

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT AFFECT
STUDENT ATHLETE SUCCESS

A Thesis

by

CHERYL REBECCA RODE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May 2008

Major Subject: Kinesiology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Michael Sagas
Committee Members,	George B. Cunningham
	Ben D. Welch
Head of Department,	James Eddy

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ABSTRACT

Academic Programs and Services that Affect Student Athlete Success. (May 2008)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Michael Sagas

Academic programs for student athletes are an integral part of collegiate athletic programs across the country. The Summer Bridge Program at Texas A&M University is a transition program for student athletes that are beginning their first year of college. The program allows student athletes to begin their college career in the summer immediately following graduation and take a few courses and learn study and time management skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine if transition programs were effective in helping student athletes succeed academically while in college. Chickering's Theory of Identity Development and literature on learning communities formed the framework of the study. Learning communities and transition programs are becoming popular programs at colleges and universities to help all student transition to college and succeed academically. Also, there was much literature regarding the Academic Progress Rate and the 40/60/80 rule which determines the amount of degree plan that must be completed at the end of the sophomore, junior and senior year of college created by the NCAA. These

rules are a driving force for academic centers to provide services for the academic success of student athletes.

Data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively with cumulative grade point ratios (GPR's) of the student athletes and interviews were conducted with a small number of student athletes in select sports. After the GPR data was analyzed, the student athletes that participated in the program had lower GPR's than those that did not participate. The qualitative data from the interviews provided positive statements and feelings toward the Summer Bridge Program. Additional research is needed since the area of transition programs for collegiate athletics has not been extensively investigated.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Kyle, without you, none of this would be possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I want to give a special thanks to Ms. Michelle Roberts and Mr. Steve McDonnell for allowing me access to student athletes at the Center for Student Athlete Success as well as the academic data for all student athletes.

Finally, thanks to my family and friends. I cannot thank you enough for all of your love and support while working on my master's degree. Thank you to my grandparents for always giving me that extra encouragement when I needed it most.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	2
Purpose and Objectives	3
Personal Statement	3
Delimitations	4
II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
Student Development Model.....	7
Learning Communities	9
Conclusion.....	11
III METHODS.....	12
Procedures	12
Participants	14
Instrumentation.....	15
Data Analysis	17
IV RESULTS.....	19
Data Results.....	19

CHAPTER	Page
V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	27
Theoretical Contribution	29
Conclusion.....	30
Limitations and Future Research.....	31
REFERENCES	33
APPENDIX A: STUDENT ATHLETE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	36
APPENDIX B: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD	37
APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT	38
APPENDIX D: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	39
VITA	67

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Grade Point Ratios for Student Athletes by Sport & Summer Bridge Participation	20
2	Pseudonyms, Sport and Summer Bridge Participation of Interviewees.....	22

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Academic success of student athletes is a necessity in order for the athlete to participate in their sport. Many student athletes are beginning their college career unprepared for the struggles and challenges that are often associated with college level courses (Roach, 2004). Adler and Adler (1985) discussed several studies that found student athletes unprepared for college and a lower chance of graduating along with progressively less positive attitudes toward academics. At universities across the country, schools are beginning to offer programs to aid in the transition of student athletes from high school to college, especially in sports that traditionally have lower graduation rates. This study evaluated the effectiveness of transition programs and determined if the goals of the program are being met. Schools across the country face the same issues in keeping student athletes eligible and showing the importance of graduating college.

Several years ago, the NCAA began allowing student athletes to begin their college courses in the summer. Incoming freshman for men's and women's basketball were allowed to attend summer school on scholarship (M. Roberts, personal

This thesis follows the style of *The Journal of Sport Management*.

communication, December 18, 2007). These sports were chosen because of their traditionally low graduation rates and academic success. Once more sports were allowed to begin in the summer, many schools have taken advantage of the opportunity to help these students begin their college career on a positive note.

Statement of Problem

The main research goal for this project was to determine the effectiveness of transition programs that bridge the educational gap between high school and college. In addition, I sought to understand any differences in academic success and graduation between students who utilize academic services like a transition program, tutoring and one on one mentoring and those that do not. The attitude toward academics of student athletes is an important tool in an athlete being able to be successful in academics. Students who have a poor or negative attitude toward academics will likely be unsuccessful in the classroom (Adler & Adler, 1985). In this study, I looked at the cumulative grades of students athletes and grouped these students into those who participated in a transition program and those who did not, as well as by sport. Based on the results of this study, academic services at colleges and universities are able to make further adjustments to their current transitional program in order to make it more effective for future incoming student athletes. Specifically I seek to determine the following:

- 1) Do student athletes benefit academically from a transition program between high school and college?

- a. Do student athletes perform better academically by participating in a transition program?
- b. Is there a difference between each sport in academic performance?

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine how effective transition programs have been for student athletes at the collegiate level. Many institutions are adopting transition programs for student athletes who mirror other transition type programs for the general student population. My premise for this research was that student athletes who participate in transition type programs will benefit greatly. These students will have higher grade point ratios and have a more positive attitude toward academics than the equally equipped student athletes who did not participate. I believed that the student athletes who felt prepared for college would be more successful academically than those who felt underprepared. Also, student athletes would find that study skills and time management can be learned at college and they would benefit greatly from the services offered at the academic services centers for student athletes on campuses. I also believed most student athletes see academics as a positive and important part of their lives. However, there remains a small population who see college as only a stepping stone to a professional sports career and views academics as a negative aspect. I see transition programs benefiting student athletes during the transition and while they are attending colleges and universities.

Personal Statement

I have always been a fan of sports. I also believe education is extremely important. While working on obtaining my teacher certification, I got a job working in the academics center within the athletics department as an academic tutor. I enjoyed working with this unique group of students and I believe that I truly made a difference in their education experience. I have worked in this area for almost five years as an academic tutor and as a learning assistant. I have worked with student athletes one-on-one and in small group settings as well as led study groups and discussions. As a learning assistant, I worked with student athletes on an individual basis teaching time management and study skills. I also worked with the students to ensure that they were prepared for exams and completed all course assignments and projects. Working with student athletes is very rewarding, especially when they perform very well in their courses. I have worked with a variety of students and all have made an impression on my life. I sincerely believe that the academics center helps student athletes succeed in their coursework and graduate. Since only a small number of student athletes turn professional, a college degree is very important for future career success.

Delimitations

The goal of this study was to determine if transition programs are successful in helping student athletes succeed academically. Since I have worked in the academics center for almost five years, I have seen student athletes come and go. I have also witnessed the success of many student athletes at this university. I understand that the possibility for biases exist based on my work experiences in athletics. I have taken

detailed notes in interviews to make sure answers were collected correctly. I also performed peer debriefing once the qualitative data were collected. The student athletes were asked to volunteer by a member of the staff; therefore, I was unable to influence the student athlete to participate.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic success of student athletes is a constant topic of discussion. It is often debated that student athletes need to remember they are students as well as athletes (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005). Academic services departments at colleges and universities strive to provide the best services possible to help each student athlete succeed not only on the field, but in the classroom as well (Carodine, Almond & Gratto, 2001).

Graduation rates are often a measure of how well an athletic program is meeting the academic standards that are set forth by the NCAA (Wieberg, 2005). Student athletes, just like regular students, must go through an adjustment process from high school to college in order to be successful. Many universities have first year programs and learning communities for regular students to ease the transition and adjustment phase; however, many student athletes do not have the opportunities to benefit from these programs (M. Roberts, personal communication, December 18, 2007). Are first year or transition type programs beneficial to student athletes, and why are there very few schools that offer these programs?

The college lifestyle, both academic and social, is very different than high school, and when participation in a sport is added, it creates a unique environment for student athletes. Several studies discuss the new academic measuring stick provided by the NCAA, the academic performance rate or APR and how individual athletic departments are affected (Lawry, 2005; Roach, 2004; Tublitz, 2007; Wieberg, 2005).

The APR has several components, but graduation rate is a very important part of the equation (Meyer, 2005). Much information is available regarding the academic performance and how a student athlete changes throughout his or her career. Please refer to Appendix C for a full review of the literature related to collegiate athletics, academics, the Academic Progress Rate and model academic programs for collegiate athletics.

Student Development is an area of research that has played an important role for colleges and universities. Many of the models for student development theory have been used to create learning communities and other transitional programs for incoming and current college students. These programs can be specific to a particular interest or very general to include a large number of students. By implementing learning communities on campuses, the colleges and universities can give needed support for students to develop emotionally, socially as well as intellectually while in college (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

Student Development Model

There are many developmental theory models that have been researched and are used to explain how college students perform and progress through college and life. Some examples of theories include Chickering's Theory of Identity Development, Josselson's Theory of Identity Development in Women and Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Each of these models describes the transition process a person goes through during college or a point in life, but in different ways. I will be utilizing Chickering's Theory of Identity Development model for my research.

Chickering's model focuses on seven vectors of development that help form an individual's identity (Evans et al., 1998). These vectors associated with Chickering's model often occur in order, but not always, and an individual could experience more than one at once. Individuals progress through these vectors at a pace unique to each individual. The seven vectors are developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Developing competence consists of intellectual and interpersonal competence as well as physical and manual skills (Evans et al., 1998). Once an individual reaches the managing emotions, they are able to understand and recognize different emotions that are being experienced. Chickering discusses that students should be able to deal with their emotions appropriately. The next vector is moving through autonomy toward interdependence. During this time, students learn to become more independent as well develop skills that will enable them to make decisions independently and solve problems. Developing mature interpersonal relationships is the next vector in Chickering's Theory of Identity Development. Students learn that differences between individuals are important and learn to create lasting relationships (Evans et al., 1998). They also learn that it is okay to be different from others, but share those things that are in common to others. Establishing identity is the next vector. This vector adds to the other vectors discussed so far. Students begin to learn who they are and recognize differences from others in regards to culture, orientation and gender (Evans et al., 1998). While in college, it is important for students to determine their career goals and select a

major to graduate. Students are looking for meaning in their career and volunteer choices. This is part of the next vector, developing purpose. Also during this time, a student learns to accept the results and possible consequences of decisions made. The last vector of Chickering's model is developing integrity. There are three stages to this vector and they include: humanizing values, personalizing values and developing congruence (Evans et al., 1998). While in the first stage, students learn to balance their interests with those of others. As students progress to the second stage, they learn to value and confirm their own beliefs and understand beliefs and values of their friends. During the last stage of this vector, students begin to feel social responsibility and the values of the student are seen in the choices made (Evans et al., 1998). Chickering's Theory of Identity Development was used for this research because it describes the many stages students go through while they are attending college and developing throughout their life.

Learning Communities

In recent years, many colleges and universities have incorporated various types of learning communities into the programs that are offered to students. Learning communities have been implemented for various reasons and for a variety of groups across the country. These programs are designed to help first year students during the transition process from high school to college. Learning communities also challenge first year students academically and create goals for their first year and beyond (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005). Learning communities frequently create smaller, more intimate groups so students have a greater opportunity to interact and learn from

one another. Students in learning communities often take many of their classes together. In some communities, the students live in the same residence hall. The learning communities provide students with opportunities for greater interaction with faculty because they are usually in smaller courses with a smaller class size.

According to Upcraft et al. (2005) there are five dimensions or important areas of learning communities. These dimensions are student collaboration, faculty collaboration, curricular coordination, shared setting and interactive pedagogy (Upcraft et al., 2005). All of these areas are important to have a successful learning community for the students and the university. There are several models of learning communities that are discussed in the text. The paired or clustered course model creates a cohort through block scheduling or pairing specific classes together. The courses often enroll a small number of students per class. This type of learning community is good for students with similar interests. For example, students interested in engineering could take a cluster of courses together. Another model is a cohort type for large courses. This type of learning community often has a student or a “master learner” takes the course as well. This person then helps the students with the material learned in the class (Upcraft et al., 2005). Team-taught programs are another type of learning community that allows students to take courses in an interdisciplinary area. Teachers from several classes collaborate their coursework in order to produce learning and interaction between the classes. Residential-based programs are learning communities that add the residential component to the learning community. Students in a particular learning community will also live in the same residence hall. This provides interaction between classmates and

can facilitate discussions outside of the classroom environment. The last learning community model discussed in the text is a learning community for specific populations. This type of learning community offers a targeted group an opportunity to have greater interaction with those that are similar. For example, a learning community that focuses on transition to college for first generation students or possibly student athletes allows these unique groups to interact and learn from one another. These groups are unique in their needs during their transition to college and throughout their college careers. Learning communities have become popular across the country. Students are receiving the benefits of smaller classes which in turn aids in transition to college and in academics.

Conclusion

Helping a student athlete, or any incoming freshman, adjust to college life is important in his or her development process. Being able to provide a program that allows the student athlete to begin in the summer is one way to aid in that transition. The summer program can help the student athlete adjust to college life while taking fewer classes without the mandatory practice and competition. There will be less stress on the student athlete to succeed because he or she will only have the academic side of things to focus on during that time. Also during this time, the student athlete can gain important skills such as time management and study strategies in case those were not obtained in high school. Summer programs could be the next big change in how academic services in athletic departments provide guidance and support for student athletes.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Procedures

Athletic departments must ensure that student athletes remain eligible to participate in their sport. In addition, many student athletes begin college unprepared for college level work (Carodine, Almond & Gratto, 2001). The transition period from high school to college for any student can be difficult, but to add practice and competition to the mix could result in poor academic performance by student athletes. The Center for Student Athlete Success (CSAS) at Texas A&M University has created a transition program called the Summer Bridge Program. This program served as a case study for the purposes of this study. It was developed to aid in the transition of student athletes that participate in fall sports but is available to all student athletes that choose to begin in the summer after their senior year of high school (M. Roberts, personal communication, September 14, 2007). Texas A&M University was a good setting for this research because the program is new and the staff was interested to determine if their efforts are making a difference in the attitudes and academic success of the student athletes.

Case of Summer Bridge Program at Texas A&M University

A few years ago, the learning center at the CSAS was revamped and the Summer Bridge program was added in order to increase graduation rates, improve student athletes academically and to help those students that have been identified as having a learning disability. Since the program was relatively new, there was not a complete group of

participants that have completed their athletic eligibility and graduated. During the first summer of the program, the participating sports included the most at risk: football, men's basketball and women's basketball. The main goals of the first summer were to aid in transition and teach study skills. The staff also tested reading levels of all incoming student athletes in order to determine the best way to help each student. At Texas A&M University, there is a provisional admittance program for the general student population titled the Gateway Program. The Summer Bridge was modeled after this program and has evolved each year to meet the needs of the student athletes (M. Roberts, personal communication, December 18, 2007).

The CSAS staff began to look into more areas for the second group of students the next summer. They looked to see if the incoming student athletes had passed the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), a standardized exam required by universities in Texas, as well as choosing courses that would be sufficient for any degree plan. The individual needs of the student athlete were determined and measures were taken to ensure those needs were being met. This last summer, student athletes from any sport were allowed to participate in the program; however, the focus is still on student athletes that participate in a fall sport or are determined to be severely at risk. Athletic staff at the university was interested to know if the program was helping bridge the gap between high school and college. By evaluating the Summer Bridge Program at Texas A&M University, both through interviews and student athletes academic performance, I was able to determine if the program is serving the intended purpose or if changes need to be made to ensure future success.

Participants

Interviews

For this study, I interviewed a select group of student athletes. The participants of one group included student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program and the second group included student athletes who did not participate in the program. Each group consisted of three student athletes, one from football, men's basketball, and women's basketball. Traditionally football and men's and women's basketball are low performers academically and graduate fewer students than other sports, and these sports will be represented in each group (Wieberg, 2005). The CSAS staff member that runs the Summer Bridge Program selected the student athletes for each category based on class, practice, competition schedule, sport and willingness to participate (M. Roberts, personal communication, December 18, 2007).

Quantitative Data

The population for the data received from the director is the entire student athlete population at Texas A&M University. The data came from the campus database, Student Information Management System (SIMS) which is downloaded to a database used by the staff at the CSAS called Student Athlete Management System (SAMS). In addition to the interviews, I evaluated data regarding the grades of the student athletes in all sports. I looked at the grades of the student athletes who did and did not participate in the Summer Bridge program as well as by sport. By looking at the quantitative data along with the interviews, I was able to look at the trends that are emerging as a result of this new transition program. It was important to have this data since a small number of

interviews were conducted. The data for this portion of the study were obtained from the director at the Center for Student Athlete Services.

To begin, data were collected on a total of 557 current student athletes. Of that population, two samples were selected, those who participated in the Summer Bridge Program and those who did not. There were 76 student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program and 481 student athletes who did not participate. For GPR analysis, only the GPR's of student athletes in football, men's basketball, and women's basketball were used because these were the three sports that were utilized for the interviews. Also, these three sports had the most participants in the Summer Bridge Program. When these three sports were singled out, the total numbers become 119 who did not participate and 61 who did participate in the Summer Bridge Program. Only 15 student athletes participated in the Summer Bridge Program and were not a member of football, men's basketball or women's basketball. These three sports were also split into two groups: those who participated in the Summer Bridge Program and those who did not.

Instrumentation

The semi-structured interviews that were used included a series of open-ended questions regarding sport participation, transition, preparation for college, attitude toward academics and athletics and how the learning center has helped them. By interviewing student athletes, I was able to give the student athlete the opportunity to speak freely to the questions rather than answering a question with a standard scale or answer choice. The interview questions were derived from the literature discussed

regarding attitudes, learning center models and preparation for college as well as Chickering's Theory of Identity Development. Adler and Adler (1985) discussed how attitudes toward academics and athletics evolve during a student athlete's college career. Their research indicated that student athletes tend to care less about academics and more about their athletic performance as they progress through their college career.

Universities often receive incoming student athletes who are not prepared for collegiate academic coursework and often did not perform well in high school (Carodine et al., 2001). The underprepared student athlete can easily struggle in a rigorous collegiate course environment without the time management and study skills many students learn while in high school. Academic services programs for student athletes are all structured differently, but the main purpose is to help the student athlete succeed academically. These programs typically offer tutoring, academic advising in some form, career services and in some personal counseling (Jordan & Denson, 1990).

Each interview lasted approximately thirty to forty five minutes and was conducted in a small group study room in the Bright Academic Center on the campus of Texas A&M University. The interviews took place as scheduled by the CSAS staff member that is in charge of the Summer Bridge Program. At any point during the interview, the student athlete had the right to not answer any or all of the questions. Each student athlete's identity has been kept confidential and all records of the interviews do not have names associated with the answers. The interview schedule was reviewed by members of the CSAS, and they have deemed the research instrument to be a face valid instrument (S. McDonnell and M. Roberts, personal communication, January 23, 2008).

In addition to these members of the CSAS reviewing the instrument, a small test group of student athletes were selected to review the instrument to aid in determining the validity of the instrument.

Data Analysis

After data were collected, both from the interviews and from the CSAS, the data were analyzed accordingly. The quantitative data provided from the director were inputted into SPSS, and the means of students' grade point ratios were calculated. The means were calculated for the student athletes who did and did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program, as well as by sport. A t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in academic performance between the two groups. I was also able to see how academic performance between the two groups is different and similar when these two groups were looked at by sport. The interview data were presented to show the overall attitude toward academics, transition, effectiveness, the Summer Bridge Program and the Learning Center. Data collected from the interviews is in the form of in depth note taking during the interview. At the end of the interview, I gave a brief overview of each answer back to the student athlete to make sure that I understood the answers provided. After the interviews concluded, I performed content analysis by placing each answer on a separate slip of paper and began to find the common themes in the answers provided. The interviews were analyzed by content and themes were determined from the data collected during the interviews. I looked at the themes that were found from the interviews to understand how student athletes view academics, athletics, their transition from high school to college and the academic services that are

used by the student athletes. The themes and direct quotes are presented as the data collected from the interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data Results

Quantitative

The cumulative GPR's from all student athletes were evaluated for this research. The main research question was to find if student athletes benefit academically from a transition program between high school and college. The research question was broken down into two specific parts: academic performance between student athletes who did and did not participate in a transition program and if there was a difference in performance by sport.

The mean GPR for student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program was 2.38 (SD=.53) and for those who did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program was 2.54 (SD=.54). A t-test was run on the data and the GPR's of student athletes in both groups. Results suggest no difference in GPR between the groups, $t(179)=1.83, p > .05$.

After running a univariate analysis of variance no interaction was found between the Summer Bridge Program and non Summer Bridge Program participants, by sport $F[2,179]=.64, p > .05$. Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations for each sport and participation status in the Summer Bridge Program. For all sports except women's basketball, the GPR's of the student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program was lower than those who did not participate in the program. For football, there

were 85 student athletes that did not participate in the program and 45 who did participate ($M=2.39$, $SD=.52$). For men's basketball, the numbers of student athletes in each group were more even at 9 who did participate, and 10 who did not ($M=2.73$, $SD=.44$). Women's basketball was less even at 7 who participated and 24 who did not ($M=2.76$, $SD=.56$).

Table 1: Grade Point Ratios for Student Athletes by Sport and Summer Bridge Participation

Sport	Summer Bridge Program		Non-Summer Bridge Program	
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Football	2.28	.54	2.45	.51
Men's Basketball	2.59	.42	2.85	.44
Women's Basketball	2.81	.33	2.74	.62

Qualitative

The interviews with the student athletes provided useful feedback regarding transition and academic concerns for this group of students. The first part of the main research question was to find if there was a difference in academic success between student athletes who did and did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program. The second part of the question looked at success between the groups by sport. Was the transition program more beneficial for certain sports over others?

The interviews were conducted in small study rooms at the Bright Academic Center at Texas A&M University. A total of six student athletes were interviewed and the sports of football, men's basketball and women's basketball were represented. There was one student in each sport that participated in the Summer Bridge Program and one that did not participate (Table 2). The interviews lasted approximately thirty to forty five minutes and the athletes participating were willing to participate in hopes that their answers might help future student athletes. Notes were taken as the interview was conducted and the interview was not audio or video taped. After questions were answered, I confirmed answers with the student athlete to ensure I understood their answers. Upon completion of interviews, answers were transcribed for future reference and analysis. Answers to interview questions were analyzed and sorted into themes. Three main themes were evident based on the answers received during the interviews. These themes were time management, study skills and college preparedness/transition to college.

Table 2: Pseudonyms, Sport and Summer Bridge Participation of Interviewees
Participated in the Summer

Student Athlete	Sport	Bridge Program
Mary	Women's Basketball	Yes
Jane	Women's Basketball	No
Joe	Men's Basketball	Yes
Don	Men's Basketball	No
Bill	Football	Yes
John	Football	No

Time Management

This theme was the most prominent of all and had the most answers that revolved around time management. Many of the questions had an answer that was related to time management even when the question did not directly ask about this topic. Time management is important in the academic success of any student, especially student athletes due to their busy schedule. Most of the student athletes interviewed indicated that the Learning Center had helped with time management skills. They also said that they attended study hall regularly and beyond required study times because they used their time wisely while at the Learning Center.

Mary suggested “if I don’t work here [at the Learning Center], I won’t do it at home” in regards to her homework and studying. A tool utilized by the staff at the

Learning Center is the Week-At-A-Glance (WAG). WAG's typically contain the student's assignments or exams for the week as well as a schedule to help them stay on track and not fall behind in their coursework. The WAG's were mentioned by most of the student athletes as very helpful because it "let's you know when stuff is going to happen".

Student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program indicated that they learned their time management skills in college. When asked where time management skills were learned, Bill said "through Summer Bridge, STLC class, with a calendar and the WAG". All of the students interviewed who participated in the program indicated that the Center for Student Athlete Services has helped them learn and utilize time management to get their academic business completed each week. For example, Mary indicated that she was "not as lost" and it "kept me from getting sidetracked and stay organized". Joe suggested that "time management is the key in college, you can't procrastinate in college."

The student athletes who did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program had similar answers to questions relating to time management. Two of the student athletes indicated that a daily planner and the WAG helped them learn time management skills. Jane said "I learned on my own-my life has been scheduled since the day I got here". She also said that the CSAS has helped with her time management because "you have your day planned out" and that she "wouldn't study at home".

Balancing academic, athletic and social areas of life was another area where I received many answers, but was still related to time management. All of the student

athletes indicated that it was difficult at first to balance these areas once they arrived to college. Mary indicated that “it was very hard to balance everything and I wondered if I am fit for this”. All said that the balancing act got easier once they adjusted because as Mary suggested “everything is planned for you”. Many indicated that the work during the first semester was overwhelming and that the Learning Center is helpful. For example, Bill suggested “it was very hard [to balance everything] when the season first started”.

Study Skills

Study skills are needed by all students in order to succeed while in college. Study skills should be learned along the way as an individual progresses through school. One of the student athletes who participated in the Summer Bridge Program indicated that they had learned study skills in high school; one said that these skills were learned in the summer and fall at the beginning of their college career and the other learned study skills in both high school and college. Two of the student athletes in this group took advanced courses in high school while the other student was enrolled in regular courses. Bill said that in college he “had to start applying myself a whole lot more; you can get away without studying in high school”. Joe said that “high school was more procedure where the teachers go through it with you and college is more in depth and there is more independence”.

The student athletes that did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program had similar answers to where study skills were learned. Don said he “learned study skills in high school, but you must learn to prioritize in college”. John indicated that he learned

“outlining, how to read and pick out important facts when reading” through the CSAS.

Most of the student athletes indicated that some study skills were learned through the Learning Center and that it has made a difference in their academic success. Another student athlete discussed the difference between teachers in high school and college.

Many of the student athletes took advanced courses in high school and indicated that this type of course helped teach them study skills and prepare them for college courses.

College Preparedness/Transition to College

Transition to college from high school can be a different experience for everyone. Most of the students who were interviewed took advanced courses in high school. These students indicated that these tougher courses in high school helped prepare them, to a certain degree, for college. However, once the student athletes completed their first semester of classes, they had the opportunity to learn additional time management and study skills and then felt better prepared for future semesters.

Bill, who participated in the Summer Bridge Program, stated “I would attend Summer Bridge again because it tells you the basics and helps you get through”. Mary indicated the “summer program was good; it put you on the right track”. Joe described the Summer Bridge program as “like a pregame” to the fall semester courses, workouts and competition. All student athletes interviewed that attend the Summer Bridge Program indicated that they would either recommend the program to others or if they had to do it over, they would still attend.

Don, who did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program, said there was “more opportunity to go out and people to interact with” in college. Don also described

that in high school “you can get away with not using time wisely, but in college you must balance everything”. John said there was “not really any change” when describing his transition from high school to college. All of the students interviewed that did not participate in the program took advance courses in high school and they believe that this helped in their academic transition and preparedness for college.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Since the Summer Bridge Program was designed to help student athletes succeed academically while in college, having input from the recipients creates the opportunity to show that the program is helping these students transition and succeed. The cumulative GPR data are also important since it is able to show information on all the student athletes at Texas A&M University instead of the small handful of student athletes that volunteered to participate in the interviews. Three main themes were found during the interviews with the student athletes. These themes were time management skills, study skills and college preparedness/transition to college.

The research questions asked were:

- 1) Do student athletes benefit academically from a transition program between high school and college?
 - a. Do student athletes perform better academically by participating in a transition program?
 - b. Is there a difference between each sport in academic performance?

Students that participated in the Summer Bridge Program did not have a higher cumulative GPR than those who did not participate in the program. I had anticipated that those that participated would have higher GPR's because they participated in courses and a program that was designed to help them succeed. Since the sample size of each group was very different, only the sports of football, men's basketball and women's

basketball were used in the analysis. These sports have the most student athletes that have utilized the Summer Bridge Program.

However, even though the GPR's of the Summer Bridge Participants were slightly different, they were statistically similar. The differences in this group could be a result of the fact that the students in these sports may not be as academically prepared as other student athletes. The Summer Bridge Program could be bringing the more at risk student athletes to the same level as other student athletes. Both football and men's basketball student athletes that participated in the program had slightly lower GPR's than those that did not. For football, the number of student athletes that did not participate is much greater than those that did. This could be the cause for the higher GPR's in the non-Summer Bridge Program group. Women's basketball student athletes that participated had higher GPR's than those that did not attend.

The results of the interviews indicated very few differences between the groups of students. All of the student athletes felt the services provided through the CSAS were beneficial to their academic success. In addition, the student athletes expressed the importance of time management and study skills in order to succeed in college. The Learning Center at the CSAS was utilized by all student athletes interviewed on a daily basis and most indicated they attended more than the time required by the coaches. Student athletes feel that the Learning Center and the CSAS are important tools for academic success.

I was glad that the student athletes interviewed saw the Learning Center as a helpful resource. Also, the student athletes interviewed that participated in the Summer

Bridge Program were glad they participated even though they were not able to enjoy a summer off before beginning college. I understand this is a small population and there may be student athletes that feel the Summer Bridge Program was not helpful. However, I believe this number is small. All of the students interviewed feel that the Learning Center is a place to go for studying and help with classes. There were a few students that did indicate that there are times that attending study hall is a hassle, but they quickly acknowledged that they know they need to attend to succeed in their classes and get the extra help needed. Overall, the feelings toward the CSAS and the Summer Bridge Program were favorable.

Theoretical Contribution

Based on Chickering's Theory of Identity Development model, students go through the seven vectors at different rates and sometimes experience more than one at once. The student athletes interviewed ranged in classification from freshman to senior. The Summer Bridge Program allows students to begin the journey through the vectors by starting with the first vector, developing competence. The program gives the students a solid foundation to build upon and become successful students. As freshman, many of the student athletes are experiencing several of these vectors at once. The program teaches student athletes time management and self direction. This is part of the vector moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Student athletes begin establishing their identity the moment they arrive on campus. In addition, once student athletes become successful on the field or on the court, they become elevated to a star player. Student athletes have several identities based on the people that are around. For example,

on the court or walking across campus, they are the athlete, but in class, they are a student. The services offered at the Learning Center help student athletes explore career options and future goals. As a student progresses through a degree plan and athletic eligibility, they develop purpose. They may not be the star athlete and do not have plans to play in professional sports. Several of the vectors can be applied to the student athletes in the Summer Bridge Program. All students will go through the seven vectors, but all will proceed through them at very different paces.

Conclusion

Transition programs and learning communities have proven effective in the past in helping students transition from high school to college (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005). Academics have become an important part of athletic programs. The APR has made athletic programs accountable for student athletes succeeding in college as well as graduating. Also, the 40-60-80, which requires student athletes to complete a specific percentage of a degree plan by the end of the sophomore, junior and senior year, limits student athletes on changing majors because of the possibility of credits not counting toward a new degree plan (Brown, 2007). Learning communities typically provide some career exploration. Student athletes in these programs can utilize the career exploration to make a better major decision before it is too late to change due to the rules set forth by the NCAA. Adler & Adler (1985) found that student athletes begin college with a positive attitude toward academics, but eventually that positive attitude fades and becomes more negative. Learning communities can provide positive support systems to

student athletes and could possibly prevent the decline in positive attitude toward academics.

According to the cumulative GPR data collected and analyzed, one would believe that the Summer Bridge Program at Texas A&M University is not effective in helping student athletes transition from high school to college. Also, it shows that the program is not helping athletes succeed at a higher rate than those that did not participate in the program. However, the qualitative data shows another side to the story. The students interviewed that participated in the Summer Bridge Program praised the program and how it had helped them get through their first semester or year. The student athletes that did not participate in the Summer Bridge Program attributed their academic success to the Learning Center and the services provided. The program has only three cohorts, so it is still early to determine the full effects of the program in regards to academic success.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to this study. Only one university was used to look at academic success of student athletes in transition programs. Since the Summer Bridge Program is in its early years, there are only a small number of student athletes that have participated. Another limitation is that only six student athletes were interviewed for this study, three that participated in the Summer Bridge Program and three that did not. While researching the topic of transition programs for student athletes, it was difficult to find much information on the particular topic. There was much information regarding

APR, academics for student athletes and learning communities, but very little relating student athletes and learning communities.

As a learning assistant and academic tutor, there may be a bias to the results of this research. I have worked with many student athletes and with some of the students that were selected for the interviews. I feel that my previous relationship with these students allowed them to open up and give honest, in-depth answers to the questions asked during the interview.

Since the NCAA has created new academic rules and standards, colleges and universities are finding new ways to help student athletes succeed in the classroom as well as in athletics. Further research in this area is necessary because there is very little research regarding the effectiveness of transition programs for student athletes. I believe these programs can help student athletes have a better transition from high school to college by providing the tools necessary as soon as the student athlete begins college. Further research will provide models for colleges and universities to use to create successful and effective programs.

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APPENDIX A:

STUDENT ATHLETE QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Questionnaire
Academic Programs and Services that Affect Student Athlete Success

What sport do you play?

When did you first begin at Texas A&M University?

Did you attend a large, medium or small high school?

Were academics a reason you chose Texas A&M University?

Tell me about the type of coursework you took while in high school.

Describe your transition from high school to college in regards to your coursework.

Describe your transition from high school to college in regards to social and personal life.

Did you participate in the Summer Bridge Program?

- What was it like to begin college right after graduation?
- Was support available to help with the transition?
- Did it help you once your fall workouts, competition, classes began?
- If you had a chance to participate in this program again, would you? Why?

Did you receive one on one help for coursework that you needed help in?

How have you learned study skills?

How have you learned time management skills?

Did you feel academically prepared during your first semester of classes at Texas A&M University?

What was it like trying to balance academic, social and team responsibilities?

How often do you use the learning center?

Are you required to attend learning center each week?

Do you see learning center as something you have to do or is it something you need or want to do to succeed?

Have the people in the learning center been helpful in your academic success? How?

Do you feel that attending learning center has made a difference in your academic success?

Do you utilize the tutoring available at the CSAS?

How has the CSAS helped you handle your academic responsibilities?

What are your plans upon graduation/completion of your athletic eligibility?

APPENDIX B:

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**

1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186
1500 Research Parkway, Suite B-150

979.458.1467
FAX 979.862.3176
<http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu>

Institutional Biosafety Committee Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Institutional Review Board

DATE: 05-Feb-2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: RODE, CHERYL R
77843-3578

FROM: Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Initial Review

Protocol Number: 2008-0048

Title: Academic Services and Programs that Affect Student Athlete Success

Review Category: Exempt from IRB Review

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and no further review is required. However, any amendment or modification to the protocol must be reported to the IRB and reviewed before being implemented to ensure the protocol still meets the criteria for exemption.

This determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:

(<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>)

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Provisions:

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX C:
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

February 5, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:
Re: Script for recruitment of interviews

<Student Name> we are currently doing some research on how effective our academic programs have been. Since you went through our program would you like to be part of this research by interviewing? I will arrange a time based on your practice times, weights, learning center and class schedule so that you can attend. Participation will require about 45-60 minutes for the interview and is completely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions during the interview if it makes you feel uncomfortable. All data will be dealt with confidentially and no individual taking part in the study will be identified.

APPENDIX D:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is much research available regarding academics and collegiate athletics. In addition to model academic programs and studies regarding academic performance, the NCAA has enacted many rules to help student athletes achieve academic success and graduate college. The NCAA has developed several rules and measuring sticks to determine if colleges and universities are helping their student athletes succeed academically and graduate or face stiff penalties. The following is a review of the literature regarding academics programs and standards.

Academic Performance and Model Programs

Jordan and Denson

This study described a model for a departmental service that teamed up with athletics to provide easier access to services for student athletes. The Student Services for Athletes (SSA) is a program that is comprised of The Center for Counseling and Student Development and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. The SSA was designed to help the student athlete gain access to services that are offered and often utilized by regular students, but are often not used by student athletes. The services offered by the SSA include monitoring academics, providing workshops for student athletes, offering personal counseling and serving as a link for communication between the student athlete and members of the university such as faculty, coaches and staff. In the academic portion of the program, staff monitors the student athlete's academic standing, course load and progress through the desired degree plan. Although SSA staff

work closely with each student athlete regarding his or her academics, it is clearly stated in the article that it “does not provide academic advisement” (1990, p.95). Jordan and Denson discuss how many faculty members across campus contact the SSA to inquire and inform about a specific student athlete and his or her academic performance. In addition, some faculty and staff identify a student athlete’s strengths and weaknesses in order to help him or her succeed in the classroom. Several workshops are provided by this program to help the student athlete transition from high school to college and then from college to a career. The workshops also help the student succeed in the classroom and deal with the stresses associated with being a student as well as an athlete. Several skills are taught in each of these workshops, and these skills can be used throughout the student’s college career as well as in his or professional career after leaving the college or university. The final area of the SSA discussed in Jordan and Denson’s article pertains to personal counseling that is available to the student athletes. The counseling side of the department offers student athletes the opportunity to have informal discussions about things that are going on in their lives as well as provide more formal counseling as needed. As with any counseling office, all information is strictly confidential and can only be released by the student’s consent. This gives the student athlete the opportunity to discuss coaching issues without the fear of his or her coach knowing what was said. In order to help the student athlete succeed during his or her time at the college or university, the article provides an excellent model for other athletic departments to mimic.

Brown

In a recent issue of *NCAA News*, Kerry Howland, the President of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A) was interviewed by Gary T. Brown and asked to discuss how academic advisors are an asset for student athletes. Only a small portion, just 5%, of student athletes admitted to regretting the major chosen while in college which if compared to the regular student body is very low. According to Howland, athletic academic advisors help student athletes select a meaningful academic major. It is important for the student athlete to succeed both on the field and in the classroom. By evaluating a student athlete's strengths and weaknesses, an athletic academic advisor can help the student athlete select a major that will enable him or her to enjoy a career after graduation in case the professional athlete career does not become a reality. Oftentimes student athletes, like regular students do not know what type of career they are interested in as soon as they graduate high school and begin college. The regular student has the luxury of exploration because he or she is not under a rule that indicates that a percentage of the degree plan must be completed at various stages of a student's academic career. Due to the 40-60-80 rule set forth by the NCAA, student athletes must have 40% of their degree plan completed by the end of the sophomore year. This requirement leaves little room to change majors or for exploration. Athletic academic advisors have become critical for the student athlete of today.

Adler and Adler

Adler and Adler (1985) conducted an ethnographic type study on collegiate men's basketball players and how their attitude toward academics changed during the

time spent at the university. They found that the majority of the student athletes actually cared about their academic achievement and had high goals regarding academics when they began college as freshmen. The approach that Adler and Adler took for the research involved one of them being very close to the men's basketball team and the second being the outside person looking in on the situation. Adler became very close to the players and coaches and was seen as another assistant coach with the team. This study took place at a medium sized, mostly white university located in the mid-south-central region of the United States. Adler and Adler found over time that the student athletes began to care less and less about their academics due to failures in the classroom and positive feedback for successes on the court. In addition, many of the athletes just assumed that after they "put in the time," a degree would be granted. They were under the false sense of security that was produced in high school. Student athletes did not realize the amount of work and time required to succeed academically in college. The student athlete also must adjust to the new found media attention that they now receive, especially if they become a star player. Many student athletes do not have weekly interviews and national attention while in high school. Adler and Adler stated that "the athletes received greater reinforcement for athletic performance than for academic performance" (p. 245). I believe that positive reinforcement regarding academics is extremely important in order for a student athlete to succeed in the classroom and graduate with a degree.

Socialization is an important part of college life. While in college, most students get the opportunity to interact with many people from various cultures and backgrounds. Often student athletes are only socializing with other athletes. Student athletes typically live

together by team, take classes together, practice and play together and attend study hall together. Because of the schedules that student athletes must live by, there is little time left for socialization and making new friends outside of athletics. Adler and Adler discuss that the lack of social interaction with non athletes hinders the academic potential of the student athlete because their sport is a more important and interesting topic. It is also discussed that if a student athlete does well on an exam or in a class, he or she is often made fun of because of his or her success. This reinforces the fact that academics are not as important. Oftentimes, student athletes do not succeed in their classes because they are enrolled in courses that do not peak the athlete's interest. Even a regular student will be uninterested in the material presented in a history class if that person dislikes the subject; however, the course is required for graduation so the student must endure it for the semester. This study is important because it shows how a student athlete's attitude towards academics is changed through a series of events during the years at the university.

Carodine, Almond and Gratto

This article compares non-athletes and student athletes at the collegiate level. All students undergo changes and challenges as they enter and progress through college. However, "student athletes must cope with public scrutiny and extensive time demands on top of regular class work" (2001, p. 19). In order to help students succeed in the classroom, the NCAA has set limits on practice time per day and week as well as competition schedules. By limiting the time for a sport, this allows the student athlete time to devote to their course work. Since student athletes begin college with various

academic backgrounds, there are often many student athletes that struggle in the development process. Many students have an idea of what their future career will be when they graduate high school and begin college. However, many student athletes, depending on sport, plan to have a career in the professional counterpart to their respective sport. This may not be a realistic goal unless that student athlete is the star of the team. The student athlete struggles with the idea of a future career in something other than sports.

The article also discusses the negative feelings some student athletes have toward the institution. This results to some students leaving the campus before they graduate or complete their eligibility. The authors believe this happens because “participating in intercollegiate sports has great time demands and is expected to have a high level of commitment” (2001, p. 20). To combat this potential negative impact, it is suggested that student athletes are incorporated into programs with non-student athletes. This will cause greater interaction among student athletes and non-student athletes on campus. The programs can include learning communities, academic advising and new student orientations.

Several models are mentioned in the article regarding the elements needed for a successful and effective student athlete services department. The different models focused on academics, athletics, personal and social issues and development and one included a general group to include staff and coaching changes. Examples are provided within the article of services that should be offered to all student athletes. Some of these services or programs are the same services and programs available to all students at the

university. For example, all incoming students at most universities are required to attend a new student orientation. This program allows the student to get oriented to the campus and community, register for courses as well as learn the traditions of the school and meet fellow classmates. In addition to the orientation, many athletic departments hold a separate orientation for all incoming student athletes to review the rules, regulations and expectations while attending the university. According to the article, “institutions of higher education have an obligation to prepare athletes for life beyond collegiate athletic competition” (2001, p. 22). All students, regardless of participating in collegiate athletics or not, benefit from career planning as well as life skills development. Each graduate of a university should be prepared for life after college. Student athletes often have a career goal of being a professional athlete in their respective sport. However, many do not realize this dream and must choose a career doing something other than playing professional sports. It is suggested that student athlete support programs should assess all student athletes regarding their interests, personalities and values. There are several tests mentioned in the article. These include the *Sigi-Plus*, *Discover*, *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and the *Strong Interest Inventory*.

The authors give a guideline for each stage of the student athlete’s academic career as to what should be done in the career planning process. As a freshman, the student athlete should take a career planning course to introduce them to the above mentioned assessments as well as to begin exploring careers. The student is also instructed to get to know their academic advisor and discuss possible majors based on the interests of the student. Since student athletes have little flexibility in course choices

due to NCAA completion rates, the student athlete must choose a major by the end of their sophomore year. The article also suggests that decision making skills should be taught during the sophomore year. All students can benefit from a workshop or course regarding decision making. It is a skill that all will use throughout their life. Student athletes often forego an internship or co-op experience while in college due to the time demands of sports. Even during off season, the student athletes are busy conditioning and studying the game. The authors stress the importance of this experience so that the student athlete will be prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation should they not become a professional athlete. Finally, as seniors, student athletes should be given the opportunity to discuss and explore the transition from college to career upon graduation and completion of their eligibility. Some students will continue their education by attending graduate or professional school. Their advisors and coaches should offer assistance for test registration and assistance with applications as needed.

The Challenging Athletic Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/Life Skills program is a vital program that is sponsored by the NCAA. Colleges and universities across the country offer the CHAMPS/Life Skills class to their student athletes. There are five components to the CHAMPS/Life Skills program. These are academic commitment, athletic commitment, personal development commitment, career development commitment and service commitment. All of these areas work hand in hand to shape the student athlete into a well rounded person. The academic component teaches student athletes how to be successful in college. For example, they learn time management and study skills, have access to computers and computer software for their

courses, tutoring, study hall space as well as academic advising and counseling. The sport side of things, including the coaches, staff, facilities and equipment make up the athletic component. The personal development portion of the CHAMPS/Life Skills program deals with the student athlete as a person. Topics include health and nutrition, mental well-being, substance abuse, diversity and financial responsibility. Student athletes learn how to write cover letters and create a great resume, information regarding internships and co-ops, summer jobs, interview skills and how to work with a sport agent should they decide to pursue professional sports through the career development component of the CHAMPS/Life Skills program. The last part of the program is service to the campus and community. This component allows the student athlete to become part of and give back to the campus and community. Many student athletes volunteer at schools by reading to students as well as stressing the importance of education.

Academic advising and academic support services are the last area covered in this article. Student athletes usually have an academic advisor with their major department as well as an academic counselor within athletics for their respective sport. The two people along with the student athlete work together to ensure academic progress are being met as well as the student athlete being eligible to participate. Academic eligibility is reviewed each semester for all student athletes. Per the NCAA completion requirements, student athletes must meet a specific percentage of completion toward a degree based on their classification. In addition to monitoring eligibility, the academic counselor meets with student athletes to discuss registration for the upcoming semester. Most colleges and universities have some sort of academic assistance available to student athletes.

These services include study sessions, “tutoring, mentoring programs, and services for students with disabilities” (2001, p. 28). Several schools have a mentoring program for student athletes with disabilities or for students that have lower GPA’s. Some students still need to learn time management and study skills and these mentoring programs provide the guidance necessary to the student. Often these mentoring programs provide one on one time with the mentor and student athlete.

Figler

Academic advisors become an important resource for student athletes while at college. Colleges and universities have realized that student athletes are a special population of students on campus and need advising and counseling on many topics beyond the traditional student. Higher education often groups students based on academic preparedness, minority status or gender, but recently has added another category to include student athletes. Student athletes, in the past, were seen as ill prepared for college and since they were being admitted to colleges and universities, then support should be provided to help them succeed. Figler stated that “student services exist for two purposes: help students having difficulty to survive in college and assist all students to realize the upper limits of their potential” (1987, p. 74). Student athletes faced all the challenges of regular students; however, they have the added time demand of practice and competition. In addition, regular students do not typically become part of the media’s constant watch because of their success in an organization the way a star quarterback or basketball player becomes part of a constant media swarm. In this article, Figler discusses the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors to

student athletes across the country. He notes that not all advisors perform all of the duties, but it depends on the budgets and availability of services at a school. The duties of an academic advisor, may at times, overlap services provided to the student athlete else where on a campus. Monitoring a student athlete's eligibility is a key role of the academic advisor. Without this, an ineligible student could be competing and this act could later cause the team to forfeit a win. Advisors can help the student athlete explore and select a major and then help the student select courses in order to complete the degree with as little conflict as possible with practice and competition schedules. Study hall and tutoring are important services that are offered by the academic advisors and the academic services departments. Student athletes do not possess the luxury of time for studying and planned study groups or focused studying can greatly improve a student athletes academic success. Despite the fact that many student athletes plan to play professional ball in their respective sport that is most likely not going to be a reality. Therefore, career counseling is an important job of the academic advisor. This person can guide a student athlete to find other areas of interest or possibly other jobs within sports. Academic advisors can become the person a student athlete confides in when it comes to a girlfriend or boyfriend or with a family or coaching issue. The advisor must be able to counsel the student and refer the student to professional services as necessary. Some schools do not see academic services as important as others because their student athletes are currently successful in the classroom and in their sport. Also, the article indicates that males have a "higher academic risk rate than other athletes" (1987, p. 79). This could be because male sports receive more media attention and therefore the

pressure to succeed in sports is so much more important than academics. This article discusses the need for academic advisors. Since this article has been written, much legislation has passed requiring academic services provided for student athletes.

Hass

This article discusses the balancing act that student athletes endure in order to succeed in both athletics and academics. Hass identifies three areas a student athlete needs to master for success. These areas are using time efficiently, planning ahead and being disciplined. Student athletes are short on time due to their busy practice and competition schedule. For a student athlete to be academically successful, proper time management is a necessity. Athletes should find a place they can study without being distracted by other students, phones, television or instant messaging on the computer. Many student athletes have their classes in the morning and their practice in the afternoon. If at all possible, student athletes should try to complete homework and reading in between classes and before practice. After practice, the student athlete may be tired or just not in the mood to study. The second area, planning ahead, is very crucial for student athletes. Due to out of town games and odd travel schedules, student athletes often miss class and sometimes exams. By planning ahead, student athletes can study in small increments instead of cramming and reschedule missed exams as needed. It is also much easier to do homework or major assignments in small amounts instead of cramming or pulling an all-nighter. The last area discussed in this article is discipline. It is very easy to become distracted when trying to study or work on homework. Student athletes should attend study sessions and meet with tutors as necessary to supplement the

class and their own study time. Many student athletes feel that the study time required of their coach is all they need to get by, but they must evaluate their study skills and level of understanding and possibly miss out on a night out to study for an upcoming exam. By acquiring these skills as a student, they will be able to utilize them after college.

Lucas & Lovaglia

Lucas and Lovaglia (2002) conducted a study on the attitudes toward academic and athletic success between athletes and non-athletes. The article suggests that “athletic success is largely viewed in the United States as a vehicle for disadvantaged student to attain higher education” (2002). According to the article, student athletes tend to have lower graduate rates compared to non-athletes. Those student athletes that do graduate typically take a longer period of time to earn their degree and they choose majors that are not as challenging as their non-athlete counterpart. Student athletes often have goals of becoming professional athletes. Since this is their primary goal, academics are seen as unimportant. Student athletes see college as a place to perfect their athletic ability in preparation for the next level, not as an opportunity to earn a degree. Lucas and Lovaglia indicated two hypotheses for this study. Both involved student athletes and non-athletes attitudes toward academics and athletics. After surveying groups of student athletes and non-student athletes, their findings supported their predictions. Student athletes saw fewer benefits in earning a college education than non-athletes. They also saw support indicating that athletics helped disadvantaged students attend college.

Academic Standards and the Academic Progress Rate

Graham

This article discusses the academic challenges faced at Ohio State University during and after Maurice Clarett was a member of the football team. There were allegations “that he received preferential treatment in the classroom and that tutors wrote his papers” (2007, p. 60). Since his departure, Ohio State University has taken measures to improve the integrity of the academic services provided to student athletes on their campus. They separated the Student-Athlete Support Services Office (SASSO) from the athletic department. OSU did this by moving the SASSO to a different building on campus. The university has also become more selective in the admissions process of its student athletes, especially those students whose grades and test scores are considered borderline. Even though the SASSO has been separated from the athletic department, they employ several full time employees and tutors in order to provide the student athletes the tools they need to perform well in the classroom. At OSU, they allow a small number of their tutors to travel with men’s basketball in order to help the student athletes from falling behind in their courses. While in Arizona for the title game for football, the team missed the first week of school, which is a critical part of the semester. It is always good to get off on the right foot at the beginning of the semester. Therefore, several members of the staff made the trip and set up a study hall area with computers, textbooks and everything needed to complete assignments from the first week of class. This article shows that OSU understands the importance of academics and has taken measures to help their student athletes succeed in the classroom as well as on the field.

Lawry

Academic departments across the country cringe when cheating is brought up involving a student athlete. Maintaining academic integrity, especially in college athletics, is very important for the university. Student athletes must be academically eligible in order to participate in college athletics; the athletic departments must insure that the students make the grades necessary to compete. Colleges and universities have established academic services at each institution in order to monitor a student athlete's academic progress as well as help him or her select courses and give guidance on a specific major. These advisors know which courses are best for a student athlete based on the professor that is teaching the course. Graduation rates are important for colleges and universities, especially now with the Academic Progress Rate (APR) in place. Lawry states that "a student who transfers in and graduates does not count in your favor, but one who transfers out and graduates from another institution counts against you" (2005, p. 21). After this article was printed, changes were made to the rule and a school will not be penalized for a student athlete that leaves in good standing. Lawry discusses that many athletes are in degree programs that are unchallenging, but when the student graduates, he or she will have a degree. Today, many job opportunities that require at least a bachelor's degree are open to all majors, and the company will train the new employee to that organization's culture. Lawry believes "that the issue of academic integrity boils down to two kinds: cheating and the skewing of academics in the service of athletics" (2005, p. 22). He believes that solutions to this problem could include eliminating the large amount of money associated with winning, eliminating academic

rules except those that are with the institution, and requiring schools to disclose almost everything. These solutions are extreme, and I believe that disclosure would be the best option, but with limitations.

Lucas & Lovaglia

Lucas and Lovaglia (2005) wanted to study the effects of the Academic Progress Rate (APR) on college athletic programs. The APR was introduced in early 2005 by the NCAA as a way to measure the academic progress and graduation rates of colleges and universities. If a school does not meet the standards set forth by the NCAA, then sanctions can be placed upon the school's athletic programs. The authors suggest there is a negative relationship of success between athletics and academics. If a school succeeds athletically, then the student athletes are not doing well off the field and vice versa. High school athletes have many factors to consider when deciding which school to accept an athletic scholarship. Prospective student athletes often look at the success of the athletic team while their parents are concerned with the quality of education their son or daughter will receive.

Lucas and Lovaglia developed a score system of their own to evaluate schools both academically and athletically. The system is called the Student-Athlete Performance Rate (SAPR). The SAPR is made up of the APR score and the Academic Success Rate (ASR). Each component has a total point value of 1,000. The ASR is composed of several athletic achievements over a period of time. These achievements include the all time winning percentage of the program, the number of conference championships in the past five years, the average attendance at events, the number of

bowl games attended in the past five years, the national ranking for the past five years, how many players are in the National Football League, and the number of wins in the past five years. Each of these components is given a weight in the overall calculation for the ASR. Once the APR and the ASR are determined, they are combined and that score is the SAPR.

The SAPR was calculated for the major conferences and they found that schools that had student athletes successful in the classroom were also successful on the field. In addition, schools that had less success in the classroom were still successful on the field. They determined some uses for the SAPR. One important use for the SAPR is to help potential student athletes make the difficult decision as to which school to attend and play their collegiate career. Another use was to look at possible coaching changes in Division I college football. Further research discussed includes a study on men's and women's basketball programs to determine if the SAPR was high due to the institution or the current coach.

Meyer

The NCAA has created several regulations over the years in order to hold universities and student athletes accountable for academic success. This article discusses the current academic regulations set forth by the NCAA and the roles of various university staff members regarding the academic success of student athletes. In 1991, the NCAA created legislation requiring colleges and universities to provide academic support for student athletes. This initial legislation was for academic counseling and tutoring, but over the years, several services were added such as health and nutrition and

career planning. Other legislation included Proposition 48 which set the minimum high school GPA and SAT or ACT scores for incoming student athletes and Proposition 16 that is similar, but used a sliding scale to determine if a student met the minimum eligibility requirements. The NCAA Bylaw 14.3.1.1.1 was implemented for student athletes entering college for the first time after August 2003. This bylaw created the Initial Eligibility Index that allowed prospective student athletes who had a GPA of 3.55 or better to meet the entrance requirements even if their SAT score was below 400.

The newest reforms in academics relating to student athletes is the Academic Progress Rate (APR) and the 40/60/80 progress toward degree rule. The APR is a score given to each sport based on graduation, retention and eligibility. Up to four points can be earned by a student athlete each year. Penalties are assessed to schools that do not meet the minimum score set by the NCAA. The penalties can include loss of scholarships or post season play. The 40/60/80 progress toward degree rule basically requires the student athlete to complete forty percent of their chosen degree plan by the beginning of their junior year, sixty percent by the beginning of their senior year and eighty percent by the time they begin their fifth year. This can be beneficial to keep a student athlete on track to graduate within five years, but this also limits a student athlete if they decide the current major is not for them. Most students have the flexibility to change their major anytime throughout their college career with losing some credits being the major penalty. However, student athletes would become ineligible if they changed their major, especially if that major is very different from the current major. It is very hard for most college students to choose their life's career during their freshman

year. College is usually seen as a time for career and interest exploration. The 40/60/80 progress toward degree rule eliminates the opportunity for student athletes to explore other possible career choices. Academic advisors or counselors are often seen as the person accountable for a student athlete's success in the classroom. The author suggests that coaches should share in that responsibility. Coaches can be rewarded for higher graduation rates within their sport with raises and bonuses and should also be penalized with no bonus or raise for poor graduation rates. Academic advisors are an important person to the student athlete. Not only does this person monitor a student's eligibility, the advisor can counsel student athletes and refer them to services as needed such as tutoring. Academic advisors will be there to guide the student athlete through their college career.

Roach

In 2004 the journal interviewed Myles Brand, president of the NCAA regarding athletics and academics at colleges and universities. Brand discusses the changes that have been made with the NCAA regarding academics and the new APR. He indicates that standards for eligibility have been raised for incoming freshmen. For example, a high school student that will play college athletics will be required to meet certain course requirements from high school. The new APR requires student athletes to make progress toward their degree each year. The progression is based on the student athlete needing five years to complete an undergraduate degree and will therefore need to complete twenty percent each year in order to be eligible for collegiate play. Brand believes that a student athlete is held accountable by having to meet the eligibility standards, and the

APR then holds the institution accountable. With the APR, if students are not academically eligible, there is the possibility of losing scholarships for that particular sport. Since every scholarship spot is crucial, it is imperative that a university does not lose a scholarship.

Tublitz

In this guest editorial, Tublitz discusses the importance of academics in the time a student athlete is part of the university. He begins with all of the distractions that have been present in collegiate athletes recently. Some of these distractions include the fake jobs for student athletes, the hiring of strippers, tutors taking exams for student athletes and fake courses. Tublitz argues that student athletes are pressured to be perfect on the field because in order to receive more booster money, the win column must be larger than the loss column. Many schools are spending millions of dollars for state of the art facilities for sports and many are spending millions on academic facilities available only to student athletes. Many sports struggle with graduating their student athletes. The NCAA has established the APR in order to insure more students are graduating from college. The APR punishes schools that do not meet the standards set forth by the NCAA by reducing the number of available scholarships for the sport that is deficient. Tublitz believes that there are five areas that need addressing to improve academics in college athletics. These areas are “academic integrity, student-athlete well-being, athletics governance at the school and conference levels, fiscal responsibility and transparency, and over-commercialization” (2007, p.15). He indicates that academics and athletics teach necessary life skills to student athletes. Therefore, both parts of the

equation are equally important for the athlete's future. This article warns that academics are not given the importance and prominence needed and that the NCAA should intervene in order to preserve the student athlete. Many schools do not treat academics as important as the sport regarding student athletes. Schools receive money for winning teams, not graduating student athletes.

Wieberg

The Academic Progress Rate (APR) is the way that the NCAA will judge how well colleges and universities are doing when it comes to academic progress and graduation rates of its student athletes. When schools do not meet the standards, the penalties can be severe. If a student leaves the school and is academically ineligible, the school will not be allowed to replace that student's scholarship. In addition, the total number of scholarships that can be lost due to not meeting APR standards is ten percent of the allowable scholarships for that particular sport. Eventually, schools that continue to perform below standards will be banned from post season play and possibly restrict the school's membership within the NCAA. At the time this article was written, approximately one third of the Division I football programs were estimated to not meeting the new standards. These new regulations and the threat of severe penalties will hopefully help schools graduate more student athletes as well as remain successful in athletics.

Wolverton

The article, "The Athletics Department of the FUTURE" by Brad Wolverton, paints a picture of what athletic experts from across the country would like to see or

what they believe college athletics will be like ten years into the future. Several academic issues were raised for this article. Many of the experts believe that there will be an increased accountability with schools, academic services departments and especially with the coaches. It is also mentioned that designated majors at each school will be the first choice for student athletes because of the large number of electives required over a set degree plan and because these degrees may be less challenging. There are also hopes that faculty across the campuses will get more involved in athletics and there will not be a divide between the student athlete and the regular students. This may result in student athletes participating in more activities on campuses. The APR is still something that everyone is discussing since it is new and the penalties are beginning to be enforced. Academic services are finding new ways to make sure that the student athlete graduates by the time his or her playing eligibility is used up. Many student athletes are beginning their college careers the summer immediately following high school graduation and more are attending during the summers between the long semesters than ever before. The experts believe that this could be a potential problem because the summer is usually the best time for a student athlete to participate in an internship or to study abroad. It is also discussed that academic services will not only have tutors but will hire "learning assistants to work one-on-one with at-risk athletes" (2007, p. A29). Even though this article is speculation about the future, it gives a good insight as to what many experts in academics and athletics believe the future needs to be in order for success on the field and in the classroom.

Evaluation and Limitations

Each of the previous articles is important toward the research question presented. Very few schools in the country have a transition type program for student athletes, but most, if not all, have academic services. The academic services focus on keeping a student athlete eligible and getting that person graduated. Jordan and Denson (1990) focus on a model of services that is offered throughout a student athlete's college career. While these services are extremely helpful, if utilized, it was not clearly indicated if the transition workshops adequately address what a student athlete endures while making the big transition from high school to college. I believe it is a good model for other academic services in athletic departments to study and possibly utilize in order to make the college experience more positive for the student athlete. Brown's (2007) interview with current N4A president, Kerry Howland, was insightful to how athletic academic advisors do their job and how important their job is in the academic success of the student athlete. Athletic academic advisors can be a positive resource for the student athlete because he or she monitors the athlete's academic progress as well as providing encouragement.

I believe the ethnographic study conducted by Adler and Adler (1985) was very insightful to how a student athlete changes goals and perspectives over the course of their time at a university. The information collected during this study shows that student athletes come to college with the hopes of graduating and the will to be academically successful. However, athletics becomes such a large part of their daily lives that academics seem to fall by the wayside. Many student athletes experience academic failures in their courses and can easily get frustrated by the larger amount of coursework

that they experienced in high school. I think this study shows the importance of academic services provided by athletic departments because student athletes often lack the time management and study skills to organize themselves and complete everything on their own.

Carodine, Almond & Gratto (2001) present excellent models for academic services programs, but the article tends to focus on career planning. Granted, career planning is an extremely important part of a student athlete's time on campus, the student athlete must pass their classes and graduate as well. The services described in this article are vital to academic success. Academic advisors have become more than an eligibility monitor. They help guide the student athlete to tutoring or mentoring as well as class advising. The role of academic services has become important to the student athlete in order to succeed both in their sport and in the classroom. The article by Figler (1987) is dated since many schools have academic services now compared to when this article was written. However, academic advisors are very important because the NCAA has insured that academics are a key component in college athletics. Many of the daily duties for academic advisors described in this article still apply several years later. Hass (2006) describes the experiences of several swimmers during their college careers and the struggles they faced with balancing a sport and trying to earn a college degree. Throughout the article, three main points were stressed: use your time efficiently, plan ahead, and be disciplined in your daily life. These things sound very simple, but when you have a busy life of a student athlete, it is imperative that a student athlete sticks to these principles. These will help the student athlete to success in their sport as well as in

the classroom and completing their degree. Lucas and Lovaglia (2002) showed that academics are a burden to student athletes mainly because many do not see the benefit to having a college degree. This is in part to many college athletes having unrealistic plans of playing in the NFL or NBA, for example. While only a small number achieve this goal, the rest must plan for a future not playing professional sports.

Graham (2007) wrote an interesting article about Ohio State University (OSU) and the changes they have made since academic allegations hit their campus regarding Maurice Clarett. I believe the changes are excellent and that they are willing to help the student athlete succeed by providing needed services to student athletes that must travel often due to their sport. It is very important to begin the semester on the right foot and OSU is doing its best to insure, despite out of town games, even the National Championship, do not interfere with academics. Lawry's article on academic integrity is interesting and comes across as negative (2005). It is the responsibility of the institution, the academic department and the student athlete to insure that cheating or any other form of academic dishonesty is not being done by anyone. Lawry offers several options to reform the system, but all are extreme (2005). Only one option is plausible, which is the complete disclosure to ensure that academic honesty is actually taking place. Privacy and confidentiality laws prevent some of the information regarding student athletes from being released to anyone, but the student athlete. I believe this option is the best, but still a little extreme.

Lucas and Lovaglia (2005) discussed the APR and how recruits can utilize it as a tool to help them select a university. I think their Student-Athlete Performance Rate

(SAPR) is very helpful to determine the athletic and academic potential of a school. This number combines both the APR and the Athlete Success Rate (ASR) and this will give a recruit the information necessary to determine how successful they can be both in the classroom and in their sport. Wolverton (2007) wrote an interesting article about the future of college athletics. This article is important because it offers the reader the opportunity to see what many experts in the college athletics area believe should be happening. Some of the ideas presented are actually occurring at some universities across the country and others can use these ideas as a guideline for future development and growth.

Meyer (2005) discussed the various academic reforms set forth by the NCAA in recent history. I thought it was interesting to see how some academic advisors across the country see these as helpful while others see them as a hindrance. I believe there should be changes to the 40/60/80 rule because it is difficult to begin college knowing exactly what you plan to do upon graduation. As an undergraduate student, I changed my major several times before graduation. If I had been a student athlete, I would not have this important option available to all undergraduate students. Tublitz (2007) began this article with a clipping from The Onion. This clip was about Florida State University phasing out the academic part of the university and focusing solely on a winning football program since that is what everyone wanted. It is amazing how much the masses are interested in how well an athletic program is doing, but does not wonder about the academics at that same school. Alumni are donating large sums of money to the athletic programs at their schools to improve facilities for the arms race, but do not give money

to the chemistry or liberal arts departments that desperately need the money.

Wieberg (2005) discusses the APR and the penalties that can result if a program are not meeting the minimum score. He believes these penalties are harsh, but I believe they are right on target. If a school fails to meet academic standards, then they will lose up to ten percent of the scholarships in that sport. In football, there are eighty five scholarship spots and if the maximum penalty was utilized, then that program would lose nine scholarships. A football team can still function with seventy six players since there are only eleven on the field at one time. I believe that coaches will at first see this as a potential problem, but graduating all of their student athletes should be the higher goal. The interview conducted by Roach (2004) for *Black Issues in Higher Education* was with Myles Brand, the president of the NCAA. This was insightful because Brand discussed the APR requirements and the possible penalties for not meeting the APR standards. This is important because an athletic department must know where they are in the APR system and if they need to improve. Academic services can use this as a guideline for services and workshops offered to help the student athlete succeed. There are several limitations to many of these articles. First of all, there are very few, if any, studies regarding the process student athletes go through as they transition to college from high school. Also, many of the academic articles focus on the APR as well as how to keep student athletes eligible to participate in their sport. Very few schools across the country employ a summer program that aids in the transition from high school to college for student athletes. Some universities have summer programs for regular students, but oftentimes student athletes are not channeled through these programs in

order to closely monitor their academic progress over the summer. In addition, learning communities at universities have become popular recently, activities for studying and for fun. Most student athletes are unable to join learning communities outside of athletics because of the hectic and preplanned schedule that athletics requires (M. Roberts, personal communication, September 14, 2007).

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