the messages. Furthermore, if people are dissatisfied with their roles, they will work to change their identities. While functionalism refers to individuals as products of social systems who demand responses to specific stimuli, interactionists argue that social systems are created by the individuals who live within a community. The social and behavioral norms and values associated with a particular society may evolve through constant social interaction (Coakley, 2004).

Weiss (2001) argues that sport, especially at the highest levels, is the most capable of social sub-systems of identity reinforcement. A critical concept associated with Weiss' article is attributed to Heinrich Popitz who developed a five-level system of recognition. These levels are referred to as "social subjectivity," and include (1) Recognition as member of a group, (2) Recognition in an assigned role, (3) Recognition in an acquired role, (4) Recognition in a public role and (5) Recognition of personal identity. These levels of recognition form the foundation for the reinforcement of self-identity (Weiss, 2001). Regardless of his assertion that these levels of recognition increase at the highest level of sport participation, they are also transferable and appropriate for analyzing lower levels of sport.

A common criticism of interactionist theory as applied to sport is that analyses of social systems through this lens only produces subjective realities of individuals. Because of this, it is difficult to ascertain any discernable trends or themes for the study of social aspects of sport empirically. Furthermore, focusing on an individual's self-identity and meanings derived as a member of sport culture does little to illuminate how individuals derive meaning from sport culture if they are non-participants. Interactionist theory does not explain the relationship of

power in society through the examination of self-identity and how sport may be used to exert, obtain or maintain power (Coakley, 2004). These explanations must be derived through alternative theoretical frameworks.

Though interactionist theory is criticized for producing no generalizable truths based on its subjective application, the researcher believes this may be a strong model for what may be observed in interviews. Faculty members are believed to be capable of accurately describing their attitudes and experiences from which they elicit and ascribe the social and educational meaning of sport in higher education and how student-athletes fit within this conceptualization. Because of this, interactionist theory will be the perceived mode of inquiry and analysis in the field.

Synopsis

Employing traditional sociological theoretical frameworks for understanding the nature of sport in a specific social and cultural context aids in conducting qualitative research aimed at gathering a better understanding of how faculty members develop attitudes towards college athletics and the student-athlete. This is the missing link in bridging what we know from prior research related to the phenomenon of sport and what we hope to achieve by using sport as a tool for social and educational development in higher education. Understanding faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes within a specific context allows interested parties to seek solutions for effectively integrating a diverse and unique population into the current social and cultural structure of the community. Although all models presented are appropriate and accepted, interactionist theory has been selected for further analysis of data collected during this study based on its overall utility and lack of demographic boundaries.

Synthesis of Literature

An in-depth study of the origins of sport and its current application in the social and cultural context of education allowed for a deeper understanding of the base motivations for institutions sponsoring college athletics. The Homeric legacy indicates that athletics serve the purpose of entertainment. Within this model, concepts such as commercialization, professionalism, nationalism (school pride) and revenues are of paramount importance and are emphasized.

The Platonic legacy indicates that athletics serve the purpose of social and educational development. As seen with the current structure of European sport, the Homeric legacy provides a framework for participation. It is seen throughout the literature that the American college sport model attempts to harness the benefits of both the Homeric and Platonic legacies. This is viewed by some as an untenable and unachievable goal. To achieve a better understanding, interviews with faculty members were conducted to understand how academicians view the phenomenon of sport and what purpose it serves in higher education. Conducting this study allowed for a better understanding of factors associated with faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution.

A deeper understanding of the components that comprise the construct of academic competency allowed for an opportunity to analyze responses of faculty members on a distinct and unique population. Using WELS and ACES as a guide, researchers were able to construct questionnaires and interview protocols that are reliable and valid descriptors of what academic competence is, and how it relates to student-athletes. Current literature indicates that there is a stigmatization surrounding student-athletes in the realm of academic competency. However, no research prior to this study had examined how the perceived unique circumstances in which the

student-athlete persists through the educational system influence the attitudes of faculty members.

In addition to academic competency, research indicates that student-athletes are treated differently on campus than traditional students. Studies have been conducted on admissions policies, soft grading practices and easy majors that allow the academically-challenged student-athlete to enter and pass through the educational system unmolested. Further complicating these practices are issues related to inclusion and gender. These are topics that were illuminated to better understand the position and role of a student-athlete in higher education settings.

Lastly, a review of the literature revealed that individuals develop attitudes towards college athletics and the student-athlete in a variety of ways. These attitudes are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which sport exists and studies have been conducted to research the phenomenon of sport. This indicates that researchers have sought to articulate hypotheses to best explain the sociological impact of participation and the systems of power that regulate sport.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Questions

The research questions developed for this study utilized two interwoven categorical concepts. The first categorical concept guiding the inquiry was the central question. This question was posited in its most general form to encapsulate the study in its broadest terms. The central question guiding this investigation was, "What are faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution?" From the central question the study moved towards a series of subquestions that were designed to help elicit measurements, trends and themes associated with the central question and to narrow the focus of inquiry for the qualitative portion of the study (Cresswell, 2003). The subquestions are listed as follows:

1. How do faculty members rate the academic competency of student-athletes in comparison to other students at their college or university?

2. How do faculty members describe the "typical" student-athlete?

3. Which factors do faculty members present as a hindrance/benefit to academic achievement for student-athletes at their institution?

4. How do faculty members describe the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport illuminated in the literature review including; commercialization, professionalism, entertainment, nationalism (school pride), the amateur ideal, educational development and social development?

Research Design and Instrumentation

 A mixed methods design was selected for this study. Research question one was approached through the quantitative tradition of survey research. Research questions 2-4 were approached through the qualitative tradition of case study research. The quantitative portion of this investigation relied on web survey questionnaires. These questionnaires were developed to measure faculty attitudes towards the academic competency of student-athletes. The survey instrument was a modified version of the ACES-College altered and used with written permission from Dr. James DiPerna of Pennsylvania State University. Written correspondence from Dr. DiPerna is included in Appendix B. The original ACES-College is included in Appendix C, and the modified version of the ACES-College is included in Appendix D.

 The modification of the instrument was completed through two alterations. First, the survey was originally configured as a self-assessment instrument for students. The current version was modified to allow faculty members to assess student-athletes in comparison to other students at their college or university through the Academic Skills and Academic Enablers realms. Because the modified version of the instrument was no longer a self assessment model, new reliability measures were conducted following data collection and are included in the results section. Second, the modified version of the instrument included the term "student-athletes" in all questions. This ensured that measurement was specific to the population being studied.

 The instrument is comprised of 66 items that cover the seven core components established by Dr. DiPerna in accurately assessing academic competency. The instrument utilizes a 5-point likert scale with responses that include (1) Far below, (2) Below, (3) At grade level, (4) above, and (5) Far above for the Academic Skills realm. The 5-point likert scale with responses that include (1) Never, (2) Seldom, (3) Sometimes, (4) Often, and (5) Almost Always are utilized

for the Academic Skills realm. The dependent variables measured include an overall score associated with the construct of academic competency and seven individual component scores. The subscales of the instrument produce scores for the Academic Skills realm components of Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills and Critical Thinking skills. The Academic Enablers realm component scores measure Motivation, Engagement, Study skills and Interpersonal skills.

The result is seven subscale scores that are analyzed individually and totaled to determine the overall academic competency of the student-athlete population being measured. The range of scores for overall academic competency is 66-330. Five of the subscales (Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills, Critical Thinking skills, Motivation and Study skills) possess a range of scores from 10-50 while the other two subscales (Interpersonal skills and Engagement) possess a range of scores from 8-40.

In addition to these scores a number of independent variables were measured for analysis to explain statistically significant relationships that could be attributed to differences in the demographic characteristics and experiences of the respondents. The independent variables included were discipline/school, faculty rank, number of known exposures to student-athletes in classes taught, primary level of courses taught (undergraduate, graduate or mixed), age, race and gender.

The qualitative portion of the investigation was conducted as a case study following the principles discussed in, *Five Qualitative Traditions of Inquiry* (Cresswell, 1998). First, this case study was an in-depth exploration of a bounded system. Second, this case study involved the collection of data from sources that were rich in context. Third, the context of the case study involved situating the case within its natural setting. (Cresswell, 1998).

Furthermore, it was suggested that using a case study design allowed researchers the ability to continually modify the design and procedures as they learned more about the topic of study. Because qualitative research is an inductive process, old ideas and procedures were adopted and modified to accommodate trends and themes as they emerged (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The bounded system for this case study was described as a NCAA Division-I institution. The sources providing detailed information rich in context were faculty members at the university who have attitudes and beliefs associated with student-athletes in an academic capacity. The faculty members were all located within the larger context of the institution being investigated. The interviews utilized a structured interview protocol that was crafted to highlight themes elicited throughout the literature review. The structured interview protocol is included in Appendix E.

Research Setting

This study was conducted at a large urban university referred to as State College University. The school boasts an enrollment of approximately 32,000 students. There are approximately 1,900 instructional faculty members. The university offers sixty undergraduate programs as well as a wide range of graduate and professional programs. State College University is classified as a NCAA Division-IAAA school. This classification is used to designate NCAA Division-I institutions that do not sponsor a football program. The university has approximately 225 student-athletes participating in sixteen sports and is considered a "mid-major" institution in relation to athletics.

Data Collection

The first portion of the study relied on the survey research tradition. An email list containing 1,551 email addresses of current teaching faculty at the university was provided by an administrator who controls the data and records of faculty members at the institution. Faculty members were invited to participate through email. Though non-response rates were high, several attempts were made to increase participation by conducting several rounds of follow-up invitations via reminder emails. Participation invitations and follow-up participation requests are included in Appendix F. The addresses for potential participants were provided by. The survey instrument was administered online. The results, when returned, were compiled in an SPSS database. This database served as the computational and organizational tool for the study and was used to address research question one.

The primary mode of data collection for the qualitative portion of the study was face-to-face interviews. The study utilized a purposive sampling technique to maximize the diversity of respondents (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To achieve this goal, participants who agreed to be interviewed were placed on a grid of independent variables. The study sought to include faculty members from the widest range of disciplines as possible. The faculty members included were professors representing different academic disciplines on campus and were selected based on their willingness to discuss college athletics and student-athletes in-depth.

The term faculty member was operationalized as an adjunct, collateral, assistant, associate, full professor or other faculty rank at the institution. A question at the end of the online quantitative survey was included to determine whether a faculty member was willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Participants who agreed to a follow-up interview were

recruited for the qualitative portion of the study after initial results of the quantitative portion were analyzed.

In interviews, the researcher conducted face-to-face sessions with participants. These sessions were based on a protocol. An interview protocol may be structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Cresswell, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the primary data were collected through a structured interview protocol. This protocol was the foundation for answering research questions 2-4 and was administered uniformly. The follow-up interview protocol was developed using themes elicited throughout the literature review. Additionally, the interview protocol included probes designed to elicit a deeper understanding of faculty attitudes. The goal of the qualitative portion of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of how faculty members develop their attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes.

The concepts of grand tour versus mini-tour questions, developed by Spradley (1980) were also used in this study. Spradley (1980) states there are three major features of all social situations: (1) Place – The physical place or places, (2) Actor – The people involved, and (3) Activities – A set of related acts people do. In addition to the core-three, six additional features of all social situations offered by the author are: (1) Object – The physical things that are present, (2) Act – Single actions that people do, (3) Event – A set of related activities that people carry out, (4) Time – The sequencing that takes place over time, (5) Goal – The things that people are trying to accomplish, and (6) Feeling – The emotions felt and expressed (Spradley, 1980). These nine considerations in total helped in developing grand tour questions that were relevant to interviews. Framing questions for the interview protocol around these central tenets allowed this

investigation to later focus on smaller units of the experience. These smaller units of experience were the focus of mini-tour questions.

Data Analysis

The academic competency ratings provided by participants were compiled in the SPSS database. When results were input into the system, the figures became amenable to statistical analysis. The statistical analysis produced a series of descriptive statistics that served to describe faculty members' overall attitudes towards the academic competency of student-athletes in a numerical manner. Additionally, demographic identifiers were used so that data could be analyzed through a series of inferential statistics that could be used to describe differences in ratings. Independent samples *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs were employed to demonstrate significant relationships among the respondent population based on independent variables.

Data analysis for the qualitative portion of the study relied on the strategies set forth by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Joseph Maxwell (2005). In *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, Bogdan and Biklen describe qualitative data analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials to come up with findings. The first step is interpretation which refers to developing ideas about the findings and relating them to literature and to broader concerns and concepts. Analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

In *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach (2005)*, Maxwell suggests that the initial step in qualitative analysis is reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, or documents to be analyzed. During the reading or listening stage, the researcher must produce

notes and memos on what they see or hear in the data and develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. This leads to three main groups of analytic options:

1. *Memos* – Researchers should regularly write memos while they are doing data analysis: memos not only capture their analytic thinking about data, but also facilitate such thinking, stimulating analytic insights

2. *Categorizing strategies (such as coding and thematic analysis)* – Coding is required to "fracture" the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts. Thematic analysis involves organizing the data into broader themes and issues.

3. *Connecting strategies (such as a narrative analysis)* – Does not focus on a fracturing of the data as does coding to distinguish categories, but instead looks for relationships that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole (Maxwell, 2005).

This study employed the analytic options of memos, coding and thematic. This is because the design of the study sought to seek out similarities and differences of the described attitudes of faculty members towards college athletics and student-athletes and to examine trends or themes that emerged from their accounts. Therefore, memos and categorizing strategies were an optimal fit.

Credibility Enhancement for Qualitative Case Study Research

The enhancement of credibility for this study followed the guidelines offered by Krefting (1991). In, *Rigor in Qualitative Research: The Assessment of Trustworthiness,* Krefting suggests using some of the following guidelines to enhance the rigor of qualitative studies. These measures include: (1) Triangulation, (2) Member Checking, and (3) Peer Review.

Triangulation – Multiple data sources are assessed against one another to cross-check data and interpretation. This strategy of providing a number of slices of data also minimizes distortion from a single data source or from bias. This process will involve the triangulation of data sources to maximize the range of data that may contribute to complete understanding of the concept. This method was used to uncover convergent and divergent themes between quantitative and qualitative data gathered

Member Checking – Technique that consists of continually testing with informants the researcher's data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions. Revealing research materials to the informants ensures that the researcher has accurately translated the informant's viewpoints into data. This strategy reduces the chance of misrepresentation. This method was used to ensure the accuracy and intent of data provided. All faculty members were presented with a complete transcript and asked to verify that it represented their views accurately. It was important to represent faculty attitudes in the way they intended while participating in the study.

Peer Review – Based on the same principal as member checking but involves the researcher's discussing the research process and findings with impartial colleagues who have experience with qualitative methods. This may lead to insights and problems that are discussed in the form of debriefing. Colleagues can also increase credibility by checking categories developed out of data and by looking at disconfirming or negative cases (Krefting, 1991). This method was used throughout the coding and thematic processes to ensure that themes and trends reported were consistent.

 Delimitations

The culture of athletics almost certainly varies from school to school. Outside variables affecting the culture of athletics at a specific site were beyond the reach of this study. The NCAA

Division-I institution that was studied is classified as a "mid-major" school in relation to athletics. This indicates that the role of athletics and the caliber of student-athletes as academicians may be different than students meeting these criteria at other colleges and universities. The results explain faculty attitudes within a specific social and cultural context. The results are not generalizable to a larger population.

IRB Statement

This study met all guidelines set forth by the Internal Review Board (IRB) for academic research. All protocols, safeguards and guidelines were reviewed, approved and followed. No research was conducted prior to IRB approval. IRB approval notifications are located in Appendix H.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

This chapter discusses results obtained through an online questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. These results were used to report faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution. These results addressed the four research questions that guided the study:

1. How do faculty members rate the academic competency of student-athletes in comparison to other students at their college or university?

2. How do faculty members describe the "typical" student-athlete?

3. Which factors do faculty members present as a hindrance/benefit to academic achievement for student-athletes at their institution?

4. How do faculty members describe the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport illuminated in the literature review including; commercialization, professionalism, entertainment, nationalism (school pride), the amateur ideal, educational development and social development?

The first research question was addressed quantitatively. Research questions 2-4 relied on qualitative data collection and analysis procedures to discover and report emergent themes and trends.

The instrument used to address research question #1 was a modified version of the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES). The modification of the instrument allowed

for faculty members to rate student-athletes on the two realms of Academic Skills and Academic Enablers that were comprised of seven different components associated with the overall construct of academic competency. These seven components in totality yielded 66 items covering the themes of Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills, Critical Thinking skills, Interpersonal skills, Motivation, Engagement and Study skills.

Each of the components results are presented individually throughout the following section. Additionally, two primary factors of interest were examined within each realm to determine if a significant relationship existed between (1) the exposure level of faculty members to student-athletes in their classes and the academic ratings they provided on the ACES and (2) the gender of faculty members and the academic ratings they provided on the ACES. Lastly, individual items that demonstrated a particularly high or low rating have been highlighted for further discussion.

Quantitative Findings – Research Question # 1

An email list containing 1,551 email addresses of current teaching faculty at the university was provided for the study. A letter of invitation to voluntarily participate in the study was emailed to every individual on the list and faculty members were asked to provide a rating for each of the 66 items contained in the questionnaire. Faculty members were further instructed that the rating should reflect their best estimation of the skill level of a typical student-athlete in comparison to other students at the institution. A reminder email was sent two weeks after the initial invitation. A second email reminder was sent two weeks after the initial reminder in week five. These reminders were sent to encourage as great a number of participants as possible.

Two hundred sixty-seven faculty members attempted and completed some portion of the questionnaire over the span of six weeks. One hundred seventy faculty members completed the

questionnaire in its entirety. Of the 170 faculty members who completed the questionnaire in its entirety, 14 declined the option to provide all demographic information choosing instead to skip some of the optional questions such as age, race and gender. The breakdown of the 156 respondents who provided all demographic data is as follows:

Table 1 - Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	*n*	%
College or school that the discipline of the faculty member is housed under	College of Humanities and Sciences	83	53.2%
	School of the Arts	15	9.6%
	School of Business	12	7.7%
	School of Education	21	13.5%
	School of Engineering	8	5.1%
	School of Social Work	5	3.2%
	Life Sciences	4	2.6%
	Other	8	5.1%
Faculty Rank	Instructor	51	32.7%
	Assistant Professor	45	28.8%
	Associate Professor	27	17.3%
	Professor	29	18.6%
	Other	4	2.6%
Contract Type	Adjunct	41	26.3%
	Collateral	48	30.8%
	Tenure Track	67	42.9%

Primary level of courses taught	Undergraduate	90	57.7%
	Graduate	16	10.3%
	Both	50	32.1%
Approximate number of student-athletes the faculty member has knowingly had in classes taught	Zero	20	12.8%
	1-5	68	43.6%
	6 or More	68	43.6%
Age	35 or Under	37	23.7%
	36-45	42	26.9%
	46-55	42	26.9%
	56-65	28	17.9%
	Over 65	7	4.5%
Racial/Ethnic Background	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.6%
	Asian	3	1.9%
	Black or African-American	17	10.9%
	Hispanic or Latino	4	2.6%
	White	122	78.2%
	Other	9	5.8%
Gender	Female	86	55.1%
	Male	70	44.9%

Reliability Analysis

The instrument used in the study was a modified version of a self-assessment instrument.

Therefore, an analysis of reliability to ensure that the modifications made did not compromise

the instrument's reliability was required. To achieve this goal, a series of coefficient alphas were run on the results produced. A Cronbach Alpha was determined for each individual component as well as for the instrument as a whole. Each component measured is also represented by the number of valid cases used and the number of items included in the analysis. The instrument far exceeds acceptable benchmarks for demonstrating reliability in all areas.

Table 2 - Reliability Analysis of the Modified ACES Instrument

Item	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*n*	*Number of Items*
Reading/Writing skills	0.97	108	10
Math/Science skills	0.98	73	10
Critical Thinking skills	0.99	204	10
Interpersonal skills	0.95	191	8
Engagement	0.96	180	8
Motivation	0.97	174	10
Study skills	0.95	170	10
Complete Modified ACES Instrument	0.99	53	66

Academic Skills

The realm of Academic Skills is comprised of three components. These components are Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills and Critical Thinking skills. Each component is comprised of ten items. The range of possible scores on each of these three components is 10-50 points and the cut point for determining competency is 30 points. The overall score for the Academic Skills realm can be determined by adding the component scores. The range of scores

possible is 30-150 points and the cut point for determining academic competency in the Academic Skills realm is 90 points.

The Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills and Critical Thinking skills components of the questionnaire utilize a five-point Likert scale. The parameters of "Far Below Grade Level" at the low end, and "Far Above Grade Level" at the high end are used. The mid-point score of three is described as being "At Grade Level." The scoring guide provided with the ACES questionnaire describes any student with a total score of < 30 points in any of the three components as developing. Competence is described as ≥ 30 points and < 40 points. Any score ≥ 40 points is described as advanced.

In both the Reading/Writing skills and Math/Science skills components, an option for don't know" was also provided. This was a modification made after pilot testing the instrument on individuals not included in the sampling frame. Several of the pilot test individuals intimated they were uncomfortable rating students in disciplines with which they are not familiar.

To maintain the integrity of the results, don't know responses were coded as zeros in the dataset and removed during analysis. The other five components of the ACES (Critical Thinking skills, Interpersonal skills, Motivation, Engagement and Study skills) are believed to be universal to all disciplines and were therefore unaltered. These five components remained as forced response questions and required a rating for each item on the scale of one to five.

Reading/Writing Skills

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at or above grade level and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above grade level.

Table 3 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Reading/Writing Skills of Student-Athletes

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	% At or Above Grade Level *(n)*
Reading comprehension	171	2.99	0.76	77.8% (133)
Reading unfamiliar words by sounding out each of the letters	115	2.97	0.71	80.0% (92)
Vocabulary	162	2.93	0.76	75.9% (123)
Identifying a main idea	169	2.99	0.74	78.0% (132)
Reading fluency	157	3.02	0.75	80.9% (127)
Spelling	164	2.80	0.78	66.5% (109)
Punctuation	166	2.76	0.76	65.0% (108)
Grammar	170	2.75	0.83	62.9% (107)
Written communication	175	2.79	0.83	66.8% (117)
Drawing conclusions from written material	176	2.92	0.78	76.2% (134)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	163	28.92	0.77	73.0% (118)

Range of possible total score is 10-50. The cut point for determining academic competency is 30.

The total Reading/Writing skills component score reported by faculty members was 28.9 points which was below the cut point of 30 points for determining competency in this component. Only reading fluency registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at grade level. The average percentage of at or above grade level ratings by faculty members was 73.0% for Reading/Writing skills items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 94 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Reading/Writing skills by exposure level was generated.

Table 4 - Comparison of Total Reading/Writing Skills Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	5	30.0	7.62
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	43	30.0	6.69
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	46	27.3	6.49

Forty-eight of the 94 individuals representing the first two levels of exposure (zero and 1-5) presented mean scores of 30.0 points which is the cut point for determining academic competency in the Reading/Writing skills component. However, faculty members who reported having had six or more student-athletes in their classes presented a mean score of 27.3 points, a result that was 2.7 points lower than what was reported in each of the other two levels of exposure. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Reading/Writing score $F(2, 91) = 1.959$, $p = 0.147$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 92 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Reading/Writing skills by gender was generated.

Table 5 - Comparison of Total Reading/Writing Skills Scores by Gender

Gender	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Male	39	28.2	4.89
Female	53	28.9	7.35

Male respondents presented mean scores of 28.2 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 28.9 points. Both reported scores were below the cut point of 30 points

for determining academic competency for the Reading/Writing skills component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Reading/Writing score $t(90) = -0.522$, $p = 0.603$

Reading/Writing Skills Items of Significance

The Reading/Writing scores presented an average of 73% of student-athletes at or above grade level on the component as a whole. However, four items on the Reading/Writing Skills component fell far below the average of 73% on the ACES. Faculty members reported that less than 67% of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were at grade level or above on four items. These items included spelling (66.5% at or above grade level), punctuation (65.0% at or above grade level), grammar (62.9% at or above grade level) and written communication (66.8% at or above grade level).

Math/Science Skills

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at or above grade level and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above grade level.

Table 6 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Math/Science Skills of Student-Athletes

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	% At or Above Grade Level *(n)*
Computation	104	3.00	0.84	76.9% (80)
Analyzing errors in information or processes	105	2.96	0.85	74.2% (78)
Measurement	92	2.99	0.79	78.3% (72)
Understanding of spatial relationships	92	3.09	0.86	80.4% (74)

Mental math	91	2.92	0.89	70.3% (64)
Using mathematical concepts to solve daily problems	99	2.97	0.89	74.8% (74)
Testing Hypotheses	106	2.95	0.90	74.5% (79)
Breaking down a complex problem	124	2.95	0.90	71.8% (89)
Identifying patterns from information	125	3.02	0.89	74.4% (93)
Problem-solving	132	3.05	0.88	78.8% (104)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	107	29.90	0.87	75.4% (81)

Range of possible total score is 10-50. The cut point for determining academic competency is 30.

The total Math/Science Skills component score reported by faculty members was 29.9 points which is just below the cut point of 30 points for determining competency in this component. Four of ten items registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at grade level while the other six items fell just below the cut point of ≥ 3.0 points by 0.08 points or less. The average percentage of at or above grade level ratings by faculty members was 75.4% for Math/Science skills items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 61 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Math/Science skills by exposure level was generated.

Table 7 - Comparison of Total Math/Science Skills Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	4	26.3	4.78
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	30	31.3	7.80
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	27	28.1	7.40

Thirty individuals representing the 1-5 exposure level presented mean scores of 31.3 points which is above the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency in the Math/Science skills component. However, faculty members who reported having had zero student-athletes in their classes presented a mean score of 26.3 points a result that was 5.0 points lower than what was reported in the 1-5 category and faculty members who reported having had six or more student-athletes in their classes presented a mean score of 28.1 points, a result that was 3.2 points lower than what was reported in the 1-5 category. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Math/Science score $F(2, 58) = 1.658$, $p = 0.199$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 59 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Math/Science skills by gender was generated.

Table 8 - Comparison of Total Math/Science Skills Scores by Gender

Gender	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Male	27	28.2	6.73
Female	32	30.9	8.33

Male respondents presented mean scores of 28.2 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 30.9 points. The male faculty members scored student-athletes below the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency in the Math/Science skills component while female faculty members scored student-athletes above the cut point for determining academic competency in the Math/Science skills component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the

independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall

Math/Science score *t*(57) = -1.378, *p* = 0.173

Math/Science Skills Items of Significance

Three items on the Math/Science skills component of the ACES produced results that

were significantly higher than the 75.4% average rating of at or above grade level for the

component as a whole. These items included measurement (78.3% at or above grade level),

problem solving (78.8% at or above grade level) and understanding of spatial relationships

(80.4% at or above grade level).

Critical Thinking Skills

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid

responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at

or above grade level and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above grade level.

Table 9 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Critical Thinking Skills of Student-Athletes

Item	***n***	***M***	***SD***	**% At or Above Grade Level (*n*)**
Synthesizing related information	204	3.12	0.98	77.0% (157)
Drawing conclusions from observations	204	3.21	0.96	80.8% (165)
Comparing similarities or differences among objects or ideas	204	3.27	0.99	82.8% (169)
Classifying objects or ideas into categories	204	3.27	0.99	82.3% (168)
Generalizing from information or experiences	204	3.25	0.97	81.9% (167)
Constructing support for or against a position on an issue	204	3.21	1.01	79.4% (162)
Analyzing supporting and opposing viewpoints on an issue	204	3.18	1.03	77.5% (158)

Deciding among alternative solutions	204	3.22	1.00	80.5% (164)
Investigating a problem or issue	204	3.18	0.97	81.4% (166)
Developing a solution to a problem	204	3.17	1.00	79.4% (162)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	204	32.08	0.99	80.3% (164)

Range of possible total score is 10-50. The cut point for determining academic competency is 30.

The total Critical Thinking skills component score reported by faculty members was 32.1 points which is above the cut point of 30 points for determining competency in this component. All Critical Thinking skills items registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at grade level. The average percentage of at or above grade level ratings by faculty members was 80.3% for Critical Thinking skills items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 168 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Critical Thinking skills by exposure level was generated.

Table 10 - Comparison of Total Critical Thinking Skills Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	20	34.9	9.31
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	75	30.4	7.46
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	73	29.7	8.26

Ninety-five of the 168 individuals representing the first two levels of exposure (zero and 1-5), presented mean scores of 34.9 points and 30.4 points respectively. Both mean scores were above the cut point for determining academic competency in the Critical Thinking skills component. However, faculty members who reported having had six or more student-athletes in

their classes presented a mean score of 29.7 points, a result that was 5.2 points lower than the zero level of exposure and 0.7 points lower than the 1-5 level of exposure. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were statistically significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Critical Thinking score $F(2, 165) = 3.241$, $p = 0.042$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 166 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Critical Thinking skills by gender was generated.

Table 11 - Comparison of Total Critical Thinking Skills Scores by Gender

Gender	***n***	***M***	***SD***
Male	73	30.0	7.18
Female	93	31.2	8.81

Male respondents presented mean scores of 30.0 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 31.2 points, both of which satisfied the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency in the Critical Thinking skills component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were statistically significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Critical Thinking score $t(164) = -0.905$, $p = 0.047$

Critical Thinking Skills Items of Significance

Four items on the Critical Thinking Skills component of the ACES produced results indicating that more than 81% of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were at grade level or above. These items included comparing similarities and differences among objects or ideas (82.8% at or above grade level), classifying objects or ideas

into categories (82.3% at or above grade level), generalizing from information or experiences (81.9% at or above grade level) and investigating a problem or issue (81.4% at or above grade level).

Summary of Academic Skills Realm Findings

The totaled mean scores and average percentages of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were calculated and are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 - Total Academic Skills Realm Scores

Component	*M*	% At or Above Grade Level
Reading/Writing Skills	28.9	73.0%
Math/Science Skills	29.9	75.4%
Critical Thinking Skills	32.1	80.3%
Total Academic Skills	90.9	76.2%

Range of possible total score is 30-150. The cut point for determining academic competency is 90.

The total Academic Skills realm score reported by faculty members was 90.9 points which is above the cut point of 90 points for determining competency in the Academic Skills realm. However, only one of the three components achieved a mean score greater than the cut point of 30 points for individual components (Critical Thinking skills). The other two components (Reading/Writing skills and Math/Science skills) feel short by 1.1 points and 0.1 points respectively.

Because all scores were close to the cut point of 30 points for individual components, the total mean score raised student-athletes at the institution above the cut point of 90 points for

Academic Skills as a whole. The average percentage of at or above grade level ratings by faculty members was 76.2% for the Academic Skills Realm.

Academic Enablers

The realm of Academic Enablers is comprised of four components. These components are Interpersonal skills, Engagement, Motivation and Study skills. All components in the Academic Enablers realm utilize a five-point Likert scale for determining frequency of component items. The parameters of "Never" at the low end and "Almost Always" at the high end are used. The mid-point score of three is described as being "Sometimes."

The Interpersonal skills and Engagement components are comprised of eight items. The range of possible scores on these two components is 8-40 points. The cut point for determining competency in the Interpersonal skills component is 28 points and the cut point for determining competency in the Engagement component is 24 points. The Motivation and Study Skills components are comprised of ten items. The range of possible scores on these two components is 10-50 points. The cut point for determining competency in the Motivation component is 36 points and the cut point for determining competency in the Study skills component is 35 points.

The overall score for the Academic Enablers realm can be determined by adding the component scores. The range of scores possible is 36-180 points and the cut point for determining academic competency in the Academic Enablers realm is 130 points. The individual cut points and overall cut point are varied based on a standardization analysis conducted by Dr. DiPerna when creating and testing the ACES. Instead of selecting the mid-point as the cut point for each component, average distribution scores were used. The same is true of the overall Academic Enablers realm cut point which was not determined by adding individual cut points of the four included components. The Academic Enablers realm cut point of 130 points was also

based on a standardization analysis and use of average distribution scores. This is viewed as a more accurate interpretation of scores when determining academic competency in this realm.

Interpersonal Skills

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels.

Table 13 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Interpersonal Skills of Student-Athletes

Student-Athletes…	*n*	*M*	*SD*	% Sometimes or above *(n)*
Are considerate of others	191	3.91	0.83	97.3% (186)
Are willing to compromise	191	3.76	0.87	95.8% (183)
Express dissatisfaction appropriately	191	3.69	0.93	91.1% (174)
Accept suggestions from others	191	3.81	0.86	95.3% (182)
Work effectively in large group settings	191	3.81	0.98	92.1% (176)
Listen to what others have to say	191	3.80	0.93	92.1% (176)
Work effectively in small group settings	191	3.80	0.92	94.8% (181)
Interact appropriately with other students	191	3.93	0.89	95.3% (182)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	191	30.51	0.90	94.2% (180)

Range of possible total score is 8-40. The cut point for determining academic competency is 28.

The total Interpersonal skills component score reported by faculty members was 30.5 points which is above the cut point of 28 points for determining competency in this component. All responses registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at or above sometimes frequency

levels. The average percentage of sometimes or above ratings by faculty members was 94.2% for

Interpersonal skills items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 168 faculty members provided data on the

number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of

means for total Interpersonal skills by exposure level was generated.

Table 14 - Comparison of Total Interpersonal Skills Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	20	28.2	5.10
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	75	30.6	6.17
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	73	30.3	6.11

All exposure levels of faculty members presented mean scores of ≥ 28 points which is the

cut point for determining academic competency in the Interpersonal skills component. However,

faculty members who reported having had zero student-athletes in their classes presented a mean

score of 28.2 points, a result that was 2.4 points lower than what was reported in the 1-5

exposure level and 2.1 points lower than what was reported in the six or more exposure level.

Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way

ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as

a factor with the overall Interpersonal skills score $F(2, 165) = 1.288$, $p = 0.278$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 166 faculty members provided data on

gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Interpersonal skills by gender was

generated.

Table 15 - Comparison of Total Interpersonal Skills Scores by Gender

Gender	n	M	SD
Male	73	29.2	5.72
Female	93	30.6	6.28

Male respondents presented mean scores of 29.2 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 30.6 points. Both mean scores presented satisfied the cut point of 28 points for determining academic competency in the Interpersonal skills component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples t-test was run. The results of the independent samples t-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Interpersonal skills score $t(164) = -1.476$, $p = 0.142$

Interpersonal Skills Items of Significance

All ten items on the Interpersonal Skills component of the ACES produced results indicating that more than 91% of student-athletes in comparison to other students were at or above sometimes frequency levels.

Engagement

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels.

Table 16 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Engagement of Student-Athletes

Student-Athletes…	n	M	SD	% Sometimes or above (n)
Use outlines to organize written work	180	2.99	0.88	75.0% (135)
Speak in class when called upon	180	3.64	1.01	88.3% (159)

Ask questions about exams or other assignments	180	3.45	1.03	83.3% (150)
Participate in class discussions	180	3.36	1.04	85.0% (153)
Volunteer answers to questions	180	3.19	1.04	78.9% (142)
Assume leadership in group discussions	180	3.11	1.01	76.7% (138)
Initiate conversations appropriately	180	3.41	1.01	83.3% (150)
Ask questions when they are confused	180	3.36	1.01	81.7% (147)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	180	26.51	1.00	81.5% (147)

Range of possible total score is 8-40. The cut point for determining academic competency is 24.

The total Engagement component score reported by faculty members was 26.5 points which is above the cut point of 24 points for determining competency in this component. All responses registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at or above sometimes frequency levels with the exception of using outlines to organize written work which scored 2.99 points. The average percentage of sometimes or above ratings by faculty members was 81.5% for Engagement items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 168 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Engagement by exposure level was generated.

Table 17 - Comparison of Total Engagement Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	20	26.6	5.14
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	75	26.4	7.31
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	73	25.7	6.49

All individuals within the three exposure levels presented similar mean scores with less than one point separating the highest group score from the lowest group score. All mean scores presented were above the cut point of 24 points for determining academic competency in the Engagement component. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Engagement score $F(2, 165) = 0.242$, $p = 0.785$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 166 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Engagement by gender was generated.

Table 18 - Comparison of Total Engagement Scores by Gender

Gender	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Male	73	25.3	5.72
Female	93	26.8	7.36

Male respondents presented mean scores of 25.3 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 26.8 points. Both mean scores presented were above the cut point of 24 points for determining academic competency in the Engagement component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Engagement score $t(164) = -1.436$, $p = 0.153$

Engagement Items of Significance

Four items on the Engagement component of the ACES produced results indicating that more than 83% of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were at or above sometimes frequency levels. These items included speaking in class when called upon (88.3% at or above sometimes frequency levels), asking questions about exams or other

assignments (83.3% at or above sometimes frequency levels), participating in class discussions (85.0% at or above sometimes frequency levels) and initiating conversation appropriately (83.3% at or above sometimes frequency levels).

Motivation

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels.

Table 19 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Motivation of Student-Athletes

Student-Athletes…	*n*	*M*	*SD*	% Sometimes or above *(n)*
Are motivated to learn	174	3.48	0.89	89.7% (156)
Prefer challenging tasks	174	2.97	0.92	73.6% (126)
Produce high-quality work	174	3.26	0.80	86.2% (150)
Critically evaluate their own work	174	3.13	0.88	78.7% (137)
Attempt to improve on previous performance	174	3.47	0.86	88.5% (154)
Make the most of learning experiences	174	3.25	0.79	84.5% (147)
Look for ways to academically challenge themselves	174	2.98	0.89	70.7% (123)
Assume responsibility for their learning	174	3.29	0.90	81.0% (141)
Pay attention in class	174	3.44	0.95	84.5% (147)
Are goal-oriented	174	3.57	0.92	88.5% (154)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	174	32.84	0.88	82.6% (144)

Range of possible total score is 10-50. The cut point for determining academic competency is 36.

The total Motivation component score reported by faculty members was 32.8 points which is below the cut point of 36 points for determining competency in this component. Eight of ten responses registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points (at or above sometimes frequency levels), however, an average score of ≥ 3.6 points across the ten items is considered the minimum for achieving academic competence on the ACES in the Motivation component. The average percentage of sometimes or above ratings by faculty members was 82.6% for Motivation items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 168 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Motivation by exposure level was generated.

Table 20 - Comparison of Total Motivation Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	n	M	SD
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	20	32.8	7.62
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	75	33.6	6.69
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	73	31.6	6.49

None of the exposure level groups presented mean scores of ≥ 36.0 points which is the cut point for determining academic competency in the Motivation component. The lowest rating offered was 31.6 points by the six or more exposure level group which is 4.4 points below the cut point and the highest rating offered was 33.6 points by the 1-5 exposure level group which is 2.4 points below the cut point. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Motivation score $F(2, 165) = 1.377$, $p = 0.255$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 166 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Motivation by gender was generated.

Table 21 - Comparison of Total Motivation Scores by Gender

Gender	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Male	73	31.5	6.89
Female	93	33.4	7.95

Male respondents presented mean scores of 31.5 points and female faculty members presented mean scores of 33.4 points. Neither of the scores presented satisfied the cut point of 36 points for determining academic competency in the Motivation component. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Motivation score $t(164) = -1.552$, $p = 0.123$

Motivation Items of Significance

Three items on the Motivation component of the ACES produced results indicating that more than 88% of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were at or above sometimes frequency levels. These items included; student-athletes attempt to improve on previous performance (88.5% at or above sometimes frequency levels), student-athletes are goal-oriented (88.5% at or above sometimes frequency levels) and student-athletes are motivated to learn (89.7% at or above sometimes frequency levels).

Study Skills

Each component item is represented in table form along with the number of valid responses, mean rating, standard deviation, percentage of respondents rating student-athletes at

or above sometimes frequency levels and number or respondents rating student-athletes at or above sometimes frequency levels.

Table 22 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Study Skills of Student-Athletes

Student-Athletes…	*n*	*M*	*SD*	% Sometimes or above *(n)*
Complete course assignments	170	3.86	0.81	97.6% (166)
Edit their work before they submit it	170	3.32	0.89	83.5% (142)
Finish their assignments on time	170	3.70	0.86	94.1% (160)
Take notes in class	170	3.46	0.92	86.5% (147)
Review notes and other materials	170	3.37	0.85	87.1% (148)
Use strategies to remember information	170	3.22	0.82	82.4% (140)
Manage their time effectively	170	3.55	0.92	88.8% (151)
Prepare for exams	170	3.60	0.91	89.4% (152)
Prepare for class (e.g., complete readings, review notes)	170	3.29	0.95	80.0% (136)
Attend class	170	3.78	0.90	92.9% (158)
Totals (*n*, *SD* and % are presented as averages)	170	35.15	0.89	88.2% (150)

Range of possible total score is 10-50. The cut point for determining academic competency is 35.

The total Study skills component score reported by faculty members was 35.2 points which is above the cut point of 35 points for determining competency in this component. All responses registered a mean response of ≥ 3.0 points or at or above sometimes frequency levels. The average percentage of sometimes or above ratings by faculty members was 88.2% for Study skills items.

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 168 faculty members provided data on the number of student-athletes they have knowingly had in class. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Study skills by exposure level was generated.

Table 23 - Comparison of Total Study Skills Scores by Exposure to Student-Athletes in Classes Taught

Exposure Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Zero known student-athletes in classes taught	20	33.0	7.62
1-5 known student-athletes in classes taught	75	36.2	6.69
6 or more known student-athletes in classes taught	73	34.8	6.49

The zero exposure level group presented a mean score of 33.0 points which is 2.0 points below the cut point of 35 points for competence in this component. The six or more exposure level group also presented a mean score that was 0.2 points below the cut point. However the 1-5 exposure level group presented a mean score of 36.2 points which is well above the cut point. Based on the difference in means in the student-athlete exposure level category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using exposure levels as a factor with the overall Study skills score $F(2, 165) = 1.675$, $p = 0.191$

Of the valid responses included in the analysis, 166 faculty members provided data on gender. Using these data, a comparison of means for total Study skills by gender was generated.

Table 24 - Comparison of Total Study Skills Scores by Gender

Gender	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Male	73	34.3	7.12
Female	93	35.8	7.52

Male respondents presented mean scores of 34.3 points and female faculty members presented scores of 35.8 points. The male faculty members scored student-athletes below the cut point of 35 points for determining academic competency in the Study skills component while female faculty members scored student-athletes above the cut point of 35 points. Based on the difference in means in gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with the overall Study skills score $t(164) = -1.312$, $p = 0.191$

Study Skills Items of Significance

Three items on the Study Skills component of the ACES produced results indicating that more than 92% of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were at or above sometimes frequency levels. These items included completing course assignments (97.6% at or above sometimes frequency levels), finishing their assignments on time (94.1% at or above sometimes frequency levels) and attending class (92.9% at or above sometimes frequency levels).

Summary of Academic Enablers Realm Findings

The total means and average percentages of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the institution were calculated and are presented in Table 25.

Table 25 - Total Academic Enablers Realm Scores

Component	*M*	% Sometimes or above Frequency Levels
Interpersonal Skills	30.5	94.2%
Engagement	26.5	81.5%
Motivation	32.8	80.3%

Study Skills	35.2	88.2%
Total Academic Enablers	125.0	86.1%

The total Academic Enablers realm score reported by faculty members was 125.0 points which is below the cut point of 130 points for determining competency in this realm. The average percentage of at or above sometimes frequency level ratings by faculty members was 86.1% for the Academic Enablers realm.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Table 26 - Faculty Members' Best Estimation of the Academic Competency of Student-Athletes

Components and Realms	Faculty Score	Cut Score	Still Developing	Competent
Reading/Writing Skills	28.9	30	X	
Math/Science Skills	29.9	30	X	
Critical Thinking Skills	32.1	30		X
Total Academic Skills	90.9	90		X
Interpersonal Skills	30.5	28		X
Engagement	26.5	24		X
Motivation	32.8	36	X	
Study Skills	35.2	35		X
Total Academic Enablers	125.0	130	X	

The overall quantitative results from this study indicate that faculty members at State College University believe that student-athletes are academically competent in one of two realms and four of the seven individual components presented on the ACES. The realm for which student-athletes exceeded the cut point for academic competency was the Academic Skills

Realm. Student-athletes failed to satisfy the Academic Enablers realm cut point of 130 points and are thus described as being in the developing stage.

The four components for which student-athletes exceeded the cut point for determining academic competency were (1) Critical Thinking skills, (2) Interpersonal skills, (3) Engagement, and (4) Study skills. Of the three components where student-athletes failed to achieve the cut point score provided with the scales, two achieved mean scores that were close to the cut points.

Both components that registered mean scores below but close to the cut point for determining academic competency were in the Academic Skills realm. The individual component of Reading/Writing skills fell below the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency by 1.1 points with a mean faculty score of 28.9 points. The individual component of Math/Science skills fell below the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency by 0.1 points with a mean faculty score of 29.9 points.

In relation to the Academic Enablers realm, student-athletes were rated as being competent in all but one of the four individual components. This component was Motivation and is represented by a cut point of 36 points. In relation to the cut points used in all other components, this represents the highest mean score required for achieving academic competence. The individual component of Motivation fell well below the cut point of 36 points for determining academic competency by 3.2 points with a mean faculty score of 32.8 points.

In addition to mean scores and cut points for individual components, percentages of faculty members rating student-athletes as at grade level or above in the Academic Skills realm and sometimes or above frequency levels in the Academic Enablers realm were calculated and reported. The overall percentage of faculty members rating student-athletes at or above grade level in the Academic Skills realm was measured at 76.2% and the overall percentage of faculty

members rating student-athletes at sometimes or above frequency levels in the Academic Enablers realm was measured at 86.1%

Lastly, though not procedurally required as would be in studies interested in hypotheses testing, a series of independent samples *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs were run for all independent variables collected throughout the quantitative portion of the study. There were very few significant relationships associated with the results, which supports the assertion that the scores provided by faculty members are comparable and consistent across a wide-range of independent variables. In this way, there was little, if any evidence suggesting that specific groups of faculty members based on demographic differences felt differently about the academic competency of student-athletes at the university.

Qualitative Findings

Ten faculty members were purposefully sampled to participate in the study. These faculty members were selected from a pool of respondents who agreed to be interviewed based on the quantitative component of the study. The demographic characteristics of those willing to be interviewed were charted in a matrix and final participants were selected to maximize variability. One faculty member's transcript was excluded from the final analysis based on their inability to address the questions presented coherently.

The final participants included six females and three males representing different disciplines at the university. All names and information that could be used to identify the university or any other universities/locations were removed and coded. All identifiable elements of individual participants were also removed and coded. The final participants and disciplines represented were:

1. Thomas – Fine Arts
2. Catherine – Education
3. Sandra – World Studies
4. John – Biomedical Engineering
5. Judy - English

6. Heather - Sociology
7. Bob – Mass Communications
8. Debbie – Core Education
9. Tiffany – Life Sciences

Qualitative Findings – Research Questions # 2

How do faculty members describe the "typical" student-athlete?

Figure 2 - How Faculty Members Describe Student-Athletes

Overview

Faculty members discussed their perceptions of the typical student-athlete in three common ways. They spoke about student-athletes in terms of (1) motivations for participation, (2) the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings and (3) exhibited attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes. It is critical to note that two common trends emerged that are directly relatable to the findings in this section. The first trend is gender. All faculty members agreed that the three common themes of motivations, dedication and acumen in educational settings and exhibited attitudes and behaviors are heavily influenced by whether the student-athlete is male or female.

The second trend is the type of sport in which the student-athlete participates. It is agreed that male student-athletes who participate in revenue producing sports (football, basketball and

baseball) approach their role on campus differently than male and female student-athletes who participate in non-revenue producing sports. In this way, a difference between possible careers in sports after college altered the way in which faculty members described student-athletes in the three common reported themes.

The Motivations of Student-Athletes

Student-athletes possess different motivations for participation. Faculty members were adamant that female and male student-athletes who participate in non-revenue producing sports are more educationally motivated and use their participation in sports as an outlet for pursuing something they are passionate about outside of the academic realm. In this way, these student-athletes are perceived as being capable of successfully blending athletic and educational goals. Male student-athletes who participate in sports that may offer a future in the professional leagues were described as being primarily athletically motivated. This is a significant factor in discussing student-athletes in relation to motivations.

Heather, a professor of sociology stated, "With baseball and basketball, those guys are always looking, you know, How am I going to make this work for the future, where field hockey, not as much so they seem to have maybe a more realistic picture of what they're going to do after college and it doesn't necessarily involve field hockey so they're more vested in their academic world where with basketball and baseball maybe they're still kind of chasing that dream and academics maybe becomes more secondary."

Judy, a professor of English studies concurred, "I assume that because the opportunities for males in terms of professional athletics is so much more, there's so much more opportunity and the money is so much bigger, that yeah I'm assuming that they would be much more into their sport." Thomas agreed, "My guess is that primarily, or that most of the female athletes

probably spend greater time than the male athletes [on academics]. Again, because they are necessarily going to be more dependent on their academic performance in their later life is my perception."

This potential for a professional career, however, is also a detriment to the student-athlete in the opinion of Tiffany. Because faculty members believe that the focus on a professional sports career inhibits academic achievement, athletes are left compromised when their playing days are over. "I've had friends who stayed with the program and they were there for the whole time with their athletics scholarships but they didn't really get an education. Some of them played professional football… had this successful, in terms of what the athletes think is success, going to play the pros and that kind of thing, but those guys had nothing, there was nothing for them to fall back on later and they are not doing well at all."

It is believed by faculty members that males who participate in revenue producing sports and male and female student-athletes who participate in non-revenue producing sports are on college campuses for distinctly different reasons. Heather stated, "I've had some great basketball students, female students who were incredibly motivated in the classroom, much more so than my male basketball students… if you can see a life that is based on athletics, it's easier to leave the academics and with female sports that's just not as much of an option."

Regardless of this distinction, a primary motive for all student-athletes was described as the motive to play. This may result in a desire to at least complete the minimum level of acceptable school work as a means to continue their playing career. Thomas said in terms of motivations that, "The motive to keep playing would be motive to at least perform in the classroom to the minimal level and therefore, if I had that motivation, even if I wasn't interested

in academics very much, I would continue to do the minimal amount so I could continue to do what I love."

Female student-athletes who participate in non-revenue producing sports were most commonly described as students who play sports for the love of the game. The consensus was that the type of sport the student-athlete participates in creates a split. This split is again determined by whether the sport has any possible impact on a future career. Debbie, a professor of core education, noted the difference between male and female student-athletes in terms of motivations for participation, "The two female student-athletes that I've had here at State College University to me did not, to me their role as a student-athlete didn't seem to be as important to them as it seemed to be, just from my perceptions, as it seemed to be to the male students that I've had… They seem a little less intense and a little less serious or even devoted."

In terms of revenue versus non-revenue sports, John, a professor of biomedical engineering, said, "They're [non-revenue producing sport participants] looking at it as a way of doing what they love to do as well as getting a college education. I'm not sure I can say that about the football and the basketball teams of Division-I because, I'm sure they're doing it because they love what they're doing, but I don't think that they're doing it, I don't think their motivation is quite the same as it would be in the other sports." He continued on to say, "People who are on the tennis team… people who are on the track team, people who are swimmers, people who are, you know, women's soccer players they're doing it, you know volleyball players, they're doing this because they happen to love that sport. They're not doing it because they somehow think, Oh my God, I'm going to be rich after I'm done here, because that's impossible."

An additional consideration discussed by faculty members in relation to motivations is the concept of scholarships for participating in sports. Almost all faculty members viewed the athletics scholarship as a means of access to higher education but disagreed as to the extent that it would be a primary motivating factor for student-athletes to participate. The difference in opinion occurred based on the overall motivation of the student-athlete for participation in the first place.

If a student-athlete is perceived to be playing for the love of the game while simultaneously getting a college education, the scholarship is perceived as a strong motivation for participation. If a student-athlete is perceived to be playing to pursue a professional career, the scholarship is considered a secondary, or in some cases, non-factor for participation. Both Heather and Bob attended college on athletics scholarships and have first-hand knowledge of the situation.

Heather discussed her experience as an opportunity. "I would not have been able to go to college if it hadn't been for my scholarship because I was the first in my family, my immediate family to go to college and I think, you know, a lot of times it's a great opportunity for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to actually have the opportunity to go to school." Bob, when discussing athletics scholarships disagreed that student-athletes view an athletics scholarship as an opportunity and motivation for participating. "A free ride, if they do indeed get that, I think would be good as a motivation, but you know, I might challenge myself to guess that because I think, well the school's not that high of a priority, so getting a free education is sort of like getting a free pair of women's shoes. I think it's a rarity or the few folks that look at it as, this is my ticket into a college where I can excel and get an education that I might not be able to get otherwise as just a general student,"

Sandra, a professor of world studies, synthesized the concept of playing for the love of the game and the impact of the athletics scholarship, "I would imagine that most students, if they really didn't want to continue playing for a team, they would just say never mind unless, unless they were on scholarship, unless they had a full-ride, unless playing made a difference to whether they could continue on." In this way, Sandra believes that if athletics are truly the means by which a student-athlete can continue their education and that education is a primary motivation for attending college, student-athletes may be compelled to continue playing.

Regardless of enticements Tiffany, a professor of life sciences, believes that if an emphasis is not placed on producing scholars who may legitimately pursue a career in something other than athletics when their playing days are over, then the point is moot. She feels something needs to be done to ensure academic success regardless of motivations for participation. "I think there should be more of a special effort made on the academic side to assure that the students do maintain acceptable grades not just so they're eligible to play but so that they're getting an education and skills that will help them after they no longer are playing a sport."

This creates a conflict between athletics and academic attainment if Catherine, a professor in the school of education and Bob are correct in what they have observed. Catherine stated, "I think that people that go to universities to participate in athletics, they're there to participate in athletics… I think there might be some people who it is academics first and athletics second but I think when people are recruited to college athletics that is the primary purpose for being at that school." Bob expressed a similar perception, "The student-athletes that I've met… their primary goal was the sport, and classes and jobs and anything else was secondary and I think that is true in the students I've seen as an instructor and in the students I knew as students when I was a player."

Summary of the Motivations of Student-Athletes

Table 27 - Motivations by Gender and Sport Type

Classification	Primary Motivation is Athletics	Primary Motivation is Education
Male – Revenue Producing Sport Participants	X	
Male – Non-Revenue Producing Sport Participants		X
Female – Non-Revenue Producing Sport Participants		X

The primary motivation for male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports is viewed by faculty members as being athletically-driven. The primary motivation for male and female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports is viewed by faculty members as being academically-driven. These motivations are both fueled by future career considerations. According to faculty members, when a career in professional athletics becomes a desirable goal for male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports, their interest in pursuing that goal full-time often overrides their interest in pursuing an education. Student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports have different career aspirations. They understand their future career will largely depend on their level of educational attainment.

Convergent Themes Associated with Motivations

Faculty members rated student-athletes below the cut point for determining competency in the motivation component during the quantitative portion of the study. These data were centered squarely on measuring motivation from an academic standpoint. Qualitative data supports the assertion that this sub-par rating by faculty members towards the academic competency of student-athletes may be influenced by additional factors. These contributing

factors are gender and whether the student-athlete participates in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. It is plausible that male revenue sport participants significantly impacted the results on the motivation component in the minds of faculty members.

The individual items that addressed the academic motivations on the ACES raised further questions. While motivations may be sport and gender influenced, there were several items on which faculty member scored student-athletes highly. These items concluded that student-athletes attempt to improve on previous performance (88.5% at or above sometimes frequency levels), student-athletes are goal-oriented (88.5% at or above sometimes frequency levels) and student-athletes are motivated to learn (89.7% at or above sometimes frequency levels). While overall results may be dependent on additional factors, these ratings are encouraging for individuals interested in working with student-athletes in an academic capacity. It is evidenced through interviews and measurement that a high percentage of student-athletes are primarily motivated by academics rather than athletics.

The Dedication and Acumen of Student-Athletes in Educational Settings

The factors associated with faculty attitudes towards the motivation of student-athletes also impacted their attitudes towards the educational dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings. The delineation between female and male student-athletes played a role in how faculty members discussed common trends and themes associated with motivation. Additionally, differences between student-athletes participating in revenue and non-revenue producing sports were observed.

Gender, type of sport played and motivations were the primary factors that contributed to faculty attitudes towards the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings. However, an additional consideration was also discussed by several faculty members. This factor

was the concept of college preparedness. It is believed that if a student-athlete is recruited

primarily based on athletic talent, they may be unprepared to meet academic requirements.

College preparedness was an additional factor added to others established previously.

Figure 3 - How Faculty Members Describe the Dedication and Acumen of Student-Athletes in Educational Settings
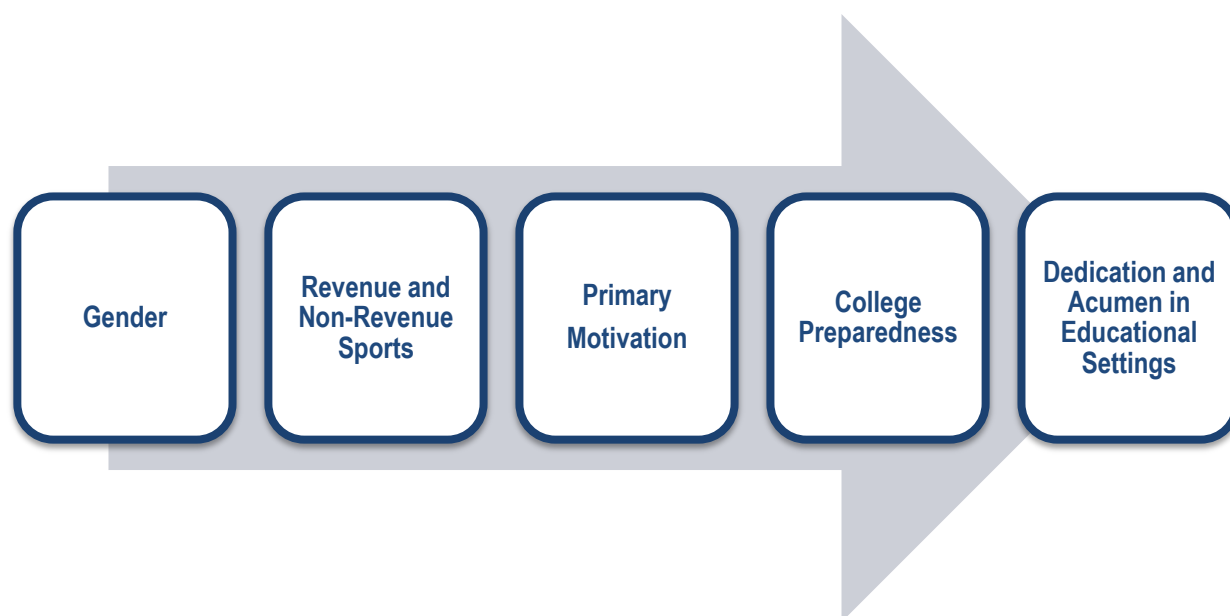
While the differences in motivation for participation among the student-athlete

population were again evident when discussing the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in

educational settings, these differences may not be static. Many faculty members reported

observing a range of student-athletes in their classes. Almost all faculty members who have

taught multiple student-athletes in classes report a blend of positive and negative experiences.

While faculty members suggest this may be a result of gender and the potential to play a sport

professionally after college, there are some cases in which the actual caliber of the student

coming into a higher education setting was discussed.

The recruitment of student-athletes for their athletic ability in lieu of their level of college

preparedness was discussed as something that occurs and is a factor that contributes to the

success of a student-athlete in an educational setting. Student-athletes in some instances are viewed as prized recruits that are not prepared for college level work but who are admitted regardless of their academic ability. The perceived lack of college preparedness is a concern of at least two faculty members who believe that some student-athletes are recruited primarily for their athletic ability. In this way, it is believed that student-athletes who are athletically gifted are granted access to higher education even though they are not ready to perform at an acceptable academic level.

In discussing this concept unprompted, Sandra stated, "I know this happens a lot and I've seen it actually, recruiting students for their phenomenal physical prowess even though they are not intellectually prepared for college-level courses even at the introductory levels." Judy, also unprompted, echoed Sandra's concern. "I think that there are some athletes, student-athletes who are recruited who are not prepared academically, who are *really* not prepared and they are drowning academically."

A factor associated with the educational dedication and acumen of student-athletes is gender. Female student-athletes are viewed as better students who are more dedicated to academic achievement. In discussing student-athletes in terms of academics Thomas stated, "I've had several female athletes in my classes. I guess my primary perception of those guys [men's basketball players] is that they are usually incredibly dedicated guys, primarily to their sport, although the female students that I've had have seemed to have struck a very nice balance. With the female students that I've had, they, often they are the better students in the class."

Debbie also discussed gender as a factor in the classroom, "The students that I've been associated with, the males in particular, I think spend a great deal more time on athletics than academics." Tiffany also acknowledged there may be a difference but was noncommittal as to

her level of knowledge of female student-athletes in the classroom. "I don't know enough about women athletes at the collegiate level to know how well they perform. Hopefully they don't have some of the problems academically that some of the young men do." Catherine only had personal experience with one student-athlete but described her in glowing terms. "She did all her work and turned it in right on time, and so she was very responsible. She was a very good student." John who has had multiple student-athletes discussed his experience with female student-athletes, "We have had several biomedical engineering students in women's soccer. They have completed their time here. They have graduated. Ironically, both went to medical school… they were very successful."

These discussions of female student-athletes as being dedicated students are noticeably absent in relation to male participants. Faculty members had little to say positively towards the male student-athletes, though it should be noted that specific mentions of male basketball players graduating did exist. These basketball players at the institution were perceived in positive terms for completing their degrees. All four players specifically named in the interviews serve as positive exemplars of individuals who pursued a career in athletics but who also had the dedication and acumen to complete their degrees.

In discussing specific athletes Thomas stated, "I don't know enough about the men's players to know how they're doing academically or what their load is academically… but things like, you know, Former State College University Men's Basketball Player #3 coming back and finishing up his degree, I think that's a good sign. Things like Former State College University Men's Basketball Player #1 hanging around and finishing his degree, I think that's a good sign."

Heather also noted some past players who pursued professional careers but finished their degrees, "I've had students like Former State College University Men's Basketball Player #3

who, he did come back and finish. Former State College University Men's Basketball Player #4 who finished and is now playing in Europe." While these stories paint a positive portrait of some athletically gifted individuals who completed their degrees, little was said about male student-athletes in a classroom setting in relation to their positive performance academically.

Summary of the Dedication and Acumen of Student-Athletes in Educational Settings

The dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings is again influenced by gender and whether the student-athlete participates in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. However, the delineation in relation to the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings is not as clear cut as it was for describing motivations for participation. This is due to the expressed belief that student-athletes, whether academically-motivated or not, all possess the motivation to play. To achieve this goal, all student-athletes must meet minimum academic requirements. This means that student-athletes who are considered primarily motivated by athletics may at the same time be dedicated students to pursue goals.

The difference between male and female student-athletes in relation to dedication and acumen in educational settings, however, is clear-cut regardless of motivations for participation or whether the student-athlete participates in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. Faculty members strongly believe that female student-athletes are superior students. They manage their time better and are more vested in the educational process.

The issues associated with recruitment are worrisome. It has long been believed by critics of college athletics that star student-athletes are granted admission regardless of educational ability. This is a concern that was brought forth by two faculty members in this study who have first-hand knowledge and experience with student-athletes. These faculty members suggested

that universities, in some instances, admit students based on their athletic ability. These students are unprepared to achieve at an acceptable academic level.

Convergent Themes Associated with Dedication and Acumen

Faculty members determined that student-athletes are academically competent in relation to Engagement. As a group, they achieved the required cut points in this component. Qualitative data suggests that student-athletes are dedicated students that possess the acumen required to achieve at an acceptable academic level. However, the motivating factors may vary. For some student-athletes, achieving at least minimal acceptable levels of education may be seen as a necessary evil to continue doing what they love. For others, a genuine interest in education may be the driving factor. College preparedness may be an additional factor when considering the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings. In instances where student-athletes are admitted to the university but who are unprepared to perform college level work may lack the acumen required to succeed at an acceptable academic level.

Regardless, there is one finding that is particularly strong. Faculty members agree unanimously that female student-athletes are superior students when compared with male student-athletes. This is a finding that was not measured or validated on the ACES for verification purposes. As a group, student-athletes met the cut scores for Engagement but it is impossible to tell how much of an impact the female student-athletes had on faculty members when they were considering their rankings.

In relation to the Academic Skills realm measured through the ACES, it was found that faculty members believe that student-athletes as a group are at or near the cut point for determining academic competency in each component. This is a set of ratings that is supported by the qualitative data. Faculty members report that students-athletes are for the most part

dedicated enough and intelligent enough to handle the academic workload at their university. While it is acknowledged that some student-athletes may be completing work only for the sake of satisfying requirements, it is evident that most are getting the work done.

Exhibited Attitudes and Behaviors of Student-Athletes

The exhibited attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes reported by faculty members are mixed. Many faculty members report observing two different ends of the spectrum with very little in between. Student-athletes in some cases are viewed as being entitled, lazy, aloof, disorganized and distracted in class while others are observed as being personable, respectful, responsible, organized and dedicated to school.

Figure 4 - How Faculty Members Describe Exhibited Attitudes and Behaviors of Student-Athletes

Entitled, Lazy, Aloof, Disorganized and Distracted in Class

Personable, Respectful, Responsible, Organized and Dedicated to School
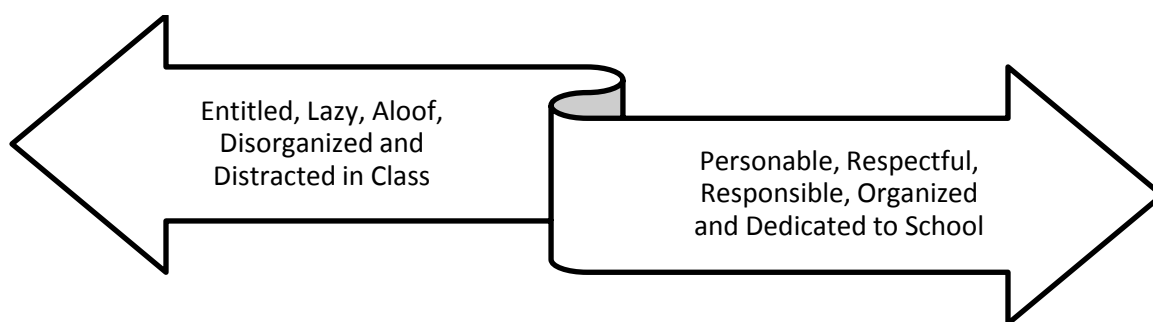
All faculty members were asked to describe the "typical student-athlete" at their institution. While it is acknowledged that the term typical does not apply universally, many descriptions were offered. Thomas described the typical student-athlete as, "Hard-working. I would say dedicated to their sports." Bob believes that a typical student-athlete is, "Extraverted, distracted in class, not a well-organized task-oriented person, personable, outgoing, academic underachiever and athletic." Debbie states that there is a mix, "I've had students that are very serious, very dedicated, know that doing well in school is very important to being able to continue playing their sport and all of those sorts of things so they have a tendency to be very

conscientious and organized, dedicated. The flipside of that is I've had students that are, and this is how they appear to me, this may not be accurate this is my perception of them, but that appear to, in terms of adjectives I would say entitled, lazy, unorganized, undedicated as a student. I'm sure that's not the same adjectives I would use to apply them to their sport if I were to go to a practice but you know as students they're kind of, they can be all over the board. I've had, like I say, these extremes and I've also had academic integrity issues with two student-athletes." Lastly, Tiffany describes the typical student-athlete. "Probably a typical student-athlete would be enthusiastic and less academically-oriented than athletically-oriented."

The demonstrated dichotomy of perceptions is portrayed strongly by Judy who had two contrasting experiences with student-athletes. Her primary experience was described as being negative. She admits, however, that her interactions with student-athletes on campus following that episode have been positive and rewarding. Her initial experience occurred during her tenure in the writing center. "I had to call security to remove some women basketball players from the writing center because they were so disruptive and so kind of had an, excuse my French, F.U. attitude… these athletes clearly were pissed off about having to be in study hall and thought it was a joke, would come in, would not acknowledge us at the desk… they'd just sort of flip us off at the desk, not take their ear buds out but then they would sit in the writing center and Facebook and actually have the sound on their computers or play their iPods so loud that the music was bothering other people and they would have loud gregarious conversations… I got a sense of entitlement like, "I'm an athlete and I'm untouchable and screw you," which was super-negative for myself. It was the female basketball players that seemed particularly, and the really tall guys so I'm thinking they were basketball too but I don't know, who seemed particularly prone to this sort of dismissive attitude."

Following that episode, Judy has taught student-athletes in a number of her classes. While she was initially hesitant and rattled she described her experience thereafter in this way, "When I started teaching… in my very first class I had a female volleyball player who was also tall and rangy and I thought, "Oh no," but she was a doll, I mean she was totally not, she had none of the negative behaviors that I had experienced with these other girls… I am aware of having had a total of six athletes over four or five courses… [The experience was] so positive. *So positive*… They were always respectful, and I don't mean that I'm the kind of old fashioned person that demands, "Yes ma'am, no ma'am," at all but I do expect people to behave, to treat each other respectfully in class… there's a certain kind of level of respect that they upheld, or exceeded, they always exceeded, in fact they did tend to, "Yes ma'am, no ma'am," me which was not the case with most students. They were just, they were delightful."

Summary of Exhibited Attitudes and Behaviors of Student-Athletes

Faculty members described a wide-range of exhibited attitudes and behaviors. The spectrum included examples of negative and positive experiences. Whereas faculty members were able to attribute the motivations, dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings to specific factors, no clear trends emerged in relation to a student-athlete's attitudes and behaviors. It is believed that this concept is more subjective than other themes discussed. In this way, a student-athlete's exhibited attitudes and behavior is dependent on the individual and each case is unique.

Divergent Themes Associated with Exhibited Attitudes and Behaviors

There were a number of instances where faculty members expressed their views of student-athletes in a negative manner. This negativity was expressed using adjectives to describe student-athletes such as lazy, disorganized and academic underachiever. These were reported to

be observations of the attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes from an academic standpoint. These data, however, are not supported by the analysis of the ACES results.

On the ACES, student-athletes scored particularly high marks on rankings associated with Study skills. These Study skills scores included a number of organization, attendance and work completion items. Faculty members reported that student-athletes manage their time efficiently (88.8% at or above sometimes frequency levels), attend class (92.9% at or above sometimes frequency levels), complete course assignments (97.6% at or above sometimes frequency levels) and complete their assignments on time (94.1% at or above sometimes frequency levels). These results do not support claims that student-athletes regularly demonstrate disorganized, lazy or underachieving tendencies.

Summary of Qualitative Findings – Research Question # 2

Faculty members discussed their attitudes and beliefs towards the student-athletes in three primary ways:

1. Motivations

2. Dedication and Acumen in Educational Settings

3. Exhibited Attitudes and Behaviors

Faculty members presented four primary factors that influenced or shaped their attitudes and beliefs towards student-athletes:

1. Gender

2. Revenue and Non-Revenue Sports

3. College Preparedness

4. Past Experience with student-athletes in higher education settings

In relation to motivations, there is a significant split between male student-athletes who participate in revenue producing sports and male and female student-athletes that participate in non-revenue producing sports. Faculty members believe that male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports yearn for a career in professional athletics. This desire to play at the next level is their primary motivation. Male and female student-athletes who participate in non-revenue producing sports are viewed as individuals that are academically-driven. This is the result of a career choice that is not associated with athletics. These participants play for alternative reasons and pursue an education that will serve them in their career path of choice.

In relation to dedication and acumen in educational settings, the primary motivation of the individual plays a role. However, the split between male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports and male and female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports is less defined. Faculty members attribute this to the overall motivation of all student-athletes to play. A certain level of acceptable academic achievement is required to reach this goal. While student-athletes may differ in primary motivation based on sport played, it is believed that most will at least be dedicated enough and demonstrate an acceptable level of acumen to continue their athletics career.

In relation to exhibited attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes, faculty members relied on past experience to describe their views on the topic. Some experiences were negative and others were positive. More faculty members described positive experiences than negative experiences with student-athletes but were unable to attribute these to any particular factor. This is indicative of the belief that attitudes and behaviors are subjective and reliant on the individual. The concept of motivation and dedication appeared as a potential factor but data were not plentiful enough to support this as a trend in relation to exhibited attitudes and behaviors.

Convergent and divergent themes were uncovered in areas where a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data was available. These included measured academic competency levels in the components of Motivation, Engagement and Study skills. It is noted that interview data tends to support the ratings provided for Motivation and Engagement but not for Study skills. It is unknown what impact additional factors had on the final quantitative results. This is due to the wording of the instrument that considers student-athletes as a whole. Individual demarcations such as gender and sport played were not part of the measurement process.

Qualitative Findings – Research Question # 3

Which factors do faculty members present as a hindrance/benefit to academic achievement for student-athletes at their institution?

Overview

Faculty members discussed their perceptions of hindrances and benefits associated with being a student-athlete. The structure of a student-athlete's collegiate experience is a primary factor discussed in this section. The structure of college athletics focuses on hindrances and benefits associated with being a student-athlete in four primary ways, (1) time commitments, (2) group membership, (3) notoriety and (4) support systems. These structural components influence the way in which faculty members describe student-athletes.

Table 28 - Hindrances and Benefits Associated with Participating in College Athletics

Category	Hindrance	Benefit
Time Commitments	X	
Group Membership		X
Notoriety		X
Support Systems		X

The common trends and themes associated with these four structural components are that time commitments are viewed as a hindrance while group membership, notoriety and support systems are described as benefits for student-athletes. In relation to benefits, there is also evidence of faculty perceptions that the treatment of student-athletes in higher education may be influenced by their participation. However, being an athlete does not necessarily resonate with staff as a correlative relationship with preferential treatment. The discussion of preferential treatment is discussed last in this section.

The Hindrance of Time Commitments

Faculty members report that student-athletes lead a highly regimented life on campus. The consensus is that a typical student-athlete has tremendous demands on their time. These demands are fueled by expectations and requirements held by a variety of stakeholders including coaches, professors, advisors and the student-athletes themselves. When asked about the balance of academics and athletics for a typical student-athlete, Sandra, a professor of World Studies responded, "Their lives are 6am practice, eat breakfast, shower, get to the 8am class. They have classes until twelve, they have lunch, maybe they have another class, maybe they have an hour to do homework. By 3 o'clock they have to be out on the field again, 2 hour practice, shower, dinner, study hall… I think the students are aware of the fact they are sacrificing, they're sacrificing some aspects of their college experience in order to play."

Thomas, a professor in the School of the Arts agreed, "I think my perception is that for the students who are participating, it's a job. And I'm sure it's a full-time job if not more than a full-time job." Tiffany, a professor of Life Sciences concurred and expanded of the issue of demands on a student-athlete's time, "It's a full-time job for them and it is so physically grueling that they don't have any energy or time left to apply towards academics." This is a sentiment

echoed by Catherine, a professor of education. "I think the athletic programs are very demanding on their time and their energy which can create conflict with the demand on their time and energy in their academic programs."

The issue of time commitments consistently raised concerns expressed by faculty members as to whether student-athletes can be realistically expected to achieve in the classroom. Many reported that student-athletes may be ill-suited for specific majors on the campus because of the rigor involved in the discipline. Thomas stated, "I know that it's tough for a student-athlete to be in the School of the Arts because it's a very rigorous program and it demands a lot of time." John, a professor of biomedical engineering had the same to say about his discipline, "It's a rarity for a basketball player to be an engineering student… My guess is that their course load and whatever their major is may not be the most rigorous at this university but I suppose that might be understandable."

In addition to rigor, faculty members believed that some majors where lab courses, collaborative group work and additional requirements exist, student-athletes are unable to keep up with other students and fall behind. Bob, a professor of mass communications stated, "I've had many student-athletes use their practice and things as the excuse why they couldn't do projects and things… it's very often an excuse I hear why a project is past due that wasn't one that we previously arranged or they couldn't meet, they couldn't be on a group, their group project, so their peer evaluations are really poor so, you know, they're failing."

Debbie, a professor of core education when asked if she thinks the time-demands placed on student-athletes are excessive responded, "Yeah I do. I think that in some cases it is a detriment to their academics in terms of the demands that are placed on them." John concurs, "Most of the time it's the time commitment that dictates, not because they're bright or they're

not bright, but I believe that their time commitment is what winds up affecting their performance as students."

Judy, a professor of English studies agrees that the time commitment required to be a student-athlete is demanding and can be detrimental to academic achievement. "Based on my own experience here I have concerns about the demands that the programs put on students and how they're able to balance their academics in some situations because they're, depending on the sport, the demands on them in terms of practice and play is pretty high." However, Judy also reports that she has had student-athletes who were motivated and did not use their athletic participation as an excuse for falling behind academically. When discussing her experiences with student-athletes and their time commitments she said there was, "A range of preparation for the courses, a range of motivation in the courses, but regardless of that they [baseball players] never used their position as an athlete as an excuse, at least in my class, English 200, hard class, a hated class, I mean it is a dreaded, dreaded class. They were doing the work and in some cases excelling at the work."

The time commitments associated with participating in sports at the collegiate level are reportedly further confounded by the type of sport the student is involved in and whether the student-athlete is male or female. It is believed that some sports place particularly high demands on a student-athlete's time and compromise their ability to perform academically. These sports are the male revenue producing sports of basketball and football. John feels that this distinction is important and is critical of how it impacts students, "I'm not a particularly big fan of how revenue-generating sports and student-athletes are handled but for the non-revenue generating sports I think that it is a tremendous experience for the student-athlete. I don't believe that they're being misused or abused in terms of their studies." John has expressed a concern that in

some ways student-athletes that participate in football and basketball are considered athletes first and students second.

This is a prevailing theme that occurred throughout the interview sessions. Tiffany stated flatly, "There's sort of an anti-intellectualism in the football mode." She also intimated that two of her cousins who played football at separate Division IA schools both quit and left their scholarships behind because, "They were not able to get an education. Their first priority was the education, not the collegiate athletics and all that goes with that. It was a means to an education and the demands of the athletic programs were such that they were unable to dedicate sufficient time to their studies." Time commitments are described as a balance that is difficult to achieve and is oftentimes inequitable.

Figure 5 - Balance of Time Commitments Required for Athletics and Academic Achievement
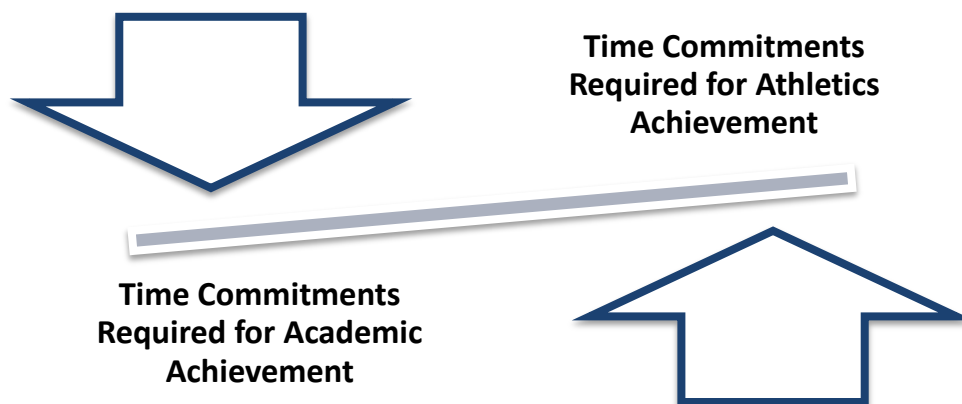
Summary of the Hindrance of Time Commitments

Faculty members report that the hindrance of time commitments for student-athletes is a significant challenge. Student-athletes are described as individuals who view their participation in athletics as a full-time job. This creates a conflict with time commitments required to achieve in an academic capacity. It is described as a delicate balance that is difficult to achieve and

several faculty members expressed concerns that in many cases, the involvement in athletics is detrimental to student-athletes in an academic capacity.

There are additional concerns associated with time commitments required for athletics achievement. Faculty members believe there are negative impacts that reach further than basic academic achievement. Almost all faculty members expressed that their disciplines are demanding. When pressed to respond to the question of which majors student-athletes may be drawn to at the university, a common response was that they were unsure, but that it would be exceptionally difficult to pursue athletics and a degree simultaneously in the faculty member's particular discipline.

Faculty members used several examples to defend their viewpoint. One concern raised was that some majors require a large amount of lab work that other majors do not. These lab sessions are difficult to attend on a regular basis given a student-athlete's demanding schedule. Another concern raised was that some majors require a large amount of group work. Because of the travel and practice time required, student-athletes may not be capable of attending a majority of required group sessions. Group members therefore submit negative evaluations based on the lack of contributions made by student-athletes to group projects.

The last significant hurdle created by the hindrance of time commitments is that male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports have additional demands placed on their time. Faculty members believe that the time commitments for these student-athletes are excessive. This leaves a unique population vulnerable to falling behind in their studies. Because the expectations of stakeholders associated with male revenue producing sports are considered high, these student-athletes are viewed as being pushed harder than others at the university.

The Benefit of Group Membership

Faculty members report there are benefits to being a student-athlete. The concept of group membership is something that faculty members point to as easing the transition into higher education and sustaining a group with which the student is familiar and comfortable. Upperclassmen are able to assist underclassmen in becoming acclimated to the college experience, and in turn, younger athletes as they rise through the college system, will do the same for those who come after. While primarily serving a social function, the members also assist individuals in successfully navigating the requirements and expectations of higher education.

While the structural component of time commitments appears daunting, this resource is at the disposal of the student-athlete to ensure success and manage expectations. Belonging to a social, team-oriented group offers student-athletes an immediate "family" on campus that is supportive and nurturing. In discussing the perceived benefits of being a student-athlete, Catherine stated that the structure of being part of a team is significant. She points out her experience with an incoming freshman student-athlete. "The student that I had, she's a freshman and she's in track and field and I think that coming into the university, she's already part of a program and part of a team and she's going to get some support from her teammates and from her coaches… when you're playing a sport, there's that team mentality that you're part of the group, you're part of the team and I think that's very helpful for anybody."

Heather supports this perception by saying, "I think the camaraderie they have, they already, you know, have a group socially that they hang out with, and just being part of a team I think is a great benefit." Debbie states that, "I think part of it is to have, sort of, a team that you belong to as on, you know a huge campus like this, it sort of gives you I think a sense of

community and being a part of something." Lastly, Tiffany describes it this way, "I think they have a sense of community with their team. Very much so, I think there is very much a sense of community and it also gives them kind of a sense of community with the rest of the student-body too and they're sort of special then."

In addition to the immediate benefit of group membership on a college campus, the concept of group membership also reportedly pays dividends in an athlete's future life. Belonging to a team and operating within the structure of a group that requires dedication for the good of the whole results in a life skill that faculty members perceive as being a positive for student-athletes following graduation. This is a life skill that is viewed by faculty members as being transferrable to other aspects of their lives.

In describing how this benefit is manifested later in life, Thomas states that, "I think with any sport, and depending somewhat on the sport, that there is certainly an individual accomplishment level, and I think followed usually closely with more successful athletes by a dedication to a team. There are not a lot of places where in the world today where you work so closely as a team and those seem like pretty good skills to take forward." The sense of faculty members is that this group membership component to being a student-athlete is a valuable life skill that athletes take forward in life. Tiffany describes this life skill benefit in these terms, "One thing I do say about team sports, it really does, those guys really do develop a sense of teamwork and that does stand them well in terms of going to work, say in corporate America or many places where it is, you know being able to work in teams is important so they do get those good things out of it."

Summary of the Benefit of Group Membership

Faculty members report that the benefit of group membership for student-athletes is valuable. The sense of belonging to a team and a "family" away from home can ease the transition into higher education for incoming freshmen. When matriculating at the university, a social system is pre-existent for student-athletes. This is a benefit that is not available to most other students. Additionally, student-athletes can rely on teammates to provide support and guidance once engrained in the university. This support and guidance assists student-athletes in achieving athletic and academic goals.

The other primary benefit of group membership is reported in the form of teamwork. Faculty members believe that participation in athletics instills in student-athletes the desire to work collaboratively towards common goals. This collaborative capability is described as a life skill that serves student-athletes in later life. The willingness to work as a group and make personal sacrifices for the team is a skill that faculty members say is transferrable to a myriad of future situations that student-athletes will face post-graduation.

The Benefit of Notoriety

The benefit of notoriety is something that faculty members believe plays a role on college campuses for student-athletes. As a group of individuals who are highly visible on campus, athletes may enjoy a certain level of recognition for their athletic accomplishments which further prompts them to participate at the highest level. This recognition and visibility is greatly enhanced by the sport played. Throughout the interviews, faculty members expressed that young men in highly successful and publicized sports such as basketball and football enjoy special attention from their peers and the college's administrative staff and faculty.

Thomas states, "I'm sure there is a population on campus that is very aware of the athletic program and thus I'm sure the athletes get a lot of attention from those students... I guess they can be the big man on campus" Tiffany agrees, "Of course there's always the glory side and that happens at the undergraduate level and there's all the, there's sort of the glamour side of it… I think there's a certain amount of prestige and recognition that they are major contributors to the university and its programs… I think people may recognize them." Heather agreed with the concept of notoriety, "I think some people are just driven to compete and to master a particular sport and I think that certainly the notoriety, that having an identity on a college campus, all of those things I think go into it."

Bob discussed the concept of notoriety in-depth and relayed a story confirming Tiffany's contention that student-athletes are recognized as major contributors to the university. "I think the popularity of the people knowing that Bob plays, runs track, or wrestles or whatever Bob might do, I think is an important thing. It's the recognition that you get being on the team wearing the jersey or the sweatshirt or the ball cap around so people know, "Oh, he must play baseball, he must play basketball." Bob continued on to say, "You can look at when State College University's basketball team went to the NCAA Final Four… that was a big deal. Former State College University President talked about it in the graduation ceremony, they had a gentleman, a basketball player stand up you know out of the 5,000 who were graduating that time and say, "That man just increased the value of your degree."

Summary of the Benefit of Notoriety

Notoriety is a benefit that is described as a valuable motivational tool for student-athletes to achieve at the highest level possible in an athletics arena. This benefit has a reported trickle-down effect on student-athletes in two ways. The first is related to the dedication and acumen of

student-athletes in educational settings. If it stands to reason that participation in athletics is a primary motivating goal, then a student-athlete will do what is required academically to continue participating. Their desire to maintain a certain level of notoriety requires an ability to successfully achieve at least minimal academic benchmarks.

The second effect that notoriety has on a student-athlete is the sense of being a major contributor to the university. Their efforts are recognized as valuable and appreciated. This campus-wide recognition may inspire a student-athlete to represent the program and themselves in a positive manner. As a result, student-athletes are held in high regard by a diverse group of stakeholders on college campuses for their contributions to the university and community.

The Benefit of Support Systems

Faculty members are unanimous in their contention that student-athletes are privy to support systems that are not only beneficial, but that are not available to the general population. These support systems involve tutors, advisors and other academic resources designed to ensure success from an educational standpoint. Whether these resources are altruistic in nature and genuinely designed to assist athletes pursue a meaningful education or whether they are simply supports designed to keep players eligible and further the athletics agenda of the school is debatable. Regardless, faculty members state that student-athletes have tremendous resources available. This access to support systems is not viewed by faculty members as being an unfair arrangement that could be described as preferential treatment.

The understanding of faculty members is that based on the tremendous time commitments and requirements placed on student-athletes, it is natural for them to have greater systems of support available. It is described by Thomas as a fair trade. "Those kids get a lot of support and I would think in any situation where as a freshman you're walking into somewhat of

an unknown that it would help to have all of the support that you could. I think they probably get more support than traditional students and at the same time they give a lot more to the university than traditional students and so I think that's a fair trade, I don't see that as unfair at all."

Bob agrees with Thomas and echoes his statement by saying, "I know my nephew who went to Division IA School #7, you know, he would have tutors and he would have, he had a lot of things that most students didn't have access to… Granted he spent a lot of time practicing, he spent a lot of time going on away trips and all that stuff so it's not a, you know there's a give and take to it."

Judy also discussed support systems for student-athletes, "I think that the main benefit [to being a student-athlete] is that you've got advisors who are looking over your shoulder who are shepherding you in a way, at least in your freshman and maybe sophomore years." Heather agrees, "They [student-athletes] have access to every resource to do well, you know, much more so than other kids."

The concept of support systems being used specifically to address the needs of a unique population as a means of altruism is debated. Some faculty members believe they exist because of prior poor academic performance of student-athletes and abuses perpetuated by athletics departments. This has led to significant regulation of athletics from an academic standpoint. In describing her understanding of college athletics, Judy stated, "They're [college athletics] pretty highly regulated and that regulation has resulted from some pretty bad behavior on the part of schools in terms of the way recruitments have been done, the very poor academic performance of the athletes who essentially leave school totally unequipped to survive if they don't get into the professional leagues, which of course only a tiny percentage of them do."

Thomas is also a faculty member that believes schools place an emphasis on student-athlete academic achievement and uses a strong support system to nurture student growth. However, he too is not wholly convinced that these support systems are the result of a genuine dedication to seeing student-athletes succeed academically. "It seems like the university places some value on that [academic achievement of student-athletes] and whether that's in a selfish way from maintaining their academic standing with the NCAA or whether that's truly altruistic in thinking about the good of the athlete, I don't know."

Debbie appreciates the system of student-athlete supports at her institution. She believes that the system, altruistic or otherwise, is effective to an extent, "I think that the communication between the folks that work with the student-athletes and instructors is pretty good here compared to the same infrastructure at other institutions. When I have had serious issues with student-athletes and I've talked to those folks there's an immediate change from the student. Not a lasting one, but an immediate one and you know, it might last a couple weeks or whatever the case may be, but I think that in the overall course of things that intervention for lack of a better word by the person who works with those athletes makes a difference and more so than if I contact the advisor for just a typical student that's not a student-athlete. They still try to talk to the student, they might use just as strong of language but I don't think they have that leverage of being able to say, you know, "This will affect your participation in the sport if you don't improve your performance," so I've definitely noticed that that seems to be a tool that I have that helps a lot, sort of a third party that I can go to if I feel the need and if I know that a student is really on a downhill slope that I have that option and that it seems to matter when I use that option."

Judy reported similar positive experiences with the support staff assigned to student-athletes at the university, "My impression was that the administrative support for them is overall,

it seems very strong. They have advisors, with certain students I had advisors in touch with me all the time clearly engaged in a very detailed way with the work that the student was doing in my class and, but firm not over-helping, supportive… the advisor was sort of reiterating, "Well, we need to hold Volleyball Player #1 to the same standard as everybody else. She needs to do the work. If she's not doing the work, she needs to be penalized."

In relation to support systems for ensuring academic success, faculty members are supportive of the practice. Tiffany states, "The ideal that I would see for student-athletes [would be] a good program to help mentor and tutor them and to keep them doing well in their studies. I think State College University might be the kind of school that could have people volunteering to work with or mentor some of the student-athletes if that was necessary… a way to help mentor them towards academic success"

Sandra agrees, "I hope that State College University takes as good care of their student-athletes as Division IAA School #1 does. I was really, really impressed with the forethought that probably developed out of very unsuccessful management of their students and graduation rates but they have it down to a science at Division IAA School #1 and I really felt that the administration, not only the sports administration but the administration as a whole really made an effort to do everything that they could to support their student-athletes and I would hope that the same procedures and the same support network is in place here at State College University because you know what, students at State College University, they probably need it more."

Summary of the Benefit of Support Systems

The benefit of support systems is the greatest benefit associated with being a student-athlete. These support systems are defined as mentors, advisors, tutors and other resources expended on student-athletes to assist them in achieving academic goals. These resources go

beyond what is perceived to be made available for other students on campus. However, it is viewed as necessary and appropriate by faculty members based on the demands placed on student-athletes. While time commitments represent the greatest hindrance for student-athletes, support systems are perceived as a method for combating negative impacts associated with time management and the ability to achieve in an academic setting.

The debate over whether the benefit of support systems constitutes preferential treatment of student-athletes was openly discussed with faculty members at State College University. The general feeling of faculty members is that if student-athletes are required to make significant sacrifices for the university then the university has a responsibility to assist student-athletes in any way possible. It is defined as a quid-pro-quos arrangement. A lengthier discussion of the perceived preferential/non-preferential treatment of student-athletes is in Chapter five.

Summary of Qualitative Findings – Research Question # 3

Table 29 - Hindrances and Benefits Associated with Academic Achievement

Category	Hindrance	Benefit
Time Commitments	X	
Group Membership		X
Notoriety		X
Support Systems		X

The primary challenge that faculty members point to when discussing hindrances and benefits towards academic achievement is the time demands placed on student-athletes. Achieving a balance between academic and athletic achievement is difficult. Faculty members believe that student-athletes treat their athletics participation as a full-time job. This can leave

them in a comprising position in relation to academic achievement. Navigating the diverse and oftentimes competing expectations of a variety of stakeholders is a daunting task.

Combating the negative impact of time commitments are three distinct benefits that faculty members discussed. These benefits are social and educational in nature. The benefits of group membership and notoriety are primarily social but also impact student-athletes in relation to academic achievement in a positive manner. The benefit of group membership is viewed as valuable for entering and continuing through the education process. Belonging to a social system affords student-athletes the opportunity to receive support and nurturing from their colleagues. Additionally, they learn the value of teamwork and sacrifice. These are tools that faculty members believe help student-athletes achieve goals at the college level and in future professional careers. The benefit of notoriety also gives student-athletes a sense of belonging and self-worth. Student-athletes that enjoy a certain level of notoriety and recognition believe they are major contributors to the university. This serves to motivate them in both social and educational realms.

The benefit of support systems is described as appropriate and necessary. Student-athletes are required to meet both academic and athletic expectations. To assist them in achieving their academic goals, universities have invested significant resources in support systems. These support systems include advisors, mentors, tutors and academic coaches. Without these resources, the challenges facing student-athletes from an academic standpoint become unachievable.

Qualitative Results – Research Question # 4

How do faculty members describe the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport illuminated in the literature review including;

commercialization, professionalism, entertainment, nationalism (school pride), the amateur ideal, educational development and social development?

Overview

Faculty members discussed their perceptions of the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport. These common themes were illuminated in the review of the literature and traced back to their origins. These origins included the Homeric and Platonic models of sport that emerged in Ancient Greece and are currently perpetuated at the college level. While not exhaustive as a list, the common themes and their origins are depicted on the following page.

Figure 6 - Common Historical Themes Associated with Athletics
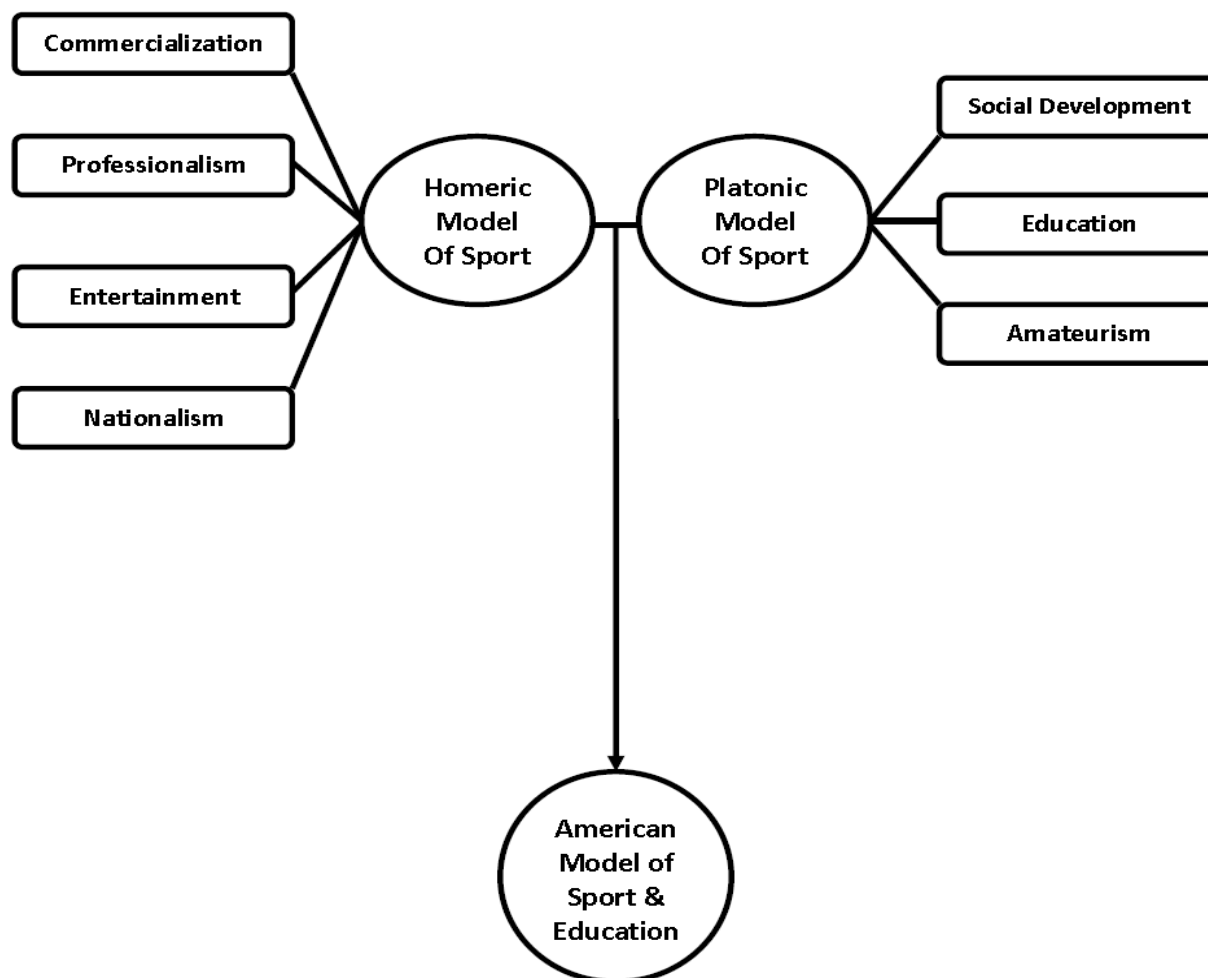
The role of college athletics was discussed in ways specific to the university but also in ways that encompass the broader goals of all institutions sponsoring Division-I programs. The emergent trends and themes associated with the role of college athletics focuses on two primary elements, (1) Nationalism (school pride and community engagement) and (2) commercialization. These elements are both Homeric in origin. The secondary theme of social and educational development of the individual, Platonic in origin, was also discussed but not universally. This concept/theme is reported later in this section.

Commercialization and National Recognition

The first primary role of athletics discussed by faculty members is focused on the concept of commercialization. It is reported to be a way in which institutions generate revenue and more importantly exposure. This is viewed as a way to get the university in the eyes and minds of the nation in attempts to bring recognition to the school. This exposure is viewed as a way to recruit talented staff and students and give the university a public name and image as being elite. In short, it is a branding and marketing tool.

In discussing the primary role of athletics and associated goals of the university, Thomas stated, "I think just like everything else in higher ed. especially at larger universities, it's big business and I'm sure that's a large consideration when a college or university undertakes different sports programs." Catherine agreed that the primary purpose of a college athletics program is to generate "money" and also discussed the concept of exposure as a reason for sponsoring sports. In response to the question about why schools sponsor programs, other than money, she said, "Recognition for their college. I know when Division IA School #1's football team started doing really well, people started paying a lot of attention to Division IA School #1. I went there in the 80s and we didn't have a good football team but once Current NFL Player #1

came along, it was, "Hey you went to Division IA School #1." When probed about how much emphasis schools place on athletics, she responded by saying, "I think they place a lot on athletics. I mean, it generates a lot of money for their school. It makes a huge recruitment tool too. I mean, they get national attention when they're playing at that level, especially if they have a good team."

Bob discussed the concept of the role of athletics on campuses in a similar fashion. "I think college athletics is, at the level that we see on television, what the general public thinks of college athletics, I think it's all about, you know, the audience and it's all about extending the brand of the university, it's all about income for the university." He went on to discuss how important that exposure is for a university, "There's a whole lot of schools I probably would of never heard of if they didn't have a good football team or basketball team." To emphasize his point, Bob offered the following anecdote, "I have a nephew who is applying to school and he, not too bright and all that kind of stuff and he sent me a list of the schools that some website said he could probably get into given his SAT scores or something like that and so I was scanning down the list and saying, "Geez, I've never heard of any of these schools," and you know, I think if any of them were a small school that had a big football team or a good basketball team I'd probably recognize the school."

The concept of money and recognition for the school is a unanimous point made by faculty members throughout the interviews. John agrees with Bob that this concept is further enhanced by the revenue producing sports, but also believes that non-revenue producing sports also provide a high level of exposure that is useful for national recognition and even the recruitment of future student-athletes. "I think that the two revenue-generating sports of football and basketball give the university a level of recognition that goes beyond academics. It's not as

though you're going to read in the paper about Dr. So-and-So who did some scientific discovery that is good but not Nobel Prize winning but the football team going 9-1 and going to the Orange Bowl, the average person can understand… I think the university looks at it first as a revenue generator mechanism, as a method of promoting their university in public. Even the non-revenue generating sports offers them the opportunity for recognition that they may not otherwise receive. As an example, the Division IA School #3 women's volleyball team, it's a three-time national champion. In a row! Now you may not know that but I guarantee you that State College University does. They're recruiting people, when they recruit a student-athlete, in this case a young lady from a Southern state to the volleyball team, they're promoting it by saying, "Hey, we are going to play against the best. Did you know that we are scheduled to play Division IA School #3 on November the, and they're the three-time national champ?" So in many ways it tends to be something that brings recognition to the university."

The concept of creating a national name and generating funding through athletic success is echoed by Debbie who believes that athletics are positioned in a way that other things at the university are not to achieve these goals. Like John who stated that you would not read about a professor making some discovery as opposed to a football team's result, Debbie shares a similar sentiment. "I think that they [athletics programs] play a big financial role on campuses… a lot of folks are, you know, willing to donate bucks for sports but not for, you know, other things so I think that, I think they play an important role in a couple of ways. One for the university as a whole in terms of fundraising and things like that and also, you know if a team's doing well in terms of public perception and things like that because they probably, you know, the general public might hear how the basketball team's doing but not necessarily hear a whole lot about, you know, say service learning or things like that that the university's doing."

Summary of Commercialization and National Recognition

Faculty members strongly support the belief that a primary role associated with athletics at the collegiate level is commercialization and national recognition. When discussing the role of college athletics and primary motivations for universities sponsoring athletics programs, the first answer was predominately revenue and exposure. Faculty members believe that universities use athletics to generate funds. A way of generating increased funding is to have competitive programs that are in the national spotlight. Many references to specific NCAA Division-I universities that annually compete for national championships and revenue were discussed.

In several instances, faculty members suggested that some of the enthusiasm for generating funding through athletics has compromised the academic reputation of universities. However, athletics are viewed as a viable vehicle for increasing revenue. A primary consideration is the profile of the university in relation to athletics. In this way, college football is viewed as the largest and most attractive draw. Though faculty members interviewed are positioned at a university that does not sponsor football, they all discussed its impact from both an academic and athletics standpoint. The unique position and effect of college football is further discussed in chapter five.

The national recognition component of commercialization is described as being even more important. Faculty members stated that universities use their athletics programs as a marketing and promotion tool. Having a higher-profile athletics program allows universities the opportunity to gain national recognition. This is viewed as a way of attracting potential students and faculty members. The desire to use athletics as an effective advertising tool is seen as a primary motivation for investing heavily into athletics.

Nationalism – School Pride and Community Engagement

The second primary role of athletics discussed by faculty members is focused on the concept of nationalism. This concept is discussed in specific ways. Athletics are viewed as an effective vehicle for developing a sense of community and engaging alumni to be loyal to that community. It is argued by faculty members that college athletics are a unique way in which all stakeholders at a university can come together for a common cause.

Thomas describes the concept of nationalism in this way. "I think it provides a great outlet for the students. I think it's a community builder, or it has the potential to be that I should say, a community builder within the university and probably one of the few things at the scale of the entire university that can draw a population at the scale of the entire university. So many other things happen at the school or college or the departmental level and there are often very few things that can draw an entire student body together." As an example, Thomas offered the following, "When they had the tragedy at Division IA School #1 a couple of years ago, one of the really sort of enduring images of that was the memorial service that they had on the drill field… I would guess, a large portion of the student body was on the drill field with a candle lit, and it was a moving thing, and I think that kind of participation rarely happens at universities except for sporting events. Even to the point that convocations and graduations are probably not as well attended. Also, I think it's, if you think about opportunities to bring alumni and students together, it certainly does that."

Heather described the sense of nationalism as, "something for the students to be involved in for them to bond and attending and going and, you know, I just, I see it as a great benefit." Debbie regarded the concept of community building by speaking about primary motivations of schools sponsoring athletics programs. In her opinion, student engagement is a priority. "Student

engagement on the campus in terms of, you know, identifying with your school and having school pride and all of those sorts of things and also to a certain extent the community engagement with the campus."

Tiffany spoke to the issue of primary motivations for sponsoring athletics as well. "Clearly it [college athletics] really engenders school spirit… Current Division IA School #1 Football Coach has built, you know just a premier program and it really has given the Division IA School #1 student body something to sort of coalesce around so I think it really provides team spirit. I think the State College University Nickname's are doing that for State College University… It also helps alumni, keep them interested and a lot of schools look at it as a way to encourage alumni giving."

In terms of alumni engagement, Judy describes the role of college athletics by saying, "A robust athletic program where you've got winning teams really engages your alumni base and if you want to keep the alumni excited and involved and contributing not just financially but sort of contributing their energy, all of that, athletics seems for a variety of reasons to be a good way to do that… there is something about that, you know home, the team and being for the team and being for the star that's pretty exciting and pretty, you know, has a place to play, a role to play in communities." While she believes athletics are an effective way to build a reputation and community, she does wish that some other means could be explored, "I'd like to see other avenues explored more. Okay, this is totally weird but I've had this notion that an institution, State College University even, could develop a community around the notion of contributing, of volunteerism, of giving, sort of giving to the world by building that sort of notion into their curriculum in an integrated way, in an organic way, that you could actually grow an institution

that was known for producing super-stars of that kind of endeavor so anyway, that's my little weird fantasy (laughs). But I do think it's [college athletics] effective."

Summary of Nationalism – School Pride and Community Engagement

Faculty members describe the concept of nationalism (school pride and community engagement) in glowing terms. Many faculty members are quoted as saying college athletics are an effective and unique tool for developing a sense of community on campus. Some faculty members stated they would like to see other avenues explored but all agreed that athletics are a useful vehicle for community building. Athletics programs are viewed as a rallying point for current students, parents, faculty members and alumni. A robust athletics program is seen as a way to keep a diverse group of individuals united towards a common cause.

The concept of community building is also tied to the first concept of commercialization. Faculty members feel that alumni are more willing to donate to athletics programs than other causes on campus. Aside from donations, it is also viewed as a way of connecting alumni with current students thus keeping them connected to the traditions of the campus. The concept of school pride and being united towards a common cause is described by faculty members as an arrangement that is less achievable through other means.

Social and Educational Development through Sport

The Platonic notion of social and educational development through sport was discussed by several faculty members who believe athletics are a way of developing well-rounded individuals as part of the liberal arts curriculum. Athletics in these terms are viewed as a way to broaden the experience of an individual while on campus and in a way that is beneficial.

Sandra expressed this perception in the following way. "I believe that athletics are developed as part of the entire liberal arts education experience." John agreed, "I do believe it

[college athletics] offers them an opportunity while they're in college to do something that they love without impacting their studies… I think [college athletics] are good outlets for the students and affords them the opportunity to be able to have a broader experience than they might not normally have." Debbie confirmed this notion, "I think it helps students be more well-rounded."

The Platonic notion of sport was described as something that may be declining by Judy, but nevertheless, she still believes it is an element that has survived. "I think that also there is, although I think it's really waning, a traditional kind of going back, way-way-way back in history that being an athlete was part of being a kind of refined person, you know that sort of old fashioned notion of the educated gentleman also was someone who had a certain level of athletic prowess."

Summary of Social and Educational Development through Sport

The evidence of social and educational development of student-athletes through sport is limited. While faculty members did discuss the concept of the well-rounded individual who is proficient in both sport and education, the concept does not represent a prevailing trend amongst faculty members. The Platonic tradition of sport is not absent from discussions, but the financial and commercial interests of current American college sports far outweighs it.

While proponents of college athletics promote character building through sport, the evidence throughout this study does not support that claim as a primary motivation for sponsoring athletics at NCAA Division-I universities. It was noted earlier that the benefit of group membership instilled the concepts of teamwork and sacrifice in student-athletes but there is little else to support claims associated with social and educational development through sport at State College University.

Summary of Qualitative Findings – Research Question # 4

There are two primary motivations for universities to sponsor athletics programs. The first motivation involves the commercialization of sport to generate revenue and exposure for the university. The second motivation is to use athletics to foster a sense of school pride and community engagement. Both of these themes are Homeric in origin. The Platonic notion of social and educational development through sport at the amateur level appears to be waning. While some faculty members point to the concept of the well-rounded individual as being a refined person that achieves in the academic and athletics realms, there is little evidence that can be used to support this claim at State College University.

Preferential/Non-Preferential Treatment of Student-Athletes – Findings

In an article published in 2005 by Lawry, it is stated that universities have spent enormously on student-athletes in an attempt to aid them in achieving scholastic benchmarks. This spending includes facilities, staff, advisors and tutors that are not readily available to the average student on campus. As a result, the question of academic integrity has been challenged in relation to the student-athlete because additional expenditures and resources are seen as unfair advantages offered to the student-athlete.

Contrasting this research, however, Thomas (2008) contends that additional resources that are currently being offered to student-athletes are not only required, but are indispensible to level the academic playing field. If these "perks" are not provided, student-athletes are at risk to fall further behind traditional students (Thomas, 2008). In this way, what some perceive as preferential treatment, may be conversely argued as accommodating a unique population in need.

Faculty members at State College University supported Thomas' viewpoint during interview sessions. Based on the tremendous time commitments and requirements placed on

student-athletes, faculty members at State College University feel it is natural for them to have greater systems of support available. It was described by Thomas as a fair trade. "Those kids get a lot of support and I would think in any situation where as a freshman you're walking into somewhat of an unknown that it would help to have all of the support that you could. I think they probably get more support than traditional students and at the same time they give a lot more to the university than traditional students and so I think that's a fair trade, I don't see that as unfair at all."

Bob agreed with Thomas and echoed his statement by saying, "I know my nephew who went to Division IA School #7, you know, he would have tutors and he would have, he had a lot of things that most students didn't have access to… granted he spent a lot of time practicing, he spent a lot of time going on away trips and all that stuff so it's not a, you know there's a give and take to it." Judy also discussed support systems for student-athletes, "I think that the main benefit [to being a student-athlete] is that you've got advisors who are looking over your shoulder who are shepherding you in a way, at least in your freshman and maybe sophomore years." Heather agreed, "They [student-athletes] have access to every resource to do well, you know, much more so than other kids."

There are varying levels of purported treatment of student-athletes on campus. This treatment in some instances may be viewed as preferential and in other cases, simply necessary. In relation to preferential treatment, there was a split amongst faculty members based on the sport the individual is playing. As seen earlier in results, male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports are viewed differently than male and female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports.

John summed up the difference in how he believes student-athletes are viewed on campus by faculty members. "Football, basketball, I think that most people believe that star athletes get special consideration, special treatment, etc… And every time you see something in the news like Division IA School #4 or something else I think that simply reinforces it. People who are graduates from those universities or root for those universities tend to overlook that. But I perceive that probably the average person would say that it's just part of doing business. Regrettable, but I think, it doesn't particularly phase them one way or another." Bob agreed with John's assessment when it comes to revenue-producing male sports. "I think you take the notoriety and the popularity and the, I think football players, basketball players, the premium sport players get some privileges that maybe the cross country player or runner might not."

Bob continued on to discuss his own personal recollections of special treatment of student-athletes playing baseball. "I remember when, I played ball at a puny little school in Southern State #2 we would play against Division IA School #12 and Division IA School #11 and Division IA School #14 and we went to their, into their athletes' dorm and athletes' cafeteria and their gym and it was like, "Wow, you guys are living high on the hog." They were able to register for classes before everybody, student-athletes were, and when we registered people would say, "Here, take Dr. Johnson, he's an easy A and take this class and this class, all easy A's, they're simple," and I knew, and I had teachers who would say, "Oh, you're a student-athlete," you know, they would sort of push you through and it was quite nice and I would imagine at bigger schools it was much, just based on seeing their dorms, their cafeterias, their weight rooms, their gyms, their facilities, they probably had it a little easier."

In relation to non-revenue producing sports, John had this to say, "The soccer team, the swimming team, the tennis team, I don't think anybody believes that those people are going to be

poor students or who are treated with special consideration… probably the general view of the faculty is, they may consider them as decent students and therefore would be shocked to hear that they are receiving some sort of special consideration in class."

Debbie discussed privileges of student-athletes but in a manner that demonstrated the utility of current arrangements on college campuses rather than preferential treatment. "I really don't necessarily know all of the things that they get here so I might just be assuming that they get these things because I know they do at other institutions but you know, things like early registration for classes because their schedule is, you know, less flexible than other students, easier time getting their books and supplies and things like that for the semester and having advisors that are really sort of dedicated to them in a greater way than the rest of the student population has in terms of advising."

Interactionist Theory – Findings

A portion of the literature review detailed six theoretical sociological frameworks that can be used to understand sport and social identity within specific cultural contexts. Interactionist theory was determined to be the primary framework that would be appropriate for further analysis of data associated with this study to assist in better understanding the trends and themes associated with the development and reinforcement of the social identity of student-athletes at State College University.

The data collected were insufficient to make definitive determinations supporting interactionist theory as a primary framework for understanding the development and reinforcement of a student- athlete's social identity at State College University. Faculty members did describe student-athletes who lead a regimented life and juggle multiple expectations of stakeholders. It is evidenced that student-athletes have a social identity that is influenced by

social interactions with a diverse group of stakeholders. These stakeholders represent both

academic and athletic interests. Additionally, it is likely that student-athletes arrive on campus

already possessing a distinct social identity that is rooted in athletics. This identity may be

reinforced or changed depending on feedback received. This was the experience of Heather.

Heather who attended college on an athletics scholarship described her experience and

subsequent changes in social identity. "I was an athlete my whole life, I mean that was my

number one identity and focus growing up and through my teenage years and college and I think,

you know, some people are just driven to compete and to master a particular sport and I think

that certainly the notoriety, that having an identity on a college campus, all of those things I think

go into it but typically the kids who are going to play in college already had that notoriety and

identity prior to, that's how they got here… I try to tell my personal story, that I was, I identified

myself as an athlete not a scholar and so I was never very focused on school. I was just kind of

doing enough so that I could play but being at Division IAA School #2, I really, I took some

amazing courses with some amazing professors and transformed myself from that dichotomy

where you're one or the other and really embraced being a scholar and I think some athletes, that

presents a challenge like that they can't be both and I always try and, you know, talk about the

fact that you can be both."

While this account is vivid and descriptive, it is isolated in the context of this study.

Other faculty members interviewed intimated similar data in less descriptive forms that

possessed overtones of interactionist theory but were inconclusive. Tiffany for instance described

an aura of anti-intellectualism surrounding college football players when she attended college.

These players were consistently encouraged to focus primarily on football and treat academics as

a necessary but secondary pursuit. Football players that were academically-motivated were

discouraged from pursuing meaningful majors. As a result, her cousins that entered college to play football both left to pursue academic goals when their athletic and academic goals became incompatible. This is indicative of the shedding of one social identity as subjective priorities changed based on interactions within a specific cultural context but the data is inconclusive.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Faculty members interviewed discussed concepts in two broad categorical terms. The first was specific to student-athletes. These discussions focused on ways in which faculty members view student-athletes in higher education. Discussions of student-athletes in higher education were further fractured to answer research questions two and three. Research question two focused on faculty perceptions of the "typical" student-athlete. Research question three focused on faculty perceptions of hindrances and benefits towards the academic achievement of student-athletes. The second categorical term was specific to the role of college athletics in higher education including a discussion of the primary motivations for universities to sponsor athletics programs.

Discussions of student-athletes in research question two resulted in several factors being illuminated. Faculty members believe that gender and whether the student-athlete participates in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport impacts their motivation, dedication and acumen in educational settings. Female student-athletes are viewed as superior students that are primarily academically motivated while male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports are viewed as being primarily athletically-motivated. This is attributed to potential career options available to student-athletes following graduation.

Discussions of student-athletes in research question three revealed that time commitments are the single greatest challenge facing student-athletes in relation to academic achievement.

This balance is described as tenuous. Faculty members reported that student-athletes lead highly regimented lives and view their participation in athletics as a full-time job. This creates conflict between time required for athletics achievement and time required for academic achievement. This conflict is combated through a series of three distinct benefits including group membership, notoriety and support systems. These benefits are social and educational in nature. All three work to support and nurture student-athletes through the educational process. These are three benefits that assist student-athletes in achieving in an academic capacity.

Research question four explored faculty attitudes towards college athletics and illuminated primary motivations they felt were paramount in describing the role of college athletics. The first motivation relies on sport as a corporate model. Faculty members agree that athletics are used to generate funds and to promote the university on a national level to compete for students, faculty and other resources. The second motivation relies on sport as a tool for community building. Faculty members believe that sport is uniquely positioned to accomplish this goal. They believe that no other tool is as effective in drawing support from a diverse group of stakeholders.

In relation to the issue of preferential versus non-preferential treatment of student-athletes in higher education, faculty members determined that additional systems of support to ensure academic attainment for student-athletes are appropriate and necessary. The general viewpoint is that student-athletes make additional sacrifices beyond those of a student that does not participate in college athletics. The primary sacrifice is time. With limited time remaining, faculty members strongly believe that student-athletes require greater resources from an academic standpoint.

In relation to interactionist theory and its application to better understand the social identity formation and reinforcement of student-athletes at State College University, the data is inconclusive. There are anecdotal data that support interactionist theory as a sociological framework that is appropriate for the study of student-athletes in higher education settings but not enough to suggest it is the preeminent approach to understanding the social identity of student-athletes at State College University.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Summary of the Purpose of the Study

This study examined faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I institution. These objectives were achieved by utilizing mixed methods. The first component of the study was quantitative and measured faculty ratings of the academic competency of student-athletes in comparison to other students at the university. The second component of the study was qualitative and examined faculty attitudes towards (1) college athletics in higher education settings and (2) student-athletes in higher education settings. Component two further examined factors associated with how faculty members developed these attitudes.

Summary of Findings

Faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at State College University are varied. There are critical factors associated with how faculty members describe the role of athletics in higher education and how student-athletes cope with expectations from a variety of stakeholders. Furthermore, faculty members describe student-athletes as a complex group of individuals who present unique challenges based on a number of factors which may include individual educational aptitude, gender and whether the student-athletes participates in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. These factors are seen

as critical in describing the motivation and dedication of student-athletes in educational settings as well as exhibited attitudes and behaviors. Despite these differences, a number of themes and trends were illuminated that serve as a common ground for describing the hindrances and benefits associated with being a student-athlete at the collegiate level in relation to academic achievement.

While faculty members differ in levels of experience and exposure to college athletics, many of their beliefs and attitudes about the topic are consistent. Some faculty members interviewed participated in college athletics. Others are familiar with the arrangement and associated challenges based on the experiences of family members and friends who participated in college athletics. Additionally, many faculty members have had direct contact with student-athletes through courses they have taught; however, not all faculty members could be categorized in this manner.

The complete statistical analysis of faculty ratings of student-athletes compared to other students at the university in relation to academic competency was reported in chapter four. Common trends and themes associated with student-athletes and the role of college athletics were also reported in chapter four. A further examination of these findings is the primary focus of the conclusions and recommendations chapter. Issues discovered and raised throughout the study are examined and discussed.

Research Question # 1 – Findings and Discussion

How do faculty members rate the academic competency of student-athletes in comparison to other students at their college or university?

A model for assessing academic competency has been developed over the past decade referred to as the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES) and was used to conduct the

quantitative portion of this study. ACES was designed to elicit reliable and valid data that measure components directly related to the construct of academic competency. The developers determined that a variety of factors, both social and educational, play a significant role in the development of academic competency. ACES is a deviation from traditional norms that focused on academic achievement solely for determining academic competency. Synthesizing traditional academic achievement data with social and behavioral data is believed to be a better, more thorough way of describing the construct of academic competency (DiPerna & Elliott, 1999).

The ACES is divided into two realms. The first realm is Academic Skills which is used to measure traditional academic achievement benchmarks associated with academic competency. These achievement benchmarks include Reading/Writing skills, Math/Science skills and Critical Thinking skills. The second realm is Academic Enablers which is used to measure social/behavioral benchmarks associated with academic competency. These achievement benchmarks include Interpersonal skills, Engagement, Motivation and Study skills.

The overall quantitative results from this study indicate that faculty members believe that student-athletes are academically competent in four of the seven components presented. The four components for which student-athletes exceeded the cut point for determining academic competency were (1) Critical Thinking skills, (2) Interpersonal skills, (3) Engagement, and (4) Study skills. Of the three components where student-athletes failed to achieve the cut point score provided with the scales, two registered mean scores that were close to the cut point.

Both of the components that registered mean scores that were below but close to the cut point for determining academic competency were in the Academic Skills realm. The individual component of Reading/Writing skills fell below the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency by 1.1 points with a mean faculty score of 28.9 points. The individual

component of Math/Science skills fell below the cut point of 30 points for determining academic competency by 0.1 points with a mean faculty score of 29.9 points. These results suggest that student-athletes compared to other students at the university are below grade level, however, not by an overwhelming margin.

In relation to the Academic Enablers realm, student-athletes were rated as being competent in all but one of the four individual components. This component was Motivation and is represented by an unusually high cut point of 36 points. In relation to the cut points used in all other components, this represents the highest mean score required for achieving academic competence. Competence in the Motivation component is expected to exceed the mid-point response of "sometimes" to achieve academic competence. Whereas a mid-point response of 3.0 points is adequate for determining competency in other components, a response of 3.6 points per item was required. The individual component of Motivation fell well below the cut point of 36 points for determining academic competency by 3.2 points with a mean faculty score of 32.8 points.

The ACES cut scores vary by component because when developed, a standardization of scores was employed to develop thresholds for determining academic competency. Whereas all components associated with Academic Skills were static and presented cut points in the middle of the range (10-50 points with a cut point established at 30 points), individual cut points of Academic Enablers were varied. During the standardization of the instrument, some components in the Academic Enablers realm yielded higher average scores, thus pushing the individual cut scores to higher thresholds for determining academic competency.

In addition to mean scores and cut points for individual components, percentages of faculty members rating student-athletes as at grade level or above in the Academic Skills realm

and sometimes or above frequency levels in the Academic Enablers realm were calculated and reported. In a quantitative survey research study of faculty attitudes towards intercollegiate athletics cited in the review of the literature, results indicated that 73% of faculty indicated that it is, "Not at All to Slightly Characteristic," of faculty in their department to stereotype student-athletes negatively, dismissing them as serious and capable students (Lawrence, 2007). The overall percentage of faculty members rating student-athletes at or above grade level in the Academic Skills realm was measured at 76.2%, a result that is slightly higher but comparable.

The overall percentage of faculty members rating student-athletes at sometimes or above frequency levels in the Academic Enablers realm was measured at 86.1%, a result that is significantly higher than the Academic Skills realm and Lawrence's study. However, it is important to be cautious with this result. The cut points for three of the four individual components in the Academic Enablers realm were set at levels that exceeded mean scores of sometimes.

There are two significant findings that resulted from the quantitative portion of the study that warrant further discussion. The first is the overall perception of faculty members towards student-athletes in academic settings. Despite the fact that a majority of faculty members believe that student-athletes in comparison to other students at the university are academically competent, there is still a large percentage that view student-athletes as sub-par students.

In this investigation, approximately one out of every five faculty members harbored some negative perception towards student-athletes in relation to academic competency. The overall percentage of faculty members rating student-athletes at the institution at or above grade level on Academic Skills measures and sometimes or greater frequency level on Academic Enablers measures was a combined average of 81.2%. The challenge set forth for further research into this

phenomenon should be to determine what factors are most significantly contributing to this belief rather than continuing to measure a figure that appears to be routinely replicated.

The second critical finding was the result of an individual item analysis of ACES results. There are specific items from the ACES instrument measures that were highlighted. These were items that contributed to lower and higher mean scores and averages in the individual components. Because of the instrument used, it was possible to analyze each of the 66 items spread over the two realms and seven components of academic competency on an individual basis. An analysis of individual items revealed scores that demonstrated strengths by highlighting figures that far exceeded the mean in each component and weaknesses by highlighting figures that fell far below the mean in each component. In this way, it was possible to determine areas of refinement that exist at State College University to better address the academic needs of student-athletes.

As way of an example, it was reported that the mean score for faculty members in the Reading/Writing skills component was 28.9 points (1.1 point below the cut point for determining academic competency). The average percentage of faculty members ranking student-athletes at or above grade level in this component was 73% as a whole. A closer examination offered an opportunity to understand individual items within this component that significantly impacted the overall mean.

There were four items that produced particularly low results, results that were deemed to be far below the average score of 3.0 points that determine an at grade level result per item. These items were (1) Spelling – 2.80 points, (2) Punctuation – 2.76 points, (3) Grammar – 2.75 points and (4) Written Communication – 2.79 points. It is clear that items related to the reading sections of the Reading/Writing skills component were at or near grade level, while items related

to the writing part of the Reading/Writing skills component need to be addressed. Knowing this offers practitioners an opportunity to better address the needs of student-athletes from an academic standpoint at State College University.

Research Question # 2 – Findings and Discussion

How do faculty members describe the "typical" student-athlete?

The overall findings suggest that faculty members described the typical student-athlete in three primary ways. These three primary ways included a student-athlete's (1) motivation for participation, (2) dedication and acumen in educational settings and (3) exhibited attitudes and behaviors. The primary consideration for faculty members in describing these three themes was dependent on the gender of the student-athlete and whether they participated in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. Revenue producing sports are considered to be football, men's basketball and to a smaller extent baseball. The revenue was not the driving force, rather the perceived opportunity to excel in a sport that may offer a professional career after competing at the collegiate level. Throughout the thematic coding process, these two variables were prevalent and presented an opportunity to better understand faculty perceptions of a typical student-athlete.

The motivation for participation in college athletics for the typical student-athlete is primarily influenced by the sport the student participates in. For male student-athletes participating in the revenue producing sports, it is believed that their motivations are more athletically-focused. In this way, higher education is viewed as a stepping stone to the professional leagues. This is a finding that is consistent with the concept of using college athletics to attain future professional careers in athletics as was illustrated by the example of Deion Sanders (Putnam, 1999).

For male and female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports, it is believed that their motivations are more academically-focused. This is due to the belief that a student-athlete participating in a non-revenue producing sport knows that their athletics career will expire following graduation. Thus, these student-athletes will pursue a career outside of the athletic arena.

Debbie described the dichotomy in this way, "I think that in some cases the sport is a career goal and they're obviously then approaching things much differently than someone who is just sort of, you know, doing it to continue their activity in a sport and are working on a degree that's leading towards their career goal." Bob, a professor of mass communications describes the difference in motivations for participation in a similar fashion, "I would think that some of the sports that nobody comes out to watch, let's say cross country, I think that their motivations are a lot different than, let's say a football player." As a result, faculty members report that these students must make the most of their educational opportunities because they will be dependent on them for the pursuit of a chosen career outside of athletics.

A further consideration offered by faculty members in relation to motivation is that there are not significant opportunities for women to play a chosen sport at the professional level. While it is acknowledged that some women do play professional sports, these opportunities are limited and are in no way comparable to a plethora of perceived professional opportunities for men. Boutilier & SanGiovanni describe this arrangement as a systematic oppression based on gender that is the result of economic interests that maintain a class structure within a given social and cultural context (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). This is a potential underlying factor that influences athletics motivations of women and why faculty members described female student-athletes as almost exclusively academically inclined.

Sport as a career is a highly unlikely arrangement for women after college. Thomas, a professor in the school of the arts, described the differences between men and women participating in college athletics. "My guess is mostly in women's athletics, because there's not the carrot of professional sports at the end of it that they're playing it more because they enjoy it... My guess is that primarily, or that most of the female athletes probably spend greater time than the male athletes. Again, because they are necessarily going to be more dependent on their academic performance in their later life is my perception."

Of further interest, it was noted in the previous findings that student-athletes as a whole were rated by faculty members to be below the cut point for determining academic competency on the motivation component. The Motivation component is comprised of items related to, "A student's approach, persistence, and level of interest regarding academic subjects." (DiPerna, 2004). However, it is unknown whether the trends associated with gender and revenue versus non-revenue producing sports associated with the theme of motivation for participation in some way influenced these ratings. It is possible that faculty members considered male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports heavily when completing their ratings. It is plausible that this may have impacted student-athletes rankings as a whole in a negative fashion.

The dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings was again described by faculty members as being dependent on gender and revenue versus non-revenue producing sports, however, the dedication component offered additional insights. The motivation for participation described previously impacted the way faculty members described student-athletes in relation to dedication and acumen in educational settings. If a student-athlete is primarily athletically motivated, it should be clear that they will be less dedicated to academic pursuits. However, according to faculty members, this is not always the case. The dedication of a

student-athlete in educational settings may be influenced by additional outside factors such as eligibility rules.

Faculty members described the dedication of some student-athletes as a necessary evil they undertake to continue playing. While they may not be highly motivated or interested in academics, they will continue to be dedicated students to achieve at least minimum levels of satisfactory academic progress. Based on all of the factors mentioned, a blend of student-athletes was described throughout the study in relation to educational dedication.

Another illuminating concept in relation to the acumen of student-athletes in educational settings was reported by two faculty members who felt strongly that admissions standards for superior athletes have been lowered in the past due to recruiting competition between schools. In this way, it is demonstrated that there are faculty members who believe that some student-athletes are admitted to the universities based on athletic talent while ignoring their ability to complete college-level work. In these cases, it is irrelevant whether the student is motivated and dedicated because they do not possess the educational acumen to succeed at the collegiate level from an academic standpoint.

This represents a particularly strong finding that is supported by previous literature. Dexter Manley, a former NFL player who attended college on an athletics scholarship was functionally illiterate (Zimbalist, 1999). It has also been asserted that college presidents knowingly admit exceptional athletes who are unqualified for college-level work in order to increase the university's chances of winning games and which benefits the institution by providing revenue and exposure (Duderstadt, 2000).

The central key finding to the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings is the attitudes of faculty members towards student-athletes based on gender. Faculty

members strongly endorse the concept that female student-athletes are superior students to male student-athletes. Female student-athletes are consistently described by faculty members as being capable of balancing the requirements and expectations of stakeholders representing both athletics and academics. Faculty members do not believe that female sports impact their academic pursuits in a negative manner and in many cases view female sports as a healthy social and physical outlet.

Aside from female student-athletes being described as superior students in comparison to male student-athletes, faculty members with direct experience teaching student-athletes in their classes report a range of dedication and acumen in educational settings. While there was a clear split between male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports and male and female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports in relation to motivation, that delineation is much less clear when describing the dedication and acumen of student-athletes in educational settings.

As way of an example, it was discussed by faculty members that baseball players in many cases are primarily athletically motivated and looking to parlay their collegiate playing career into a professional playing career. Heather, a professor of sociology, described baseball players as always looking ahead to figure out how to get to make it work as a profession. In discussing the educational dedication and acumen of baseball players at State College University, however, Judy, a professor of English, described the baseball players in the following way. "My baseball players I also saw in the offseason but clearly they were practicing because they would come into class just drenched in sweat having done whatever, you know, some sort of practice so I think that they were being, there were a lot of demands but they were graciously, at least in my class, English 200, hard class, a hated class, I mean it is a dreaded, dreaded class, they were doing the

work and in some cases excelling at the work." This suggests that while baseball players may be more athletically motivated and are focused on baseball as a career, they still possess the dedication and acumen required to succeed in educational settings. Whether that dedication is a derivative of the need to remain eligible or meet other academic standards to continue playing is unknown and warrants further investigation.

A wide range of exhibited attitudes and behaviors by student-athletes was described by faculty members at State College University. Almost all faculty members described having seen a spectrum of attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by student-athletes. Some of the negative behaviors and attitudes were described as a demonstrative sense of entitlement. In this way student-athletes are described as an aloof group of individuals that do not need to participate or try as hard in academic settings because of their perceived value to the university's athletics department.

Many faculty members described student-athletes as disorganized, distracted, poor with time management and generally disinterested in academics. This was much more prevalent with male student-athletes than female student-athletes who, as suggested earlier, were primarily described as decent students overall. However, this is far from a static, consistent result. Faculty members acknowledged that some of the student-athletes they've had in classes taught were quite the opposite and were excellent students that possessed excellent interpersonal skills and were highly organized.

While the range of attitudes and exhibited behaviors is an interesting finding within itself, there is little evidence of why faculty members think this may occur. Unlike gender and revenue versus non-revenue producing sports discussed in the motivation for participation and dedication and acumen in educational settings, faculty members failed to make any assertions as to what the

primary influencing factors could be that impact the range. For instance, the highly negative incident with student-athletes in the writing center was brought on by encounters with female basketball players. A further exploration of factors that may be associated with the expressed attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes could provide further insight into this phenomenon and lead to positive change. However, individuals are unique, and perhaps their exhibited attitudes and behaviors are as much subjective as they are influenced by participation in college athletics.

Research Question # 3 – Findings and Discussion

Which factors do faculty members present as a hindrance/benefit to academic achievement for student-athletes at their institution

Interviews with faculty members produced data supporting four primary themes that were described as hindrances and benefits to academic achievement for student-athletes. Time commitments are described as a hindrance. Group membership, notoriety and support systems are described as benefits. These four primary themes impact student-athletes in higher education as they attempt to meet academic expectations and requirements. The hindrance of time commitments and the benefit of support systems are clear-cut and undisputed in relation to academic achievement and are discussed first. The benefits of group membership and notoriety and their subsequent impact on student-athletes from an academic standpoint are less clear and are discussed last.

Time commitments are described unanimously by faculty members as a significant hurdle to academic achievement for student-athletes. The demands placed on their time from both academic and athletics stakeholders are reportedly excessive. These excessive demands make academic achievement difficult. The time expended pursuing athletics greatly reduces the

time remaining for student-athletes to dedicate to their studies. Additionally, faculty members are concerned that during periods of time that student-athletes can dedicate to their studies, they are too mentally and physically fatigued to do so.

Faculty members describe participation in college athletics as a full-time job for student-athletes. This dedication to athletics has a reported degenerative effect on academic achievement. Many faculty members when pressed for what majors may be attractive to student-athletes at State College University intimated that while they could not pinpoint any specific major, it was clear that their discipline would be too rigorous for student-athletes. Presumably, there are majors that are less rigorous and therefore more appropriate for student-athletes.

The discussion of rigor raises a critical issue. It is a way of suggesting that student-athletes should major in "softer" disciplines if they expect to succeed. This is not a universally held belief, however, and faculty members were somewhat split when it came to the sport. For instance, John, a professor of biomedical engineering, suggested that it is a real rarity for a men's basketball player to be an engineering student. John, however, also stated that he's had several female soccer players that were successful in the classroom, graduated and went on to medical school. This is suggestive that some sports are more demanding of a student-athlete's time than others. This was a belief that was echoed by other faculty members interviewed.

An additional consideration beyond rigor associated with time commitments was majors that require high levels of collaborative group work as well as majors that require extended hours to conduct laboratory sessions. Faculty members representing these majors stated that student-athletes are challenged by their practice and playing schedules. Bob, a professor of mass communications intimated that a core component of many of his classes is centered on collaborative group projects. In his experience, student-athletes, based on their practice and

playing schedules, are routinely unavailable to meet with their groups. Because peer evaluations play a role in a determining a student's grade in these courses, student-athletes often suffer the consequences.

The issue of time commitments is a significant finding for individuals wishing to understand the challenges and motivations of student-athletes in higher education. Thomas (2008) contended that there are additional pressures that student-athletes face to succeed at the college level. Of the significant factors listed, many were associated with the inequitable treatment and requirements that student-athletes must endure. Some issues listed were: time required to achieve all athletic and academic demands, physical and emotional strain and academic competition with traditional students. Faculty members at State College University strongly supported and validated these assertions.

The benefit of support systems is believed to be a way of offsetting the hindrance of time commitments. While some literature cited throughout the study indicated that this practice constitutes preferential treatment of student-athletes, faculty members at State College University do not support that claim. Support systems were described as additional educational resources provided to student-athletes to ensure academic achievement. In fact, State College University, like all NCAA Division-I universities, have support systems in place. These support systems include advisors, tutors, mentors and academic coaches. While faculty members believe that student-athletes have access to academic support systems that other students do not, they also believe that student-athletes make sacrifices for the good of the university that other students do not. Because much is expected of student-athletes, faculty members at State College University view additional academic support as appropriate and necessary.

While faculty members at State College University do not equate the benefit of additional support systems for student-athletes with preferential treatment, other individuals do. In an article published in 2005 by Lawry, it was stated that universities have spent enormously on student-athletes in an attempt to aid them in achieving scholastic benchmarks. This spending includes facilities, staff, advisors and tutors that are not readily available to the average student on campus. As a result, the question of academic integrity has been challenged in relation to the student-athlete because additional expenditures and resources are seen as unfair advantages offered to the student-athlete. The benefit of support systems is one that should be further explored on a larger set of study sites to determine the overall attitudes of faculty members towards this issue.

The benefit of group membership and the benefit of notoriety associated with a being a student-athlete at State College University represented common themes discussed by faculty members during interviews. However, determining the impact of these benefits in relation to academic achievement remains unclear. The transition into higher education is a challenge for many students. This is a transition that faculty members believe can be eased by belonging to a group. Few students enter the university system with a social network or group already established, but according to faculty members, student-athletes do. This social support network is viewed by faculty members as a significant benefit towards academic achievement for student-athletes. While it is noted that group membership is primarily a social benefit in a student-athlete's life, it is also critical to note that this social component has the ability to impact educational attainment goals.

Upperclassmen and teammates are viewed as a valuable asset for student-athletes. These upperclassmen are capable of mentoring newer students to help them navigate the myriad

expectations placed on them by both academic and athletics stakeholders. Additionally, this group membership benefit enjoyed by student-athletes serves as a support system and network. It is described as belonging to a family and part of being in that family includes the nurturing that goes along with it. Being guided through the academic and athletic pitfalls with a large support system greatly enhances the chances of the student-athlete to achieve academic standards.

Belonging to the group also means being accountable to the group. While the group is supportive and nurturing, there are expectations that individual members will work their hardest to do what is best for the group. This means meeting academic and athletic expectations to the best of their ability. This is a skill that faculty members believe is critical to the success of individuals later in life. The ability to work effectively in a team atmosphere and to sacrifice for the good of the group is seen as a skill that is transferrable and valuable.

Notoriety was discussed primarily as an opportunity for student-athletes to possess a sense of self-worth and belonging. It was described by faculty members as a benefit that may motivate student-athletes to achieve at higher levels. Because student-athletes, particularly in highly-visible sports, view themselves as being significant contributors to the university, it is believed by faculty members that this serves as a motivation to achieve both academically and socially. This benefit was an unexpected finding in this study and little is known about it. The extent to which notoriety is an effective means for motivating a student-athlete to achieve academic standards and portray the university in a positive manner is a new concept and could be the basis for future investigations into this phenomenon.

Both group membership and notoriety are viewed as social benefits for student-athletes. However, the level to which these benefits motivate student-athletes or assist them in achieving academic goals is worth pursuing further. While time commitments as a hindrance and support

systems as a benefit are potentially measurable, it is difficult to ascertain with any certainty whether group membership and notoriety have a significant impact on student-athletes in relation to academic achievement.

The benefits of group membership and notoriety have been described as being social in nature. It is believed that student-athletes develop and reinforce social identities through a series of interactions, feedback and personal subjective processing. Weiss (2001) wrote that sport, especially at the highest levels, is the most capable of social sub-systems of identity reinforcement. A critical concept associated with Weiss' article is attributed to Heinrich Popitz who developed a five-level system of recognition. These levels are referred to as "social subjectivity," and include (1) Recognition as member of a group, (2) Recognition in an assigned role, (3) Recognition in an acquired role, (4) Recognition in a public role and (5) Recognition of personal identity. These levels of recognition form the foundation for the reinforcement of self-identity (Weiss, 2001).

One of the goals of the study was to examine this concept using an interactionist framework. While shades of interactionist theory were present and reported, the data were inconclusive. This is an element that should be further examined; however, a grounded theory study would probably be best for utilizing the interactionist framework rather than the case study method that was used in this study.

Research Question # 4 – Findings and Discussion

How do faculty members describe the role of athletics at their institution in relation to common themes associated with sport illuminated in the literature review including: commercialization, professionalism, entertainment, nationalism (school pride), the amateur ideal, educational development and social development?

There were two primary findings and one secondary finding related to the traditional common themes associated with sports. The concepts of commercialization and nationalism were viewed by faculty members as the driving force between the motivations of universities for sponsoring athletics programs. The concept of commercialization was described by faculty members as a means for developing revenue and exposure for the university. The concept of nationalism was described by faculty members as a means of developing school pride and community engagement.

Faculty members equate a robust athletics program with a corporate business model. The athletics program is used to generate revenue and promote the university on a national level. The higher the profile of the athletics department, the more effective the university is in obtaining these goals. This motivation, however, fuels the debate over the role of college athletics. Previous literature cited, indicated that the desire to win may be eroding the foundation of amateur athletics in favor of revenues (Watterson, 2000). Additionally, it was noted that many individuals associated with higher education believe that the financial goals of universities have led to commercialization and professionalism within college athletics (Sperber, 2000). Lastly, it was reported that that one of five significant problems identified by faculty based on attitudes of the impact of intercollegiate athletics is that college athletics have a degenerative effect on the academic integrity of higher education (Benford, 2007).

While the extent of these claims is unknown, almost all faculty members agreed that achieving these goals effectively requires a commitment to competitiveness in one of the male revenue producing sports (either football or basketball). While baseball was considered a borderline revenue producing sport, faculty members were adamant about the football/basketball distinction.

An interesting finding, however, is that while football impacts the way in which faculty members describe universities from an athletics standpoint, they do not believe it is critical to succeed in both to achieve goals associated with revenue generation and national exposure. Many examples were offered that described and named specific universities that are well-known for their men's basketball program alone. Some examples sponsor football programs while others do not. It is interesting that faculty members at State College University believe that without committing additional resources, the men's basketball program is enough to achieve the goals of the university in relation to revenue and promotion. They pointed to the enormous investment required and doubted the rewards would offset that investment. They felt convinced that if the men's basketball team can continue to be competitive and play games in the national spotlight, that would be just as beneficial to the university community.

In relation to the concept of nationalism, faculty members were adamant that college athletics provide the greatest opportunity for bringing a diverse group of individuals together in support of a central cause. This in turn develops a sense of community and school pride. Nationalism is a concept that has permeated literature on the subject for decades. College athletics are viewed as a way for students to support their school, connect with their peers and bridge gaps that exist due to social stratification and cultural differences (Riess, 1995). Faculty members at State College University describe this as one of the primary purposes for sponsoring athletics programs and while some are interested in exploring other avenues, all agreed that athletics are effective in achieving goals associated with a sense of nationalism.

An additional consideration was the inclusion and engagement of the alumni and surrounding community. The university has an impact on the region and the resources provided by alumni are critical. Athletics are viewed by faculty members as a way of reaching out and

engaging both the community and alumni base. The support from the community and the support provided by alumni is a critical component associated with college athletics. Because the athletics department is oftentimes the most visible component of the university, it is important to operate it in a manner that reflects positively on all stakeholders. When done correctly, faculty members believe that athletics are powerful in achieving objectives associated with school pride and community engagement.

The secondary finding that only partially supported the concept of social and educational development through sport was surprising. For decades, supporters of college athletics have pointed to the concept of character-building through sport as a primary justification for sponsoring athletics in higher education. Sources indicate there is a strong positive correlation linking participation in sport to positive social and educational development (Edwards, 2003; Drever, 2002; Harrington & Dawson, 1997). Supporting evidence of this claim was not completely absent during discussions, however, it was limited.

One area where the concept of social and educational development through sport was particularly prevalent was during discussions of the benefits associated with participation in college athletics. A primary benefit discussed was the benefit of group membership. Faculty descriptions of the benefit of group membership reinforce the concept of social and educational development through sport. They described student-athletes as individuals that learn self-sacrifice for the good of the group and the invaluable concept of teamwork. This teamwork is described as the ability to work collaboratively towards a common goal and to put the team ahead of one's self. Faculty members felt strongly that few, if any, other outlets in academia exist where students can learn this life skill as effectively.

There are reasonable objections and counter viewpoints that could contribute to a digression from this view. It is possible, for instance, that sport attracts certain personalities to begin with. These personalities being similar in makeup, could already inherently believe in specific concepts such as sacrificing for the good of a group. In this way, sport does not develop character, rather sport attracts it. Concepts associated with social and educational development through sport must be further examined and understood if practitioners in the field hope to harness the power of sport to elicit change and growth.

Study Limitations

This study was conducted at a NCAA Division I-AAA university. This classification is used to describe NCAA Division-I schools that do not sponsor a football program. It was demonstrated by faculty members that college football plays a significant role in college athletics and may have an impact on the way in which faculty members view college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes.

Faculty members interviewed believe there is a significant difference between college football and the rest of college athletics. Football is viewed as an entity that defies comparisons with other college sports. While there is a demonstrated overlap between college football and other male revenue producing sports, the level of investment by a university and the large rosters required to participate elevate it to a different level. Faculty attitudes towards college football are mixed. It is viewed as a degenerative influence in higher education in some instances and in others it is viewed as the best way to gain visibility for the university on a national level.

Regardless of varying views towards college football at State College University, a number of interesting issues were raised. College football is truly the largest and most visible college sport. The investment in football programs designed to compete for national titles is

tremendous. Many of the upper-tier universities that compete in college football have an enormous following and garner national media attention. Some faculty members supported the notion of visibility by intimating that they probably would not have heard of a number of universities if it were not for their football team. The challenge appears to be discovering and maintaining an appropriate balance between college football and the traditions and ideals associated with the university.

An additional limitation was that this study utilized mixed-methods. The qualitative component of the study was designed as a case study. The results from both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study are specific to a single institution. It is believed that the results of both portions may be subject to change when replicated at different universities. These universities differ in academic and athletics profiles. Each university has a specific academic and athletics mission. The results from this study, therefore, are not generalizable to other NCAA Division-I universities.

Recommendations for Future Studies

There are a number of studies that could be logical offshoots of the one conducted at State College University. The most appealing would be a direct replication utilizing a sample of universities that differ in academic and athletics profile. By replicating the research, trends and themes associated with faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at State College University may be challenged or reinforced by results obtained from additional study sites. The instrumentation and protocol were designed in a way that is universally applicable. The addition of study sites would allow for a confirmation or disconfirmation of results in a way that would continue to isolate critical factors associated with understanding college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes.

There were also two demonstrated needs at the conclusion of the study that should be considered. The first was the high non-response rate of faculty members throughout the quantitative portion of the study. While 170 faculty members completed the ACES in its entirety, that only represents approximately 11% of all faculty members invited to participate. Methods for enhancing participation are desirable. Additionally, the independent variable of whether faculty members actively participated in college athletics could be employed. It was intimated by several faculty members that they had participated at the college level and results obtained throughout the qualitative portion of the study may have been influenced by this participation. It should be noted, however, that these faculty members did not differ significantly from others when describing common themes and trends associated with college athletics and student-athletes at State College University.

Additional studies of interest would be comparative analysis studies. It was determined by faculty members that there are two factors that are most critical when discussing the "typical" student-athlete and hindrances/benefits associated with academic achievement for student-athletes. These factors included gender and whether the student-athlete participated in a revenue or non-revenue producing sport. This split is significant and could be used to develop a deeper understanding of factors associated with faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes. The instrumentation used in this study could be altered to measure three distinct groups. These groups are (1) male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports, (2) male student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports and (3) female student-athletes participating in non-revenue producing sports.

Conclusion

The findings from this study have contributed to what was previous known about faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes. While previous research indicated that faculty members surveyed in nationwide studies possessed specific and varying attitudes towards both concepts, little was done to further understand the foundation of those attitudes. By employing a mixed methods study procedure, quantitative and qualitative factors associated with faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA Division-I study site were isolated and reported. These factors have immediate implications

By utilizing a modified version of the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES), specific items contained within each of the seven components were scored and analyzed. In areas where student-athletes were deemed as developing rather than competent, specific items of interest were discovered. These results can be used to address specific needs of student-athletes at State College University in the immediate future.

By utilizing a structured interview protocol, specific factors that impacted and influenced the attitudes of faculty members towards college athletics and the academic competence of student-athletes at State College University were discovered. This discovery serves two critical functions. First, it allows practitioners, faculty members and administrators at State College University an opportunity to better understand issues associated with integrating a unique population into the traditional classroom setting and issues associated with running an effective athletics department that best represents the goals and traditions of the university.

Secondly, the data analyzed and reported serves as a foundation for future studies. This is research that should be and can be replicated at a large group of study sites that will be used to

confirm or disconfirm the themes and trends reported at State College University. Because all institutions of higher education are believed to be unique and have specific athletics and academic goals, it is of paramount importance to establish similarities that defy setting.

Results reported that are similar across settings would allow for better implementation and administration of athletics departments nationwide that are capable of serving a diverse group of stakeholders efficiently and effectively. While there is significant work and research left to be done, issues and factors associated with better understanding attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes are beginning to be uncovered. Several of these issues and factors were reported in this study. Understanding these issues and using these factors to further hone additional research has tremendous potential.

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Appendix A: Traditional Themes Associated with College Athletics


```
Commercialization ─┐
                   ├──► ⬭ Homeric        Platonic ⬭ ──► Social Development
Professionalism  ──┤      Model          Model    ├──► Education
                   │      Of Sport       Of Sport └──► Amateurism
Entertainment    ──┤
                   │
Nationalism      ──┘
                        │
                        ▼
                   American
                   Model of
                   Sport &
                   Education
```
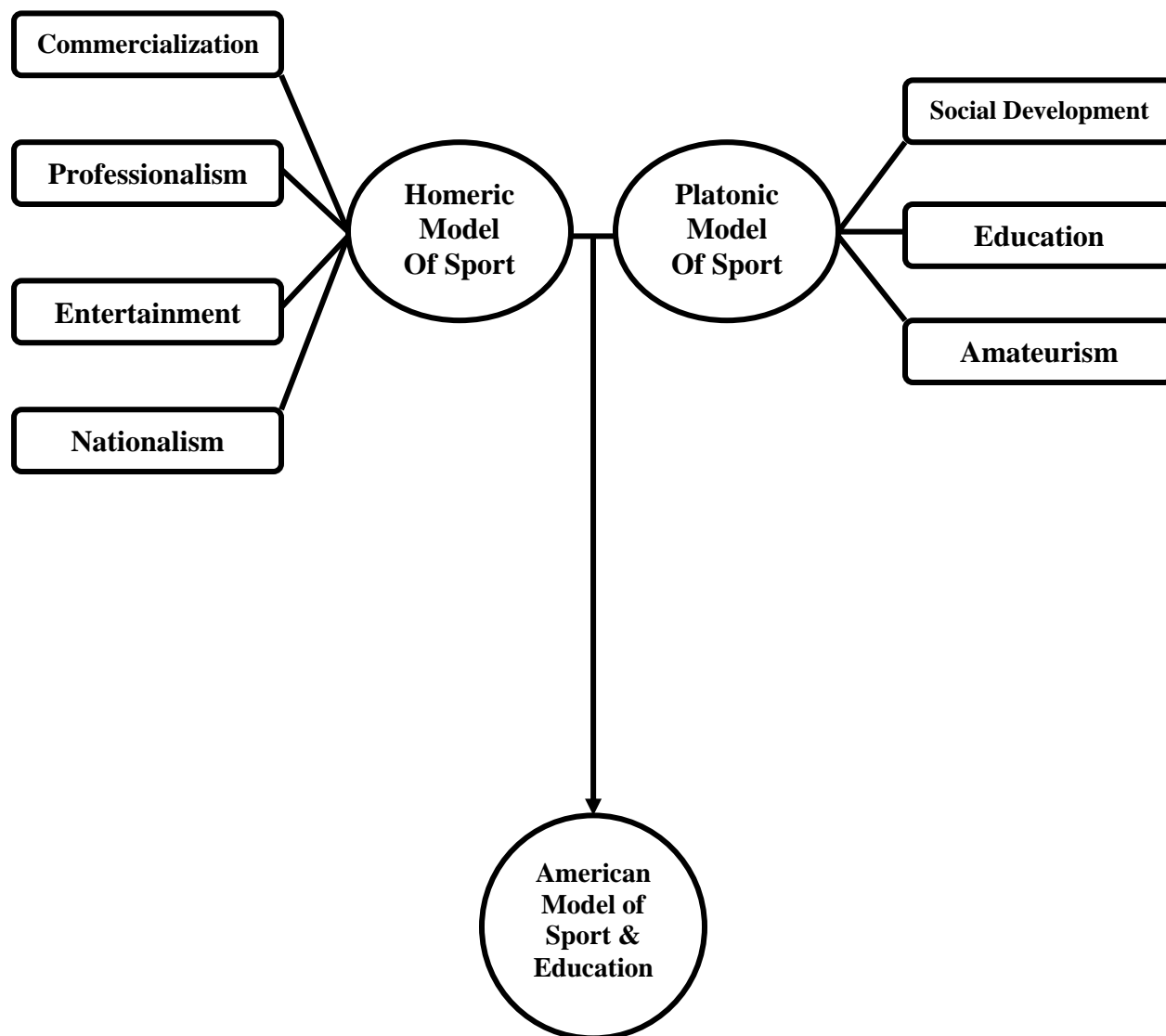
Traditional Themes Associated with Sport Elicited throughout the Literature Review

Appendix B: Written Consent to Modify and Use ACES-College

----- Original Message -----
From: James DiPerna
To: Christopher Atwater
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2009 10:30 AM
Subject: Re: Modified ACES - College Edition

Hello Christopher and sorry for the delayed response. I certainly am fine with you creating such an adaptation -- I would appreciate it if you would share the revised version with me as well as a draft of your dissertation when it is completed. Thanks and let me know if I can be of further assistance...

Jim

On Fri, Aug 28, 2009 at 9:20 AM, Christopher Atwater < atwaters@verizon.net > wrote:

Hello Dr. DiPerna -

I assume students have returned and that you are busy as usual, but I wanted to follow-up with you and see if you had an opportunity to review my request to use a modified version of the ACES-College Edition you developed for my mixed-methods dissertation on Faculty Attitudes Towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of Undergraduate Student-Athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution.

I would need your formal written permission before conducting any data collection and to present to my committee for approval.

Thank you for your time and efforts -

Christopher Atwater
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Commonwealth University
804 827 0802 (p)
804 827 1739 (f)

June 5, 2009

Christopher,

Enclosed are a few copies of the ACES-College. Sorry for the delay in getting them to you, and please don't hesitate to contact me again if you have any additional questions or I can be of further assistance. Best of luck with your research...

Jim DiPerna

Appendix C: Original ACES-College

Academic Skills

Reading/Writing Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above	Not Important	Important	Critical
1. Reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
2. Reading unfamiliar words by sounding out each of the letters	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
3. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
4. Identifying a main idea	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
5. Reading fluency	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
6. Spelling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
7. Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
8. Grammar	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
9. Written communication	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
10. Drawing conclusions from written material	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS R/W   ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

Mathematics/Science Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above	Not Important	Important	Critical
11. Computation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
12. Analyzing errors in information or processes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
13. Measurement	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
14. Understanding of spatial relationships	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
15. Mental math	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
16. Using mathematical concepts to solve daily problems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
17. Testing hypotheses	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
18. Breaking down a complex problem	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
19. Identifying patterns from information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
20. Problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS M/S   ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

Critical Thinking Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above	Not Important	Important	Critical
21. Synthesizing related information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
22. Drawing conclusions from observations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
23. Comparing similarities or differences among objects or ideas	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
24. Classifying objects or ideas into categories	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
25. Generalizing from information or experiences	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
26. Constructing support for or against a position on an issue	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
27. Analyzing supporting and opposing viewpoints on an issue	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
28. Deciding among alternative solutions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
29. Investigating a problem or issue	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
30. Developing a solution to a problem	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS CT   ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

(for office use only) **AS RS**

Academic Enablers

Interpersonal Skills	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Not Important	Important	Critical
31. I am considerate of others	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
32. I am willing to compromise	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
33. I express dissatisfaction appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
34. I accept suggestions from others	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
35. I work effectively in large group activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
36. I listen to what others have to say	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
37. I work effectively in small group activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
38. I interact appropriately with other students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS/IS ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

Engagement	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Not Important	Important	Critical
39. I use outlines to organize my written work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
40. I speak in class when called upon	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
41. I ask questions about exams or other assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
42. I participate in class discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
43. I volunteer answers to questions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
44. I assume leadership in group discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
45. I initiate conversations appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
46. I ask questions when I am confused	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS/ES ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

Motivation	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Not Important	Important	Critical
47. I am motivated to learn	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
48. I prefer challenging tasks	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
49. I produce high-quality work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
50. I critically evaluate my own work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
51. I attempt to improve on previous performance	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
52. I make the most of learning experiences	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
53. I look for ways to academically challenge myself	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
54. I assume responsibility for my learning	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
55. I pay attention in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
56. I am goal-oriented	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS/MS ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

Study Skills	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Not Important	Important	Critical
57. I complete course assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
58. I edit my work before I submit it	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
59. I finish my assignments on time	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
60. I take notes in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
61. I review notes and other class materials	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
62. I use strategies to remember information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
63. I manage my time effectively	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
64. I prepare for exams	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
65. I prepare for class (e.g., complete readings, review notes)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
66. I attend class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3

(for office use only) RS/SS ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ + ◯ =

3

(for office use only) AE RS

Appendix D: Modified ACES-College

Directions:
The Academic Competence Evaluation Scales assess a student's academic skills and academic enablers (interpersonal skills, engagement, motivation, and study skills). For each item, a rating is required. The rating should reflect **your best estimation of the skill level** of a typical student-athlete in comparison to other students at your college or university. This survey is completely voluntary and should take no longer than 10 minutes. Thank you for your time.

Reading/Writing Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above	Don't Know
1. Reading Comprehension						
2. Reading unfamiliar words by sounding out each of the letters						
3. Vocabulary						
4. Identifying a main idea						
5. Reading fluency						
6. Spelling						
7. Punctuation						
8. Grammar						
9. Written communication						
10. Drawing conclusions from written material						
Mathematics/Science Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above	Don't Know
11. Computation						
12. Analyzing errors in information or processes						
13. Measurement						
14. Understanding of spatial relationships						
15. Mental math						
16. Using mathematical concepts to solve daily problems						
17. Testing Hypotheses						
18. Breaking down a complex problem						
19. Identifying patterns from information						
20. Problem-solving						

Critical Thinking Skills	Far Below	Below	At Grade Level	Above	Far Above
21. Synthesizing related information					
22. Drawing conclusions from observations					
23. Comparing similarities or differences among objects or ideas					
24. Classifying objects or ideas into categories					
25. Generalizing from information or experiences					
26. Constructing support for or against a position on an issue					
27. Analyzing supporting and opposing viewpoints on an issue					
28. Deciding among alternative solutions					
29. Investigating a problem or issue					
30. Developing a solution to a problem					

Interpersonal Skills: "Student-athletes…"	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
31. Are considerate of others					
32. Are willing to compromise					
33. Express dissatisfaction appropriately					
34. Accept suggestions from others					
35. Work effectively in large group settings					
36. Listen to what others have to say					
37. Work effectively in small group settings					
38. Interact appropriately with other students					

Engagement: "Student-athletes…"	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
39. Use outlines to organize written work					
40. Speak in class when called upon					
41. Ask questions about exams or other assignments					
42. Participate in class discussions					
43. Volunteer answers to questions					
44. Assume leadership in group discussions					
45. Initiate conversations appropriately					
46. Ask questions when they are confused					

➡

Motivation: "Student-athletes…"	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
47. Are motivated to learn					
48. Prefer challenging tasks					
49. Produce high-quality work					
50. Critically evaluate their own work					
51. Attempt to improve on previous performance					
52. Make the most of learning experiences					
53. Look for ways to academically challenge themselves					
54. Assume responsibility for their learning					
55. Pay attention in class					
56. Are goal-oriented					

Study Skills: "Student-athletes…"	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
57. Complete course assignments					
58. Edit their work before they submit it					
59. Finish their assignments on time					
60. Take notes in class					
61. Review notes and other materials					
62. Use strategies to remember information					
63. Manage their time effectively					
64. Prepare for exams					
65. Prepare for class (e.g., complete readings, review notes)					
66. Attend class					

➡

College or School that the discipline You teach is housed under:

○ College of Humanities & Sciences

○ Schools of the Arts

○ Schools of Business

○ School of Education

○ School of Engineering

○ School of Social Work

○ Life Sciences

○ Other _____

Approximate number of student-athletes you have knowingly had in classes you teach

○ zero

○ 1-5

○ 6 or More

Race:

○ American Indian or Alaskan Native

○ Asian

○ Black or African-American

○ Hispanic or Latino

○ White

○ Other

Faculty Rank:

○ Instructor

○ Assistant Professor

○ Associate Professor

○ Professor

○ Other _____

Contract Type:

○ Adjunct

○ Collateral

○ Tenure Track

Primary Level of Courses you teach:

○ Undergraduate

○ Graduate

○ Both

Age:

○ 35 or Under

○ 36-45

○ 46-55

○ 56 -65

○ Over 65

Gender:

○ Male

○ Female

Would you be willing to discuss college athletics and student-athletes in a follow-up interview lasting approximately 1 hour?   YES_____   NO _____
(If yes, please provide contact information on next page – If no, the survey is completed)

Your confidentiality is a priority. All contact information will be removed from the survey and stored in a separate locked file.

Name:

Office Phone:

Email:

Appendix E: Structured Interview Protocol

Personal Experience:

Tell me about your experience with college athletics.
- Did you participate?
  - o If yes, which sport did you play?
  - o If yes, did you receive any form of athletic scholarship for your participation?
- Do you have any relatives or friends who participated in college athletics?
  - o If yes, which sports did they play?
  - o If yes, did they receive any form of athletic scholarship for their participation?
- Do you attend many sporting events?
- Do you watch college athletics on television and/or follow them through any other media outlets?
- In your opinion, does the media play a role in developing people's perceptions of college athletics?
  - o If yes, what role does the media play?

College Athletics:

What is your understanding of athletics at US colleges and universities?
- What do you perceive as the primary motivations for sponsoring athletics at US colleges and universities?
- How much emphasis do you think Division-I universities place on athletics?
- How much like other Division-I institutions do you think State College University is in terms of college athletics?
- Does football impact how people think about athletics at universities?
  - o If yes, does this impact the way you think of State College University in terms of college athletics?
  - o If no, why not?

Student-Athletes:

What is your understanding of the motivations and challenges facing student-athletes at US colleges and universities?
- What do you perceive as the primary motivations for student-athletes to participate in college athletics?
  - o (If response is dependent, what is it dependent on?)
  - o (If response is not dependent proceed to probes below.)
  - o Does the sport the student plays matter when considering their motivation?
    - o If yes, why?
  - o Do female student-athletes have different reasons than male student-athletes for participating in college athletics?
    - o If yes, please describe the differences.
- How much like other Division-I institutions do you think State College University is in terms of student-athletes?

Student-Athletes (continued):

- Are there benefits to being a student-athlete at State College University?
    - If yes, what are the benefits?
- How much time do you think a student-athlete at State College University spends per week on school work?
- How much time do you think a student-athlete at State College University spends per week on their sport?
- Are there certain majors that attract student-athletes more than other majors at State College University?
    - If yes, what majors do you think attract the most student-athletes at State College University?
    - If yes, what is attractive about these majors to student-athletes at State College University?
- Do college athletics at State College University impact graduation rates at the institution?
    - If yes, how?
    - If yes, are there particular sports that impact graduation rates more than others?
        - If yes, which sports and how do they impact graduation rates (raise? lower?)
- Please describe for me what you think the typical student-athlete is like at State College University
    - (If response is dependent, what is it dependent on?)

Faculty Estimates:

- How many student-athletes do you think we have at State College University?
- Of that number, what percentage would you say are on some form of athletic scholarship, either partial or full?
- Out of the (total number listed by respondent) student-athletes at State College University, what percentage would you say are minority students?
- Please give me a rough estimate of how much money it costs the university each year to operate the athletics department?

Closing Question:

- Is there anything else you would like to include that is helpful in understanding your perception of college athletics and/or student-athletes at State College University?

Appendix F: Participation Invitations and Follow-Up Requests

Invitation to Participate

Dear Faculty Member –

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. I am inviting you to participate in my current research study that is part of my doctoral dissertation. As a faculty member, I am interested in your attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at your institution.

While individual participants may not benefit directly from participation, the results of this study will expand the knowledge base on what is known about faculty attitudes towards student-athletes as part of the collegiate community and in the classroom. By conducting this research, factors associated with the academic competency of student-athletes may be illuminated in a way that assists in understanding the academic requirements and any perceived strengths/deficits associated with simultaneous participation in higher education and athletics.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If you choose only to complete the survey portion of this study, no personal information will be collected that can be used to identify you as a respondent unless you choose to provide that information voluntarily to the researcher. This is a mixed-methods study that will seek to include participation from those willing to discuss college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes in a face-to-face follow up interview. To conduct these interviews personal information including name, and contact information will be required. The potential risk to providing information includes breach of confidentiality. However, these data will be stored on the host site Survey Monkey that requires a login name and password. In addition to that safeguard, all data will be stored on a

password protected private computer. All identifying information will be separated from individual survey responses and deleted from study files at the completion of the study.

I appreciate your time and efforts. The survey consists of 66 likert items and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete online. The link for the survey hosted on Survey Monkey is included. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at: atwatercr@vcu.edu (804) 304-5935 or you can contact my dissertation director, Dr. Beverly Warren at: bjwarren@vcu.edu (804) 828-3382. Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation.

Reminder Email # 1

Dear Faculty Member –

Two weeks ago I emailed you an invitation and a link to participate in my current research study that is part of my doctoral dissertation. As a faculty member, I am interested in your attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at your institution. If you have yet to respond, there is still time and your participation would be greatly appreciated. If you have already completed the survey, I thank you for your efforts.

The benefits associated with the study are to assist researchers in obtaining information that allows for expanding the knowledge base on what is known about faculty attitudes towards student-athletes as part of the collegiate community and in the classroom. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If you choose only to complete the survey portion of this study, no personal information will be collected that can be used to identify you as a respondent unless you choose to provide that information voluntarily to the researcher. This is a mixed-methods study that will seek to include participation from those willing to discuss college athletics and the

academic competency of student-athletes in a face-to-face follow up interview. To conduct these interviews personal information including name, and contact information will be required. The potential risk to providing information includes breach of confidentiality. However, these data will be stored on the host site Survey Monkey that requires a login name and password. In addition to that safeguard, all data will be stored on a password protected private computer. All identifying information will be erased and deleted following the study.

The survey consists of 66 likert items and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete online. The link for the survey hosted on Survey Monkey is included. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at: atwatercr@vcu.edu (804) 304-5935 or you can contact my dissertation director, Dr. Beverly Warren at: bjwarren@vcu.edu (804) 828-3382. Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation.

Reminder Email # 2

Dear Faculty Member –

Three weeks ago I emailed you an invitation and a link to participate in my current research study that is part of my doctoral dissertation. As a faculty member, I am interested in your attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at your institution. Obtaining this information is important to expand on what is known about faculty attitudes towards student-athletes as part of the collegiate community and in the classroom. If you have yet to respond, there is still time and your participation would be greatly appreciated. If you have already completed the survey, I thank you for your efforts.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If you choose only to complete the survey portion of this study, no personal information will be collected that can be used to

identify you as a respondent unless you choose to provide that information voluntarily to the researcher. This is a mixed-methods study that will seek to include participation from those willing to discuss college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes in a face-to-face follow up interview. To conduct these interviews personal information including name, and contact information will be required. The potential risk to providing information includes breach of confidentiality. However, these data will be stored on the host site Survey Monkey that requires a login name and password. In addition to that safeguard, all data will be stored on a password protected private computer. All identifying information will be erased and deleted following the study.

The survey consists of 66 likert items and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete online. The link for the survey hosted on Survey Monkey is included. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at: atwatercr@vcu.edu (804) 304-5935 or you can contact my dissertation director, Dr. Beverly Warren at: bjwarren@vcu.edu (804) 828-3382. Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation.

Appendix G: Informed Consent

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of Student-Athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution

VCU IRB NO.: HM12708

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study investigator to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may review unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of the study is to measure faculty attitudes towards college athletics and the academic competency of student-athletes at a NCAA division-I institution and to follow-up with faculty during personal face-to-face interviews to discuss the topic in-depth. This is intended to add to the body of knowledge in this area of study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT
If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you. This study involves the participation of faculty members in interviews that will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The faculty members will be asked to discuss topics associated with college athletics and student-athletes at their institution. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded, but no names will be recorded. After the interview, the recording will be transcribed and participants may be asked to review the transcript to ensure accuracy. It is anticipated that approximately 8-15 faculty members will be interviewed during this study.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
It is not anticipated that talking about issues related college athletics or student-athletes at the institution will cause any psychological or emotional discomfort. However, you do not have to talk about any subjects that you would prefer not to address and you can stop the interview at any time.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS
You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but by offering your insights and perceptions, this study may contribute to a better understanding of factors associated with how educators conceptualize athletics in higher education and the student-athlete. Though prior research indicates quantitatively that faculty possess distinct views of these concepts, there is a gap between measured attitudes and known factors that contribute to these attitudes.

COSTS
There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend participating in the interview.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
There is no payment or compensation for participation in this study.

ALTERNATIVES
The alternative is to not participate in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes and audio recordings. The interview data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by a pseudonym, not your actual name, and will be stored on a password protected personal computer until the conclusion of the study, at which point it will be erased and deleted.

I will not tell anyone the information you provide; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University. Further, your choice to participate will be kept strictly confidential.

What I find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

As described, the interviews will be audio taped, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to use first names only so that no full names are recorded. During the transcription process your first name will be changed to a pseudonym. After the information from the audio recording is transcribed into an electronic file, the recording will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer specific questions that are asked during the interview. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

QUESTIONS
In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

Christopher Atwater, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate, School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University
804-304-5935
atwatercr@vcu.edu

You may also contact my dissertation chair directly:

Dr. Beverly Warren
Interim Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University
901 West Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23284
804-828-1345
bjwarren@vcu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, VA 23298
Telephone: 804-827-2157

You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm.

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION
I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.

_____

Participant name printed   Participant signature   Date

_____
Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness
(Printed)

_____ _____
Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent   Date
Discussion / Witness

_____ _____
Investigator Signature (if different from above)   Date

CONSENT FOR RECORDING

I understand the information about this study and that the interview will be recorded with my permission. Questions that I wanted to ask about the recording and transcription of the interview have been answered. I have checked the box below that indicates my permission or declination of the recording of the interview.

☐ YES, I give my permission to have the interview recorded.

☐ NO, I do not give my permission to have the interview recorded.

Appendix H: IRB Approvals

VCU Memo
V i r g i n i a   C o m m o n w e a l t h   U n i v e r s i t y

Office of Research Subjects Protection
BioTechnology Research Park
BioTech One, 800 E. Leigh Street, #114
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, Virginia 23298-0568
(804) 827-2261, (804) 827-1448 (fax)

DATE: January 28, 2010

TO: Beverly J. Warren, PhD
School of Education
Box 842020

FROM: Lisa M. Abrams, PhD *hma/278*
Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
Box 980568

RE: **VCU IRB #: HM12708**
Title: Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of
Student- Athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution

On January 28, 2010, the following research study was *__approved__* by expedited review according to 45 CFR
46.110 Category 7. This approval reflects the revisions received in the Office of Research Subjects Protection on
January 28, 2010. This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

RESEARCH APPLICATION/PROPOSAL: NONE

PROTOCOL: Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of
Student- Athletes at a NCAA Division-I Institution, version 1-1/28/10, received 1/28/10

CONSENT/ASSENT:
▪ For the Interview Portion of the Study: Research Subject Information and Consent Form, version 1:1/27/10,
4 pages, received 1/28/10
▪ For the Survey Portion of the Study: "One of the conditions set forth in 45 CFR 46 117(c) (1),
(2)for waiver of documentation of consent has been met and the IRB Panel has waived
documentation of consent."

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:
▪ Recruitment email for participation in the study, version1:1/28/10, received 1/28/10
▪ Reminder #1 for participation, version 1:1/27/10, received 1/28/10
▪ Reminder #2 for participation, version 1:1/27/10, received 1/28/10

This approval expires on December 31, 2010. Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require
continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed
to you prior to the scheduled review.

The Primary Reviewer assigned to your research study is Lisa M Abrams, PhD. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Abrams at lmabrams@vcu.edu and 827-2627; or you may contact Donna Gross, IRB Coordinator, VCU Office of Research Subjects Protection, at dsgross@vcu.edu or 827-2261.

Attachment – Conditions of Approval

Conditions of Approval:

In order to comply with federal regulations, industry standards, and the terms of this approval, the investigator must *(as applicable)*:

1. Conduct the research as described in and required by the Protocol.

2. Obtain informed consent from all subjects without coercion or undue influence, and provide the potential subject sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved or research is exempt).

3. Document informed consent using only the most recently dated consent form bearing the VCU IRB "APPROVED" stamp (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved).

4. Provide non-English speaking patients with a translation of the approved Consent Form in the research participant's first language. The Panel must approve the translated version.

5. Obtain prior approval from VCU IRB before implementing any changes whatsoever in the approved protocol or consent form, unless such changes are necessary to protect the safety of human research participants (e.g., permanent/temporary change of PI, addition of performance/collaborative sites, request to include newly incarcerated participants or participants that are wards of the state, addition/deletion of participant groups, etc.). Any departure from these approved documents must be reported to the VCU IRB immediately as an Unanticipated Problem (see #7).

6. Monitor all problems (anticipated and unanticipated) associated with risk to research participants or others.

7. Report Unanticipated Problems (UPs), including protocol deviations, following the VCU IRB requirements and timelines detailed in VCU IRB WPP VIII-7):

8. Obtain prior approval from the VCU IRB before use of any advertisement or other material for recruitment of research participants.

9. Promptly report and/or respond to all inquiries by the VCU IRB concerning the conduct of the approved research when so requested.

10. All protocols that administer acute medical treatment to human research participants must have an emergency preparedness plan. Please refer to VCU guidance on http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/guidance.htm.

11. The VCU IRBs operate under the regulatory authorities as described within:
    a) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Title 45 CFR 46, Subparts A, B, C, and D (for all research, regardless of source of funding) and related guidance documents.
    b) U.S. Food and Drug Administration Chapter I of Title 21 CFR 50 and 56 (for FDA regulated research only) and related guidance documents.
    c) Commonwealth of Virginia Code of Virginia 32.1 Chapter 5.1 Human Research (for all research).

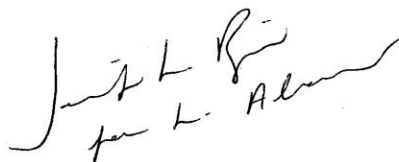010507

VCU Memo
Virginia Commonwealth University

Office of Research Subjects Protection
BioTechnology Research Park
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 114
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, Virginia 23298-0568
(804) 827-0868
Fax: (804) 827-1448

DATE: March 23, 2010

TO: Beverly J. Warren, PhD
          School of Education
          Box 842020

FROM: Lisa M. Abrams, PhD
          Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
          Box 980568

RE: **VCU IRB #: HM12708**
          Title: Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of Student Athletes at a NCAA Division I Institution

On March 23, 2010, the changes to your research study were **_approved_** in accordance with 110 (b) (2). This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

PROTOCOL (Measure):
- Academic Competence Evaluation Scales, received 3/8/10, version 2, dated 2/19/10

<u>**As a reminder, the approval for this study expires on December 31, 2010.**</u> Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled review.

The Primary Reviewer assigned to your research study is Lisa Abrams, PhD. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Abrams at lmabrams@vcu.edu and 827-2627; or you may contact Jennifer Rice, IRB Coordinator, VCU Office of Research Subjects Protection, at jlrice@vcu.edu or 828-3992.

Page 1 of 1

VCU Memo
Virginia Commonwealth University

DATE: May 13, 2010

TO: Beverly J. Warren, PhD
School of Education
Box 980568

FROM: Lisa M. Abrams, PhD
Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
Box 980568

RE: **VCU IRB #: HM12708**
Title: Faculty Attitudes towards College Athletics and the Academic Competency of Student Athletes at a NCAA Division I Institution

On May 13, 2010, the changes to your research study were ***approved*** in accordance with 110 (b) (2). This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

PROTOCOL (Measure):
- Interview Protocol, received 5/5/10, version 2, dated 4/22/10

As a reminder, the approval for this study expires on December 31, 2010. Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled review.

The Primary Reviewer assigned to your research study is Lisa Abrams, PhD. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Abrams at lmabrams@vcu.edu and 827-2627; or you may contact Jennifer Rice, IRB Coordinator, VCU Office of Research Subjects Protection, at jlrice@vcu.edu or 828-3992.

Vita

Christopher Atwater was born on May 7, 1974 in Brunswick, Maine and is a citizen of the United States of America. He grew up in Boothbay Harbor, Maine with his mother Kathleen and his brother Jeffrey. Christopher attended Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York from 1992-1996 and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in History. He earned his Master's degree in Recreation, Parks and Sport Leadership from the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership in 2006. Following graduation, Christopher enrolled in the VCU School of Education, Urban Services Leadership Track Ph.D. program and completed all doctoral study requirements in December, 2010.