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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF FRESHMAN STUDENT-
ATHLETES AT A FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
SUBDIVISION UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Lori L. Braa

College of Natural and Health Sciences
School of Sport and Exercise Science
Sport Administration

August 2011

This Dissertation by: Lori L. Braa

Entitled: *A Qualitative Analysis of Variables That Contribute to the Academic Success of Freshman Student-Athletes at a Football Championship Subdivision University*

Has been approved as meeting the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Natural and Health Sciences, School of Sport and Exercise Science, Program of Sport Administration

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

David K. Stotlar, Ed.D., Chair

Dianna P. Gray, Ph.D., Committee Member

Mark A. Smith, Ph.D., Committee Member

Robert L. Heiny, Ph.D., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense _____

Accepted by the Graduate School

Robbyn R. Wacker, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Research
Dean of the Graduate School and International Admissions

ABSTRACT

Braa, Lori L. *A Qualitative Analysis of Variables That Contribute to the Academic Success of Freshman Student-Athletes at a Football Championship Subdivision University*. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2011.

Few topics in higher education are more debated than intercollegiate athletics. Issues such as amateurism and professionalism, and the academic abuses of athletes and coaches, keep college athletics in the headlines. Over 400,000 student-athletes participate in intercollegiate athletics at all three Divisions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association. However, Division I receives the most criticism and attention within the media and in higher education. Most of this attention revolves around graduation rates, educational development and learning, and time commitment devoted to athletics (Crowley, 2006).

Although many student-athletes are able to adjust to the rigors of higher education, a growing number of freshman student-athletes are challenged in maintaining their grade point averages (GPA) during their freshman year. This qualitative study sought to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success of freshman student-athletes. An inherent goal of this study was to examine the cognitive and non-cognitive similarities and differences of freshman student-athletes.

Perceptions from five sophomore student-athletes were elicited through semi-structured interviews as they reflected on their freshman year. Three male and two female student-athletes, who came from a variety of sports, served as the research participants of this

study. The transitional experience from high school to college, unpreparedness from high school, athletic demands, and social adjustment were found to be major variables that contributed to their academic success in their freshman year. The results have implications for athletic practitioners and higher education professionals in providing a quality athletic and academic experience for their freshman athletes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	5
Significance of the Study	6
Definition of Terms	7
Limitations	9
Overview of the Chapter	10
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	12
Organization of Literature Review	14
History of National Collegiate Athletic Association Academic Reform	15
Issues Facing Freshmen Student-Athletes	20
Factors Contributing to Academic Success	34
Academic Motivation.....	36
Variables Related to Academic Success	44
Summary	51
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	52
Why Qualitative Research	53
Research Design	54
Methodological Approach: Case Study	55
Data Collection Procedures	60
Data Analysis	63
Trustworthiness.....	64
Researcher's Stance	68
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS	72
Introduction	72
Overview of the Research Process.....	73
Demographic Background Information of the Participants	74
Anika	76
Andy.....	88
Mia	98

Ray	108
Walter	120
CHAPTER V. INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	130
Interpretation of the Findings	130
Research Question 1.....	131
Research Question 2.....	151
Conclusions	158
Recommendations	158
Recommendations for Future Research	163
REFERENCES.....	165
APPENDIX A.INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION AND APPROVAL	195
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM.....	202
APPENDIX C. GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	205
APPENDIX D. DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND FORM.....	208

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Study Demographics	75
2.	Participant High School Grade Point Averages and ACT/SAT Test Scores ..	76

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing concern over the academic performance of student-athletes at today's higher education institutions. Although the concern has been an issue for over 80 years, the relationship between athletic participation and academic success continues to be scrutinized in the media and in higher education (McTeer & Curtis, 1990). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA; 2010c) mandates certain academic standards for entrance into college. However, athletes admitted to college still struggle to maintain passing grades, with some failing to graduate. College student-athletes are under considerable pressure to perform both in and outside the classroom. They face unique challenges and demands that may require special attention and support (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). Student-athletes are expected to balance the extreme time demands of being an athlete with the countless hours they must also dedicate to the rigor of higher education coursework. This unrelenting balancing act can take a toll on student-athletes, particularly freshmen, who tend to exhibit considerable stress and struggle with the transition into college life (Jolly, 2008). Because of this balancing act, many student-athletes are not performing well in the classroom.

Most college students are admitted to college based on their potential to succeed in an institution's programs and educational opportunities. In many of the larger Division

Institutions, student-athletes are admitted for their potential to provide benefits for the institutions. This conflict of interest has been a part of higher education since athletics first became a fixture among colleges and universities in America. Student-athletes who compete in revenue-generating sports at some of the most successful universities in the country are expected to display their skills on the playing field; however, they lack the same motivation to succeed in the classroom (Simons, Van Rhee, & Covington, 1999).

Some authors argue that athletes are not as well prepared academically as their non-athletic counterparts due to low high school academic standards, lack of time to study, or teachers allowing them to underperform in the classroom (Covington, 1992; Foy, 1998; Hollis, 1998; Lewis, 1997; Mixon, 1995; Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Ryan, 1989; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Stuart, 1985). The lack of academic preparation leads to a diminished sense of accomplishment within the classroom (Kramer, 1996). Often, student-athletes find themselves graduating from high school, only to discover their high school course work had not properly prepared them with the academic skills needed to be successful at the college level (Tracey & Corlett, 1995). This may prove to be harmful to student-athletes who are expected to perform both athletically and academically to keep his or her scholarship.

The 2001 Knight Commission addressed the issue when they reported that many athletes, especially ethnic minority males, arrive on campus longing for a professional sports career, only to find that their sole objective to make the professional teams has failed. Athletes then find themselves in a world that demands skills their universities did not require them to learn. Sparent (1989) believed there are a variety of reasons that

might explain the lack of academic motivation. One reason noted was the college athletic lifestyle often encouraged them to focus on an athletic career and did little to prepare them for a life without athletics or college life.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative research study examined the variables that led to the academic success of freshmen student-athletes, specifically those who were successful in their secondary education but who failed to adjust to the academic rigor of college. Growing research addresses issues such as the transition from high school to college, cognitive and non-cognitive variables, and the under-preparedness of incoming freshmen. However, there is scant qualitative research addressing the issue of *why* some student-athletes are academically challenged in their first year given the resources available. In many higher education institutions, athletic departments are responsible for implementing their own orientation programs for student-athletes in an effort to assist them with the transition from high school to college (Pascarella, Edison, Hagedorin, Nora, & Terenzini, 1996). Many of these students do not enter college prepared for the academic rigor; with their time commitments to athletics, they have less opportunity to devote the time needed for academic success (Browne, Cunningham, Gruber, & McGuire, 1995; Clark, Floyd, & Alford, 1986). These issues provide a unique challenge for student-athletes and further emphasize the need for academic support. Student-athletes come from various backgrounds that influence their transitional experience. Because of these various backgrounds, some student-athletes do not always adapt within the standard program an athletic department utilizes (Hill, 1993; Tracey & Corlett, 1995).

The traditional college years (ages 18-22) are considered a transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood as students shift from being reliant on family to dealing with separation and ultimately their independence (Cogan & Petrie, 1996). As a student makes the transition into the college social structure from the familiar high school setting, they must establish a sense of self as they enter the new college environment. In addition, the demands and pressures of university life may challenge the path of students' personal development (Etzel, Ferrante, & Pinkney, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose of this study was to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success and persistence of freshmen student-athletes. It was the researcher's intent to elicit the voices and perceptions of a select number of freshmen student-athletes. Although many student-athletes are able to adjust to the rigors of higher education, a growing number of freshmen student-athletes are challenged in maintaining their grade point averages (GPA). Because of this, student-athletes' eligibility and retention at the institution are at risk.

Predictors of college success have often been based on cognitive factors such as high school GPA and SAT/ACT scores (Ervin, Saunders, Gillis, & Hoglebe, 1985; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Purdy, Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1985; Tinto, 1993). Growing research supports the use of non-cognitive factors in addition to traditional cognitive measures to predict academic success (Gaston-Gayles, 2004). Non-academic variables (social and emotional adjustment and institutional attachment) more accurately predict college adjustment than academic variables. Non-cognitive factors--a sense of belonging, positive attitude toward peer relationship, interactions with faculty, and social

integration--influence student persistence (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Petrie & Russell, 1995). Further, when non-cognitive variables are combined with high school GPA and standardized tests, predictions of success are more accurate (Gaston-Gayles, 2004). This study examined non-cognitive variables in combination with cognitive variables as they relate to academic success. A growing number of quantitative studies are using assessment questionnaires such as the Non-Cognitive Questionnaire (NCQ; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992) and the Student-Athletes' Motivation Toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ; Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). These quantitative tools have accurately studied the relationship between non-cognitive variables and academic performance. Scant qualitative research addresses cognitive and non-cognitive variables of freshmen student-athletes and how they relate to academic success. Qualitative research seeks to explain *why* and uncover meaning in an effort to understand a phenomenon. This study employed qualitative research methods to understand the influences and factors of a students' academic success.

Research Questions

This research study utilized two guiding questions derived from prior literature on academic success and motivation.

- Q1 What is the relationship between academic and athletic variables and academic success for freshmen student-athletes?
- Q2 What is the relationship between motivation and academic success?

The questions that guided this study were posed in a broad, general format and evolved as the research progressed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Significance of the Study

This study sought to provide information to college administrators for retaining freshmen student-athletes at risk of academic failure and the loss of their eligibility to compete. The NCAA requires that member institutions review each student-athletes' GPA every semester to determine the student-athletes academic performance to remain eligible for competition. Since 1991, Division I institutions across the country have been mandated by the NCAA to provide academic services for all student-athletes. Although the allocation of resources varies at each institution, student-athletes are provided with academic assistance while participating in their sport and progressing toward a degree. This study investigated why certain freshmen student-athletes are challenged academically during their first year despite available resources.

The college experience for students comes during a challenging time in a person's life. The first year of college presents an opportunity for positive intervention to those who are confronted with the transition into higher education. From an institutional standpoint with increasing pressure to attract and retain students, it is critical to gain a rich, first person account of the freshman lived experience.

Results of this study could be shared with athletic practitioners to assist them in providing a quality athletic and academic experience for their freshmen athletes. Once an understanding is gained of the salient variables that contribute to quality intercollegiate experiences, appropriate steps can be taken to proactively structure and organize these experiences in a manner that best positions student-athletes to reap the benefits of academic and sports participation.

Definition of Terms

Academic motivation. The degree to which a student-athlete allocates time and energy toward their academic roles and tasks.

Academic progress rate (APR). An NCAA measure to track the academic success of Division I teams during each academic term. This is a real-time assessment of a team's academic performance and awards students points (one point each) based on retention and eligibility. A team's APR is the total points earned by a team at a given time divided by the total points possible; it is used to monitor the effectiveness of an institution's support of academics for student-athletes. Teams are penalized for falling below a certain number, e.g., a reduction of scholarships to more severe penalties.

Academic success. Meeting GPA requirements and regulations as they relate to attaining a degree in a timely fashion.

Athletic motivation. The degree to which a student-athlete is committed toward excelling in athletic related tasks.

Background variables. The group of variables that represent descriptive information about the participants. Gender, race or ethnicity, and parent level of education were variables used in this study.

Division I. Is divided into three subdivisions: FBS (formally I-A), FCS (formally I-AA), and Division I (formally I-AAA). For the purpose of this study, Division I refers to the entire Division, which includes all three subdivisions unless otherwise noted.

Dual roles. Academic-athletic motivation represents the balance student-athletes have between their two major roles in college--students and athletes.

First-generation student. Neither parent had more than a high school education (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

Freshmen year experience (FYE). Study topics relevant to the first semester freshman's transition into the academic community of critical thinking and problem solving skills. It assists freshmen in developing academic success or a graduation plan.

Grant-in-aid (athletic scholarship). The amount of aid the university provides for freshmen student-athletes that includes room and board, tuition, fees, and books.

Learning disability. Difficulty in acquiring school skills: a condition that either prevents or significantly hinders somebody from learning basic skills or information at the same rate as most people of the same age (often used in the plural).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The national governing organization that oversees and enforces the rules and regulations of its members within Division I, II, and III intercollegiate athletics.

Parent level of education. The highest level of education that any one of the participant's parents achieved. Examples of this variable included less than high school graduation; high school graduation or GED; vocational, trade, or business school after graduation from high school; college education after high school; undergraduate degree; master's degree or equivalent; and Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree.

Race or ethnicity. The racial or cultural background of the participants--Black, White (non-Hispanic), Asian (or Pacific Islander), Hispanic, Native American, and other --as reported by the athlete.

Redshirt freshmen. A freshmen student-athlete who does not participate in competition but is able to practice in a sport for an entire academic year.

Revenue generating sport. Collegiate athletic sport teams that historically generate financial revenue through ticket, merchandise sales, and alumni giving. Men's football and men's and women's basketball teams are generally considered to be revenue generating sports.

Season status. The athlete's current playing status at the time of the interview for this study. In-season is defined as an athlete who is currently participating in their sport in what the NCAA terms as the "playing season." The following fall and winter sports were currently in-season at the time the interviews were conducted: Men's and women's basketball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, women's volleyball, wrestling, and women's swimming. Out-of-season is defined as an athlete who is outside the institution's declared playing season.

Student-athlete. An eligible member of a varsity athletic team at the Division I, II, and III levels within a university or college. Cheerleaders and dance team members are not included. Participants in this study were sophomore Division I athletes at the participating institution during their freshmen year.

Limitations

Four primary areas limited this study. First, this study was conducted at a mid-size, predominantly White, Division I FCS, public institution in the mountain west region of the United States. Results might not be applicable to first year student-athletes at other like institutions. Second, the qualitative nature of this study forced the researcher to continually make judgments such as managing large amounts of data, interpreting participants' experiences and what had been heard by the researcher. Third, the ability to generalize the findings of this study might have been diminished if the purposive

sampling procedures had minimal ethnic and gender diversity. Fourth, this study was conducted at the beginning of the second semester of the participants' sophomore year, providing only snapshots of their freshmen year experience. As athletes progress through their college careers, their levels of motivation as well as their memory of the past year might be limited.

Overview of Chapters

The study of variables that contributed to the academic success of freshmen student-athletes was composed as follows:

Chapter I includes an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, the major research questions, definition of terms, and limitations.

Chapter II provides a thorough and succinct review of the literature pertaining to student-athlete issues, cognitive and non-cognitive variables, background variables, motivation, and theories as they relate to academic success.

Chapter III provides an overview of the qualitative research design and methodology used in the study. The chapter outlines detailed procedures used in the selection of participants, individual interviews, data collection, data analysis, and research issues related to triangulation and trustworthiness.

Chapter IV provides the results of data collection situated around the major themes and subthemes related to the major research questions. Living narratives were developed through individual interviews that shared and explored the stories of the participants.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the findings of the study, the conclusions and implications of the study, implications for practitioners, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Few topics in higher education are more volatile and debated than intercollegiate athletics. Issues such as economic factors around “big time” athletics, the issue surrounding amateurism and professionalism, and academic abuses of athletes and coaches keep college athletics on the front pages and in the media. Over 400,000 student-athletes participate in intercollegiate athletics at all three divisions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA; 2010b). Of the three divisions, Division I receives the most criticism and attention within the media and in higher education. Most of this attention revolves around graduation rates, educational development and learning, and time commitment devoted to athletics. These issues have plagued higher education since the 1890s, resulting in ongoing reform efforts (Crowley, 2006).

Being a student-athlete on today's college campuses creates many challenges when it comes to academic success. College student-athletes are under considerable pressure to perform both in the classroom and on the field. They face unique challenges and demands that may require special attention and support (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Carodine et al., 2001). Student-athletes are expected to balance the extreme time demands of being an athlete with the countless hours they must also dedicate to the rigor of higher education coursework. This unrelenting balancing act can take a toll on

student-athletes, particularly freshmen, who tend to exhibit considerable stress and struggle with the transition into college life (Jolly, 2008). In a study conducted by Paul and Brier (2001), adjusting to the first year of college is considered the most difficult period students face. In general, an institution loses approximately 25% of its freshmen before their sophomore year (ACT, 2002). According to the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (2002), only 55% of undergraduate students who begin their education at a college will graduate from the same school. One reason for this high number is 53% of college freshmen enter higher education institutions academically unprepared for the rigor of college work. As a consequence, institutions find themselves having to develop specialized academic support services and developmental education (Fenton, 2006).

Student-athletes are faced with a myriad of other challenges as they begin their college experience: career and vocational matters, drug abuse, fear of failure, fear of success, interpersonal relationships, financial concerns, racism, and discrimination (Coakley, 1994; Edwards, 1984; Parham, 1993; Person, Benson-Quaziena, & Rogers, 2001). An additional small group of student-athletes encounter difficulties because of a hearing or visual learning disability. They have to deal with the concerns of being student-athletes but have the additional challenge of trying to hide their disabilities for fear of decreased playing time or even dismissal from the team (Parham, 1993).

Learning disabilities do not manifest themselves in the same way among student-athletes (Gerber & Reiff, 1991). While learning disabilities can be mild for some and difficult to detect, others can be quite severe, presenting a challenge to both the individual and the institution (Dowdy & Smith, 1994; Gerber & Reiff, 1991). There is little in the

current literature that addresses the difficulties of learning disabled student-athletes within higher education and the accommodations to assist them as they progress toward a degree.

Organization of Literature Review

The academic environment for underprepared freshmen student-athletes, the transition from high school to college, and academic reform efforts are factors affecting student-athlete academic success. Although not a primary focus of this study, institutional academic policies and resources at the Division I college might also have an effect on both the athlete and the academic support system of the university. The history and philosophy of intercollegiate athletics laid the groundwork for the section on academic reform efforts in this chapter. NCAA academic propositions such as Proposition 48 (1986), Proposition 42 (1989) and Proposition 16 (1992) provided the foundation for a discussion of the 2003 Academic Reform Standards.

Student-athletes are considered by some academic support personnel as a special population with their own culture. The following section explores issues facing today's freshmen student-athletes. This section investigates the dual role of athlete and student, the transition from high school to college, and an examination of student-athletes who are considered "at risk" by the institution.

The effect of cognitive variables (i.e., high school grade point average, high school standardized test scores, and freshman GPA) and non-cognitive variables (i.e., willingness to learn, attitude towards learning and motivation) are explored in a succeeding section to gain a better understanding of academic motivation and success during an athlete's freshmen year. Next, learning disabilities and the possible effects

they may have on freshmen student-athletes are introduced. In addition, the literature review addresses other relevant topics for this study including academic motivation, expectancy theory and self-efficacy theory. To complete the literature review, background variables that could affect freshmen student-athletes regarding their learning and development are explored.

History of National Collegiate Athletic Association Academic Reform

Just as the NCAA and reform cannot be separated, nor can football be separated from the NCAA. The three have been intertwined for over 100 years. Former NCAA employee Kay Hawes (1999) has written that the NCAA's father was football and its mother was higher education. This was, she noted, an almost unintentional union brought about in part by the proclivity of students to play the game. The game of football and the academy began their relationship before the end of the 19th century with the increase of interscholastic and on-campus club matches (NCAA, 2010a).

As early as the 1890s, football was an incredibly popular sport within the United States; game day crowds grew as did the number of universities fielding teams. However, after 18 deaths and 149 serious injuries concerning football in 1905, President Roosevelt offered a choice--reform or abolish the sport. New York University's chancellor, Henry MacCracken, after the death of a NYU football player, took President Roosevelt's request to heart. He invited representatives to attend a conference and, in effect, make the choice President Roosevelt had presented. Thirteen colleges and universities sent delegates to the first organized meeting and reform efforts were on the way. Within the next few months, 62 institutions, represented by faculty members, came together and developed rules for not just football, but all sports. A constitution and

bylaws were drawn up. At the 1906 convention, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States was born; the name would change in 1910 to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (Crowley, 2006).

Some early proposals of academic reform examined the notion of requiring student-athletes to participate in intercollegiate sports only if they were enrolled in a full allotment of courses at the institution they were attending. Although this measure would provide a general guideline of what would become early eligibility guidelines, each institution independently determined what constituted full-time status for their students. Because the NCAA was originally created to develop and implement rules for football in an attempt to curb both recruiting and subsidized abuses, the creation of universally acceptable eligibility policies would take some time (Crowley, 2006). For the first 50 years, institutions were self-regulated through the “home rule” in which individual institutions determined academic eligibility for their student-athletes (Crowley, 2006; Kelo, 2005).

In 1946, the NCAA held their first conference where they adopted the Sanity Code--a set of principles that defined amateurism by holding student-athletes to the same academic standards as the student body. Financial aid was awarded to recruits without consideration of athletic ability (Kelo, 2005; Ridpath, 2002). Although the Sanity Code changed some years later, the core of the eligibility legislation remained as the NCAA continued to grow to over 400 member institutions. The issues and abuses also continued to grow and the need for strong leadership led the NCAA to hire the first full-time executive director, Walter Byers, in 1951 (Crowley, 2006; Falla, 1981).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the NCAA saw tremendous growth due in large part to the addition of television. The growth not only brought an increase of revenue but increased scrutiny of intercollegiate athletics, challenging the NCAA to approve a program to control the live telecast of football games. Proceedings at the annual convention during this time delegated enforcement powers to govern postseason bowl games that had exploded onto the scene in the early 1950s (Falla, 1981).

The first of several academic reform attempts occurred in 1965 with the 1.6 Rule, which essentially established that incoming students must have a predicted 1.6 GPA on a 4.00 scale in order to compete in intercollegiate athletics. This was based on a complex set of expectancy tables taken from high school GPA's and standardized test scores. This was the first instance in which the NCAA and university presidents worked together to create a membership-wide standard for student-athletes (Crowley, 2006; Gurney, 2010). The rule came under instant criticism due to academic and competitive concerns. In 1973, the 1.6 Rule was replaced with the 2.00 Rule wherein minimum standardized test scores were eliminated and a 2.0 high school GPA was used as the measure of academic success (Crowley, 2006; Falla, 1981). However, early results showed that too many marginally prepared athletes were allowed to enter into higher education institutions.

The next major attempt at reform came from the American Council of Education (ACE), which was strongly influenced by university presidents (Crowley, 2006; Ridpath, 2002; Sperber, 1990). This group proposed Proposition 48 in 1983; it stipulated that for incoming freshmen student-athletes to achieve initial eligibility, they must meet a standardized index combining GPA and SAT scores as well a 2.0 high school GPA upon entering college. In addition, students were required to earn a passing grade in 11 core

courses while in high school. If the initial standards were not met, athletes would be classified as partial-qualifiers; those athletes would be required to sit out their first year of competition (Knight Commission, 1993). Proposition 48 was quickly criticized for being too strict as well as discriminatory toward minority student-athletes who traditionally scored poorly on standardized tests (Brooks & Althouse, 1993; Etzel et al., 1996; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992). Proposition 16 soon followed, which allowed institutions to use a sliding scale of high school core GPA and standardized test scores to achieve eligibility (Benson, 1999; Crowley, 2006; NCAA, 2010a). The NCAA also adopted legislation that set degree completion requirements year by year: (a) 25% of one's degree must be completed by the beginning of their third year, (b) 50% must be completed by the start of their fourth year, and (c) 75% must be completed by the start of their fifth year (Crowley, 2006; NCAA, 2010a). Crowley noted that students were required to maintain 95% of their institution's mandated GPA entering their third year and 100% for all subsequent years.

With the inauguration of Myles Brand as the president of the NCAA in 2003, academic reform measures became paramount. The most aggressive NCAA Division I academic reform legislation came in 2003, which incorporated increased core course requirements for initial eligibility and GPAs. However, the legislation also lowered the standardized test score requirements for incoming freshmen. The new legislation also permitted first year student-athletes to get a head start in the summer prior to their first fall semester by allowing athletic scholarships to cover the cost of summer classes. In addition, continuing eligibility standards were strengthened in 2003: student-athletes

were to complete 40% of their degree by the start of year three, 60% by year four, and 80% by year five (NCAA, 2010a).

The new NCAA 40/60/80 rule replaced the previously enforced 25/50/75 rule that was instituted in 1992. The rule was intended to ensure that student-athletes make significant progress toward their degrees, thus reducing the chances of student-athletes taking easier courses not part of their degree requirements. The academic reform policy also carried with it robust punitive measures, e.g., loss of scholarship monies, as consequences for failure to meet guidelines set by this legislation (Gurney, 2010). The Academic Progress Rate (APR) was introduced to give each institution a score to determine how they were performing as an institution in keeping their student-athletes on track to graduate (Crowley, 2006; NCAA, 2010a). There is increasing concern regarding the impact of the 40/60/80 rule and its effects on student-athletes and academic services. Student-athletes are no longer able to explore possible majors; they must decide on a major within their first year in order to meet new requirements. According to Cathie Helmbold, an academic/athletic counselor at Auburn University, "The 40/60/80 requirement forces student-athletes to stick to a major once they reach a certain point even if they change their minds. Otherwise, they forego competing" (Meyer, 2005). Reform efforts could prompt student-athletes in selecting an easy field of study in order to remain eligible. Underprepared student-athletes who need remediation to develop their basic academic skills are another concern. Jennifer Quirk, director of Academic and Student-Athlete Support Services at Fairleigh Dickinson University, states,

For those [underprepared] student-athletes, the new markers can be difficult to achieve with needing to improve their basic skills and meeting degree-percentage requirements. Student-athletes required to take basic (non-credit) preparatory

courses are generally also the ones who cannot successfully take more than fourteen or fifteen credits a semester. (Meyer, 2005)

Although this reform effort has been met with praise for holding institutions accountable regarding admissions and retention of student-athletes, the challenge of admitting underprepared or high-risk freshmen student-athletes still remains (Gurney, 2010). High-risk student-athletes are commonly ethnic minorities, come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, have been academically underprepared, and may have learning disabilities. Studies have found that high-risk athletes frequently have low self-esteem and engage in activities that may lead to them to drop out of college or lose their eligibility (Jones & Watson, 1990). Admission of high-risk freshmen students is a challenge admission officers continue to battle. Once on campus, retaining both the high-risk freshman athletes and those struggling with the transition from high school to college becomes the concern. The focus shifts from the student-athlete to university athletic programs and student support services and how they can provide assistance to student-athletes.

Issues Facing Freshmen Student-Athletes

A great deal has been written on predictors of academic success for student-athletes (Carodine et al., 1999; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Sowa, Thomson, & Bennett, 1989; Young & Sowa, 1992). The most common predictors of academic performance have traditionally been high school GPA and class rank, parental education, and standardized test scores (Ervin et al., 1985; Purdy et al., 1985). Studies have also supported the use and influence of background variables that vary for different racial/ethnic groups. Sellers (1992) found that high school GPA and mother's occupation were the only significant predictors of college GPA for Black athletes who participated in

revenue sports at NCAA institutions. For White athletes, high school GPA, socioeconomic status, and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores were significant in predicting college GPA. Young and Sowa (1992) found that high school GPA was one of the best predictors of academic performance for Black athletes.

Studies have shown that career aspirations and high demands associated with college sports have been linked to the failure of some athletes to balance academic and athletic tasks (Adler & Adler, 1991; Simons et al., 1999). However, other research studies suggest that student-athletes wishing to play at the professional level also aspire to earn a college degree (Center for the Study of Athletics, 1988; Gaston-Gayles, 2004).

Students and Athletes: The Dual Role

Student-athletes, like their non-athlete peers, face several obstacles in their transition to college life--adjusting to new living environments, dealing with increased autonomy that comes along with attending college, refining and developing their own identity, and dealing with adversity--just like other freshmen students (Parham, 1993). "Student-athletes are socialized from an early age in an environment that presents a set of challenges and demands that are in addition to and vastly different from the challenges and demands that their non-athlete peers have to face" (Parham, 1993, p. 412). Some of these challenges include learning to balance academics and athletics, adapting to isolation from social and mainstream activities, their own health concerns such as trying to minimize injuries, balancing relationships and dealing with the finality of their athletic careers (Parham, 1993).

The identity of being a student does not bring the same excitement or glory as does the identity of being an athlete (Watts & Moore, 2001). Research has shown that

the more important the *athletic* identity was to a student-athlete, the probability of psychological effects increased, e.g., stress and substance abuse (Killeya, 2001; Miller & Kerr, 2003; Parham, 1993; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002).

Much has been written on student engagement of the general college student and the relationship to learning and personal development (Astin, 1993; Hu & Kuh, 2003; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2004, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005); however, little has been written that examines the student-athlete's engagement in educational activities and the influences on cognitive and affective outcomes (Pascarella, 2006; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996). Few studies have examined what student-athletes have done with their time outside of participating in their sport and how those experiences influenced their learning and personal development (Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009).

Unlike regular students, student-athletes have the added pressure of committing a significant amount of their time to athletics. According to the NCAA Bylaw 17.1.6.1 (2010b), in season, student-athletes are not allowed to spend more than 20 hours per week (and four hours per day) engaged in direct sport-related activities such as team practices or competition. Although many believe this could be the equivalent of a part-time job, this time commitment can be deceiving. The 20 hours of contact time does not include time away from campus traveling to and from competitions and time spent in the weight and training rooms each day; nor does it count the hours of study hall required by most institutions.

Prior to 1991, student-athletes reported they were spending more than 30 hours per week on athletic-related activities (Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996; Suggs, 1999).

Despite limits enforced by the NCAA, results from a survey on the student-athlete experience at the Division I level found football players reported spending well over 40 hours a week on athletically related activities--the equivalent of a full time job (Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009; Wolverton, 2008). The amount of time being spent on athletic related activities is alarming because it leaves little time to devote to other activities such as academics and other educational activities (Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009). The physical demands and exhaustion of athletic participation cannot be ignored when considering how student-athletes perform in the classroom (Cogan & Petrie, 1996). The dual roles of student and athlete also create many other dilemmas, e.g., the student-athlete's belief that motivation and confidence in ability as an athlete should translate to academics.

In their study of college basketball players, Adler and Adler (1991) described the conflict student-athletes face as "role-engulfment" (p. 226). They found that student-athletes had three essential roles: athletic, academic, and social. These roles were in constant conflict with each other. The study also found that the time demands and intense training of competing in their sport led to athletes being inundated by their athletic responsibilities. Other factors in the literature show the negative effects of participating in college sport (Dempsey, 2002; Earl, 2004; Einarson & Matier, 2002). In fact, it has been widely reported that athletic participation has a negative cognitive effect on both male and female student-athletes. Adler and Adler (1985) found that student-athletes became disassociated with academics as they progressed through college. Other factors reported were the lack of value regarding academics as it related to the athletic culture (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Hanks & Eckland, 1976; Leichter, Meilman, Presley, & Cashin, 1998) and athletes entering higher education with lower academic credentials

(Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Other studies found that female athletes were more likely to demonstrate academic success than males and non-revenue sports participants excelled in the academic arena beyond their peers in revenue sports (Simons et al., 1999).

Studies have shown that most recruited athletes start out behind the general student body due to lower academic credentials when they enter college (Hood, Craig, & Ferguson, 1992; Purdy et al., 1985; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Stuart, 1985). In their study, Shulman and Bowen examined over 90,000 student-athletes in 30 colleges during 1951, 1976 and 1989. They found that student-athletes entered college with significantly lower academic credentials such as SAT and high school GPAs compared to the general student population. The study also found that athletes who exhibited a higher commitment to athletics suffered the greatest academic deficiencies. These findings reinforce other studies which have asserted that as the intensity level of athletic participation increases, academic performance decreases (Bowen & Levin, 2003; McCormick & Tinsley, 1987; Stuart, 1985).

Although there are numerous studies regarding the negative effects of athletic participation in college athletes, other authors have reported the positive benefits of athletic participation. Ryan (1989) and Pascarella and Smart (1991) found evidence that participation in college athletics was positively related to motivation to earn a college degree. Ryan's (1989) study suggested that the motivation between participation in college athletics and completing a degree was weak at best. Astin (1975) reported that participation in athletics related positively to developing interpersonal skills, peer relationships, and leadership abilities.

Transition into College

Millions of high school graduates enter college each year but the transition can be a difficult one. It is important to understand the differences between high school and college before understanding how students make the transition. High school is mandatory; college is voluntary. Parents and teachers often help the high school student with their responsibilities and help them develop priorities. In college, students are exposed to ethical and moral situations where they are forced to establish priorities and balance their responsibilities. In high school, students spend approximately 30 hours a week in classes; whereas the full-time college student typically spends 12-17 hours in classes.

Two significant differences transitioning from high school to college include testing and grading. In high school, tests are numerous with small amounts of information being tested; whereas college tests are more infrequent and generally cover more content. Grading occurs for most assigned work in high school; whereas college grades are dependent on a few exams and required papers. The major grading difference between high school and college is high school tends to reward effort, while college focuses on results. By understanding the differences between high school and college, the difficulty some students have in transitioning into college becomes more evident (Gomer, 2004).

Typically, transitions mark a turning point for the implementation of new behaviors (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). When students transition from high school to college, many have a new found freedom--they realize their parents are no longer monitoring them as they had while living at home.

All freshmen are susceptible to difficulties with the adjustment to college. Many freshmen are overwhelmed with their newfound freedom and focus more on socializing than on academics. Many freshmen deal with different amounts of increased responsibilities in addition to their academic requirements. For some, it may be working full-time to pay for their education. For others, it includes participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics. Regardless of personal situations, the transition from high school to college is often difficult.

Transition is a part of everyday life whether we move from grade school to middle school, change employment, or move to a different location. The term transition has a variety of meanings and contexts. Pearson and Petitpas (1990) describe transition as a construct that is useful in describing and understanding how psychological, physical, and social changes can affect an individual. Schlossberg (1984) describes transition as “not so much a matter a change as it is of the individual’s own perception of the change” (p. 44). Schlossberg developed transition theory by taking a psychosocial perspective on changed experiences in individuals’ lives. It could be generalized that student-athletes view their movement from high school to college as an anticipated transition--one which could affect their daily routine and impact their lives. According to Schlossberg’s theory of transition, there are different levels of transition: the transition from high school to college can be overwhelming and life changing, the more subtle changes of losing interest in a major of study, or living at home while attending college. As an individual begins the transitional process, their perceptions and behaviors about personal experiences in life adapt to the transition (Schlossberg, 1995). According to Schlossberg (1995), “adaptation is a process during which an individual moves from being totally

preoccupied with the transition to integrating the transition into his or her own life” (p. 7).

Research has shown that student-athletes represent a unique and identifiable student subpopulation (Ferrante et al., 1996; Watson, 2005). While many athletes find participation in intercollegiate athletics to be a positive experience as they work toward earning a degree (Astin, 1993; Pascarella et al., 1996; Ryan, 1989), a growing number are experiencing issues such adjustment problems and emotional distress as a result of their participation (Blann, 1985; Kennedy & Dimmick, 1987; Sowa & Gressard, 1983; Watson, 2005).

Gomer (2004) conducted a study that focused on how student-athletes at the high school level made the transition to college life. The study examined whether participation in athletics hindered them in their overall adjustment to college life in academic, social, emotional, and athletic contexts. He concluded that the majority of student-athletes faced some form of stress during this adjustment period, both academically and socially. Freshmen student-athletes encounter newfound freedoms and also begin to develop new social interests. Social and economic backgrounds (i.e., single parent homes, low-income households) proved to be more stressful for student-athletes than for non-student-athletes. Street (1999) found that student-athletes, unlike the general student population, were expected to represent the school while simultaneously maintaining high academic standards. On many Division I campuses across the country, student-athletes are often celebrated for their athletic ability and success on the field with many enjoying an almost celebrity-like status. However, this status also presents challenges for many athletes as they attempt to balance the dual roles of student and

athlete. Student-athletes must manage many of the same academic, emotional, and personal goals as their non-athlete peers but they must also manage the unique challenges associated with being a student-athlete (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). Among the many challenges athletes face are balancing academic and athletic demands (Pinkney, 1992), coping with physical injury (Parham, 1993), developing outside social interests (Astin, 1978; Lanning, 1982), forming interpersonal relationships (Parham, 1993), managing sports-related career transitions (Pearson & Petipas, 1990), and maintaining optimal physical conditioning (Danish, Petipas, & Hale, 1993). Often, as these elements come together, emotional, physical, or developmental difficulties for student-athletes may become apparent (Watson & Kissinger, 2007).

Graber and Brooks-Gunn (1996) reported that some form of stress occurs any time a student changes schools and encounters a new academic and social system, regardless of their extracurricular activities. Some stressors students adjust to while in transition include leaving friends/family for the first time, having a roommate, and money management. Student-athletes are further stressed in dealing with travel to and from games, attending study hall, participating in practice sessions, attending media sessions, and engaging in year-round workouts.

The transition from high school to college life can be extremely stressful for first-generation student-athletes. First-generation students are at greater risk for difficulty in the transition from high school to college (Ishitani, 2006; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Those students-athletes who are academically and socially involved prior to college experience a smoother transition to college and are

more likely to return for their sophomore year than those who struggled both academically and socially during this time (Tinto, 1998).

In an effort to aid students during their transition period, a number of programs have been established to assist with the transition into college. The NCAA developed the Challenging Athletes Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS) program in 1994, which was designed to help and prepare student-athletes in five major areas as they progress through college: academics, athletics, personal development, career and community service, and any challenges they could encounter during and after college (NCAA, 2010c).

Underprepared Student-Athletes

Underprepared students entering college is not a new problem. Since at least the late 1940s, measures have been taken to deal with large groups of students who need both an access to a college education and the assessment required to provide a quality education (Cole, 1947).

The underprepared or at risk student-athlete has become a fact of life on Division I campuses across the country. In general, many believe college athletes are less academically prepared for college and enter with lower high school grades and test scores than the general student body (Adler & Adler, 1985; Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Chu, Seagrave, & Becker, 1985; Hood et al., 1992). This is particularly true for minority student-athletes (Clark et al., 1986; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Hyatt, 2003). Many of these students do not enter college prepared for the academic rigor; with their time commitments to athletics, they have less opportunity to devote the time needed for academic success (Browne et al., 1995; Clark et al., 1986). These issues provide a unique

challenge for student-athletes and further emphasize the need for academic support. Freshmen student-athletes in particular must learn developmental tasks associated with young adulthood (Chickering, 1981). Underprepared student-athletes may lack academic motivation and self-regulatory behavior (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002), emotional characteristics (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994), and accessibility to services provided by the institution (Astin, 1984). Robinson (1996) describes three kinds of underprepared student-athletes: academically underprepared, emotionally underprepared, and culturally underprepared. In his study, high school GPA and standardized test scores were used to identify underprepared student-athletes needing remedial coursework or special academic support. Robinson found underprepared student-athletes to be emotionally and culturally underprepared: “The emotionally underprepared students tend to have a lack of confidence in their lack of skills, low self esteem, personal problems outside of school, and possibly substance abuse” (p. 1). Maybe those most challenged in making the transition into higher education are the culturally underprepared. They tend to be first-generation student-athletes or student-athletes who find it difficult to navigate around the bureaucracy of higher education (Parham, 1993). It is not uncommon to see all three behaviors manifest themselves as underprepared students enter into higher education.

There are several causes related to student under-preparation: complex social and educational issues that include a lack of certain educational skills, a lack of postsecondary educational preparation, a lack of communication and coordination between K-12 and higher education systems, variation in the definition of remediation, and multiple goals in the American higher education policy (Herzberg, Nagata, Long, & Bollman, 2003). Tinto’s (1987) theory of departure indicated that some students leave higher education

because they are unable or willing to meet the minimum standards of the institution. The majority of students leave because of insufficient skills based principally on inadequate prior preparation.

In addition to the lack of preparedness some student-athletes face upon entering college, many also lack some of the abilities to be academically successful: learn strategically, critically analyze one's own beliefs and inner motivations, or effectively manage the social environment of the college community (Entwistle & McCune, 2004; Ruban, McCoach, McGuire, & Reis, 2003). Albaili (1997) found that cognitive factors and personal motivation also played a significant role in student success. In 2003, Ruban et al. reported differences in motivation and self-regulation between students with learning disabilities and those without a disability were significant in explaining differences in academic success.

The central model in Tinto's (1993) model of retention is the notion of integration. Student academic success may be predicted by their degree of academic and social integration into the culture of higher education. According to Tinto's theory, the first six months are an important period as a student persists and completes their first year and eventually obtains a degree. Underprepared or at risk students are the most vulnerable during this time period, reaffirming the need for academic assistance to be provided shortly after the student enters the institution. Further, the issue of grade inflation from elementary school to high school may explain why some incoming freshmen who successfully completed college preparation classes are unable to adjust to the culture of the institution and may be required to take remedial courses once they begin college classes (Fenton, 2006; Silverstein, 2004).

Hoyt and Sorenson (2001) studied the effects of high school preparation classes on college remedial placement rates at Utah Valley State College. The researchers used high school transcripts of approximately 2,500 high school seniors from 1995. They noted, “The chain of blame is a metaphor for the discourse taking place in the educational community” (p. 26). Their study explained how universities blamed high schools, high schools blamed middle schools, and middle schools blamed elementary schools for poor student preparation.

As underprepared freshmen student-athletes enter into college, additional assistance may be needed to ease any apprehension as they persist toward a degree. Although academic preparedness (i.e., course taking and high school academic success) appears to be the strongest predictor of academic success in higher education (Ingels et al., 2002), nonacademic factors are also associated with academic success. The importance of assessing student ability has resulted in greater research in this area and increased accountability requirements levied on colleges and universities to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency (Entwistle & McCune, 2004; Jakubowski & Dembo, 2002). Because of this, the need to effectively assess the underprepared or “at risk” student-athletes, the use of SAT scores, and other psychosocial variable such as drinking, smoking, and social support have been used to predict achievement in freshmen college students (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004).

Learning Disabilities

The American Psychological Association’s (2002) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* defines a learning disorder (LD) as any condition that affects one’s perception and the ability to read, write, or do calculations. A “specific learning disability” includes

many different conditions that interfere with one's ability to learn. Dyslexia is one of the more well-known conditions. Other conditions such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are also types of learning disabilities. Troiano (2003) defines a learning disability as a disorder of one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

The number of college students with learning disabilities (LD) enrolled in colleges has steadily increased. In a longitudinal study conducted by Heiman and Precel (2003) from 1985 to 1990, 2.2% percent to 8.8% of all students in higher education were learning disabled. The study also found the graduation rate of college students with LD was 3.6% compared to 62.1% for college students without LD.

Since the ability to understand and use written and verbal language is an important part of life, difficulties in this area put a person at a significant disadvantage. To be successful within education and life, it is important to have the ability to read, write, and calculate. Failure in these areas can range from mild embarrassment to dropping out of school. This failure can also threaten a person's social role and sense of self-worth (Arceneaux, 2006).

There is little research on student-athletes with LD and the effects LD has on some student-athletes' abilities to perform in the classroom. This study did not address this topic at length; however, LD was considered as a possible variable throughout the study.

Factors Contributing to Academic Success

The three most studied cognitive variables are introduced in this section as they relate to academic success: high school GPA, high school standardized test scores, and freshmen year GPAs as it relates to students' progress toward a degree. The next section focuses on non-cognitive variables and background variables as they relate to academic success; it is followed by a section defining the basic principles of academic motivation. This study was based on investigating several non-cognitive and background variables as they relate to academic success. In addition, this study examined the link between academic motivation and academic success.

Cognitive Variables

The two most commonly used cognitive predictors of academic success are persistence toward graduation and college GPA (Purdy et al., 1985). The NCAA bases graduation rate calculation on whether students graduate within six years of their first enrollment (NCAA, 2008). Persistence refers to enrollment status at any given point during an academic career (Horn, Kojaku, & Carroll, 2001). However, Funk (1991) rebuked these traditional measures of academic success as inappropriate measures of academic success for student-athletes as well as the general student population.

Grade point averages are questionable measures due to the fact that they are only representative of a students' performance at any given time in any given sport. Graduation rates are also problematic in that there is the potential of inaccurate reporting from institutions across the country. Student-athletes enrolled at an NCAA institution are required to make progress toward a degree. To be eligible for continued participation, student-athletes must meet minimum progress-toward-degree standards, which include

grade-point average minimums and a percentage of courses that count toward a declared degree program (NCAA, 2010b). According to NCAA (2010e), calculations of the Division I graduation success rate (GSR) are based on full-time freshmen who entered the institution six years prior to the fall term being calculated. The GSR also allows institutions to include student-athletes who transferred into an institution while allowing institutions to exclude student-athletes who separated from the institution and who would have been academically eligible to compete had they returned. Adding to the confusion, the adjusted graduation gap (AGG) was developed to address some shortcomings of the GSR. The AGG compares the adjusted graduation rate for full-time students from the following NCAA Division I sports: football (FBS and FCS), men's and women's basketball, softball, and baseball. Confusion about which rate to report and how often leads to inaccurate or, at the very least, inconsistent reporting across institutions.

Non-Cognitive Variables

Use of cognitive measures such as grade point average, class ranking, and graduation rate have been the most commonly used predictors of academic success within higher education. SAT and other standardized tests were challenged by Sedlacek (2004) because they fail to account for how students learn, their ability to learn, or their quality of instruction. Many factors such as environment, type of institution, and motivation have also been studied as contributing to academic success. In order to obtain a well-rounded view of academic success, non-cognitive and cognitive measures must be considered (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985; Young & Sowa, 1992). Gaston-Gayles (2002) found that non-cognitive variables such as self-concept, community service involvement, and long-term goal-setting were also linked to academic success. In his 2001 study,

Ransdell found factors such as interest in school, willingness to study, and competence in handling test situations also influenced academic success.

Academic Motivation

Motivation has been defined as something that “gets us going, keeps us moving, and helps get the jobs done” (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995, p. 4). Academic motivation is a broad term which can be more thoroughly explained by a number of theories that address more specific achievement-related components. Hollembeak and Amorose (2005) support the importance for both researchers and practitioners alike to understand the motivations of athletes. Thus, a review of motivation was necessary for this study.

Motivation theorists have developed theories over the past several decades that have focused on the importance of attributions (Weiner, 1986), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997), expectancies and values (Atkinson, 1957), goals (Maehr, 2001; Pintrich, 2000), and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this section, two such theories are explored to further the general understanding of academic motivation: expectancy theory and self-efficacy theory.

Academic Motivation of Student-Athletes

Motivation can be defined as the intensity and direction of behavior. It describes how much effort an individual applies to any given task and the choice of whether that task will be completed or not (Silva & Weinberg, 1984). Motivation, as it relates to student-athletes, has the potential to provide some understanding related to successful or unsuccessful academic performance.

In order to understand the academic motivation of Division I student-athletes, it is essential to understand the motivation of some student-athletes for entering college. A

significant number of student-athletes believe they will become professional athletes even if they were a non-starter and were not recruited at one of the top institutions in the country (Fenton, 2006; Gabert, Hale, & Montalvo, 1999; Simons & Van Rhee, 2000; Sparent, 1989). Many student-athletes, especially those who participate in football and men's basketball, either expect or believe they will play professionally after completing their collegiate careers. Athletic competition and the excitement of preparing for their athletic careers often take precedence over other educational opportunities college offers (Martinelli, 2000). According to Eitzen (2006), approximately 8% of male college football, basketball, and baseball players will be drafted to a professional team either in the United States or abroad. However, only 2% will actually sign a contract and that typically does not guarantee playing time. "The college athletic lifestyle encourages and reinforces a lifestyle that points athletes toward athletic careers and does little to focus them on the academic side of their college life or prepare them for non-athletic careers" (Sparent, 1989, p. 9).

Aspirations of playing professional sports, however remote the possibility to actually play, have been linked to academic failure in college for football and male basketball student-athletes (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Sparent (1989) presented a multiplicity of reasons why Division I student-athletes had difficulties related to academic motivation; time commitments in their sport, isolation from campus events outside of athletics, and reliance on teammates kept athletes focused on athletics and not on academics.

Adler and Adler (1985) conducted a qualitative study from 1980-1984 that examined the relationship between athletic participation and academic motivational

factors. The study described the academic detachment process that college student-athletes experience while attempting to be successful academically and athletically. They found that most student-athletes entered college “feeling idealistic about their impending academic experience and optimistic about their likelihood of graduating” (p. 243). However, as they progressed through the years, they became more detached from academics and “their naïve, early idealism gradually became replaced by disappointment and growing cynicism as they realized how difficult it was to keep up with their schoolwork” (p. 244).

In 1991, Adler and Adler, after several years of extended qualitative research, summarized the different roles student-athletes experienced as they tried to live up to their own and others’ expectations of them as they negotiated who they were in the college setting. They described the college student-athlete as “specialized, narrow, and singular in focus” in which they were “comparatively blinded to all others” (p. 230).

Research has proven that motivation plays a role in academic performance (Astin, 1984; Gaston-Gayles, 2002; Miller & Kerr, 2002; Pettaway-Willis, 2005). Gaston-Gayles (2005) found that academic motivation, rather than athletic motivation, plays a more significant role in a student-athletes’ academic performance. Her study concluded that high motivation in either academics or athletics does not directly correspond with another area. A student-athlete may have high athletic motivation but also have high academic motivation. Ryska and Vestal (2004) found that sport-motivated student-athletes carried their motivation over into the academic realm. In addition, student-athletes with higher athletic motivation spent a greater amount of time and energy on academic preparation utilizing information processing, time management, personal effort,

task persistence, self testing and skill improvement (Ryska & Vestal, 2004). Studies have shown that the mental and physical challenges student-athletes face help them transfer the discipline they gain from collegiate athletic competitions to their academic work (Astin, 1984; Eccles, 2004; Hollembeak & Ambrose, 2005; Ryan, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wempe, 2001).

Expectancy Theory

Atkinson (1964) developed the original foundations for expectancy-value theory. Atkinson argued that motivation could be explained by factors that affected how people approach success or avoid failure. He eventually developed two formulas: (a) one determined the degree to which people approach success and (b) the other was developed to explain the disposition of avoiding failure. Atkinson (1964, 1966) argued that the value of success is inversely related to the expectancy of success.

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation is commonly used and researched in business, education, and organizational behavior. However, his theory can be applied to college student development and has been used to predict academic performance (Geiger & Cooper, 1995) in college students. In their study, Geiger and Cooper concluded that valence, which is one of Vroom's key perceptions, was found to be the best predictor of academic performance in 81 male and female college students. Motivation, according to Vroom, is driven by conscious choice and acknowledges individual differences.

Vroom (1964) describes motivation as a force that exhibits behavior, directs behavior, and sustains behavior. Motivation tends to be specific to individual behaviors and is used to select the option that has the greatest reward. Vroom also went into great

detail on expectancy theory by creating three basic perceptions: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Each perception represents how differing beliefs about effort, performance, and reward explain behavior. In explaining *expectancy*, Vroom believed that the probability of a certain level of effort would result in a specific goal being met. Instrumentality refers to the reward aspect of performance. In other words, an athlete would expect that success on the field would reward him or her with a scholarship, a starting position, or a professional career. The third perception, valence, is related to the value associated with the reward given in turn for a successful performance. Athletes decide whether or not to approach a task by the reward that has been established such as the pursuit of a professional career because of the extrinsic reward (e. g., social status, financial gains, etc.) associated with playing at that elite level.

Wigfield and Eccles (1992) developed a modern approach to expectancy-value theory that attempts to explain the role motivation plays in determining what tasks people pursue, how long they persist, how much effort they apply, and how well they perform the tasks. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) argued that expectancies of success and the value of success are positively related to each other as opposed to Atkinson's (1964) position that these two entities are inversely related.

Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, and Davis-Kean (2006) identified three key constructs that affect motivation: ability beliefs, expectancy beliefs, and task value. Ability beliefs indicate the current level of perceived competence in a particular domain. Whereas ability beliefs focus on people's current levels of ability, expectancy beliefs focus on how people predict they will perform in the future. Task value encompasses four subcomponents: attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost. These

values are the backbone of the underlying foundation for motivation (Clow, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Attainment value describes the importance of executing a task successfully. Intrinsic value takes into account an individual's attachment toward a task, while extrinsic value is how the task relates to an individual's goals. The cost value entails what one must give up or sacrifice to perform the task. All of these categories constitute the value of a certain task to be performed. An individual will weigh these categories and, based upon the expectancy, will engage or disengage in a certain task. Taken together, this theoretical model lays the foundation for investigating athletic and academic motivation (Rasmussen, 2009).

Expectancy theory was a practical framework for this study based on the argument that the differences in academic preparation were, in part, a function of differences in motivation (Sellers & Chavous, 1997). Research indicates that athletic participation can be linked with a student-athlete's satisfaction with the overall college experience; it may also increase motivation to complete one's degree and persistence in college (Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, & Terazini, 1995). The NCAA's focus on reform and their efforts in changing initial and continuing eligibility standards "has been based on the assumption that the academic problems of college athletes are motivational in nature" (Ridpath, Kiger, Mak, Eagle, & Letter, 2007, p. 60).

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy is one of the strongest non-cognitive constructs in predicting academic outcome. Research on self-efficacy and academic outcomes has focused attention on a number of areas: college major, career choices, and instructional practice (Pajares, 2003). Studies on the positive influences of self-efficacy related to academic

performance and achievement have been found in academic disciplines such as statistics (Finney & Schraw, 2003), mathematics (Pajares & Miller, 1994), and writing (Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck, 1984; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). In his study on self-efficacy beliefs, Bandura (1977, 1993) found that self-efficacy beliefs affect college outcomes by increasing students' motivation and the persistence to master challenging academic tasks by fostering the efficient use of acquired knowledge and skills.

Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) defines self-efficacy as the expectation people have about their abilities to succeed in a given task. The theory assumes that individuals decide which task to approach, how much effort to apply, and how long to persist when they run into obstacles. Individuals tend to avoid tasks they believe they cannot successfully complete but they will put a great amount of effort into those tasks they feel they can complete successfully. A person's belief about their abilities is more predictive of future behavior than their skill level, base of knowledge, or prior success (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura (1997) was cautious in pointing out the difference between outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectations are beliefs that a behavior will lead to an outcome. Efficacy expectations are people's beliefs about their ability to perform a behavior in order to achieve a particular outcome. Those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy will most likely persist toward attaining the successful completion of a task even if it does not guarantee success (Bandura, 1986).

According to Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997), four main sources contribute to self-efficacy beliefs: past mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasions, and

physiological state. Mastery experiences or performance accomplishments are the most effective means of building self-efficacy. One's past performances promote positive self-efficacy beliefs for similar activities in the future. For student-athletes, past success in the classroom could very well lead to future success. One way to increase academic motivation is to create an environment in the classroom where students have the opportunity to experience success (Schunk, 1985). Vicarious learning tends to be less influential than mastery experience due to the fact that vicarious experiences are developed through watching others successfully perform a difficult task. The individual watching the performance believes they can also complete the task successfully. The approach is "If they can do it, so can I." Words of encouragement or verbal persuasion may also influence a person to put more effort into any given task. It is thought that individuals who believe they can achieve a task successfully perform better with words of encouragement from others. Bandura's theory (1997) also involves the physiological state or the body's reactions to the thought of attempting and completing given tasks. Reactions such as anxiety, fatigue, and mood can provide information about self-efficacy beliefs. Thus, the physical toll sport places on athletes may affect their ability to focus on studying after a practice or competition (Cogan & Petrie, 1996).

In education, self-efficacy beliefs refer to expectations of students' cognitive abilities as they relate to specific academic tasks or academic goals (Schunk, 1985). It has been suggested that self-efficacy influences achievement both directly and indirectly through increased persistence. Students who have high self-efficacy will perform better on given tasks and continue to persist when they face obstacles in their quest to complete these tasks (Pajeres, 1997).

As noted earlier, two prominent theoretical models were used to understand these factors: expectancy-value theory and self-efficacy theory. Expectancy-value theory emerged from the literature as a key theory in motivation for student-athletes. When a student-athlete expects to do well on a task, they will put forth more effort to achieve success. Similarly, if student-athletes value a certain outcome, they will enthusiastically engage in the task. Values such as intrinsic extrinsic importance and perceived cost comprise the moral fiber of the underlying motivation foundation. Self-efficacy theory recognizes that individuals make judgments about their abilities. Those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy in their ability to accomplish the appropriate behavior will most likely persist toward attaining the successful completion of a task even if it does not guarantee success. Clearly, these theories may be helpful to those in academic services when working with student-athletes.

Variables Related to Academic Success

This section investigates three variables related to academic success in freshmen student-athletes: gender, race and ethnic background, and parents' educational background. The following paragraphs describe these in further detail.

Gender

It has been widely reported that female student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than their male counterparts. According to the latest NCAA (2010e) graduation rates, female student-athletes continue to graduate at a higher rate than males across all sports. Opportunities to participate in sports have increased for women since the passage of Title IX in 1972, which mandated equal opportunity to participate for both men and women in

educational institutions receiving any federal financial assistance (NCAA, 2010b; Schulman & Bowen, 2001).

In a study conducted by Smallman, Sowa, and Young (1991), it was suggested that female student-athletes receive more support for their roles as students than do males. Simons et al. (1999) found that female athletes had higher high school and college GPAs than their male counterparts in revenue producing sports. Bowen and Levin (2003) collected data from 33 private and Ivy League universities and found that female athletes graduated at a higher rate than their male peers. These studies indicated that females were more focused on their academics than on their sport.

Gaston-Gayles (2002, 2004) found that female athletes scored higher on the academic motivation scale of the SAMSAQ compared to male athletes. Her studies also found that male athletes were more motivated to pursue athletics professionally or at the Olympic level than females. It is widely known that women's sports do not receive the same television coverage; nor do females have the same opportunities to pursue athletics at a professional level as compared to men. Because of this, women have placed more emphasis on academics and their role as a student over that of an athlete (Ethier, 1997).

Gender and race literature showed that African American female athletes graduated at a lower rate than their Caucasian female peers. However, they graduated at a higher rate than their non student-athlete, African American peers (NCAA, 2010e; Sellers, Kupermine, & Damas, 1997).

Race and Ethnic Background

Over the last 30 years, more students are entering college than ever before. Approximately 17.6 million students are enrolled in postsecondary degree-granting

institutions compared to only 11.0 million in 1976 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), a 60% increase in what is considered a short period of time. According to the U.S. Department of Education, a significant gap still persists across racial/ethnic groups with African Americans lagging behind their Caucasian and Asian peers. Those African American students attending predominantly White institutions report significant barriers to their success due in part to psychological stress (Steele, 1997; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009).

The percentage of Black male basketball student-athletes in Division I increased from 55% in 2000 to 60% in 2009. Over the same time period, the percentage of Division I Black female, basketball student-athletes increased from 35.7 to 51.5%. In 2009, the highest percentages of football student-athletes in the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) were Caucasian at 46% and Blacks at 45.6% (NCAA, 2010f).

Several studies confirmed that in revenue producing sports, Black student-athletes came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and were not as academically prepared for college when compared to their Caucasian teammates (Horn et al., 2001; Hrabowski, 2002; Person & LeNoir, 1997; Sellers, 1992). Studies indicate that the fastest growing college populations are those of color (Scurry, 2003):

Nationwide, minority and low-income students tend to have unequal access to quality primary and secondary education often arrives at the university's door steps underprepared. Whites make up the greatest percentage of remedial learners... simply because they have greater access to higher education than minority students. (p. 14)

Ethnicity has also been predictive of academic performance (Arnold, 1999; Cripps, 1996; Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Waugh, Micceri, & Takalkar, 1994). Both African-

American and Hispanic students persist at lower rates than Asian, Pacific Islander, and Caucasian students.

Arnold (1999) suggested that African-American students might struggle with perceived faculty prejudice, lack of parental support, and lack of positive interracial relationships before college. This would suggest that first-time freshmen from minority cultures might have a difficult time making the transition into higher education. This could lead to difficulty in retaining these students. It has been theorized that insufficient goal commitment is a factor inhibiting Hispanic students' persistence in higher education. Stage (1989) suggested that minority students with high levels of social integration are more likely to persist than those with lower levels.

There is a concern within higher education that many academically underprepared African American student-athletes believe their way out of poverty is their athletic ability (Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Socioeconomic status has been found to be a factor in limiting the success of African American student-athletes. It comes as no surprise that students attending four-year institutions who do not continue through college tend to be from the lowest socioeconomic quartiles first, followed by students in the middle quartiles (Choy, 2001). Students in the upper quartiles of the socioeconomic brackets are less likely to withdraw from college than those in the lower quartiles (Cabrera, Stammen, & Hansen, 1990; DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002).

Many believe that African American males have two educational issues to overcome in their pursuit of a degree as they compete as a Division I athlete: the lack of preparation in the K-12 education and their identification as an athlete early in their educational experience (Bailey, 1993; Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Goldman, 1994,

Killeya, 2001; Person & LeNoir, 1997). Goldman (1994) believed that academic preparedness in high school could ensure an athlete's success in higher education. He developed and implemented a program that prepared members of a high school football team for the rigor of higher education; the results showed great improvement in academic success. Thus, high school coaches should be concerned with student-athletes' academic preparedness as well as their psychological readiness for college.

Most research has emphasized the cognitive factors as they relate to successful persistence for African American males. Hyatt (2003) reviewed non-cognitive variables such as motivation and attitudes and reported, "To be effective, programming and intervention strategies must be founded on a basic understanding of the characteristics of the institution as well as the students" (p. 260). Hyatt found that involvement in community service and the ability to recognize and manage racial discrimination played a critical role in the persistence of minority athletes.

Gay (2000) studied the educational achievement patterns of minority students in the United States and found that in order to close the achievement gap, it is important for those in higher education to demonstrate authentic caring in the classroom at all levels, develop culturally relevant curriculum, and develop a relationship between communication, culture, and education.

International students have also been studied with regard to their adjustment into American higher education institutions. Research has shown that this population had similar difficulty adjusting to living conditions (food, climate, financial problems, and health concerns), academic issues (lack of English proficiency and understanding of educational system), and social and cultural adjustment (racial discrimination and conflict

with values of Americans). Loneliness, depression, isolation, and loss of status and identity were also identified as they made the transition into the American educational system (Selvadurai, 1998).

Parents' Educational Background

One of the most common predictors of academic success outside of high school GPA and SAT scores has been the educational background of parents of students entering college. First-generation college students are those whose parents or siblings did not attend college, i.e., they may have special needs relative to persistence in college (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Choy, 2001; Swail & Holmes, 1999; Terenzini & Reason, 2005). This has been attributed to the lack of familiar experiences with college. What can be minor problems or obstacles for most college students may become major obstacles for first-generation students.

Historically, first-generation students have not been as prepared to go to college as their peers whose parents attended college. Many require developmental or remedial courses to prepare them for the rigor of college level work (Boylan & Saxon, 1999). First-generation students typically receive lower grades, take fewer credits, and have higher drop-out rates than students whose parents attended college (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). They are also less likely to participate in clubs and student organizations or develop close social relationships with peers or faculty (Billson & Terry, 1982; Richardson & Skinner, 1990; Terenzini et al., 1994).

There is research on the parents of college students in a variety of areas: parental impact on the student's pursuit of higher education, parental attachment, and the impact

of transition issues. Hahs-Vaughn (2004) examined the impact of parents' education level on first-generation college students and found that first-generation students aspired to lower levels of post-secondary education than non first-generation students. McCarron and Inkelas (2006) found that many first-generation students were ethnic minorities; their parents were limited in the information they could share with their children due to the limited exposure and lack of understanding of higher educational opportunities (Ceja, 2006; Gandara, 1995; Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Perez, 1999).

Studies have also shown the positive impact of parental involvement as it relates to the likelihood of their children attending and enrolling in higher education (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Horn, 1998; Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Perna, 2000; Perna & Titus, 2005). Wintre and Sugar (2000) explored the relationship with parents, personality, and the university transition. In a study of 419 first-year students, the role of parents was found to be paramount. The relationships with parents had a direct influence on university adjustment; trust and honest communication between parents and students were particularly beneficial to university adjustment.

Dennis, Phinney, and Chuateco (2005) studied the role of parental support, motivation, and peer support of ethnic minority, first-generation students as they related to academic success. Their study of 100 first-year minority students at an ethnically diverse commuter school found that peer support appeared to be a strong predictor of college grades and adjustment over support from their family. However, Arellano and Padilla (1996) found that Hispanic parents with limited education encouraged their children's academic success. Inconsistent research in this area highlights the need for

more research at it relates to the relationship between parental expectations and college success.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature surrounding this study--specifically cognitive and non-cognitive variables, background variables, expectancy theory, self-efficacy theory, and motivation--as it related to academic success. There is an abundance of literature as it relates to freshmen student-athletes and the success or failure of academic success. However, there is a dearth of information related to qualitative research on this topic. Generalizing much of the literature to student-athletes is possible; however, a more in-depth investigation as to *why* student-athletes succeed or fail academically in their freshman year prompted this study. Chapter III presents the methodology, sample, and procedures of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As discussed in Chapters I and II, a change in environment can be difficult for students entering college for the first time, especially student-athletes who are faced with a myriad of factors related to both academics and athletics. There has been growing concern over the academic performance of student-athletes in today's higher education institutions. College student-athletes are under considerable pressure to perform in- and outside the classroom. They face unique challenges and demands that may require special attention and support (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Carodine et al., 2001).

In this chapter, a description of the research methodology used to investigate and answer the research questions inherent in this study is provided. The first section discusses the rationale for a qualitative study--the qualitative research design and the methodological approach. The second section provides a description of the research setting, the program to be studied, a description of the participants, and an articulation of the data collection procedures. The remainder of the chapter provides details of the data management, data analysis, trustworthiness methods, transferability considerations, and a personal statement of the researcher's motive and biases.

Why Qualitative Research?

The qualitative researcher . . . prefers to capture the lived experience of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives, case-by-case. (Janesick, 2003, p. 73)

As stated in chapter I, the purpose of this study was to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success and persistence of freshmen student-athletes. It was also a goal of this study to examine the cognitive and non-cognitive similarities and differences of freshmen student-athletes. Athletes may have been socialized into sport differently depending on the culture of their secondary education and socioeconomic background. This culture may be a factor in the student-athletes' overall freshman experience and academic success.

Implementing a qualitative study using face-to-face interviews as the primary data collection method allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the variables that contribute to the freshman student-athletes' academic success. Participants are able to explain their perspectives in their own words and stories rather than forcing their experiences into limiting, preconceived categories (McCracken, 1998). The intent of qualitative research is to not only discover meaning but for the researcher to interpret the meaning (Farrell, 2006). A qualitative research study explains *why* a person behaves in a certain way. It is not constructed to prove something or control people; rather, it seeks to study a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in their own terms (Janesick, 2003). The rationale for employing qualitative methods for this study stemmed from the researcher's desire to uncover and delve into the experiences of the participants in an effort to understand their academic experiences during their freshman

year. Therefore, given the nature and scope of this research study, a qualitative research design was deemed appropriate and was employed.

Research Design

Researchers use either quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of the two approaches during each phase of the research process (Creswell, 2002). Quantitative and qualitative research can be traced back to the late 19th century (Creswell, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Quantitative research began with the development of statistical procedures and explains the relationship among variables and describes trends. In qualitative research, the researcher narrows the questions, locates and develops the instrument, gathers the data to answer the question, and analyzes the numbers using statistics (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative research emerged from early activity at the University of Chicago, which was known to sociologists as “Chicago sociology” (Hatch, 2002). Philosophers of education called for an alternative to the traditional quantitative approach, which they felt relied too heavily on the researcher’s view and less on the participants the researchers were studying (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative research seeks to grasp the world from the perspective of those living in it (Hatch, 2002). According to Creswell (2002),

Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks the participants in the form of words or images, and analyzes the information for descriptions and themes. From this data, the researcher interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflections and past research. The final structure of the final report is flexible, and it displays the researcher’s biases and thoughts. (p. 58)

Qualitative methods used in sport psychology can assist practitioners with their understanding of various experiences by student-athletes. A qualitative approach has the

potential to produce credible findings that could benefit not only the participants but coaches and administrators (Strean, 1998). Strean suggests that this could be beneficial to student-athletes as they transfer the results across many different academic and personal settings to their own circumstances and performances. Because the goal of this study was to examine individuals' perceptions of a phenomenon, the use of qualitative methodology allowed the participants to describe their perceptions in their own words.

Methodological Approach: Case Study

Although other qualitative research methods exist (ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology; McNabb, 2000; Rudestam & Newton, 2007), the case study method was chosen for this research based on the potential richness and “thickness” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128) of the data collection. Data collection included interviews, archival documents, internal communications survey, and observations. Case study research is one of the most widely used forms of qualitative inquiry. A case study “is a variation of an ethnography in that the researcher provides an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection” (Creswell, 2002, p. 641). Merriam (2009) stated, “By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case), the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (pp. 42-43). Merriam noted that case studies differentiate themselves from other research designs because the researcher seeks to “discover and interpret rather than hypothesis testing” (p. 42). Case studies are generally advantageous due to the fact that the researcher is able to get closer to the subjects.

Stake (2005) identified three types of qualitative case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The *intrinsic case study* refers to the case as being the

primary interest to the researcher and is not necessarily used to further or better the case or a certain phenomenon. The *instrumental case* study serves to provide knowledge or insight on the actual subject, issue, organization, or entity being studied. The case is of secondary interest. Understanding variables as they related to the academic success of freshman student-athletes was the primary focus and the student-athletes provided the means by which to examine that phenomenon. The *collective case* is commonly known as the “multi-case” design (McNabb, 2000, p., 287), which can provide insight into an issue or theme (Creswell, 2002; Stake, 2005). This study could best be described as an instrumental case study because the focus was not specifically on the student-athletes but on the insights they provided regarding academic success. From these insights, possibilities exist for generalization and the identification of improved practices in both education and athletic academic services.

Theoretical Perspective

In qualitative research, it is essential to establish a theoretical lens through which the researcher conducts the study. According to Crotty (2003), it is the way we look and make sense of the world. Crotty states this is also known as an epistemological framework, i.e., “how we know what we know” (p .8). Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge; thus, it is important to identify and explain one’s epistemological stance. My epistemology was constructivist, i.e., meaning is constructed by individuals rather than discovered (Crotty, 2003). Crotty states, “All knowledge is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world within a social context” (p. 42).

Setting

This study was conducted at a mid-size university nestled in the heart of the Rocky Mountain region. The university is located in a community of 90,000 and is comprised of 60% females, 40% males, and 16% ethnic diversity. Of the 10,000 undergraduates, approximately 2,300 are freshmen, 90% are state residents, and 36% are considered first-generation students. The freshmen enrollment average GPA was 3.19.

Approximately 400 student-athletes, 94 of whom are freshmen, participate on 9 men's and 10 women's NCAA Division I FCS sports teams. The university made the transition from Division II to Division I FCS in 2003-2004 and has seen a growth in the number of student-athletes and the addition of new facilities.

The site for the study was selected to assist the athletic department with a problem that has continued to grow since the university transitioned to Division I. In working with the athletic department, it was hoped that this study would provide information needed to assist in the retention of freshman student-athletes.

Participants

Although statistical sampling is not necessarily used in qualitative research, it was necessary to clearly define a logical sampling strategy. "Purposive sampling is a set of procedures whereby the researcher manipulates the analysis, theory, and sampling activities *interactively* during the research process to a much greater extent than in statistical sampling" (Mason, 1996, p. 100). The ability to generate data, to explore processes, make meaningful comparisons, and to test and suggest theory that may explain similarities and differences is vital in qualitative research when determining the number of participants (Mason, 1996).

According to Patton (1990), sampling procedures reflect purposeful sampling. The power of purposeful sampling lies in “selecting information-rich cases for study” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Patton further states that information-rich cases are those from which a great deal of information can be learned about salient issues regarding the purpose of the research. Thus, selecting a random, yet diverse, pool of sophomore student-athletes who, during their freshmen year at the institution, had a GPA of 2.0 or below in one or both semesters was used to constitute an information-rich sample that would provide a great deal of insightful and pertinent information for the stated purpose of this study.

Sample Size

According to Patton (1990), “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. “Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (Patton, 1990, p. 184). Qualitative studies typically have smaller sample sizes than those utilized in quantitative studies. Patton contends that a researcher must consider breadth and depth when selecting sample sizes.

Patton (1990) believes that the utility and credibility of small purposeful samples are often judged on the basis of the logic, purpose, and recommended sample sizes of probability sampling. Patton further states, “Random probability samples cannot accomplish what in-depth, purposeful samples accomplish and vice-versa” (p. 185).

For the purpose of this study, five sophomore student-athlete participants were asked to serve as the sample. Approximately 20 sophomore student-athletes completed their freshman year with a 2.0 GPA or below in one or both semesters, thus providing the

sample. The sample size varied according to gender, team, and individual sports, both in- and out-of-season. This allowed the researcher to compare and contrast the results to gain better insight into the academic success of freshman student-athletes.

Gaining Access

According to Janesick (2003), researchers must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with participants in qualitative research. Rapport and trust is important so that the researcher is better able to capture the nuances and meaning of the participants. It is especially important to establish rapport and trust at the beginning of a study by ensuring that participants openly share their feelings and insights (Janesick, 2003). Because the researcher had been involved with some of the student-athletes from prior research or from interacting with them in the athletic department, some rapport and trust with the participants already existed.

Before any research can be conducted, necessary approval from the university's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects was obtained (see Appendix A). Once permission to conduct the study was approved by the university, permission to solicit participation in the study was requested and secured from the assistant athletic director of academic services. The assistant athletic director and researcher began discussions and meetings regarding this study in the spring of 2010. An initial meeting with five sophomore student-athletes who qualified to participate in the study was conducted to solicit their willingness to participate; participants were given a complete description of the study and a discussion of the interview process. Individual meetings between the researcher and participants were then arranged. Participants were asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix B). To safeguard confidentiality,

the participants were asked to select a pseudonym in place of their given name; this would allow them to follow their written words throughout the study as well as in any published material. All information collected throughout the study, including interviews and forms, was kept strictly confidential and safely locked in the researcher's home. Participants' names would not appear in any future presentation or publication.

Data Collection Procedures

Pilot Study

Because little qualitative research exists on the topic of factors as they relate to academic success of freshman student-athletes, a pilot study proved to be necessary. The pilot test enabled the researcher to gain the knowledge and understanding needed to move forward on this topic. It also allowed the researcher to develop the appropriate skills needed for the interview process and to refine the data collection in both procedures and content.

The pilot study consisted of four freshman student-athletes during the spring of 2010. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes, during which time they responded to questions developed by the researcher about their experiences as freshmen and the relationship of athletics and academics. Results of the pilot study revealed the difficulties of transitioning from high school to college. The lack of time and the sense of alienation, as it pertained to being a student on campus, were two common themes among the four student-athletes. Redshirt student-athletes described a sense of frustration with not being able to compete while observing other freshmen competing. The results of the study led the researcher to revise some of the interview

questions pertaining to the transition process, time management skills, and the motivation of redshirt freshmen.

Each of the interviews was digitally taped and transcribed. Participants were given the transcripts to review and were encouraged to provide feedback or clarification of the information. The participants also provided feedback on the interview process and interview questions, suggesting open-ended questions and gaining clarification during the interview. As a result of the pilot study, the questions were revised and restructured to create a more meaningful and comprehensive interview protocol for the current study. The interview guide is located in Appendix C.

Interviewing

According to Fontana and Frey (1994), interviewing has a wide variety of forms; however, one of the most common and most powerful ways to try and understand human beings is the individual, face-to-face, verbal interchange. Gaining knowledge and insight into the experience of others is the objective of an interview (Fontana & Frey, 1994). There are three types of interviewing: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 1994). In-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study. Singer (2002) believes this form of interviewing enables the researcher to engage the participants in meaningful conversation. Pre-determined, open-ended, semi-structured questions were developed to guide the conversation, allowing for flexibility in seeking clarification or exploring their thoughts more thoroughly. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to follow up on statements made by the participants that could be pertinent to the study. Although the questions were consistent, the sequence of the questions could change for each participant that could allow for follow-up,

clarification, elaboration on a response, and to provide a venue for participants to tell their stories (Kvale, 1996).

Four interviews were conducted and digitally taped with each of the five participants. Interviews were approximately one hour in length. The location of the interviews was determined by the participants, each deciding upon a private boardroom within the athletic department academic services area.

Briefing and debriefing were used as part of the interview process. Briefing occurred prior to each interview when the researcher provided a reminder about the context of the study, the purpose of the interview, and answered any questions that the participant had before beginning the interviews (Kvale, 1996). Debriefing occurred once the tape recorder was turned off. Kvale (1996) describes this process as one in which the interviewer can summarize the interview's main points and the interviewee can comment or question these perceptions.

Document Review

In addition to interviews, data were collected from artifacts such as high school transcripts, standardized test scores, freshman year grades, NCAA clearinghouse documents, and field notes recorded after each interview. As the researcher, I also used a demographic and background form that allowed me to collect demographic and background information (see Appendix D). Participants were asked to complete the form after their interviews. The artifact information collected assisted me in creating a profile on each participant and to test the validity of the information provided by each participant.

Data Analysis

The purpose of conducting a qualitative study is to produce findings. Janesick (2003) suggests that methods and strategies should not be considered as ends in themselves within a study. Becoming too fixated on the methods is dangerous, such that substantive findings may become obscured.

An important characteristic of qualitative research is that data are continually being analyzed throughout the design process and begins the moment data are collected (Glesne, 1999). The end goal of the qualitative analysis process is the creation of a compelling and genuine narrative of what occurred while conducting the study. Behaviors and stories of the participants found in the data (field notes, artifacts, and interview transcripts) are salient in telling the complete story (Janesick, 2003). “The researcher must find the most effective way to tell the story and to convince the audience of the meaning of the study. Staying close to the data is the most powerful means of telling the story” (Janesick, 2003, p. 63).

Each interview was transcribed verbatim from a digital recorder; a second recorder was used as a backup in case problems occurred. Before reading the transcripts and analyzing the data, I conducted a thorough examination of myself as a researcher. Patton (2002) describes this self-examination or reflection process as *epoche*. This process allows the researcher to remove, or at least become aware of, prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions concerning the phenomenon under investigation. It was important for me to begin my analysis with an open viewpoint, excluding any prior knowledge or experience.

I used the techniques of content analysis followed by the research procedures detailed by Kvale (1996). In the first stage, the transcribed interviews were read in their entirety to achieve a sense of understanding as a whole. The next stage used the meaning condensation approach that entailed a synopsis of the meaning expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations. Kvale (1996) termed these shorter formulations as natural meaning units. As the researcher, I read the participants' dialog and categorize the statements from their viewpoint. Next, I examined the natural meaning units to determine themes. I noted the essential themes in the margins of the transcripts with simple wording. I found several natural meaning units that could fit under more than one theme. The next stage consisted of interrogating the meaning units in terms of themes as they related to the specific questions and purpose of the study.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered four terms for evaluating the quality and trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four terms are the naturalist equivalent of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility is a term often used to describe the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Internal validity deals with whether or not the findings in research match reality (Merriam, 2009). Merriam poses the question, "Are researchers observing or measuring what they think they are measuring" (p. 213)? In qualitative studies, the credibility of qualitative research is particularly dependent on the credibility of the researcher (Patton, 1990). Techniques I employed to increase the likelihood of credible findings were triangulation, member checks, and peer checks.

Triangulation

Triangulation is salient to validating credibility in qualitative studies and involves the use of multiple data collection methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). “Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2002, p. 651). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that triangulation is a process directed “at a judgment of the accuracy of specific data items” as opposed to one concerned with seeking a universal truth (p. 316). I achieved triangulation by analyzing interview transcripts, field notes, demographic questionnaires completed by the participants and archived material such as high school GPA, standardized test scores, and other material collected from the athletic department. Peer review, member review, and an audit trail were also used for this study.

Peer Review Checks

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that researchers present their findings and interpretations to one or more peers in order for them to explore meanings, interpretations, bias and inconsistencies contained in the analysis. Peer debriefers are important; they challenge the researcher to look beyond their own, sometimes narrow, viewpoints (Singer, 2002). Singer (2002) also stated that debriefers can assist the researcher in identifying and solidifying emerging themes and patterns of data. The expert debriefers examined my proposal, which consisted of the introductory chapter, the literature review, and the methodology section. They were also asked to review other pertinent material used for the study: participant consent forms, background demographic questionnaires, proposed interview questions, and other requested documents.

Member Checks

I used member checking to improve the credibility of this study. Member checking is the process of presenting findings, interpretations, and conclusions to participants to confirm the representativeness of the findings in their experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulate that member checks are the “most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). According to Singer (2002), a key feature of member checks is that the research participant is positioned to become the expert. I provided the participants with a copy of their transcripts via email for their review prior to their next interview. Participants were asked for any corrections pertaining to the previous interviews before conducting the next set of interviews.

While formal member checks are the primary goal of the research process, I also incorporated informal member checks for this study. While interviews were being conducted, I interpreted the participants’ responses back to them, seeking accurate analysis of the participants’ perceptions, attitudes, and experiences.

Transferability

Transferability or external validity seeks to determine how applicable findings can be transferred or applied to similar situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers must find a “thick” description within the findings to demonstrate that the data might be transferable to other situations or cases (Geertz, 2000). The best way to ensure the possibility of transferability is to create “a thick description of the sending context so that someone in receiving the context may assess the similarity between them and.... the study” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 125).

The researcher hoped to provide a significant amount of information from the participants' experience so that results may be constructive to other Division I FCS institutions.

Dependability

Dependability is another criterion to establish trustworthiness and is similar to the term reliability. As a researcher, dependability can be greatly enhanced by establishing an audit trail. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), an audit trail provides evidence that allows other researchers to reconstruct the process to reach their conclusions. However, no two research processes can be exactly the same, making it impossible to completely duplicate a prior study.

An audit trail "explains in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). Merriam (2009) states, "The researcher must keep a journal or record memos on the process" (p. 223). The researcher used a detailed journal or field notes for this study.

Field Notes

In addition to interviews, artifacts, and the demographic background questionnaire, field notes served as a secondary means of data collection. Field notes were recorded and labeled after each interview. Field notes are important in that the environment of the interview location, non-verbal demeanors of the participants, and other non-foreseeable factors can contribute to the data. Kawulich (2005) indicated that field notes are both data and analysis; field notes provide an accurate description of what is observed. Most importantly, Kawulich emphasized that "observations are not data unless they are recorded into field notes" (p. 2).

Researcher's Stance

No matter how objective a researcher attempts to be, there are continuous biases and judgments about what has been observed, heard or experienced, what to write or record and how to interpret what the data mean (Mason, 1996). "There is no value-free or bias-free design. Early on, the qualitative researcher identifies his or her own biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for their study" (Janesick, 2003, p. 56).

The decision to conduct a qualitative study required the researcher to be open and honest about his or her own biases at the inception of the study and throughout the study, being clearly aware of their role in the study. The researcher created the questions to be asked, selected the participants to be interviewed, and interpreted the responses. Because of this process, it was vital that personal and professional backgrounds be considered. Horvat (1996) acknowledged the power the research act had as it related to her own values as a person and a researcher. I attempted to expose my personal biases by making my beliefs and relationship to this topic transparent. To illuminate my own background, experiences, and biases, it was necessary to temporarily abandon formal, technical writing for a more informal, personal style of qualitative methodology.

My interest in this topic of research was the result of my service and involvement in the collegiate athletic setting over several years as an athletic administrator. For five years, I served as an assistant athletic director and moved into the athletic director role after the tumultuous departure of the former director. During my tenure at the college, I was able to establish a sense of equity relating to gender and various other issues within the department and throughout the college community. As a result of what I witnessed early in my collegiate administrative career, I developed a firm and passionate belief

about intercollegiate athletics and how it related to student-athlete welfare. During my five years, I was able to see the balance of athletes as both a student and an athlete, where coaches were as concerned with athletes' graduating as they were with their commitment to the team. The athletes were true *student-athletes*. I was able to see from the administrative level the impact decisions had on not only the department, the teams, but on the athletes. However, in this case, most coaches protected the athletes and inequities eventually affected everyone within the department.

The next five years were spent at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). I began to see my first glimpse of the student-athlete as it related to the whole person. It was also my first glimpse of who and what the NCAA truly was and how the staff related to the issues of intercollegiate athletes. I admit that at the national level, you are removed from dealing with athletes and even campus administrators on a daily basis. However, I believe the staff was able to see the big picture and how decisions affected those involved. It was here when I began to realize what student-athletes at the Division I must deal with--juggling academics with athletics--and what that truly meant in their eyes. I saw and heard from athletes, who at 18 years of age, were put under pressures most adults would not be able handle. This was not unnoticed at the national level. The governance office within the NCAA primarily deals with university presidents who ultimately make the decisions with regard to college athletics. Where many hold the NCAA responsible for the state of college athletics today, presidents have the ultimate authority to create change. The challenge of change and balance would have to begin with them.

I transitioned back to campus and spent two years at a place where I experienced frustration from the first day. I learned the importance of the interaction between the administration, coaches, and student-athletes as it related to success: success in the form of graduation rates, administrative support, and the politics behind the bottom line. I saw coaches struggling to keep their heads above water, all doing the best they could. The lack of funds affected the athletes, which in turn affected the coaches, but at no point affected the administrators. It was here that I directly witnessed the joys, the struggles, the demands, and challenges of being a student-athlete. It was at this point that I began thinking about seeking my doctorate in sport administration. As the frustration of athletics began to weigh on me, my thoughts went to the next generation of athletic administrators who would need the ability to create change. Knowledge is power and that is what is needed to create change and foster student-athlete welfare.

Athletics plays an integral role in higher education; however, many critics may not agree. Athletics is a part of American higher education; the two have been intimately linked for over 100 years. Critics called for change and many agreed; however, the process through which that change can occur keeps athletics in conflict with the higher education mission. It was from this perspective that I viewed the not-so-perfect world of college athletics. Although I am passionate about college athletics and the athletes that play, I am dedicated to acknowledging the role athletics plays on campuses across the country and the changes needed, especially as they relate to student-athlete welfare and the role they play on campus. My personal and professional experiences have certainly contributed to my knowledge of sport in general and university life.

As mentioned before in the review of literature, a great deal of research relates to freshmen student-athletes and the first-year experience. I believe that the athletic experience, first at the interscholastic level and then continuing to the intercollegiate level, can promote growth emotionally, academically, and socially. However, not all athletes find the experience so positive. Athletic participation can also produce negative effects, some well-hidden by both the athlete and administrators. I felt it was important to understand what it was about sport participation and the sport experience that influenced athletes to stay in school and perform academically. It was my greatest hope that the information from this study would assist administrators and those who interact with athletes to gain a keener sense of the athletes and how best to meet the needs and expectations of those athletes.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success and persistence of freshmen student-athletes. The case study method was chosen for this research based on the potential richness of the data. In-depth, tape recorded interviews were conducted over a four week period with five sophomore student-athletes. Through face-to-face communication, the researcher discussed with these student-athletes the quality of their high school and freshmen year athletic, social, and academic experiences. As the student-athletes reflected on those experiences, they were asked to share their positive and negative encounters. The interviews were transcribed and became the database for the study. The researcher's journal, field notes, and documentation were used to gain a better understanding of the participants and their experiences. I completed a data analysis by following suggestions of Kvale (1996), using natural meaning units to determine themes. In the introductory process, each participant was colored coded and natural mean units were placed on sections of paper on my wall at home to determine final themes and categories. The themes surfaced as a result of questioning the participants concerning the quality of their athletic, social and academic experiences during their freshmen year at the university. Their responses provided rich descriptions of those happenings.

This chapter presents living narratives of the participants in two areas (a) relationship of athletic and academic success and (b) motivation of academic success. The data analysis process of this study culminated in identifying four common themes: (a) academic adjustment, (b) athletic demands, and (c) family influence, and (d) social adjustment with categories under each heading. The categories were designed to correspond to the areas of focus within the interview questions.

The findings from this chapter provide preliminary answers to the following research questions:

- Q1 What is the relationship between academic and athletic variables and academic success for freshmen student-athletes?
- Q2 What is the relationship between motivation and academic success?

After providing the overview of the research process, this chapter provides a comprehensive, in-depth description of all five participants with respect to demographic, athletic, academic, and social histories.

Overview of the Research Process

Data were collected for this study through the use of a demographic background questionnaire and one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Consents from the participants were obtained from each participant at the beginning of the initial interview session. Each participant freely gave of his or her time and was compensated solely by the researcher in person and email thank you. Each interview took place in a quiet study room within the athletic department. Access to the participants was obtained with the assistance of the athletic department. Student involvement in the study was woven into already scheduled athletic time and did not produce any significant additional burden on their heavily scheduled time. The first interview session began with the researcher

explaining the purpose and outlining procedures of the research; this was followed by participants signing and dating the consent form. Participants then selected a pseudonym that would identify them throughout the study. Each participant took part in four interviews--one each week for four weeks. Interviews lasted no longer than one hour and 15 minutes. The demographic background questionnaire was discussed and completed during the last interview session. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. All transcriptions were done by the researcher, a transcription company, and two transcribers I had worked with on prior qualitative research. No more than two weeks after the interview, participants were provided with a copy of their transcript, permitting them to validate the wording and context of their interview. The language used by the participants was often informal; thus, the wording in the interview narratives were not rephrased but have been kept in their original form.

Demographic Background Information of the Participants

To better understand the students interviewed for this study, demographic and background data concerning the participants are shared. Gaining an understanding surrounding the participants provides a point of reference of the participants' perceptions and viewpoints. Additionally, this information serves as an appropriate reference for readers attempting to make transferable connections regarding the findings of this study.

A summary of the demographic data for each participant is provided in Table 1. Five sophomore student-athletes participated in this study--three males and two females--across a variety of sports including football, soccer, tennis, and golf.

Table 1

Study Demographics

Name	Race/ Ethnicity	Sport	Redshirt	Scholarship*	Amount of Aid (dollars)	Father Education	Mother Education
Anika	Caucasian	Golf	No	Athletic (Partial)	5,000	B.S. Degree	High School
Andy	Caucasian	Tennis	No	Academic (Partial)	1,200	Master's Degree	Master's Degree
Mia	Hispanic	Soccer	No	Athletic (Partial)	10,000	High School	High School
Ray	Pacific Islander	Football	Yes	Athletic (Full)	14,000	Middle School	High School
Josh	Black	Football	Yes	Athletic (Full)	14,000	High School	High School

*Full grant-in-aid scholarship for freshmen student-athletes at the institution

A summary of the participants' high school GPAs and standardized test scores is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant High School Grade Point Averages and ACT/SAT Test Scores

Name	Credits Earned Freshman	Credits Earned Sophomore	Credits Earned Junior	Credits Earned Senior	Total Credits	GPA	SAT/ACT Composite
Anika	70	70	70	55.25	265.25	3.0	ACT 19
Andy	50	60	60	55	225	3.2	ACT 29
Mia	70.125	55.250	45	70	240.375	2.2	ACT 20
Ray	50	60	55	45	205	3.0	SAT 840
Josh	82.5	62	62	50	265.5	2.8	ACT 21

The primary focus of this chapter is to present the narratives and thoughts of the participants in this study. The results are presented for the reader to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of intercollegiate athletic participation within the first year from the perspective of five sophomore student athletes. The results of the data analysis are not a generalization of all first year student athletes' quality perceptions.

Anika

Background

Anika is 19 years old and currently on the women's golf team. She walked into our first interview cautiously. Before taping our conversation, I gave her details on the study and read through the consent form with her before signing. As the time passed, Anika became comfortable as she settled into her chair. I started the tape and it did not

take long to notice that she was a well spoken, outgoing, and lighthearted person who had a smile that could light up the room. She was open and honest in her conversation, yet guarded; she did not go into great detail as she answered the questions. Initially, I walked away from the first interview wondering if there was something she wasn't telling me.

Anika is a very controlled and strong person by nature, yet seems to struggle with who she is in life. Although family is very important to her, it is also a source of frustration at not being fully understood. She describes herself as being competitive and very loyal. Her family is number one in her life and friends are a large part of her life. She is not self motivated in her accomplishment but is pushed to be motivated by others. She states that she has never believed in herself and her abilities outside of athletic competition.

Anika has spent the majority of her life in the suburb of a large metropolitan city near the mountains. She grew up in a very athletic family; sport has been a large part of her life from an early age. She grew up focused on playing basketball and began to play golf later in life. At the end of her junior year in high school, she quit basketball to focus on golf. When asked why she did not play basketball in college as opposed to golf, she stated:

I played golf mostly for my dad because he loves golf and my older sister played. He wanted me to play too. I really got burnt out of basketball because that is all I did every day. I was playing 4 or 5 hours a day. I miss it now but I was just burnt out from playing all the time.

Her family is on the smaller side, including her parents and an older sister. Her older sister graduated from the same university Anika is now attending. She also played golf and was a great student during her four years. Although very close to her sister, she describes their relationship as a love/hate one:

My sister is very girly and I'm not. My sister and I are total opposites, my hair is blonde, and hers is brunette. I'm a rebel and she's the smart and nice one. She always sucked up to my parents when she was in trouble while I didn't care if they were mad at me and I retreated to my room. It's like my sister is the good one and I was the one always getting into trouble.

When asked if there is a sibling rivalry between her and her sister, Anika remarked: "I have always been more athletic than my sister, but my sister has always been smarter than me. She always ended up with straight As and I have never gotten straight As in my life."

She went on to tell me that her sister is her best friend and she can share anything with her, regardless of the news. Her parents are both high school graduates and her father went on to graduate from college and works for a newspaper. Her father was a golfer in high school and her mother participated in basketball, tennis, volleyball, and softball while in high school. Anika's mother attended college but did not complete her degree. They all share a love of college athletics and enjoy supporting the father's alma mater. Throughout our interviews, the conflict she felt with her parents was evident and at times painful. She admitted to feeling her parents favored her sister over her. She shared that her friends have seen the favoritism over the years and have confirmed Anika's feelings. I felt she had worked through this feeling of not living up to her parents' expectations over the years, but her pain was still evident. Her family dynamic was perplexing--loving on one side and painful on the other.

Anika enjoyed her childhood and stated on several occasions how close she was to her family while growing up. While progressing through high school, Anika was not only active in playing sports but was very active in student senate.

High School Experience

Anika loved high school and still maintains that she misses high school to this day. She expressed her high school years as being “easy” when referring to academics. Teachers were lenient due to her involvement within the school. Athletics and student senate kept her at the school until early evening on most days. She felt her teachers respected her due to her involvement in school and didn’t believe they favored athletes over any other student. Anika says she regretted quitting basketball in high school:

After I quit basketball, I lost contact with many of my close friends, and I started hanging out with people who were older than me and weren’t in high school. I stopped going to high school events and if I did go, I would leave early. I remember I left prom early to go hang out with my friends who weren’t in school.

She found acceptance in her older friends, yet remained close to teammates. Although her teammates were like sisters to her, Anika shared the importance of having friends who are not involved in athletics, claiming she needed to have a life outside of sports.

Her athletic experience in high school was “fun.” Anika competed for her high school and a club sport team. She went into the many difference between the two, concluding her club sport experience and coaches were the most helpful in her athletic career.

Reflecting on the end of her high school years, we talked about two common topics for student-athletes: SAT or ACT tests and the recruitment process. When asked about the high and low points throughout high school, she mentioned several high points, most revolving around athletics. Her low point came without any hesitation--she hated standardized tests. She took the ACT test four separate times throughout her junior and senior years. Her fear of taking tests and lack of confidence in herself showed as we talked about this part of her life. Anika was a successful student while in high school,

graduating with 3.0 GPA. Being unable to take a standardized test has carried over to her college academic career.

When asked to reflect upon her high school career and how it prepared her for college, she was quick to respond, “I don’t think they prepared us very well. High school allowed students to turn in assignments late, exams were easy, and organization was not a requirement.” She mentioned how easy writing papers was in high school compared to college where they made students write in APA or MLA and had to be at least six pages in length. Anika did not grasp that writing was such a big part of college. In high school, writing was done in one class--English. The other classes did not require any writing skills. She claimed her other high school classes, like math and science, had several tests throughout the semester: “If you didn’t do well on one test, you had other chances to bring that grade up.” Anika noticed that much of college involves writing well. She enrolled in a college prep writing class and an advanced placement (AP) English class in high school, of which she was most critical due her lack of knowledge once she enrolled in college English classes: “I don’t understand the majority of what my professors are trying to tell me when it comes to formatting a paper. Professors are telling me what all I have to work on regarding my papers, and I have never heard of half of what they are telling me.” Anika leaned forward toward me as we discussed the lack of preparation in high school as it related to the demands of college as if she wanted to make sure I understood her point.

The NCAA Clearinghouse certifies high school athletes for participation in college. When I asked Anika who helped her in the process of getting certified, she replied: “Mainly my sister because she played golf and she graduated from the college

the same year I graduated from high school, my counselor helped me some with the paperwork.” When asked the role her head coach played in the certification process she commented:

He didn’t, he would just say “if you want to play golf in college you need to start practicing. I mean he really didn’t help me with anything.” I listened to my golf professional who worked with me through most of the year, not my high school coach.

The recruitment process was easy for Anika. She was offered a scholarship at a few colleges but she knew she wanted to play for the same school her sister had five years earlier. Anika received a partial scholarship to attend the current university. The transition would be easier for her since the university would remember her sister and her contribution to the golf team and the university. Although she had offers to play golf at other schools, I asked her why she chose to come to the university, to which she replied:

I wanted to be near my family so if I needed something I could go home, yet it was far enough away so they can’t be up here all the time. I had other opportunities, other schools talked with me, places my high school coaches wanted me to go, but I wanted to stay near home.

Anika planned on going to college regardless of playing a sport. She was unclear on a degree path, thinking at one time she wanted to be a teacher and a coach, but has since changed to communications: “I love music and I want to do something to incorporate that passion in my life.”

Transition into College

The transition from high school into college for freshman student-athletes is an important phase of the athletes’ career--they are exposed to new freedoms and new expectations. Certain transitions for students and student-athletes attending college for the first time could be overwhelming, challenging, and life-changing.

When I asked Anika how she felt about her transition from high school to college, she said:

It was really hard for me. I was really excited to leave the house, but it was tough not having my parents there all the time. I think once you get to college, you think you have free reign to do whatever you want, and you lose focus on what really needs to be done. If you don't want to go to class, you don't have to, if you don't want to do your homework, you don't have parents around telling you to "do it". It was really tough because it's a big change. You're on your own. Your parents aren't here to push you through things.

Parents were acknowledged as the student-athletes' first teacher and coach and contributed the most during the transition process. Anika was not homesick being away from her parents but missed not being able to walk down the hallway of their house and ask for help with something. She was on her own, having to seek other options when it came to help. I asked her if there was anything about the transition that was positive for her. She replied: "The change between doing what I wanted and not having to tell my parents what I was doing all the time." Anika also felt the transition helped her get even closer to her family--not being around everyday helped her to appreciate her parents and sister. Athletically, the transition was easier even though the competition was better at the college level. Teammates were credited for assisting in the transition process. Anika felt that because her sister played golf in college, she knew what to expect athletically. I followed up by asking her if that truly made a difference, now that she had experienced the transition. She remarked, "It was tough; it was a dramatic change that one can never fully prepare for regardless of others experiences." She stated, "High school is just easy, you're still predicting what you're going to do and be in the future, but college is your future; it has arrived and is taken much more seriously." Anika participated in golf her freshman year, which allowed her to develop a support system shortly after starting

college. When I asked Anika to reflect on the transition once she had been on campus for about month, she replied, “I was nervous, I didn’t know what to expect and to be honest, I still don’t what to expect. I questioned everything I did--should I go out or should I stay home?”

Freshman Year Experience

Transition alone is met with new challenges--academically, athletically, and socially. For many student-athletes, the first year out of high school is to get oriented to a new atmosphere and new experiences. It is also a time for exploration into a new environment, the “next level.” All freshmen are susceptible to difficulties with the adjustment to college. Many are overwhelmed with their freedom and focus more on socializing than on academics.

Anika described her freshmen year as fun, but terrifying: “There are many emotions that come to the surface as you begin to walk around campus.” Life had changed in many ways for Anika; she was experiencing the transition not only from high school to college but from adolescences to adulthood. That process, she explains, has been the most challenging: “Going to class, making new friends and being on my own was scary; it was the fear of the unknown.” We talked about these feeling and looked at them from three different perspectives--academically, athletically, and socially. She started by saying, “I didn’t do well academically; obviously, it wasn’t what I expected. I really thought I would miss my family more, but I was able to go home more than expected.” Her study habits and preparation for classes carried over from her high school experience. She would study the night before a test and admitted not putting much effort into her coursework. The consequence for lack of preparation and execution was her

being unable to travel with the golf team her second semester. When I asked her about being isolated from team travel, she commented: “It was definitely not fun; I watched the girls on the team qualifying for tournaments out of state and I had to just sit and watch.”

We progressed through her academic experience during her freshman year. College is focused on results; in high school, the opportunity to make up assignments and earn extra credit made high school easy. The lack of effort in class carried over to college. She attended classes regularly but was challenged by the tests: “I’m not a good test taker, so I wouldn’t know how to study for them. I would just try to memorize things and I quickly found that didn’t work. I went to class, I took notes, I just didn’t know how to study.” Asking for help was an issue for Anika:

I was really nervous to ask for help. I feel if I ask for help, it’s a sign of weakness. I want to figure things out for myself. I have never been a person to ask for help. If I couldn’t figure it out myself, then what’s the point? I guess I wondered what people would think of me if I asked for help.

Interaction with professors and the way college information is presented was a difficult transition. Some professors were easier to approach and had an interactive class learning environment that assisted in her learning. The lecture style environment was difficult for Anika. She admitted to being a visual, more hands-on learner. Adapting her learning style to the professors was a challenge and is one she continues to struggle with today.

When I asked Anika what her biggest struggle was in her freshmen year, she answered:

I think studying since I didn’t have anyone there to tell to do it. The funny thing is I didn’t really need anyone to tell me to do it. I knew I had to, but there were so many distractions living in the dorms. Basically I would say I can do it later and I never did.

Division I universities across the country must establish resources available to assist student-athletes with the academic challenges they experience in college. The university offers a Freshman Year Experience (FYE) class for all incoming freshmen. Student-athletes are required to take this one credit course in the fall of their freshman year. Student-athletes attend this class with other student-athletes and not the general freshmen population. I asked Anika about the class and the experience. She replied: “We only met once a week and it didn’t help me. I don’t even remember what we did in the class. Obviously I would have been fine without it; at least it was an easy credit.”

The other resource universities may require from their freshmen student-athletes is study hall. The university’s academic success team and the head coach establish how many hours each of their freshmen athletes needs throughout the year. Establishing more or less hours is discussed depending upon the semester grade each freshman athlete receives. The average freshmen athlete receives five hours of study hall a week. Anika found study hall to be useful saying, “It was a set time for me to study.” She commented that she has always been an organized person, always planning her day ahead. Her organized life helped her with the demands of her time as a student-athlete. She commented on her life being busier this year and the challenge of managing her time; however, time was not as demanding for her during her second semester. Participating in weight training, practice, study hall, and traveling for matches was a concern. One of Anika’s biggest concerns during her freshman year was missing classes in order to compete: “I was really nervous about having to make up assignments because I had always heard that some professors don’t let you make up work you missed. I freaked out.” She found most of her professors were supportive of her being an athlete for the

university and were willing to work with her. Tutors were available to student-athletes at any time; there were students who volunteered their time to work with student-athletes who needed extra help in many different areas. When I asked Anika if she worked with a tutor last year, she replied: “No, I was too scared to ask for help. I knew they were there but I just didn’t want to go through having to sign up. I thought I could do it myself.” The university had resources available but Anika struggled with asking for help, feeling it would be a sign of weakness or a loss of control

I asked Anika how she felt after receiving her first semester grades. She said, “Terrible, and I was scared out of my mind to tell my parents. They kept asking me for my grades, what seemed like every hour of everyday. I was scared of their reaction.” Anika continued: “I’ve never really been a person who believes in herself. I don’t have much self-confidence.” Once the grades were shared, they had a family meeting; her parents were supportive but also felt they needed to step in and assist their daughter. Anika was to write down a set of goals and her parents and sister would help her stay on track. I asked Anika if there was one thing she wished she had done differently last year. Her answer was eye opening for both of us; it was said with sadness and eyes beginning to water:

I wish I hadn’t of given up, I just gave up. I had plenty of time to talk to my teachers about getting my grades up, but I was too scared to do anything. I wish I could of told them my position and I was struggling. I just wish I had been more vocal and forthcoming with them.

Motivation came into the conversation on several occasions when I asked Anika what motivated her in general:

My family and friends motivate me, my dad mainly now. Last year we thought he had cancer which felt like a slap in the face. I realized that life can change at

the drop of a hat. My mom called and said they didn't know for sure. I felt broken inside. Something like that happening opened my eyes to everything.

She admitted her motivation last year was fitting in with people in her new environment. School was not a priority--what happened outside the classroom became the focus. She mentioned she was not a self-motivated person; competition motivated her and the reward of winning.

Athletically, Anika found the competition to be more challenging. She quickly became part of team but commented on being a freshmen and having to prove herself: "I was the best golfer on my team in high school but once in college, that didn't matter. You were looked at as a freshman athlete." We weren't able to talk much about her athletic experience during her freshmen year due to the fact that she did not fully compete during the spring season. Not being able to compete kept her on the outside. Her coach was not very supportive during her freshmen year, only talking with her about her grades once it was too late.

The social aspect of college became the focus of her first year experience. Her time and effort went to athletics, her social life, and then academics: "I didn't really drink in high school. I guess once I came to college, I just let loose." Her parents were strict with her in high school and when she arrived on campus, the newfound freedom meant drinking with new friends and teammates.

I asked Anika if alcohol use played a role in other aspects of her life last year. She said: "Absolutely. It took my mind off school completely. It didn't matter if I had an 8:00 class or not, I would go out and party and in class wouldn't really pay attention."

Living in the dorms the first year meant there was never a shortage of friends with whom to go drink and have fun. During the first semester, Anika didn't go out much. However, once she began to meet new people and make friends, she admitted to going out four or times a week to drink with friends. The freedom of being able to go out and be with friends was a new concept for her. She mentioned her parents not liking her hanging around older friends during high school; in college, she able to be with anyone including her older friends from high school. The transition socially was important to Anika; she is an outgoing person and spent a great deal of time building relationships with new friends. The role coaches played or did not play in the social aspect of the golf team was interesting. Anika commented, "Our coach definitely knew what was going on and he didn't say anything. The only time he said anything was before a tournament: "'don't go out this week'."

As the interviews concluded, I asked Anika to tell me about her overall freshmen experience:

It was a good learning experience, a tough learning experience. I learned how to manage my time; I learned what I should and should not be doing in college. It was like a stepping stone to move on. It's not good that I failed, but I think it's good that it happened to me.

Andy

Background

Andy is a 20 year old male who played tennis for the university his freshmen year; he was the last person to volunteer for the interviews. He arrived on time; as we settled into our seats, it was obvious he was nervous. His eyes darted around the room, never settling on my gaze. I questioned how much information I was going to get from my interviews with Andy but pushed forward. He is a tall, slender young man who

walked into the interview room quietly. He didn't smile much and was clearly unsure about volunteering for the interviews. I could feel his nervousness so we spoke for a while before starting the tape recording. Once the taped interview began, he was well-spoken and thoughtful in his answers.

Andy grew up in an upper class neighborhood outside of an elite college town in the Midwest. He was active in every sport growing up--baseball, ice hockey, track, and field--but settled on basketball and soccer. He added tennis to his list when he turned 15 years old. He enjoyed tennis the most due to "the individual aspect of the sport. It's just me against one other person." It was apparent he is an independent person, an introvert by nature. As the conversation continued, Andy began to focus on my eyes and the questions, relaxing in his chair.

His parents are both educators and obtained master's degrees. His father coached a professional cycling team, traveling around the world before getting married and settling in the area. His mom and dad began playing tennis when Andy was 10 years old, his dad gravitating toward tennis. They had financially saved through the years to send both Andy and his brother to college. Andy recalls one of his fondest childhood memories was his dad coaching his soccer and basketball teams for several years. Andy is the eldest of two children; a younger brother currently in high school is being recruited to play soccer at the college level.

Andy was a good student in high school, graduating with a 3.2 GPA. When I asked what activities he enjoyed in his spare time while in high school, he replied: "When my friends and I weren't outside playing basketball or some other sport, we would play video games." Video games consumed much of Andy time when he wasn't with his

friends. He described the purchase of his first Xbox 360 in great detail: “Before the summer of my senior year in high school, I had saved up enough money to buy an Xbox 360.” Video games gave him the chance to compete in games with others around the world from the safety of his room. It also allowed him to escape from life and was his way of relaxing. He admitted that for a time he spent too much time playing video games; however, his life had changed since arriving at college.

Andy described himself as competitive person, yet lacking in confidence. He admitted that he is confident in his athletic abilities except in the sport of tennis--the sport in which he chose to compete while in college: “It’s weird. I tend to stay back in the backcourt and lob the ball; I’m not aggressive at the net like most would think. I’ve never been too confident in my tennis abilities.” He described this style of play as successful to a point: “I’m a quick player and it takes a lot of competitiveness to play like I do.” He is patient as a player, waiting for his competitor to make a mistake.

He said his father would describe him as “a little too lazy.” However, according to Andy, this comes from a person who is extremely active. I asked about the relationship with his father. He replied: “We are very similar and we fought a lot in high school. We would disagree on most things. It took me a long time to realize that we were actually a lot alike. College has helped my relationship with both of my parents, especially my dad.”

Andy worked throughout high school and clearly was most proud of teaching at the local tennis club. He was promoted several times; he enjoyed the responsibility and mentor status that came with the job. Andy enjoyed the younger tennis players looking

up to him. He was proud that he was going to be playing tennis at the Division I level in college.

High School Experience

Andy described his overall high school experience as “Ok, it wasn’t great.” High school was “easy.” He admitted to not really putting much effort into getting good grades. He describes his experience best by saying:

I didn’t have any problems and honestly really didn’t try. I just showed up for classes, semi listened to the teacher, and did my homework in class so I didn’t have to take it home. I basically cruised through high school; it was nothing spectacular.

His favorite memories in high school were linked to his athletic achievement:

High school athletics was some of the most fun I have had. I remember showing up for tennis practice, just hitting the ball, nothing too serious and having a great time. I would beat the majority of the people I played; my only regret is not winning a state title.

Andy enrolled in two AP classes while in high school and found those classes to be easy.

It was apparent that high school did not challenge Andy academically. When asked if high school had prepared him for college, his answer was surprising: “I don’t think it did at all. Not to sound arrogant, but I believe I’m an intelligent person, and I really didn’t have to put forth much effort. Maybe for those who have to put more effort into school felt prepared, I don’t know.”

Andy had completed all his classes for graduation by the beginning of his senior year and told me that he enrolled in “joke classes” to get him through his last year. He was finished by noon, which gave him free time to be with his friends.

Andy participated in both high school athletics and the club sport scene while growing up. The club sport side of his athletic career taught him how to be a better

player. He explained how high school athletics in the sport of tennis worked in the recruiting process: “You are recruited by your national ranking, which comes while playing in regional and national tournaments.” Andy, along with five other players, hired a coach who helped them get into tournaments that established his ranking.

Andy was recruited to play at the college level, but not at the Division I level. Recruiters from Division II and Division III talked with him about playing tennis for their colleges. He remarked that he was the one who made contact with the Division I schools. Coaches called him but never came to his high school to see him play. When I asked Andy why he chose to come to this university, he replied:

The main reason was that it was a Division I school. It was an opportunity to play against the best in the country. Even if you don’t make it to the stage, you still could win a national championship down the road. I had a friend who played here so that helped too. I also liked the fact that it was a big campus and they had a good business school. I knew I wanted to major in business so this seemed like the best fit for me.

Andy did not receive any athletic funding to participate on the tennis team at the university and turned down scholarship offers from other colleges, none of which were Division I.

Andy’s father was the primary resource when it came to recruiting and NCAA Clearinghouse regulations. His father made sure Andy had the necessary paperwork and course load to be eligible to participate in college athletics. I asked Andy what role, if any, his high school played in assisting him through this process. He noted that neither his coach nor counselor assisted him. His only interaction with his counselor was to request grades be sent out to the colleges.

Transition

The transitional experience for incoming freshmen is as unique as they are; each described the effect this phenomenon had on their lives. When I asked Andy what his overall transitional experience from high school to college was, he said:

I think it was pretty easy, at least in the beginning. Although I know a lot of friends struggled being away from home and their family, I didn't really mind. I adjusted and said to myself, "This is a new life for me." I was actually excited to make new friends and enjoy my freedom.

I followed the question with the effects it had on him athletically and socially. He remarked how much more time tennis consumed at the college level: "The demands of tennis took me by surprise. It seemed like all we did was play tennis." Andy felt fortunate he liked his roommate when he arrived on campus: "I got lucky--my roommate and I got along great. And there was a group of new friends that I played tennis with so the transition was pretty easy for me."

Andy struggled his freshman year to adjust to a new style of teaching and learning. His college educational experience was much different; professors lectured more and tested less, which accounted for the majority of the grade. He found himself getting bored in general education classes and not being able to relate to the topic at hand. When I asked him how he balanced his school work with the demands of his sport, he replied:

I didn't do well. There were only four tests a semester; I went to class but I didn't have homework. So I guessed I have nothing to do, which was obviously a mistake. The free time you do have, you're so exhausted from tennis. I didn't want to think; I just wanted to relax.

Freshman Year Experience

Andy found his first year to be exhausting. His schedule didn't allow for much free time; when he did find some time, it was spent taking a nap. He remarked that his day was "constantly busy." The demands of his sport made his adjustment to college difficult. Academically, Andy struggled with educational expectations. There were fewer tests that were worth more points toward your overall grade. Professors expected students to read the material before arriving in class, a concept lost on many arriving in college. Andy stated he "zoned out in class and struggled making a connection with what the professor was saying and what he read in the book." Andy went on to tell me he "learns by doing. I don't like people telling me to do things. I would rather work things out myself. If I have to ask, I will." I asked Andy what motivated him. He struggled in answering the question: "To be honest, not much, especially academically". He stated that he has always lacked motivation in life outside of athletics. The will to win motivates him on the court or in the athletic field; however, he lacks motivation in most areas of his life.

In the first semester, freshman student-athletes are required to take a class to assist them in the transition from high school to college. Andy had strong feelings and reactions as we began talking about the FYE class and other freshman requirements. The FYE course was completely worthless according to Andy. He did not understand the objective of the class or the activities: "I don't even remember that class. I think we had to do some touchy feely stuff and I'm not a fan. I hate that." I asked him about the resources available to him through the athletic department and across campus. Study hall was the subject he touched on next:

It's pretty much worthless. It's probably a good idea but the way it stands now, it really doesn't help. I found study hall to be difficult, I'm not sure why. It was time we had to have in our schedule, but there was something about it. I think it was the environment. It was loud. I just couldn't study. I went to the library to do that.

Study hall is a requirement for freshman athletes. Andy thought that an environment in which you could study in smaller rooms or individually would be better than one large room.

Andy's greatest struggle in his freshmen year was time management:

You would wake up, go lift weights, eat, go to class, have an hour or so, head to class again. After class, you would immediately head to tennis for several hours, go eat, and head to study hall until 9:00 P.M. Day in and day out. The fact you didn't have any free time was the biggest struggle for me.

Andy does not like to have his schedule set for him; he has to have some control of his life and the decisions he makes. Andy would prefer to study on his own; study hall was a requirement for freshmen but actually studying in that environment was not a requirement. He claimed that most of the athletes in study hall did everything but study. He spoke of how exhausted he was all the time compared to high school. The demands of college life took him by surprise: "There is no time to do what I want to do; athletics and academics consume all my time."

I talked with Andy about the support he received from his coaches and the athletic department. He claimed his coaches were just that, tennis coaches, and were more concerned with the sport over academics. He felt he could talk with one of the coaches the first semester. However as time went on, he was uncomfortable talking with his coaches about his struggles academically: "I think coaches need to realize that we have school work. It seems like they forget we have classes. Their only focus is about their sport." The athletic department assisted him but he felt he was just part of a group, not an

individual. I asked if having a mentor or a tutor would have made a difference. He felt some kind of individual attention would have helped in the adjustment he needed to be successful academically. When I asked Andy about his athletic experience in his freshman year, he replied:

Athletically it was frustrating, and the year started off poorly for me. I lost several of my challenges and I wasn't playing well. For the first time, I was playing hurt quite a bit. I think it had to do with playing every day, lifting weights, and having little down time.

Andy was frustrated by his position on the team; he felt he should be in the second player position and not the sixth or fourth he played all season. The team losing matches and not being successful his freshman year were sources of personal frustration. He was hard on himself when he lost a match. According to Andy, he did not play up to his standards. When I asked him if he disliked being a student-athlete, he replied:

I didn't like the emphasis placed on athletics. They say you're a student-athlete but in actuality you're an athlete first. The amount of time you put into your sport becomes your primary function and what time you have left over goes to academics.

Andy talked about his tennis experience last year, mentioning he did not like playing the sport anymore: "I'm tired of our team not winning and I was just not playing well. I couldn't get into my groove and even my stroke was off." He began to dislike practice and eventually came to dread going and playing tennis. Andy quit the team after his first season:

I began to hate playing tennis; they were putting so much pressure on, you know. you have to travel to tournaments and the demands became too much. It's just one of those things, the more you do it and the pressure is placed on you, the less fun it becomes.

I asked about his coaches' reaction to his decision. He was quick to point out they did not seem concerned or cared why he was leaving the team.

Socially, Andy adjusted to college life quickly. He commented, "Being on the tennis team gave me a set of friends who helped me in the beginning." He admitted he was not a drinker or partier: "I really don't enjoy going out; I'm not a person who goes out and thrives on meeting new people. I would rather stay in with a group of my friends." Throughout our interview, he mentioned he was a little shy. Although he was not comfortable meeting new people, he did enjoy talking with people once they initiated the conversation. Andy was very engaging in our interviews and remarked once we had finished how he enjoyed talking with me. He found it good to reflect on a time in his life full of adjustments and transitions.

I asked Andy about his friends. I was interested to hear if they were his teammates or other students he had met during his freshman year. He had a few teammates who were friends but the majority of his friends were those he had met outside of athletics. He added his high school friends were the same; the majority of them were friends who liked to participate in athletic events but not at the competitive level interscholastic or intercollegiate sports offered.

The interview concluded and I asked Andy if there was anything he wished he would have done differently last year. He replied: "I definitely wish I would of put more emphasis on academics; getting a 1.8 my first semester was a shock. I also could have been a little more positive about tennis and losing." He is learning to adjust with his decision to quit the tennis team; he has always considered himself an athlete and his identity has changed to being a student. He struggles with the loss of his athletic identity,

sometimes talking about leaving the university to play soccer at another college. He quickly turned from that statement to admit that he enjoyed being a student and having the time to enjoy the college experience.

Mia

Background

Mia is a 20 year old soccer player who grew up in a large suburb of a major metropolitan city nestled in the Rocky Mountain area. Mia was distant as we sat down for our first interview; I felt it was fear of the unknown. We talked for a period of time before I turned on the recorder. She quickly relaxed as I began to ask her about herself and her family. By the end of the first interview, I found her answers to be open and thoughtful. Mia looked forward to our interviews and was on time, ready to talk for each of her interviews.

Although her immediate family consists of her, a sister, and her parents, Mia comes from a large extended family who is very close despite distance between some relatives. She has aunts and cousins who grew up in the same neighborhood as her family. She began playing soccer when she was four years old and shortly thereafter started playing basketball. She admits that soccer is the sport to which she has devoted most of her time. Basketball was fun for her but she never took it as seriously as she did soccer.

Her mother graduated from high school but her father left high school to provide for his family. Her parents were active in sports while in high school; her father was a three sport athlete and her mother participated in both softball and cheerleading. Mia is a first generation college student; neither parent attended college after high school. Her

older sister graduated from high school and grew up playing soccer. Mia remembers vividly watching her sister play soccer and learning how to play the sport from her as she was growing up. Her sister did not attend college and is married with three children.

Mia is very close to her family, especially her father. She classifies herself as “daddy’s little girl”:

When I was younger, I would wait for my dad to come home and I would hide, pretending I wasn’t home. We would play hide and seek. We had many nights where we all played cards. I wasn’t the type to go out and play with friends when I was younger; I stayed home with my parents. I’m very close with my family.

She added, “I was always home and always did what my parents told me to do. I was a major homebody. I wouldn’t sneak out of the house to go see my friends, I was good that way.”

As she grew, Mia and her father would spend time after school playing basketball in their backyard. She also spent time helping her mother in the house but remarked that her mom is a serious person; chores needed to be done before her parents arrived home from work.

Mia had several friends growing up, but none closer than her best friend, Tami. She identifies her as more of sister. Mia disclosed some private experiences that landed her in trouble that only she and Tami shared. Tami was a strong influence while Mia grew up and played a major role in her life as did Tami’s parents. Mia would like to pursue a criminal justice career, which she became interested in at a young age due to Tami’s father being in the law field.

High School Experience

Mia shared that high school was the best experience of her life and admitted: “I still say I would do anything to get back to high school.” When I asked her why this time of her life was the best, she replied:

Because of all my friends, all of the girls I grew up with ended up at the same high school. Having my best friend and other friends to hang around with was great. I loved being on the soccer team because we were really good. People knew who I was since my sister went there and that was great and made life easier.

Her academic life in high school was tumultuous. Mia had the capability to do well academically but her life outside of academics always came first. Her class attendance and behavior were admittedly a problem. Mia’s sophomore year was spent in detention for missed class time. Her struggle in the classroom had no effect on how she viewed high school. She loved school and she loved the experience throughout her four years. Mia’s favorite year in high school was her junior year when they won a state title in soccer. Her love of high school directly pointed to her athletic career and not her academic career. She admitted to putting her social and family life first. Her lack of interest in the subject matter or the relationship with her teachers became a common theme when we talked about academics.

If my teachers interested me and caught my attention, I did better in class. I felt if they wanted me to do well and cared about me, I was better in class. I ended up having a bad attitude toward the subjects. The teachers bored me and didn’t present the material in a way that caught my attention or was fun. A big part of my problem was if I didn’t feel they were going to help me, I just didn’t try. I hated asking for help.

Teachers played a major role in Mia’s academic career; she was too intimidated to ask for help. She felt if she asked teachers for help, she was bothering them: “They always seemed busy, not approachable.” If she was not comfortable asking for help, she

admitted to cheating to get the assignments done. She talked of giving up when it came to academics: “My parents couldn’t really help and my friends were busy doing their homework. So I would just say “I can’t do this” and go hang out with my friends.” As she reflected back on high school, she realized she made it harder on herself: “Looking back now, I realize high school really was easy.”

Her athletic career was the foundation of her high school experience. It was an area in which she found success. She talked extensively about her soccer career and how she earned a position on the varsity team while being a freshman. She was excited to tell me she was the only freshmen to play on the team; the other freshman varsity players never saw playing time. She was proud of the state title her team accomplished her junior year but even more proud of the fact that she had scored the game winning goal. Her senior year was a struggle toward the end. She admitted that being so close to graduation, she just wanted to be done. She was in trouble most of the time the last few weeks of school before graduation.

Mia did not experience much of a social life outside of soccer and school. Her parents did not allow her to go out during the week. When she did go out on a Saturday evening, her parents would wait up for her and check to see if she had been drinking. Alcohol and parties did not play a role in Mia’s high school experience until the summer before college when she paid a costly price for using alcohol. The consequences of her actions carried over to her freshman year in college. She eventually had to tell her mother of the incident but her father, to this day, still does not know. When I asked her why she was not able to talk about the situation with her father, she replied: “He would get mad and be disappointed. I would be scared to tell him.”

Mia also played for a soccer club while growing up and through her high school years. She admitted that her club soccer coaches had a greater impact on her than her high school coaches. Her club coaches were more knowledgeable about winning and the sport itself; their coaching style fit Mia's needs to be a better soccer player.

I asked Mia about the recruiting process in high school years and found that her mother and the athletic secretary played vital roles. Her mother found the necessary requirement for the NCAA Clearinghouse and helped her complete the forms needed to be certified to participate at the college level. She told me that her mom completed most of the paperwork sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse. The athletic secretary assisted Mia with the classes she needed to qualify as a college athlete. Her high school counselors came into the picture only when she needed transcripts sent to interested colleges: "I was more comfortable with the athletic secretary, so I just kept going to her when I needed something."

Transition into College

The transition into college was difficult for Mia:

I was very close to my parents and I didn't want to leave. I was scared of moving out of my house and living on my own. It wasn't that far away but it was hard to be away from my parents, my sister, and her kids. I cried the whole way up to college, scared that I wouldn't see my family every day. I think that was the hardest part.

I could tell as we began talking about the transition that she had several different feelings, the first being fear. She then mentioned the excitement of having the freedom to do what she wanted in college. Mia looked forward to playing soccer and meeting new people. She quickly turned the emotion of excitement to dread: "The transition made me realize that I'm going to have to grow up."

When I asked if her high school had prepared her for college or the transition into college, she replied:

Not as much as they should have. I was a good writer in high school and when I got to college, I realized I had no idea how to write and research a paper that was longer than two pages. I just did what I had to do to get by in high school. Being an athlete, my teachers and even vice-principal let me off the hook.

Mia reflected back on high school academics and remembered coloring the United States in her junior year, having extra credit, and being able to hand in assignments late, all of which did not prepare her for what she was now experiencing in college. She did not take any AP classes while in school and could not speak to whether those classes would have prepared her for college. Mia looked back on her high school time and stated, “Some of the assignments and tests were elementary compared to college. I just didn’t know it at the time.”

Her transition into college was emotionally difficult for her. She was diagnosed with anxiety disorder, which went along with depression. She experienced uncontrollable crying spells her first semester; on several occasions, she wanted to either quit school or transfer to a school closer to home where she could live at home and commute. Her mother was for the idea and made it known that if she wanted to come home she could. She never did talk to father, scared he would be disappointed in her if she left college. She alluded to the pressure of being the first one in her family to attend and graduate from college, and how her father was counting on her completing college and getting her degree. We went into more detail about being a first generation college student:

I feel a lot of pressure, especially from my parents. They are always telling people how proud they are of me and that I’m a Division I athlete on a

scholarship. I feel pressure because I'm a role model for my little cousins who want to grow up like me and play soccer for the same university as me.

She shared that her parents are the main reason she's in college, but she wants to finish college for herself. She told me she felt some of the stress, causing her anxiety attacks stemming from personal issues--the discord she was having with two close friends and the loss of her grandfather who she was very close to. Soccer was an escape for her and kept her mind off the emotional pain she was experiencing. Soccer was the one venue where her anxiety attacks never occurred. As the school year went on, Mia began to control her anxiety attacks by recognizing the signs before they could happen so she was able to deal with them accordingly. She ended by telling me she felt supported by her friends, teammates, and coaches.

When I asked Mia how often she talked with her parents during the transition and while in college, she replied: "I talk to mom and dad every morning and my mom several times a day. We text a lot during the day, every day." Almost on cue, her mother texted her during our interview; Mia ignored the text and kept going with the interview. She then turned off her phone and apologized.

First Year Experience

Mia chose her current university not only because it was close to home but she also knew her college coach from her high school days; he was her club soccer coach at one point. She felt comfortable with him and respected him as a coach. Originally Mia grew up wanting to be a teacher and a coach. However, after entering college and taking some classes, she declared criminal justice as her major in her sophomore year.

Mia told me in the beginning of her freshman year, she wanted to change her bad behavior of high school and attend every class, hoping to start college with better habits.

It took six weeks before her old habits came rushing back to haunt her, just as they had in high school. She began to miss class and talked with me about the demands of her sport and her social life interfering with her being able to get up and attend class: “Forcing myself to go to class was hard for me. I was tired from lifting, it was cold, and I just wanted to go home and take a nap.”

We talked about her freshmen year with regard to academics: “I really struggled. If I didn’t understand something, I would just make it up and say, ‘Okay. That works. That’s good enough.’ I would either not study for tests or just say, ‘I’ll be able to wing it.’ But I found I couldn’t.” Her greatest frustration was not being able to ask for help. She was put off by people telling her she had a problem with not comprehending her classes. She resisted asking for help stating, “I’m a very independent person and asking for help is for weak people.” Mia did not take advantage of the resources available to her during her freshman year because she was prideful and unable to ask for help. She worked with a tutor at one point and did not feel comfortable in a one-on-one session. She found it hard to admit to the athletic staff and her coaches she did not understand her class work. She told me she was not a good test taker and she lacked the skills to properly study for her classes. School became overwhelming for Mia. It continued and she started to shut down mentally when it came to school.

Mia was the only “true freshman” to play soccer her freshman year, just as she had in high school. She was honored but told me she worked hard preparing for her college career. She commented that her father had paid for a trainer over the summer to prepare her for the demands of her sport. Mia was confident in both her soccer skills and conditioning when she arrived on campus in the fall.

Most freshman athletes are redshirted their freshman year so they can adjust to college life and develop the necessary skills to be a successful member of the team their sophomore year. Soccer was Mia's focus in her freshman year but the demands of her sport quickly took their toll: "I found it difficult to manage my time. If something was going to give, it was going to be my school work."

As we delved further into the demands, she mentioned her time away from campus traveling to and from games: "It was hard traveling and missing classes." On most occasions, the team left for competitions on a Wednesday and returned on Sunday. She quickly fell behind in her studies due to the exhausting schedule. She was able to tell me later that her exhaustion came more from her social life than her athletic life: "I went out almost every night drinking. The only time we didn't drink was the night before a game." She was strict on her night before a game routine by going to bed early and taking care of herself. She would not allow herself to be distracted by friends or social activities before games. Mia became ineligible to compete in her sport after her freshman year. When I asked her what motivated her, she replied: "Now, it's not being able to play. It opened my eyes and I realized something had to change." Mia was motivated by outside forces and was not self-motivated. Her parents being able to watch her play soccer again kept her on the road to recovery. I asked her about her parents' reaction to her not being eligible to participate in soccer. She told me she gave her parents another excuse and didn't share with them the real reason behind her not playing. She eventually informed her mother but never talked with her father.

As we moved into the role her coach played in her academic life as a student-athlete, she felt he was supportive once he received her grades and she became ineligible.

Academics were not a common theme during practice. The coaches concentrated on training the body and left training of the mind to the athlete.

Mia explained to me her frustration with time management: “I had a hard time adjusting to class work and demands of my sport. There’s a lot more work at this level than in high school.” Balancing soccer and schoolwork was difficult for Mia; she didn’t know how much time she needed to study or how often she should be studying. When she realized there were no breaks in her schedule throughout the day, she eventually broke down and gave up.

We talked about study hall at this point; it was clear that the time set aside for studying was not used for that specific purpose. She said study hall was loud and distracting. She spent study hall time finishing study guides or doing note cards for class. She admitted that study hall was not about studying. The environment made it hard to study for Mia. It was a large room; most in the room were either talking or were playing games on their computers.

When asked about the FYE class she took in the fall of her freshman year, she admitted she rarely went to class due to traveling with the team. She was not able to remember what the class was about or if it helped her in anyway: “I just remember I got a C in that class because I missed it so much.”

I asked her what one word described the beginning of her freshmen year. She replied: “Miserable. I was really homesick even though home is only an hour away.” I wondered how often she went home to visit her family in her freshmen year:

I went home almost every weekend and sometimes during the week just for dinner. I spent the night at the house and woke up early to drive back to school. I didn’t feel comfortable at school. I didn’t know anybody and I was so used to high school where everybody knew me.

We concluded this interview session by me asking what she was most proud of this last year, to which she replied: “Probably the success I had on the field as a freshman student-athlete. It was the biggest part of my freshmen year--being able to play on the soccer team.”

I was able to see the change in Mia through the interview process. I began the interviews worried if Mia would be able to make the changes needed to be successful in college. Mia has relied on many external factors. To be successful, she was going to have to find herself and take responsibility for the position was in at this point in her life. When we talked of her growth over the last year, I could see her life had changed. She admitted she had learned a hard lesson this last year and was looking forward to the future. She was looking forward to playing soccer again.

Ray

Background

Ray was waiting for our interview when I arrived. It was easy to see he had a way of commanding attention in a room, yet a strange way of blending in depending on the situation. It was easy to guess his position as a lineman on the football team. He appeared to be a person who was confident in himself and not concerned with how others viewed him. Ray is 20 years old and although he was big, he was not a tall person. He has a contagious smile and was easy to talk with as we began the interviews. He was looking forward to talking about himself and his family. I found him to be respectful, honest about his life, and eager to share his thoughts.

Ray is a proud Pacific Islander; both of his parents come from the islands of Tonga. His Polynesian influence quickly came to the surface as we began the interview. He grew up in a large metropolitan city in the southwestern United States. Ray is the youngest of four children; when he was 12 years old, three of his first cousins came to join the family, increasing his family to seven children. His sister started community college to become a lawyer when she met her future husband. She left college shortly thereafter to get married but has since returned to community college. One of Ray's brothers had a promising football career but took a wrong turn in life and became involved in the gang life. He was shot in the arm at one point in his senior year of high school, shattering his arm. Ray tells me his brother's dream of playing college football was shattered that day along with his arm. Ray's father did not graduate from high school and quit junior high school to work to support his family. His father was a great athlete but his parents believed he would not be able to make a living playing sports or even finish school. With the support of his parents, Ray's father quit school to help support a family of 10 children. Ray's mother graduated from high school and began her education at a trade school. However, she left school due to lack of funds and began working to assist in supporting her family.

The interview quickly turned to the importance of family: "In the Polynesian culture, family comes first." Older Tongans left school to provide for their families; getting an education was not a priority. The culture thrives on family ties and extended family functions and celebrations. He told me, "We are people who are social and inclusive. I grew up socializing with many different groups throughout school, not just the jocks. Our school loved the Polynesians."

Baseball was Ray's first love growing up until one day in middle school someone told his dad he should put Ray in football. It was not long thereafter that Ray found football to be the outlet he needed and the sport he wanted to play. He told me, "Football kept me out of trouble."

When I asked Ray about his childhood, he replied: "I say I had the best childhood. We struggled financially and there were times we really didn't have a Christmas in the traditional sense." He told me of one of his fondest childhood memories:

It was Thanksgiving time and my dad had just gotten laid off. All us boys went out to basketball at a nearby city basketball court. As we started messing around, we would find ketchup packets on the ground or mustard, that kind of stuff, and we joked that we now had ketchup for Thanksgiving. We played for several hours, knowing we weren't going to have Thanksgiving like everyone else. But when we got home, a family had donated a turkey and things to our family. My brothers and I bring that time up a lot, even now. It was a great memory, the kindness of strangers.

Ray grew up embracing his culture and still does to this day. When I asked him to give me an example, he replied: "I grew up hula dancing and still do to this day. I also play the ukulele and love to sing. In high school, we were always performing in front of the school at assemblies." Ray also mentioned his involvement in the church: "I'm a member of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints." I asked him if he was comfortable sharing what that meant in his life, to which he replied:

My dad was Methodist growing up, so we were Methodist. My dad lived a crazy life. He was into alcohol and smoking until one day someone introduced him to the LDS church and dad felt it was right for him. We started to go to church and I saw a transformation not only in my dad, who quit drinking and smoking cold turkey, but also in my brother and sister who were baptized in the church.

His mother had previously belonged to the LDS church. However, in the Tongan culture, the wife takes the husband's faith so she became a Methodist until his family became followers of the Mormon church. He admits to being what his family calls "Sunday

Mormons”--doing what they wanted during the week and then on Sunday’s practicing the Mormon faith. He shared that since coming to college, he has had a change of heart and has dedicated his life to his faith; moreover, he has completed the necessary paperwork required by the church and is planning on leaving college after his sophomore year to complete his two-year mission. Ray’s faith was evident throughout the interviews.

High School Experience

High school was an easy experience for Ray. He mentioned on several occasions how much fun his high school years were--the best yet he tells me quickly. He was a good student but had trouble attending class through the years. His worst memory of high school was having to run home and erasing the answering machine message the school left because he had missed class. Ray described himself as a class clown throughout high school: “I wasn’t disrespectful like most, but I loved bringing humor to a situation.” His high school coach had the most influence on him during the high school years: “He changed my life in a positive way; he stressed being a better man today than you were yesterday.” Ray admits his coach was a strong figure in his life--not letting him get away with bad or disrespectful behavior, on and off the field. In his sophomore year, Ray told me he did not miss class. His football coach made players who skipped class run the majority of practice.

Ray was not thinking about attending college in high school; he thought about going on his mission out of high school. He shared that he played football to stay out of trouble and was thinking he would get married and begin life in the work world and support his family. His mind changed when recruiters came to his high school and showed interest in him playing football and continuing his education.

Ray shared with me about not being prepared to attend college. Although he had the grades in high school, he was unsure of his academic ability:

My bad habit from high school carried over to college--not wanting to go class and procrastinating. I think my high school tried to prepare me for college but I just didn't listen; it wasn't a priority for me. Because I missed class so much, I think I missed out on what they were trying to do for me.

Ray did not become interested in college requirements until he had to turn in the NCAA Clearinghouse paperwork. His high school counselor helped him a great deal with the paperwork and the classes needed to be certified to play in college. His counselor was Tongan and played professional football for a short time; Ray respected and trusted what his counselor was doing to help. He gave his high school counselor credit for attending college.

Ray was very supported in high school; he had teachers and counselors who cared about him as a student and a person. This support group encouraged him to attend college and to realize the doors a college education could open for him for the rest of his life. This support conflicted somewhat with his culture and "family first" philosophy: "We always had family time; it's family over everything else, even school."

When I asked Ray about his experience while he was being recruited to come to college, he replied:

I really didn't pay that much attention until my senior year when coaches showed up at my high school. I was getting calls from other schools wanting me to come visit. I had offers and visits at other universities but my mom really had a good feeling about this university and since I'm pretty much a mama's boy, I came here.

He talked about the pressure of coming to college--choosing to enter college because of his parents and family: "I basically came to college for my mom, not for me."

He commented on the pressure he put on himself--being the child who would go to

college and earn a degree. He felt he'd focused enough to attain a college degree. He was confident in his ability to come back to college, once his mission work was complete, to finish his degree.

Transition into College

I asked Ray about his first few weeks on campus and he replied:

Academically it was hard; I had a hard time going to classes. I found that attending class was part of your grade. If you didn't go to class but did well on your assignments, you would still get a C or D in the class. That was hard for me since I didn't go to class in high school and still had good grades.

I was curious whether Ray missed being close to home and his family. He said:

It was hard coming to college. I didn't have a problem being away from home. I don't get homesick. I miss home and my family but they prepared me pretty well to start this new life and not to be afraid. I lived in the dorms so there was always something to do and people to meet. I loved doing that so much that I chose that over doing homework.

Ray indicated that when he first began two-a-days in football, he was intimidated by the size of the other players. The intensity level and the demands of the sport were difficult for him as he transitioned into college. The transition affected him mentally and physically. The demands of his sport left him exhausted and lost when it came to time management. Football was a priority for Ray and much of that stemmed from his scholarship. In receiving a full athletic scholarship, he believed he had an obligation, not academically but athletically, to the university: "they are paying for me to be here."

He shared with me that he had to become more determined in college to be successful, which he struggled with during his freshman year. He did not take it seriously at first, thinking he would get by just as he had in high school. The transition into college did not affect Ray emotionally; he was eager to be on his own and to explore his newfound freedom. Academically, his transition into college was difficult. He

continued the same bad habits reinforced in high school, thinking he would be as successful in college just as he was in high school. One year later, he reflected back on his academic transition, wishing he had taken his classes more seriously and set his priorities differently. We finished with the transition into college with Ray reflecting:

No one talks to you about the transition into college. But say what you want, someone can tell you need to learn to manage your time and your sport but until you really go through it, I don't think you can understand. It's like leading a horse to water; you can't make him drink. I don't know if you can truly prepare for college.

I was intrigued by this statement. As we continued to talk, he came back and made another statement, countering his original statement: "I guess if someone had talked with me about the transition and college life, it would have helped me. At least I would have heard it; whether I took the advice would have been my responsibility."

Ray had mixed feeling about his transition; academically he struggled with bad habits that transferred from high school. Emotionally and socially, Ray was excited to meet new friends and enjoyed his time in the dorms his freshman year. Athletically, the transition was challenging for Ray--redshirting and having to find his place and voice on the team.

First Year Experience

We started by talking about his overall experience of being a freshman on campus: "It was fun. I mean there was always something to do. I could go out and when I could, I'd sleep. Time management was my biggest struggle." He told me that football was always first when it came to managing his time--whether it was practice, lifting, or study hall. His social life became his life and having fun was important. He had found the freedom to do what he wanted, which was a new and different experience: "If you put

more time in having fun and meeting people, it means less time for doing things like homework.”

Ray continued his old ways from high school when it came to missing classes: “I was super sore from lifting and was so tired from workouts, so I would go back to the dorm for a quick nap. I would wake up and think since the teacher doesn’t take attendance, I’ll go back to sleep.” His schedule was consistent: “lift, sleep, wake up feeling refreshed, go back to lifting, take a nap, and then get ready to go out.”

He moved onto the topic of study hall “I could never do homework in study hall”. He talked with me about getting asked to leave study hall: “I just joked all the time. I don’t know, but I would crack jokes and get thrown out.” Ray did very little studying in study hall. He mentioned he completed only three or four assignments throughout the year, believing he was limited in getting homework completed due to not having a laptop computer. He admits study hall was distracting. Many of the other redshirt football players were in study hall at the same time and he admitted to accomplishing little if anything other than talking. He struggled in having to be in study hall for two hours. He felt he would produce better results if he had more freedom in putting his required hours. He confessed to being stubborn in his freshman year. Although time was set aside to study, his attitude was to sit in study hall and not study.

He had strong opinions regarding FYE classes his first semester, not fully understanding the objective of the class. Ray confided he did not remember the class being of any help to him in his transition to college: “I don’t even remember what FYE stands for.” When I asked him about his freshmen year academically, he replied: “I thought I was doing really well until I found out my grades were lowered because of

attendance problems.” As I continued the conversation, he was upset. He had attended a class everyday and received a C for the semester: “I feel if you show up every day to class, you should get an A.” Ray’s changing view of attendance and how it related to his grades were contradicting. He struggled with the academic demands of college; I had the sense he thought higher education should replicate high school

We talked about the impact of redshirting his freshmen year: “They never really told me I was redshirting. In fact, I thought I was going to play until football started and they told me I was going to redshirt.” He respected his coaches but felt they were not being completely honest with him about football. Ray also recalled an incident where his position coach used both him and one other player as examples by belittling them because they did not get a good grade in their FYE class.

Ray is a social person by nature, outgoing and funny; he enjoys being part of the crowd. The social aspect of his freshman year took priority over his academic life. Meeting new people and exploring his freedom gave him pleasure and affirmation. Living in the dorm meant he always had access to doing something. It was hard to say no to friends when they were going out and Ray had an assignment due or tests the next day. He admitted to struggling when it came to balancing the many roles he played in his freshman year: “I learned about sacrifice and consequences, but I learned the hard way because I wasn’t a very good student last year.” Although he never became ineligible to participate in football, he realized he was heading down a dangerous path. By the end of his freshman year, Ray realized bad grades had the potential to keep him off the field. Once he made the connection, he put more effort into the academic side of his life. We talked about his scholarship:

I wouldn't have been in college without a scholarship. My folks wouldn't be able to afford it and I think it's dumb to take out loans for school when you can go out, get job, and work for a living. I know people who are in huge debt because of school loans and they aren't making much more than someone without a college degree. That doesn't make sense to me.

He talked about his expectations in having a scholarship: "I feel I'm under more pressure to perform." He had mixed feeling regarding his scholarship and felt the pressure of being a scholarship athlete: "Education is supposed to be the priority and yet we are required to put so much time into our sport. The coaches want us there to be athletes; after all, they are paying for me to be here to play ball."

Socially, Ray talked about the pressure of being a student-athlete and drinking his freshman year: "We have more expectations put upon us. Since we are student-athletes, if we get into any trouble, it hits the news as opposed to just a regular student. Being on scholarship, if we were to get caught drinking and charged, we could lose our funding." He went into greater detail about drinking and his social life: "There is always something going on every night of the week. We would go out a couple times during the week and after games on Saturday. You don't drink the night before games. We're in a hotel, so we have a strict schedule."

When I asked Ray what he was most proud of last year, he replied: "That I was eligible to play this year." He went into detail about grades in college: "C's get degrees. I'm satisfied with just getting C's. I don't think it really matters if you get A's or C's. I will still get the same degree and I'm still going to be eligible to play football." In his mind, his logic is sound; as long as he has a college degree, the grades are not a concern.

Ray's parents motivated his actions academically and athletically: "My mom and dad always struggled while I was growing up. My mom and dad have always worked

two or three jobs to support us kids. I feel like my scholarship helps them.” He admits to being motivated by outside factors and not being self-motivated. Ray finds strength in doing well for others. When I asked him to describe himself, he said: “I’m Ray and there are only two of us in this world--me and my dad.” He is very proud of who he is and his accomplishments: “I don’t care what others think of me unless they are hurting my family, reputation or character.”

Ray has gentleness about him but tells me he has a quick temper, which he is trying to tame. He talks about his temper being a cultural characteristic: “We are a people ready to defend ourselves and a cause we believe in. We are not afraid to speak up.” He has been challenged in taming his temper as it relates to his faith: “I get angry when people tease me or crack jokes about being a Mormon. I know it’s not a characteristic of Christ so I’m trying to work on that--to be a better person.” Ray talked freely with me about his faith and becoming more responsible when it came to his faith. “I have been a hypocrite,” he tells me.

I wouldn’t tell people I was Mormon or talk with them about it because I couldn’t live by the church’s standards; they don’t drink or smoke. People didn’t know how important my faith was because I would go out and drink. I had a temper and could be rude when I wanted to be.

He tells me he has grown over the last year. He believes he has changed his attitude and temper, but he has to work on it every day.

Ray’s overall freshmen year experience was “good” he tells me as we sit down for his last interview: “It helped strengthen me to be the person I am today; it was a lesson in life.” I asked him to explain what that last phrase meant to him: “Your freshmen year, you’re living on your own for the first time. You have a lot of choices to make; some will be good ones and others not so good. You’re going to have to face the consequences;

realizing that is tough.” Reflecting back on his decisions last year, Ray realized how the majority of the time he chose to do what was fun and not what he knew he should be doing such as studying or attending class. Almost out of nowhere, sitting up in his chair, Ray changed the subject and began to tell me his thoughts of the term “student-athlete”: “I guess I knew in high school we were athletes first, but we were still able to have fun and go to school. It is clear in college that I’m a football player first and a student second. Coaches talk to you about getting grades but it’s all about the sport.” He had honestly thought of the term *student-athlete* and commented, “I know they tell you you’re a student-athlete, but everything about college is to keep you eligible to play. I’m an athlete-student; we all are at this level.” I asked what he thought about what he had told me: “They are paying for me to be here, I feel an obligation to being a football player and it just so happens I have to be a student also.”

I was curious about Ray’s remarks when I asked him if he could change anything from last year and what he would change. He replied: “I wish I would have tried harder, had more discipline to go to class, and not given up. I may still struggle but at least I would be struggling while I was trying harder.”

Ray was outspoken and honest throughout our interviews. He had definite opinions about his first year at the university. He took responsibility for his actions, or lack of them, but he also found fault in the university system. Ray was quick to criticize the use of study hall, the time demands of being a first year student-athlete, and classroom management. Class management included attendance and the professors’ style of conveying the material to students. As he left our last interview, I questioned how

much responsibility he took for his actions during his freshmen year over those he believed to be beyond his control.

Walter

Background

Walter was mature and unassuming as we began our interviews. He is a 20 year old football player. He was slight in size but as we talked about his position on the team, it was clear his quickness and instincts would make him an asset to the team. Walter was a redshirt freshman, as he finished the fall practice season, he sustained an anterior crucial ligament (ACL) tear and had surgery, which kept him from participating his second year.

Walter moved a great deal as a child and remembered living in at least five states before settling in a college town nestled in the foothills. He admits to not knowing why his family moved so much over the years but he did not mind the adjustments: "It was never really a big deal; in a way, it helped me because I find it easy to meet and talk with people." He made an early impression in the initial interview. Walter was a positive person, taking the negative aspects of his life and seeing them as opportunities for improvement or growth. He held himself accountable for his actions and his attitude.

He grew up one of six boys, four being half brothers. Walter never knew his biological dad and commented that his dad had left his mother when he was young. He was quick to follow the information he had just revealed: "I don't know my real dad. Oh well, I don't need him; I'm over it." Walter's stepfather has been the father figure to him and his brothers for as long as he can remember. As we talked over the month, he referred to his stepfather as his father when talking about his parents. He described them

as being very supportive; he felt no pressure in having to participate in sports. Walter talked about his mother and their relationship: “I’m mom’s little boy and I can do no wrong, but she treats us all like that. She is proud of me and what I’ve done with my life by earning a full ride scholarship.” Walter’s father has an associate’s degree and his mother dropped out of high school but returned to complete her GED after Walter was born. He credits his mother for “giving me a good mind. I want to make her proud when it comes to school. I came to college to pursue a career, which she wishes she would have been able to do for herself.”

Walter has a stepbrother who is also 20 and currently serving in the military. His other brothers range in age from 10 to 17. His stepbrothers have lived on and off with Walter’s parents, going between biological parents and Walter’s family. He grew up loving the outdoors more than video games or watching television. He was an active child, participating in almost all sports but concentrating on football and track as he entered high school. He was a two sport athlete throughout high school, participating in football in the fall and track and field in the spring.

On more than one occasion, Walter talked about his easy going nature: “I hate stress and I don’t like to be held down by things in life.” He is committed to his family and friends and admits they play an important role in life: “My teammates growing up were more like my brothers; I would do anything for them.” Walter views himself as reliable and dedicated to his family, friends, and his endeavors in life. He loves to meet people and considers himself a “social butterfly.” He was quick to point out the biggest reason for coming to this university was to be close to family; he wanted them to be able to attend his games. He hopes to become a teacher once he graduates from college.

High School

Walter, like all the participants in this study, described high school as “fun and easy. High school was fun, fun, fun and easy. No real responsibility, although you thought you did, but you really didn’t. High school was all about having fun for me and my group of friends.” His friends were mostly teammates from football: “I feel like I thrive on who’s around me. If there are good people around me, I feel good and my teammates were just that to me.” Walter loved his high school experience and felt it was the right balance of academics, athletics, and social. Academically, Walter commented on his philosophy: “I would go to class and take notes. I was able to retain what I heard in class so I didn’t really have to study to do well on tests. I feel I was a good student by grade standards but not by practice standards. I didn’t practice being a good student.”

Walter was proud of the fact that he only missed two classes during his high school years and was successful, both academically and athletically, in high school: “I wasn’t the type to study. I would just look over my notes for about a half hour before I took a test and I ended up doing fine on the test.” He took two AP classes in high school. The structure of one of his AP classes resembled the higher education class structure. “We really didn’t have homework assignments; we read a lot and only had two or three tests.” He didn’t consider the AP classes as being hard or easy, just different from his other high school classes.

When I asked Walter to reflect on his favorite high school memory, he replied: “Just the people, whatever I was doing, I was doing it with my friends. I will never forget the senior season of football. We had a great year, and it was a great ending to high school.” Walter had a very successful athletic career in high school, finishing top in

the state in rushing yards his junior and senior years. In his senior year, he also broke five out of six school records, which made him proud of his accomplishments on the football field. Walter is clear how important his friends are in his life.

We moved forward in our interview and I asked Walter about the relationship between high school and college: “I believe they put the tools there for me but I wasn’t interested. I just didn’t know how different it was going to be. I didn’t really take advantage of what they give you and if you don’t, then you’re going to struggle.” Walter took responsibility for not being prepared to handle the hardships of college. He believed because high school was easy in term terms of academics, he didn’t take AP classes seriously: “They told us AP class *can* help you prepare but I didn’t think I needed to. I was doing just fine.”

His mother was not in a position to assist him with the NCAA Clearinghouse material: “She received a packet in the mail my junior year and told me I needed to take it to my counselor so she could help.” The high school counselor assisted Walter in making sure he had the appropriate classes needed to participate in football while in college. He credited his counselor for making the NCAA Clearinghouse an easy and comfortable process: “She was always there for me, trying to help me and making sure I had the right classes needed for college. She also helped me with all the paperwork and the timelines I needed to meet to be eligible.” He credited his high counselor as the driving force behind him being able to participate in football at the college level.

Walter was cleared by the NCAA Clearinghouse to participate in both football and track and field. He participated in track throughout high school to stay in shape for football. He enjoyed being a part of the track team but admitted that track practices were

not as much fun as football. He pointed out that his track team was not as close on and off the field as his football teammates. His football teammates were his friends and his support system; his track teammates were just teammates.

Recruiting was not done in the traditional sense of the word Walter tells me. He was not concerned with playing football at the college level until after his senior year:

I wanted to finish my senior year. I didn't want my teammates to think I was looking past my commitment to the team my senior year. I was kind of a stand out in high school. I was a big part of the team and I wanted them to know I was there for them 100%. What was going to come was going to come, whether I looked at it now or later. I just put off all the calls and letters. I didn't take recruiting seriously, which was fine with me. I'm here, aren't I? This school is perfect for me, perfect size, perfect everything.

His high school coach played an important role in his life. He felt supported and a valuable part of the football team: "My coach had my back; when I was messing up, he was on me and he was supportive and happy for me when I did something good." His position coach took care of him and valued his input: "During games if things weren't working the way they should be, he listened to my suggestions and we changed the play." There was a coaching change in his senior year and one of the assistant coaches was elevated to the head coaching position. Walter felt he was not supported by the new head coach and remarked, "I had another really good football school recruiting me and he wanted me to go to that school over this one. I felt he wanted me to go to the other college for him and what it would do for his reputation, not because it was best for me."

Transition into College

The transition into college was difficult for Walter. He explained: "I was lost. I didn't know what I was doing. Things were so different and it was hard to adapt." He mentioned the structure of college and the demands of football:

It's so different. My whole day was planned--between school and football, my day was scheduled. I didn't realize how much time football would take: between, practice, films, meeting with coaches, travel, and games. As for school, I had to learn to be prepared for class before I walked in, which was different. In high school, you showed up to class and got your assignments; in college, you had better read ahead of time and be ready for class before you even start. College is about preparing and high school was more about reacting.

Academically, he was challenged by the lack of time and time management. His schedule for the day would begin at 6:00 A.M. and end with two hours of study hall at 9:00 P.M. He thought he was ready for college and was excited about the change and transition into college. He admitted later that he was not as prepared as he should have been coming out of high school:

People told me you won't have time to do much in college but you don't really understand that until you're here. You don't have time to do anything, school, homework, sleep, which was a huge change for me. I use to show up for football in high school; you would play then you'd leave. Now football is never over. Life is football. My schedule is done around football; my life is scheduled around football.

He admitted to driving home often his first semester of college. It was after Christmas break when he began to settle into the college life. Walter did not feel the need to go home as often during his second semester.

I asked how being a redshirt athlete his freshman year made a difference. He mentioned he was recruited at a time when there was one other eligible player playing his position on the team, which led Walter to believe he might play on the team as a true freshman. Once he arrived on campus, he was informed the situation had changed and he would be redshirted his first year. He believed redshirting was the best course of action for him as he reflected back to his transition:

I did have a hard time going from being a top high school athlete to sitting on the bench, which was fine. I guess I expected it. It's hard because you really don't have a place on the team yet. It's like an initiation, a passage. I think being a

redshirt you work harder. You have to; you have something to prove. I like the challenge football puts in front of me. I love a challenge.

He mentioned his college coach being available and helpful during his transition; he felt the coach was there for him if he needed any assistance:

He had an open door policy and you could talk to him about anything--anything from school to girls, to family, anything. I just didn't think I needed anything. That's the problem; I didn't know what I needed at the time. You have to figure out what you need before you can go out and do what you need to do.

First Year Experience

Walter started by telling me his overall experience in his freshman year was

a change of pace. Everything is so new, and there wasn't anything I was comfortable with -- new team, new school, new friends, and freedom I have never had. It is an experience that others may be able to assist you with but it is a process you have to experience for yourself.

We talked about the lack of control he felt during his freshmen year: "I felt like I didn't need to take control in my freshman year. It was just going to work out somehow. My schedule was all planned out for me but I learned the hard way that I had to take control of my life." Walter did not like asking for help his first year: "I like figuring things out for myself. I thought I could do this on my own. I'm the kind of person who helps other people, not them helping me." He remembers his coaches checking on grades, missed classes, and academic life, telling Walter he needed to be accountable for his own actions. He reiterated feeling lost his first semester--trying to make school, football, and campus life all come together. Academically, Walter mentioned:

It was rough. It's hard to get used to this level of football and this level of school at the same time. If I could of concentrated on just one of those my first semester, I think I would have been ok. I felt time management was my biggest thing; I would lift, then sleep whenever I could throughout the day, go to practice, then study hall. Not to mention coming back to the dorm and people wanting to go do something. There just wasn't enough time in the day. I was tired all the time. My free time, if I had any, was spent trying to catch up on sleep.

He confessed to being distracted his first year, sharing with me that there was more to do than just football and academics. Like many universities, several campus activities are planned to introduce people and help with the adjustment of their freshman year: “There is so much going on. You are pulled in so many directions.” We talked about his first year in the dorms, a requirement for freshman student-athletes at the university: “Socially, my freshman year was good; I met a lot of people while living in the dorms. I would stay up and talk until midnight or 1:00 A.M.” He confessed his social life came before his academic life: “I let my social life come before other things like my academic life. You can’t not do football but you cannot do your homework.” While living in the dorms, he admitted to spending as much as possible meeting and talking with others. He found his first year to be socially successful. His friends in his freshman year were those he met in the dorms: “My floor was mainly football players. Because we were all pretty much redshirts, we had a lot in common and became friends.” He told me he is not close to his upperclassman teammates and believes that has more to do with the dynamics of the sport. He described it as more like a rite of passage, an initiation.

Walter struggled his first year in balancing his life with the demands of football, school, and establishing relationships: “Study hall was the only time I did any kind of homework and even then, I would forget about some homework and would just read a book or play on my computer.” He thought study hall was something he needed but thought of it as more of a requirement than something he needed. It was one more task on his already long list of requirements: “I thought of it as something I had to do instead of thinking they were giving me time in my schedule to study. I know I needed to do it; I

just didn't take advantage of what was given to me." He went on to explain, "I thought if I did what I did in high school, I would get good grades in college too. After my first semester grades, I realized I had to put more effort into my studies." Study hall was a set time that he eventually learned to use properly. It was at this time Walter mentioned how exhausted he was throughout his entire freshman year: "You can't know how exhausting it all is; you're tired all the time. I had to push through being tired all the time so I could go to classes, which was hard for me last year."

FYE classes were not effective in helping Walter with the transition or his first year experience: "I don't feel I came away with anything like 'oh, I can do this now'. I'm not the kind of person you sit down and teach me what I have to do. I have to experience for myself and maybe I'll come back and say you were right." I don't think the class did what it was supposed to--help us with the transition. I can't remember what I learned in there; I guess nothing if I can't remember."

When I asked him what motivated him last year, he replied: "I'm self motivated. I'm not as motivated by others as I am by myself. I want to get better for myself." He admitted to being competitive athletically and having the will to train and win. Walter told me he was in college to get a degree first and foremost: "I would be in college today even if I didn't play football. It just so happens that football is paying for my education and I'm proud of that." Walter talked more in depth about motivation as he explained: "I have to be interested in the class or what I'm doing. I like to do things I can do well. I have to make a connection to the activity or teacher; otherwise, I just leave it alone and move on." As we continued on the subject of motivation, he made it clear he has learned

to push classes or activities he may not enjoy to get to his final destination or reward such as college degree.

When we spoke of the assistance the athletic department had available for student-athletes, he said: “I did know what resources were there but I also didn’t know what resources I needed at the time.” He admitted knowing about tutors being available through the athletic department but did not believe at the time he needed any assistance from outside help. Walter did have a mentor last year: “She was pretty assertive. She kept asking me what I needed help in and I really didn’t know what to tell her at the time.” He thought the idea of a mentor was logical but would have preferred a student-athlete as a mentor--someone who could understand what he was going through at the time.

Walter did better academically his second semester. He stated, “In season, it’s not that it’s less about school, it’s just that it’s less emphasized in season.” In the fall during football season, his thoughts were about his sport, not making the grade.

When I asked Walter to reflect on what he was most proud of last year, he replied: “That I finished the year.” Walter had many friends who did not make it through their first year of college and had moved back home to begin a life outside of school. Walter was clearly proud that he made it through a tough year and believed he would become a better student as he continued with school.

Walter is a bright young man who has the determination to achieve his ultimate goal of receiving a college degree. Although he is motivated to achieve much in his life for his mother, he is also motivated to complete goals he has set for himself.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success and persistence of freshman student-athletes. An inherent focus of this study was to examine the cognitive and non-cognitive similarities and differences of freshmen student-athletes. Individual interviews were used to elicit the voices and perceptions of five sophomore student-athletes reflecting on their freshman year. Although many student-athletes are able to adjust to the rigors of higher education, a growing number of student-athletes are challenged in maintaining their grade point averages (GPA) during their freshman year.

The study's focus and significance were presented in the first chapter. The review of literature in Chapter II addressed cognitive and non-cognitive issues affecting the academic success and motivation of freshmen student-athletes. The issue of student-athletes being underprepared to make the adjustment into higher education and the transition was also highlighted throughout the chapter. The information presented in both Chapters I and II served to produce a general understanding of the existing literature.

Chapter III provided an outline of the methods that used to collect and analyze the data. An in-depth description of the research design, theoretical perspective, results of the pilot study, the student-athletes, data collection, and analysis were discussed. Chapter

IV presented the findings of the study from the perspective of the five student-athletes. The chapter introduced the themes found through interpreting the transcriptions of each participant.

Chapter V focuses on the interpretation of the results found in Chapter IV, provides meaning to the themes and primary assumptions of the findings, seeks to answer the question of “why” the phenomenon is occurring, and most importantly how the themes (established through the living narratives of the student-athletes) answer the research questions. The chapter closes with the conclusion and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of the Findings

The following two research questions examined the relationship of academic, athletic variables, and motivation as they related to freshman student-athletes’ academic success.

1. What is the relationship between academic and athletic variables and academic success for freshmen student-athletes?
2. What is the relationship between motivation and academic success?

The most relevant findings are presented below based on the analysis of the data.

Research Question 1

The first research question examined the relationship between academic and athletic variables as they related to academic success. The results of the study revealed four main themes.

1. *Academic Adjustment* had three categories: transition, underprepared, and first year experience.

2. *Athletic Demands* had three categories: time demands, study hall, and university resources.
3. *Family Influence* had two categories: support and pressure.
4. *Social Adjustment*.

Academic Adjustment

Academic adjustment was a common and recurring theme with the five student-athletes. Only one of the student-athletes mentioned having been told by family, teachers, counselors, or coaches of the rigors of higher education and the academic differences. Each of the student-athletes alluded to the differences in higher education, the different class structure, the new teaching styles, and less interaction with professors. Methods of studying changed for the student-athletes as they finished their first semester. Studying the night before or not studying at all turned into more intensive study habits after their freshman year.

Transition into college. The transition into college can evoke a sense of fear and excitement as freshmen arrive on campus. The hope of meeting new people and making new friends can come into direct conflict with the fears of adapting to a new environment, managing freedom, and adjusting to the social adjustments of college. The transition into college was more difficult for three of the five student-athletes. The process evoked feelings of sadness, loss, frustration, and fear. All of the student-athletes commented on enjoying the new found freedom but were unable to manage their time. The adjustment into college affected each differently; one participant almost quit school to move back home and one participant was excited about the transition and challenges of

change. Adapting to the emotional, social, and academic requirements was as varied as the student-athletes.

I was lost, I didn't know what I was doing, things were so different and it was hard to adapt. My whole day was planned; between school and football, my day is scheduled. I didn't realize how much time football would take, between, practice, films, meeting with coaches, travel and games. As for school, I had to learn to be prepared for class before I walked in which is different. In high school you showed up to class then get your assignments, in college you had better read ahead of time and be ready for class before you even start. College is about preparing and high school was more about reacting. (Walter).

It was hard coming to college. I didn't have a problem being away from home. I don't get homesick. I miss home and my family, but they prepared me pretty well to start this new life and not be afraid. I lived in the dorms so there was always something to do and people to meet. I loved doing that so much, that I chose that over doing homework. (Ray)

I was very close to my parents and I didn't want to leave. I was scared of moving out of my house and living on my own. It wasn't that far away but it was hard to be away from my parents, my sister, and her kids. I cried the whole way up to college scared that I wouldn't see my family every day. I think that was the hardest part. (Mia)

I think it was pretty easy, at least in the beginning. I know a lot of friends struggled being away from home and their family, I didn't really mind. I adjusted and said to myself, this is a new life for me. I was actually excited to make new friends and enjoy my freedom. (Andy)

It was really hard for me. I was really excited to leave the house, but it was tough not having my parents there all the time. I think once you get to college, you think you have free reign to do whatever you want, and you lose focus on what really needs to be done. If you don't want to go to class, you don't have to, if you don't want to do your homework, you don't have parents around telling you to "do it." It was really tough because it's a big change. You're on your own. Your parents aren't here to push you through things. (Anika)

The majority of the student-athletes mentioned missing family and going home often, especially their first semester. Emotionally, the transition affected Mia to a point of almost leaving college altogether or transferring to a school closer to home:

I went home almost every weekend and sometimes during the week just for dinner. I spend the night at the house and wake up early to drive back to school. I

didn't feel comfortable at school, I didn't know anybody and I was so used to high school where everybody knew me. (Mia)

Underprepared. Each of the student-athletes believed their high school did not adequately prepare them for college, although two took more of a personal responsibility for not being prepared. All of the student-athletes commented on their high school experience as being "easy." The academic standards at the high school allowed for late assignment, lack of study skills, and elementary level tests. Two of the student-athletes commented on the lack of writing skills they received in high school and their struggle in college meeting the demands of writing a college-level paper. Three of the student-athletes had an overall high school GPA of at least a 3.0 and four of the five took at least one AP class in high school.

All of the student-athletes shared that on some level they lacked certain educational skills to better prepare them for college. The student-athletes shared their thoughts on how well high school prepared them for college:

In high school, I didn't have any problems and honestly really didn't try. I just showed up for classes, semi-listened to the teacher, and did my homework in class so I didn't have to take it home. I basically cruised through high school; it was nothing spectacular. I don't think it prepared me at all. Not to sound arrogant, but I believe I'm an intelligent person, and I really didn't have to put forth much effort. (Andy)

Not as much as they should have. I was a good writer in high school and when I got to college I realized I had no idea how to write and research a paper that was longer than two pages. I just did what I had to do to get by in high school and being an athlete, my teachers and even vice-principal let me off the hook. (Mia)

My bad habit from high school carried over to college--not wanting to go class and procrastinating. I think my high school tried to prepare me for college but I just didn't listen; it wasn't a priority for me. Because I missed class so much, I think I missed out on what they were trying to do for me. (Ray)

As the student-athletes moved from high school to college, they believed they were not well prepared for heading into college. None of the student-athletes mentioned their high school coach assisting them in preparing for the demands of their sport while in college. The head coaches assisted two of the student-athletes in the recruiting process but not with the NCAA Clearinghouse or other issues dealing with being a college athlete. The high school counselor assisted only one of the student-athletes in preparing the athletes for the next step in life. Inadequate prior preparation was also evident in the form of “lack of self esteem” two of the student-athletes exhibited prior to coming to college; it was only strengthened once they arrived on campus.

First year experience. All of the student-athletes agreed that the first year experience (FYE) class they were required to take the first semester of their freshman year was less than effective. The FYE class is designed to assist incoming freshmen with the transition into college. Topics included study skills, note taking, time management, managing money, learning styles, reading skills, and emotional adjustments to college. Even after a year had passed, all of the student-athletes were very clear the class did little more than give them an easy credit their first semester.

We only met once a week and it didn't help me. I don't even remember what we did in the class. Obviously I would have been fine without it; at least it was an easy credit. (Anika)

The FYE course was completely worthless. I don't even remember that class; I think we had to do some touchy, feely stuff and I'm not a fan. I hate that. (Andy)

I don't feel I came away with anything like oh, I can do this now. I'm not the kind of person you sit down and teach me what I have to do; I have to experience for myself, and maybe I'll come back and say you were right. I don't think the class did what it was suppose to, help us with the transition. I can't remember what I learn in there, I guess nothing if I can't remember. (Walter)

Athletic Demands

“This is a job; it’s not something we do just for fun” (Anika). None of the student-athletes were prepared for the demands their sport would place upon them. Having to balance the demands of their sport as well as academics became overwhelming to each of the student-athletes. None of the student-athletes aspired to a professional career but all commented on graduating and being able to support a family once they graduated from college.

Time demands. The five student-athletes in this study shared similar experiences and frustrations when it came to the lack of time they had throughout their day. All five made reference to the difference between participating in their sport in high school versus the college level and the increased time demands of participating in their sport. The student-athletes mentioned having to attend morning lifting sessions, practices, coaches meetings, playing and traveling to and from games, attending classes, and mandatory study hall. The student-athletes each went into great detail about the demands of their sport being all year in college and not just in season as in high school. They each struggled with the constant demands of their sport--having no real downtime or off season. In high school, student-athletes were home before the evening meal with sufficient time to complete homework and spend time with family. All of the student-athletes in the study commented at not being finished with their athletic time constraints in college until after 9:00 P.M. The time demands led to the athletes being “tired” or “exhausted” throughout their entire freshman year. When asked to rank how much time each of the student-athletes committed to academics, athletics, and socially, each ranked them the same: athletics, social, academics.

It was rough. It's hard to get used to this level of football and this level of school at the same time. If I could of concentrated on just one of those my first semester, I think I would have been ok. I felt time management was my biggest thing--I would lift, then sleep whenever I could throughout the day, go to practice, then study hall. Not to mention coming back to the dorm and people wanting to go do something. There just wasn't enough time in the day. I was tired all the time. My free time, if I had any, was spent trying to catch up on sleep. You can't know how exhausting it all is, you're tired all the time. I had to push through being tired all the time so I could go to classes, which was hard for me last year. (Walter)

Time management was my biggest struggle. I was so tired from workouts; I would go back to the dorm for a quick nap. I would wake up and think since the teacher doesn't take attendance, I'll go back to sleep. My schedule was lift, sleep, wake up feeling refreshed, go back to lifting, or practice, take a nap and then get ready to go out. (Ray)

I found it difficult to manage my time; if something was going to give, it was going to be my school work. It was hard traveling and missing classes. I had a hard time adjusting to class work and demands of my sport. There's a lot more work at this level than in high school. (Mia)

You would wake up, go lift weights, eat, go to class, have an hour or so, head to class again. After class you would immediately head to tennis for several hours, go eat and head to study hall until 9:00 P.M. Day in and day out. The fact you didn't have any free time was the biggest struggle for me. (Andy)

I was really nervous about having to make up assignments due to my travel schedule because I had always heard that some professors don't let you make up work you missed. I freaked out. (Anika)

Study hall. The inability to use athletic and university resources and time constraints posed an academic challenge to the five student-athletes. However, two topics evoked the most frustration--mandatory study hall and first year experience (FYE) classes. Required study hall hours per week were set by the academic services administrators within the athletic department and by the head coach of each sport. The student-athletes felt there were already enough demands on their time. The number of hours were determined by the student-athletes past grades and were adjusted accordingly

throughout the year depending on their academic success. The frustration came from the layout of the large room and being too distracted to complete homework.

It's pretty much worthless, it's probably a good idea, but the way it stands now, it really doesn't help. I found study hall to be difficult, I'm not sure why. It was time we had to have in our schedule, but there was something about it. I think it was the environment, it was loud. I just couldn't study. I went to the library to do that. (Andy)

Study hall was loud and distracting. The time was spent in study hall was to finish study guides or doing note cards for class. Study hall is not about studying. The environment was distracting; most in room were either talking or were playing games on their computers. (Mia)

I could never do homework in study hall. I just joked all the time; I would crack jokes and get thrown out. (Ray)

Study hall was the only time I did any kind of homework and even then I would forget about some homework and would just read a book or play on my computer. I thought of it as something I had to do instead of thinking they are giving me time in my schedule to study. I know I needed to do it; I just didn't take advantage of what was given to me. (Walter)

A different perspective came from Anika: "It was a set time for me to study." She believed her organizational skills helped her with the demands of her time as a student-athlete.

University resources. All of the student-athletes remarked about not using the university and athletic department resources available to them their first year. The time demands placed on their daily schedules limited them from using the available resources. One participant found the library to be the best resource for him. Another participant made it very clear that the library was the last place she was able to study with all the distractions. Tutoring services were provided by the athletic department for all student-athletes; yet none of the five asked for this service. One mentioned using the service for a brief time. Tutoring services accounted for an hour of study hall time; anything beyond

an hour in a week was time added onto an already long day for the athletes. Mentoring services were available to three of the student-athletes and was met with mixed reactions. Mentoring was an additional demand on their already busy schedule. It was not a part of their study halls hours. Two of them felt it assisted them to a point but they struggled trying to find a time when they could both meet. The highly structured schedule and lack of time were factors. However, the fear of asking for help precluded three of the student-athletes from using the resources available.

I was really nervous to ask for help. I feel if I ask for help, it's a sign of weakness. I want to figure things out for myself. I have never been a person to ask for help. If I couldn't figure it out myself, then what's the point. I guess I wondered what people would think of me if I asked for help. (Anika)

I learn by doing. I don't like people telling me to do things. I would rather work things out myself, and if I have to ask, I will. (Andy)

I'm a very independent person and asking for help is for weak people. (Mia)

Walter mentioned his experience with his mentor: "She was pretty assertive. She kept asking me what I needed help in and I really didn't know what to tell her at the time."

Family Influence

Support. Results of this study found family members were a major contributing variable. All of the student-athletes gave credit to their parents for being their first "teachers" or "coaches" in life. While each verbalized a different level of parental involvement as they were growing up and entering college, each recognized the value their parents had in their lives. Four of the student-athletes talked extensively about the role their parents had in coming to college and continuing on a path toward a degree.

A strong sense of support needed for success in college was apparent, although not verbalized using the word “support.” Support began with the family but friends, faculty, and academic advising within the college also played a role. The majority of the student-athletes acknowledged the support from academic services with class scheduling and scholarship information. One student-athlete mentioned feeling supported by her professors when she was finally able to confide in them about not understanding class assignments. Another admitted to relying a great deal on his teammates for support.

My teammates growing up where more like my brothers, I would do anything for them. I feel like I thrive on who’s around me, if there are good people around me I feel good and my teammates were just that to me. (Walter)

Although the student-athletes felt support from family, friends, and teammates, the non-football student-athletes did not feel supported by their coach until they were at risk of not being eligible.

I think coaches need to realize that we have school work. It seems like they forget we have classes. Their only focus is about their sport. (Andy)

Education is supposed to be the priority and yet we are required to put so much time into our sport, but the coaches want us there to be athletes. After all, they are paying for me to be here, to play ball. (Ray)

Walter mentioned his college head coach as being supportive and having an open door policy, but he never took advantage to meet with his coach. He added, “My high school coach had my back. When I was messing up, he was on me and he was supportive and happy for me when I did something good.”

Pressure. All of the student-athletes in this study felt the pressure and stress of dealing with their athletic and academic demands as well as developing a new social life and social support system. The results of the study indicated that a vital support system

for the majority of the student-athletes was their parents. At the same time, four of the five student-athletes felt at least some pressure from their parents.

Two student-athletes were first generation students and felt the need to succeed for their parents over themselves. Their initial motivation for college came from their parents.

I feel a lot of pressure, especially from my parents. They are always telling people how proud they are of me and that I'm a Division I athlete on a scholarship. I feel pressure because I'm a role model for my little cousins who want to grow up like me and play soccer for the same university as me. (Mia)

I basically came to college for my mom, not for me. (Ray)

Ray went on to explain the pressure he felt in having a full ride scholarship as it related to his parents:

My mom and dad always struggled while I was growing up. My mom and dad have always worked two or three jobs to support us kids. I feel like my scholarship helps them. I feel I'm under more pressure to perform because of my athletic scholarship. (Ray)

One of the student-athletes chose to play golf over basketball--a sport she had played and loved all of her life:

I played golf mostly for my dad because he loves golf and my older sister played. He wanted me to play too. I really got burnt out of basketball because that is all I did every day; I was playing 4 or 5 hours a day. I miss it now. (Anika)

One of the student-athletes felt so much pressure around his sport he quit the team after his first season with no intention of playing the sport again at the college level.

They were putting so much pressure on playing the sport, you've got to travel to tournaments and do everything else around playing and practice. It was just getting to be a lot. I think it's one of things for me, the more the pressure is put on you, the less fun playing becomes.

Two of the first generation student-athletes stated they would not have been able to attend college without a scholarship. Both of the student-athletes had athletic scholarships and felt an obligation to their parents and to the university.

I wouldn't be in college without a scholarship. My folks wouldn't be able to afford it and I think it's dumb to take out loans for school when you can go out, get job and work for a living. I know people who are in huge debt because of school loans and they aren't making much more than someone without a college degree. That doesn't make sense to me". (Ray)

I would not have been able to go to college without a scholarship. When my parents and I talked about it in my senior year of high school, they told me they spent the money saved up for college to pay for my training session. I wouldn't of financially been able to come to college without one. (Mia)

Social Adjustment

Developing social connections was easy for all of the student-athletes in the study, although each developed them at different rates throughout their first year. All of the student-athletes commented on the importance of their teammates while beginning their freshmen year. Because of the time spent with teammates while in practice, traveling and training, the adjustment socially was enjoyable to each of the student-athletes. The primary social interaction occurred in the residence halls and more specifically, their roommates. Freshman student-athletes are required to stay in the dorms their first year. Several of the student-athletes had teammates who were also roommates. However, one of the student-athletes was clear in not wanting a teammate as a roommate; she actually commented that the majority of her social friends were not her teammates. She showed great maturity in knowing her need for independence, yet still being part of group or her team.

Although one of the student-athletes in the study admitted to not being a social drinker, the others shared freely about their social drinking having an impact on their

adjustment to college. Interestingly, alcohol did not play a role in any of the student-athletes while in high school. In fact, all mentioned they did not drink while in high school. One of the student-athletes began her freshmen year dealing with a minor in possession (MIP) due to a drinking incident the summer before her freshmen year. However, she confessed that it was only the second time she had been drinking before coming to college. Interestingly, she admitted to drinking most nights except before a game throughout her freshman year.

The dorms presented an environment where the pressure to socialize and establish relationships became a priority over academics. The use of alcohol several times a week impeded a couple of the student-athletes from attending classes, becoming an issue in how their social life affected their academic achievement.

Socially my freshmen year was good; I met a lot of people while living in the dorms. I would stay up and talk until midnight or 1:00 A.M. I let my social life come before other things like my academic life. You can't not do football but you can, not do your homework. (Walter)

There is always something going on every night of the week. We would go out a couple times during the week and after games on Saturday. You don't drink the night before games; we're in a hotel so we have a strict schedule. (Ray)

I went out almost every night drinking. The only time we didn't drink was the night before a game. (Mia)

When asked if alcohol played a role in Anika's life her freshman year, she replied:

Absolutely. It took my mind off school completely. It didn't matter if I had an 8:00 class or not; I would go out and party and in class wouldn't really pay attention.

One of the student-athletes summed up his freshman year with these words:

Your freshmen year, you're living on your own for the first time, and you have a lot of choices to make, some will be good ones and others, not so good. You're going to have to face the consequences, and realizing that is tough.

Summary of Research Question 1

The first research question examined the relationship between academic and athletic variables and academic success for freshman student-athletes. Results of the study revealed four key areas that student-athletes regarded as major variables in their academic success. In keeping with the results found in other studies of the same nature, the athletes felt their academic adjustment was one of the major contributing variables. The results of this study showed a relationship to the literature regarding the transition and underpreparedness of student-athletes. All of the student-athletes noted the difference between college and high school. Gomer (2004) suggested two significant differences transitioning from high school to college (testing and grading), both of which were mentioned as a challenge as the student-athletes tried to make the academic adjustment into higher education. The transition into college was overwhelming; each of the student-athletes mentioned not managing their time and new freedom. Being away from parents and family for the first time had an impact on the majority of the student-athletes. Just as Graber and Brooks-Gunn (1996) reported finding athletes stressed regarding the changing of schools and encountering a new academic and social system, the student-athletes in this study found these factors as stressors, which also included leaving friends/family for the first time and having a roommate. Two of the student-athletes were furthered stressed by having to deal with travel to and from games. All of

the student-athletes commented the consequences of mandatory study hall, participating in practice sessions, and engaging in year-round workouts.

Although many believe college athletes are less academically prepared for college and enter with lower high school grades and test scores than the general student body (Adler & Adler, 1985; Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Chu et al., 1985; Hood et al., 1992), this study found the student-athletes had ACT averages comparable to the overall freshman population at the university; three of the five had a 3.0 GPA or above in high school. Findings in this study were consistent with the literature (Fenton, 2006) that college freshmen are entering unprepared for the rigor of college work. Each of the student-athletes commented on the lack of preparation their high school provided or recommended. Research has shown complex social and educational issues such as a lack of certain educational skills, a lack of postsecondary educational preparation, and a lack of communication and coordination between K-12 could lead to students being underprepared as they transition to higher education (Herzberg et al., 2003). The results of this study would suggest the K-12 educational system did not appear to assist the student-athletes with the anticipated changes to higher education. Time demands of their sport, study and test taking skills, and time management were all factors in this study. Lack of emotional adjustment played a role in at least two of five student-athletes. Moreover, the first year experience classes offered at the university were not effective in assisting the five student-athletes with their transition to higher education. Although the concept of transitional classes is theoretically sound, they were not effective for the student-athletes in this study.

A second contributing variable was athletic demands. The physical demands and exhaustion of athletic participation cannot be ignored when considering how student-athletes perform in the classroom (Cogan & Petrie, 1996). The dual roles of student and athlete also created many other dilemmas, e.g., the student-athlete's belief that motivation and confidence in ability as an athlete should translate to academics. Student-athletes, unlike regular students, have the added pressure of committing a significant amount of their time to athletics. The results of this study found participating in their sport consumed a great deal of their time and they were unprepared for the athletic commitment in college. Each of the student-athletes felt more pressure to perform athletically than academically until the possibility of being ineligible led to a change in attitude and priority in their sophomore year. The NCAA (2010c) mandates that student-athletes, in season, are not allowed to spend more than 20 hours per week (and four hours per day) engaged in direct sport-related activities like team practices or competition. The student-athletes in this study all struggled with the time demands of their sport as the literature suggested. They commented on not only the hours per day or week but the demands being all year, not just in season. Gaston-Gayles and Hu (2009) found some athletes spent over 40 hours a week on athletically related activities. The two football players in this study spent a great deal more than 20 hours a week on their sport. Each student-athlete in the study found little time outside of athletics to devote to academics; the time they did find was given to their social life. The findings of this study correlated with the literature that suggested the amount of time being spent on athletic related activities left little time to devote to other activities such as academics and other educational activities (Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009). Student-athletes were asked to

prioritize their college commitments; each of them responded unanimously: athletics, social, and academics. This was consistent with the Adler and Adler (1991) study in which the demands of each of these aspects were in direct conflict with each other.

A third contributing variable was the family influence. Of the five student-athletes in this study, four identified their parents as have a strong influence on them going to college and obtaining a degree. All the student-athletes mentioned without hesitation that they were enrolled in college to obtain a degree. The common motivation for obtaining a degree was the pursuit of a better life and being able to provide for a family in the future. The results of this study also found that the two first generation students did not appear to be less prepared for the rigors of college than the student-athletes whose parents had gone to college. Historically, first-generation students have not been as prepared to go to college as their peers whose parents did attend college. Many require developmental or remedial courses to prepare them for the rigor of college level work (Boylan & Saxon, 1999). None of the student-athletes in this study had ever enrolled in remedial classes.

Two of the student-athletes commented their parents had intervened and assisted them with note taking and motivational assistance once they were aware of the participant's grades after the first semester. The other student-athletes reflected on the emotional support their parents had given them throughout their first year. This finding correlated with the literature (Wintre & Sugar, 2000) that found the relationships with parents had a direct influence on university adjustment; trust and honest communication between parents and students were particularly beneficial to university adjustment. One participant admitted to not being able to confide in her father about her college grades

and the consequence of not being eligible to play; however, she found her mother's encouragement assisted her in her persistence toward a degree and becoming eligible.

The fourth and final variable was social adjustment. What became clear during data collection was the participants' definition of a quality freshman year was not defined by their academic success but by their social experiences. Unfortunately, these social interactions seemed to have a negative effect on their academic performance. It was clear each of the student-athletes had an imbalance of handling their academic and social lives as it related to their athletic demands.

The results of this study correlated with the literature (Parham, 1993) that indicated the student-athletes were challenged to adjust to new living environments in the dorms and had to deal with increased independence that went along with attending college. Few studies have examined what student-athletes have done with their time outside of participating in their sport and how those experiences influenced their learning and personal development (Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009). This study found the student-athletes spent a large amount of their limited free time socializing with teammates in the dorms and establishing new friendships. The majority of the student-athletes mentioned that alcohol played a central role, which led to missed class time and lack of focus in the classroom.

A finding of this study not consistent with the literature was the lack of participants wanting to play at the professional level. None of the student-athletes in this study articulated wanting to participate at the professional level. However, all of the student-athletes commented at some level about wanting to participate in their sport at the Division I level.

It was also a goal of this study to examine the cognitive and non-cognitive similarities and differences of freshman student-athletes. High school GPA, class rank, parental education, and standardized test scores have commonly been used to assess academic performance (Ervin et al., 1985; Purdy et al., 1985). In answering the first question, the researcher purposely identified three freshman student-athletes who were academically and athletically successful in high school but failed to receive a GPA of higher than 2.0 in the first semester during their freshman year of college. Three of the five student-athletes had a combined high school GPA of 3.0 or better. The other two student-athletes were athletically successful but had combined high school GPAs of 2.2 and 2.8, respectively. The academic standard relating to cognitive variables was examined first.

According to the latest numbers (2002-2008 Cohort) at the university where the study took place, the average student's high school GPA was 3.24. After the first year, the average GPA increased slightly to 3.29. The average ACT composite score of incoming freshmen at the university was 22; whereas, the average ACT composite score of the four student-athletes who took the ACT was also 22. The average SAT score at the university was 1076; the one student-athlete who took the SAT received an 840. While in high school, four of the five student-athletes took less total credit hours in their senior year than they did in their sophomore and junior years. Two of three student-athletes were first generation students. Two of the student-athletes identified themselves as White, one was Black, one was Hispanic, and one was Pacific Islander.

College success has often been based on cognitive factors, the most common factors being high school GPA and SAT/ACT scores (Ervin et al., 1985; Gerdes &

Mallinckrodt, 1994; Purdy et al., 1985; Tinto, 1993). Cognitive variables alone for this study would not have predicted the academic success of these student-athletes. Due to the student-athletes selected, the researcher was aware that cognitive variables alone would not predict academic success, contradicting the literature. A focus of this study was to identify non-cognitive variables as they related to academic success in combination with cognitive variables.

The researcher identified the amount of credits and caliber of the classes each student-athlete completed during the senior year of high school. One of the student-athletes was forced to take a large number of credit hours her senior year due to academic shortcomings her junior year. She identified the NCAA Clearinghouse core courses needed to be eligible to play soccer at the Division I level, which accounted for the majority of her classes taken during her senior year. However, the other student-athletes took only the minimum amount of credits needed to graduate and the caliber of those classes was taken into account. Results suggested the lack of credit hours taken and the caliber of classes could have affected the educational experience and success of these freshman student-athletes. Four student-athletes identified their senior year as being “easy,” not academically challenging. The lack of academic rigor during their senior year in high school could possibly have had an effect on the student-athletes not being able to make the transition to the academic rigors of higher education. One of the student-athletes stated what the other student-athletes were verbalizing when it came to their senior year in high school:

If I had to give teachers advice, especially for their senior students, it would be to not let us slack off. In my senior year, I slacked off a lot. I pretty much did all year, so it was a rude awakening coming to college. I wish they would have had us do more college-like stuff, like assignments, to prepare us.

This study examined the academic and athletic demands of participation in higher education; the results produced contrasting results. Pascarella and Smart (1991) found athletic participation promoted academic achievement; whereas, Adler and Adler, (1985, 1991) found athletic participation was a deterrent to academic success. The finding of this study could neither confirm nor deny the previous findings. Three of the five student-athletes were strong students and the other two were average students in high school. Their lack of success in the classroom during their freshman year could not be directly linked to their participation in college athletics but suggested the need for more research in this area.

Research Question 2

The second research question examined the relationship between motivation and academic success.

Motivation

The student-athletes' motivations were as varied as they were. Each had a different path in getting to the place they were today. Despite their distinct differences, they shared two common thoughts and frustrations: each was motivated to compete in their sport and each struggled academically their first year due to the lack of academic motivation. I asked each of them a simple question: What motivates you? Each remarked how difficult it was to answer the question. After reflecting for a few minutes, they began to answer:

My faith and my family motivate me. My scholarship and not losing it also motivates me. (Ray)

I have the desire not to do bad on things I know I can do well. I'm the kind of person that likes doing what I'm good at; if it doesn't interest me then I don't do it. (Walter)

My biggest motivation is playing soccer and my family. Because I can't play soccer right now, getting back on the field so my parents can come watch me is my motivation. (Mia)

To be honest, not a lot motivates me. It's tough to motivate me, especially academically. Athletically I'm motivated to not lose. I hate losing more than I like to win. I'm self-motivated, in fact, I hate when other people try to motivate me to do better. (Andy)

I love competition; I'm a very competitive person, but academically, I didn't really have any motivation last year. I didn't really care about school. But I finally had talks with people and it finally clicked in my head that school should be my number one priority. Last year, what I was really focused on was fitting in with people. (Anika)

Academically, each student-athlete remarked about not placing enough time and effort into their studying. The student-athletes believed if they used the same study tactics from high school, those skills would transfer over to their academic success in college. Each believed success in high school would mean success in college. As sophomores, they collectively agreed they were not successful in their freshman year but for different reasons. One reason expressed by a participant was upsetting for her to say aloud.

I wish I didn't give up ... I just gave up. I guess I just don't believe that I can do stuff but I push myself to do it for other people. I want to win to tell people that I won something. I don't do it for myself. I don't do anything for myself really. I do it more for other people. It's kind of all clashing into each other. But it depends on which things ... I'm not confident in school. But with sports, I'm pretty confident because I'm so competitive. I guess mostly I'm just not self confident in myself in school. (Anika)

One of the student-athletes had an academic philosophy that motivated him in the classroom:

My motto--they say C's get degrees. Yep, C's get degrees! I'm going to aim, I'm going to aim high. But I'm going to be satisfied with a C; if I get my report card and it says 2.0, fine with me. I'm still going to be satisfied with that grade. In the long run, I'm still going to get my degree. The degree doesn't say A or C; it's just a degree. (Ray)

Most of the student-athletes classified themselves as self-motivated--being able to find value and worth within themselves to complete a task. Academically, they were less self-motivated to complete a task. The demands in the classroom became overwhelming for the majority of the student-athletes, which led to avoiding and completing the task. Two of the student-athletes admitted to missing several classes during their freshman year; two were adamant about attending all of their classes. All of the student-athletes were reluctant to ask for help; two of them feared they would look dumb and felt others would see them as weak. One participant was unable to identify his need to ask for help his first year. Another participant struggled with the athletic demands and whether he was going to end his athletic career; his academic career suffered until he was able to decide which was more important, his athletic or academic career. He ultimately chose his academic career.

One of the student-athletes mentioned the need of a reward for her efforts in the classroom:

I can't just do something for no reason. If you gave me something to do, like in class, if they said write this paper and do the best you can on it, but we're not going to give you a grade, I wouldn't take it seriously. I just don't care. But if it's something big, then I would put all my heart into it. Some people think it's just a good practice opportunity but I won't put my heart into it unless it's the real thing. (Anika)

All of the student-athletes in this study aspired to obtaining their college degree; at no time during their interviews did they believe that goal would not be achieved. They

all felt support from family members, teammates, or the academic staff within the athletic department in being able to successfully progress toward their degree.

Summary of Research Question 2

The lack of time management, fatigue, and lack of priorities were the main reasons cited for not being academically successful their freshman year. Academics were not a priority to the student-athletes; each admitted their athletic demands and social life came before their class work. As sophomores, all of the student-athletes admitted to being immature in their thinking last year; they learned their lack of academic commitment had consequences. Their personal development over the last year had each of the student-athletes looking forward to the coming year in college, both on the field and in the classroom. One of the student-athletes became ineligible to participate in her sport. The others were faced with the same prospect if they did not change their focus.

Expectancy theory and self-efficacy theory were used as the framework for this study in an effort to understand the academic motivation of the five student-athletes. Expectancy theory was a practical framework for this study based on the argument that the differences in academic preparation are, in part, a function of differences in motivation (Sellers & Chavous, 1997). The results of this study correlated with research indicating that athletic participation could be linked with a student-athlete's satisfaction with the overall college experience and might also increase motivation to complete one's degree and persistence in college (Pascarella et al., 1995). All of the student-athletes in this study indicated an overall positive freshman year experience even though their freshman year GPAs suggested otherwise. The student-athletes based their overall

experience on their athletic achievement, goals, and social adjustments over their academic achievements.

Gaston-Gayles (2005) found that academic motivation, rather than athletic motivation, played a more significant role in a student-athlete's academic performance. Her study concluded that high motivation in either academics or athletics did not directly correspond with another area. One of the findings in this study demonstrated that student-athletes were motivated by their athletic demands: time commitment, loss of scholarship, and parental pressure over their academic achievement. However, their athletic motivation did not carry over to their academic achievement.

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation describes motivation as a force that illustrates behavior, directs behavior, and sustains behavior. Motivation tends to be specific to individual behaviors and is used to select the option that has the greatest reward. Three of the student-athletes were somewhat motivated academically by their scholarship funding. They felt they had an obligation to the university and to the coach to be successful inside the classroom and on the field. As the year progressed, their priority was to their sport. It was not until their second semester that they realized academics had to become a priority; otherwise, they would not be participating in their sport. Vrooms theory is based on the reward; an individual's behavior is based on the value of the reward--in this case, the scholarship. These athletes were able to transfer this to the classroom. There were no rewards for them to be successful in the classroom and at the time, neither were there consequences. Three of them recognized that being successful on the field would permit them to keep their scholarship. The other two

athletes in this study had no chance of receiving more funds to participate in their sport; it was clear this affected their motivation for academic success.

Each of the athletes admitted to putting little effort into his or her studies and was unwilling to give up the athletic and social aspects of his or her time. None of the athletes had academic success as a goal their freshman year, although each had athletic goals. This was consistent with the literature found by Clow (2000) and Eccles and Wigfield (2002).

Efficacy expectations are people's beliefs about their ability to perform a behavior in order to achieve a particular outcome. One's past performance promotes positive self-efficacy beliefs for similar activities in the future. For student-athletes, past success in the classroom could very well lead to future success. Those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy will most likely persist toward attaining the successful completion of a task even if it does not guarantee success (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy and the beliefs around motivation were evident with the student-athletes in this study; they each believed they would be successful in the classroom even though they were not in their first year. Their past accomplishments in the classroom led them to believe they could be successful in the classroom while in college if they put forth the effort and made changes in their priorities. Only one had a slight hesitation; Mia was not as confident in her academic abilities. It was her motivation to become eligible that led her to seek assistance from resources available to her after her first year. Interestingly, as an average student in high school, she had no hesitation in her abilities as a student to do well in the classroom in order to become eligible to participate. Her fear of not asking for help was superseded by her fear of not being able to participate on the soccer team. She suffered from anxiety

attacks before entering college but they became more frequent during her freshman year. Bandura's theory (1997) involves a student's physiological state or the body's reactions to the thought of attempting and completing given tasks. Reactions such as anxiety, fatigue, and mood can provide information about self-efficacy beliefs. Mia felt the stress of losing her role on the team if her academic performance did not improve. Her body's reaction came in the form of anxiety attacks.

All of the student-athletes in this study felt fatigue was detrimental to their academic success in their freshman year. The physical toll sport places on athletes and their ability to focus on studying after a practice or competition was consistent with the literature. Cogan and Petrie (1996) found fatigue to be a factor in academic achievement. The results of this study confirmed the results found by Cogan and Petrie; the athletes admitted to missing class and not being able to concentrate and study due to the physical demands of their sport.

All of the student-athletes had different levels of motivation in the classroom and on the field. The study found student-athletes to be athletically motivated, primarily due to the demands of the sport. The commitment to their sport overshadowed their commitment to academic achievement. Their quest to graduate from college and receive a degree was never questioned as they struggled academically through their first year. They each set forth at the beginning of their freshman year to achieve academic success along with athletic success. When they were faced with a lack of success in the classroom, each chose to persist toward their ultimate goal.

Conclusions

The nature of this study was to gain a better understanding of variables that contributed to academic success and motivation of freshmen student-athletes who were challenged in maintaining their GPA. This research represented a microcosm of a larger group of student-athletes--only the stories of these five student-athletes rather than the stories of all freshman student-athletes at the university. These five student-athletes described their unique experiences while in their freshman year. They all shared four common themes that emerged in this study as contributing to their academic success. Other findings--lack of coaches' involvement, student-athletes' background, social influence, and researcher's interpretation--proved to be specific and emergent in this study. Taken all together, the specific themes and the emergent findings will hopefully provide a better understanding of academic success for freshman student-athletes.

The researcher contends that the findings of this study were based on motivation, transition, cognitive, and non-cognitive variables leading to academic success. How the athletes in this study identified with their athletic roles, to their motivation for participating and academic success, added to the existing literature and knowledge.

Recommendations

This section relates the results of this research to educational practice. The experiences and desires described by the athletes in this study provide useful information for high school administrators, counselors, and college student services programs.

High School Administrators and Counselors

Although this study did not find remedial courses as a variable between high school and higher education, there is a growing concern with the gap between K-12

education and post-secondary institutions regarding the first year freshman experience and retention (Abraham & Creech, 2000). One way to bridge the gap is increased communication between high schools and higher education institutions. It is important high school students be more aware of the content regarding university placement and retention. The importance of taking college preparatory courses should be stressed to high school students and their parents, especially those entering their senior year. It is also important that K-12 administrators and counselors stress the consequences of deciding not to take college preparatory classes as it relates to their success in the college admission process as well as the transition into college.

It is also recommended that secondary schools understand the significance of non-academic or non-cognitive variables as they relate to a successful transition and adjustment for college freshman student-athletes. High schools must acknowledge and assist students in preparing for the emotional and physical demands of college. Phillips (2002) found faculty interaction, peer interaction, and integration into the college environment were important factors in adjustment to college. Programming, seminars, and workshop should be established early in high school to assist students and their parents in preparing for the academic and personal demands of higher education. First generation students and their parents may be considered unique with special programming and workshops addressing issues--independence, scheduling, new people, and expectations--surrounding the transition into college. High schools and higher education institutions should work to offer programming and seminars to assist with adjustments as students enter college.

Parents play a vital role in the college transition and adjustment. They are the first line of support for their student-athlete during this process of adjusting from high school to college. Parents should be included and encouraged to participate in programming and workshops; they should be educated regarding the adjustments just as much as the athletes.

Current high school coaches must realize the valuable role they play in assisting student-athletes prepare for the rigors of college life, both academically and athletically. Although high school coaches were not a determining variable in this study, four of the five student-athletes alluded to their high school coach in either a positive or negative way. The coaches must reach beyond the walls of their high school and assist in orienting student-athletes with the many challenges they will face on the court or field and inside the classroom within higher education. Student-athletes must learn to manage their time and set priorities to handle their hectic schedules and demands. Coaches should also play an integral role in assisting their athletes in the recruitment and college selection process. This time in their life is marked not with just excitement but can also be filled with confusion, guilt, and disappointment. Coaches should guide their athletes through this time of transition.

Student Services

The transition to college presents a unique challenge for student-athletes as they adjust to a new environment and life style. During this transitional period, student-athletes may be faced with being away from family for the first time, academic fears, and the adjustment to becoming adults. It is important that college athletic departments develop programs based on the student-athlete's perceptions and concerns. Service

programs such as first year experience programs, tutoring, career services, and counseling support should be provided by higher education institutions. In many higher education institutions, athletic departments are responsible for implementing their own orientation programs for student-athletes in an effort to assist them with the transition from high school to college (Pascarella et al., 1996). Many of these student-athletes are not prepared for the academic rigor along with time restraints and athletic commitments. The results of this study suggested that a mixture of emotional, social, and physical demands of the sport affected the student-athlete's college adjustment. Therefore, successful student adjustment programs and retention interventions must involve the coordinated efforts of athletic department academic services and counseling professionals.

The results of the current study indicated the current first year experience program was not affective in assisting a select few freshman student-athletes. However, transitional programming could help student-athletes deal with social, emotional, and academic issues. Early identification of student-athletes who may be struggling with the adjustment of college life in their freshman year could help by establishing intervention programs to help prevent them from becoming academically ineligible, departing from their sport, or from the university. Identifying student-athletes early is the key to success. Surveys addressing college adjustment could be developed and given at registration or within the first few weeks of classes. Follow-up surveys could be given at the end of the first semester. Involvement with high school counselors and administrators might also shed some light on incoming freshmen and their specific needs. Seminars, web seminars, and workshops during the first year that address issues such as study skills, test taking skills, time management issues, separation anxiety, and dealing with faculty issues might

assist some student-athletes with the challenges of higher education. According to the student-athletes of this study, making student-athletes aware of available student service programs such as tutoring, writing assistance and counseling could assist them in being more academically successful. This study found student-athletes were reluctant to ask for this assistance. Thus, these services may need to be mandated for a short period of time until the athlete can be evaluated to determine whether the service should be continued. Incorporating these services into study hall hours or having mini sessions could help athletes without overwhelming their time. Academic advisors are vital in the success of at-risk athletes. Providing advisors to address the demands of freshman student-athletes should be implemented for athletes to get personal assistance.

Counseling services are established on college campuses to assist the student population with such issues as college adjustment, social, and emotional problems. College counseling services and counselors should work with athletic department academic services in assisting athletes with their transition and adjustment to college. Establishing and offering prevention programs to assist athletes with learning skills, motivation, and self-esteem may lead to a successful first year experience and increase overall satisfaction with college.

Mentorship programs established within the athletic department could aid in freshman academic adjustment into college. Results of this study found some of the student-athletes had mentors; whereas, others were not aware of the assistance available to them. Properly trained upperclassmen--both student-athletes and students from across campus--could assist freshman athletes with time management, schedule demands, the time demands of their sport, and offering assistance dealing with faculty and coaches.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. While this study employed qualitative methods to explore the variables of academic success of freshman student-athletes' experience and their motivation, future research could build upon these results to explore the same area of interest by employing a mixed methods study that could reach a broader and more representative sample of the freshmen student-athlete population.
2. Further research studies should replicate the current study at a variety of institutional types: community colleges, private and public higher education institutions, and historically Black colleges.
3. Further studies should build on the academic rigor of high school senior athletes, the caliber of classes, amount of credits taken in their last year, and how those variables affect the academic performance of freshman student-athletes in college.
4. One of the limitations of this study was it was conducted at a predominately White, Division I FCS institution. Broadening this study to include other FCS, Division II institutions could also be beneficial to athletic administrators and student-athletes regarding retention and adjusting to the demands of college.
5. Further studies should build on the need to create a model for implementing transitional and preparation programs at the high school level to better serve student-athletes who are leaving a high school environment and entering a college environment.

6. This study raised the question of how beneficial mandatory study hall hours are as they relate to academic success of freshman student-athletes. Future research examining the quality of studying and the amount of hours assigned could assist the student-athlete regarding academic success in their freshman year and beyond.
7. To understand the long-term effects concerning cognitive and non-cognitive variables regarding the freshmen year experience as they relate to both academic adjustment and the athletic demands could be extended over a longer period of time. A longitudinal study of the entire college experience could be implemented.

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APPENDIX A

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION AND APPROVAL**

Research Involving Human Participants Coversheet for UNC IRB Application

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Project Title: Lori L. Braa

Contact Information (reviewers will communicate via e-mail)

Lead Investigator: Lori L. Braa phone: 970-201-2259

School: University of Northern Colorado UNC e-mail: lori.braa@unco.edu

Research Advisor: David K. Stollar UNC e-mail: david.stollar@unco.edu
(required for students)

CERTIFICATION OF LEAD INVESTIGATOR

I certify that this application accurately reflects the proposed research and that I and all researchers who will have contact with the participants or access to the data have reviewed this application and the Guidelines of the UNC IRB and will comply with the letter and spirit of these policies. I understand that any changes in procedure which affect participants must be submitted to the IRB (using the Request for Change in Protocol Form) for written approval prior to their implementation. I further understand that any adverse events and significant changes in risk for participants must be immediately reported in writing to the UNC IRB.

Lori L. Braa
Signature of Lead Investigator

11-29-10
Date of Signature

CERTIFICATION OF RESEARCH ADVISOR (If Lead Investigator is a Student)

I certify that I have thoroughly reviewed this application, confirm its accuracy, and accept responsibility for monitoring the conduct of this research, the maintenance of any consent documents as required by the IRB, and, in the case of expedited reviews, the continuation review of this project in approximately one year.

David K. Stollar
Signature of Research Advisor

11-29-10
Date of Signature

Summary Information (to be completed by Lead Investigator)

Review Category: ☒ Exempt (2-3 weeks) ☐ Expedited (3-4 weeks) ☐ Full-Board (4-6 weeks)

Research participants will be:
(e.g., adults, elderly, children,
healthy, unhealthy, etc.)

Sophomore student-athletes

Type of data collected will be:
(e.g., survey responses, interviews,
blood samples, existing data, etc.)

Demographic survey, interviews

SPONSORED
PROGRAMS NOV 29 2010

Location of data collection:

University of Northern Colorado

Is standard consent documentation used? ☒ YES ☐ NO If NO, must be addressed within application.

Is permission required (e.g., school district)? ☐ YES ☒ NO If YES, must include letter (this is not consent).

Is this a funded research project? ☐ YES ☒ NO If YES, must provide source within application.

Submit the original and one copy of the cover page, narrative, and all attachments to OSP, Kepner Hall #25, Attn: Sherry May

Clear Form

University of Northern Colorado

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Application for Exemption from IRB Review Guidelines

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Purpose

The overarching purpose of this study is to explore and identify variables that lead to academic achievement and persistence of freshmen student-athletes in order to achieve academic success. It is the researcher's intent to elicit the voices and perceptions of ten sophomore student-athletes and have them reflect on their freshmen year. It is widely known that a small number of student-athletes are challenged in maintaining their grade point averages (GPA) during their freshmen year, thus risking the student-athletes' eligibility and retention at the institution.

Predictors of college success have often been based on cognitive factors such as high school grades and SAT/ACT scores (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Tinto, 1993). Other research has illustrated that nonacademic variables (social and emotional adjustment and institutional attachment) more accurately predict college adjustment than academic variables. Non-cognitive factors such as a sense of belonging, positive attitude toward peer relationship, interactions with faculty, and social integration influenced student persistence (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994, Martin, Swartz-Kulstad, & Madson, 1999; Petrie & Russell, 1995). There is scant qualitative research addressing variables of freshmen student-athlete and how it relates to academic success. Qualitative research in this area is essential in understanding the influences and predictors of a students' academic success as it relates to eligibility and academic achievement. The ultimate goal is to provide data to the athletic department and the first-year experience program for predicting college adjustment and increasing the academic success of student-athletes at risk of academic failure.

2. The selection category type for this study: *Exempt*. This research will not disrupt participants' normal campus or life experience, and will not be invasive in its procedures to the sophomore student-athletes. Research will involve interview procedures that will be conducted in an acceptable educational setting on the campus of UNC. The sophomore student population sample will be provided by the athletic department (see Appendix A). Student-athletes will be selected from their freshmen year GPA. The athletes must have been college freshmen at UNCO in order to participate. The student-athlete population will be interviewed with the approval and guidance of the athletic department to insure a good sample size.

Methods

Participants

Though statistical sampling is not necessarily used in qualitative research, it is necessary to clearly define and have a logical sampling strategy. "Purposive sampling is a set of procedures where the researcher manipulates the analysis, theory, and sampling activities *interactively* during the research process, to a much greater extent than in statistical sampling" (Mason, 1996. P. 100). The ability to generate data to explore processes, make meaningful

comparisons, to test and suggest theory which may explain similarities and differences is vital in qualitative research when determining the number of participants (Mason, 1996).

According to Patton (1990), sampling procedures reflect purposeful sampling. The power of purposeful sampling lies in "selecting information-rich cases for study . . ." (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Patton goes on to state that information-rich cases are those from which a great deal of information can be learned about salient issues to the purpose of the research.

For the purpose of this study, ten freshmen student-athlete participants will be selected to serve as the sample. A diverse, pool of sophomore student-athletes who, during their freshmen year at the institution, had a GPA of 2.0 or below will be used to constitute an information-rich sample that would provide a great deal of insightful and pertinent information. The sample will vary according to gender, team and individual sports and in-season and out-of-season sports as deemed appropriate for the study. This sample size allows for better insight and experience of student-athletes for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

According to Fontana and Frey (1994) there are three types of interviewing: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. The use of in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews will be conducted for this study. Singer (2002) believes this form of interviewing enables the researcher to engage the participants in meaningful conversation. Pre-determined questions (see Appendix B) will be developed to guide the conversation, but the semi-structured process will allow for flexibility in seeking clarification or exploring their thoughts more thoroughly. Semi-structured interviews will allow me to follow up on statements made by the participants which could be pertinent to the study. Though the questions will be consistent, the sequence of the questions could change for each participant which could allow for follow-up, clarification, elaboration on a response and to provide a venue for participants to tell their stories (Kvale, 1996).

Interviews will be digitally taped and will be approximately one hour in length. The location of the interviews will be determined by the participants, each deciding which location is most comfortable to them.

The athletic department will assist in providing documentation for this study. In addition to interviews, data will be collected from artifacts such as high school transcripts, standardized test scores, freshmen year grades, NCAA clearinghouse documents that are available and field notes I will record after each interview. As the researcher, I will also use the background demographic form, which will allow me to collect demographic and background information. Participants will be asked to complete the form after their interviews. The artifact information collected will assist me in creating a profile on each participant and to test the validity of the information provided by each participant in the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data will be collected via digital recordings at the interview, which will be encrypted on a password-protected computer. The data collected will consist of opinions of sophomore student-athletes. A semi-structured interview will be used and a general script outline will be used and based on the answers given for these general questions. Respondents may be asked follow-up questions during the interview process. Any additional questions will not depart from the topic of study. Documents or artifacts for this study will be hand coded for themes and reviewed along with the interviews.

Data Handling Procedures

Consent form for students in Appendix C, audiotape consent form in Appendix D and the demographic form in Appendix E. The collected data will be kept confidential, the source of the interview answers will be known but I will do my utmost to protect the privacy of the information and the participants. Additionally, a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of each athlete. Participants will not be asked their name or identified in any way other than being sophomore on the UNC campus. Consent forms, audiotape forms and demographic forms will be retained by the research advisor for the designated time period.

Risks, Discomforts and Benefits

There are no foreseeable benefits or risks to participants while participating in this study. The data are not sensitive in nature. Participants do not stand to benefit directly from their participation but will be given results of the study if they wish to receive them.

Braa, Lori

From: Henderson, James **Sent:** Tue 23/11/2010 10:54 AM
To: Braa, Lori
Cc:
Subject: dissertation
Attachments:

Hi Lori,

I wanted to thank you for working with our office and to let you know that we are excited to have a partnership with you for your dissertation. I believe the work you are doing with our freshmen and their academic achievement will greatly assist us in the future as we continue to search for avenues of success for our students. Please let me know how we can help throughout the process. As we discussed previously I am willing to assist in recruiting and obtaining the student participants and the documents necessary for the study as I feel the outcome will benefit our efforts regarding student success. Again, I'm excited that we have this partnership and let me know if there are any other avenues I can be of assistance.

Thanks!

James Henderson

Assistant A.D. for Academic Success

University of Northern Colorado

970-351-2150



UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO
Institutional Review Board (IRB)



November 30, 2010

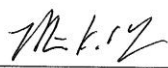
TO: Maria Lahman
Applied Statistics and Research Methods

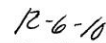
FROM: The Office of Sponsored Programs

RE: Exempt Review of *A Qualitative Analysis of the Variables that Contribute to Academic Success of Freshmen Student-athletes at a FCS University*, submitted by Lori L. Braa (Research Advisor: David Stotlar)

The above proposal is being submitted to you for exemption review. When approved, return the proposal to Sherry May in the Office of Sponsored Programs.

I recommend approval.


Signature of Co-Chair


Date

The above referenced prospectus has been reviewed for compliance with HHS guidelines for ethical principles in human subjects research. The decision of the Institutional Review Board is that the project is exempt from further review.

IT IS THE ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE STUDENT OF THIS STATUS.

Comments:

25 Kepner Hall ~ Campus Box #143
Greeley, Colorado 80639
Ph: 970.351.1907 ~ Fax: 970.351.1934

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



**CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

Project Title: A qualitative analysis of the variables that contribute to the academic success of freshmen student-athletes at a FCS university

Researcher: Lori L. Braa, School of Sport and Exercise Science.

E-mail: lori.braa@unco.edu **Phone:** 970-201-2259

Research Advisor: David K. Stotlar, Director, School of Sport and Exercise Science.

Email: david.stotlar@unco.edu **Phone:** 970-351-2535

The overarching purpose of this dissertation study is to explore and identify variables that lead to academic success and persistence of freshmen student-athletes. It is the researcher's intent to elicit the voices and perceptions of a select number of sophomore student-athletes regarding their freshmen year. I will use recorded interviews and high school documents for this study. The recorded interviews will take approximately one hour. I also intend to review high school grades, your freshmen grades, high school standardized tests and any other material pertaining to academic achievement and success that could be of assistance for this study. The review of documents will remain confidential and will be color coded with a pseudonym to protect your identity. The documents used will be destroyed once the study has been completed.

The data collected for the study will be stored in the researcher's home in a locked file cabinet/password protected computer. Note your professors, coaches, etc will not know whether or not you participate, nor will they have access to your responses. Neither your grades nor athletic eligibility will be affected, whether or not you participate. Your participation is very important to the researcher. The information you provide may help the athletic department with practical information regarding variables that may lead to a better understanding regarding the academic success of freshmen student-athletes.

The data collected may be published; however, I will strive to protect the confidentiality of your digitally-recorded responses using electronic file encryption on a password-protected computer. You have the right to review, edit, and request of copy of your digitally recorded interview. Additionally, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

There are no direct benefits or foreseeable risks to you. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Subject's Signature _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C
GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Guiding Interview Questions

- Tell me about your high school experience?
- Tell me about your high school athletic career?
- How did your high school experience prepare you for college?
- What do you wish your high school had done differently to prepare you for college?
- Reflecting back to high school, describe your relationship with parents/familymembers, coaches, and teammates?
- Was your transition into college an easy one? Why or Why not?
- How did the transition from high school affect you emotionally?
- How did the transition from high school affect you athletically?
- Tell me about yourself? your family? your friends?
- Describe your freshmen year?
- How would you describe the beginning of your freshmen year in college?
- What was your greatest struggle as a freshman? and as a student-athlete?
- Explain your academic experience during your freshman year?
- Describe how your head coach and athletic department helped you in your transition in your first semester in college. Do you feel that your coach was helpful? Was the athletic department
- What did you like or dislike about being a student-athlete?
- Tell me about your time management skills? What have you learned?
- Would you have participated in sports if you were not awarded a scholarship or an academic scholarship?

- What is the most challenging part of being a college student-athlete verses being a high school student-athlete?
- Where do you see yourself after graduation?
- What motivates you? Academically? Athletically?
- Did you use the university resources' available to you?
- As a freshmen, what were you most proud of?
- What advice would you give to high school student-athlete about the transition into college? about the first year of college?
- What advice would you give to high school administrators or athletic administrators about the transition into college?

APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND FORM

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Place an "X" beside the appropriate response.

Gender:

____ Male

____ Female

1. Race:

____ American Indian

____ African American

____ Hispanic

____ Caucasian

____ Asian/Pacific Islander

2. Local Residence:

____ Residence Hall

____ Greek House

____ Live off campus *with*
parents/guardians

____ Live off campus *without*
parents/guardians

4. Approximately how many student organizations are you a member of ?

____ None

____ 1-2 organizations

____ 3 - 4 organizations

____ 5 or more organizations

5. Approximately how many hours per week are you engaged in extracurricular activities (attending meetings, organizing activities, supporting club activities, community service, recreational sports, etc.)?

_____ None

_____ 1 - 2 hours

_____ 3 - 4 hours

_____ 4 - 5 hours

_____ 5 or more hours

Athletics _____ hours

6. Parent level of education? (Indicate with a F for father and M for mother)

_____ Did not graduate from high school

_____ Graduated from high school

_____ Have a GED or vocational training gained
after graduating from high school

_____ Graduated from college (BA/BS)

_____ Master's Degree or J.D. Degree

_____ Doctorate