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A Study of the Effects of Participation in Intercollegiate Athletics on Academic Achievement

Joy Gaston
Auburn University

"The purpose of this study is to measure variables that may contribute to differences among achievement between different groups of student athletes at Auburn University."

Intercollegiate athletics and its effect on higher education has been a controversial issue since the first intercollegiate competition which was a rowing competition on the Winnipesaukee River where Harvard defeated Yale in 1852. As intercollegiate athletics continued to develop over the years, so did illegalities within the system. The attitude held by most teams which is to win at all costs lead to scandals and other unethical practices at the expense of student athletes. There have been numerous reports of falsified transcripts, phantom credit hours, as well as financial and academic exploitation of student athletes. Of major concern to researchers and educators within higher education are the academic achievement levels of student athletes at Division I institutions. In 1986, the National Collegiate Athletic Association mandated Proposition 48 which requires freshman athletes to have a 2.0 high school grade point average and score at least a 700 on the SAT. As a result of Proposition 48, the National Collegiate Athletic Association frequently publish graduation rate reports that compare graduation rates of student athletes and the general student population. The reports also compares graduation rates of student athletes based on sport, race and gender. Results show that there are differences in academic achievement among student athletes based on sport, race and gender. Female student athletes graduate at higher rates than male student athletes, white student athletes graduate at higher rates than minority student athletes and non revenue producing sports graduate at higher rates than revenue producing sports.

The purpose of this study is to measure variables that may contribute to differences in academic achievement between different groups of student athletes at Auburn University.

PRESENTER

Joy Gaston is an Auburn University graduate student in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology specializing in Sports Administration. Ms. Gaston received her Bachelor of Science degree in Adapted Physical Education and Kinesiotherapy from Shaw University in 1996. While attending Shaw University she was a valuable member of the lady bears softball team. Throughout her softball career, Ms. Gaston received many honors and awards: CIAA (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) all-rookie team in

1992, CIAA Conference championship team in 1994, CIAA 2-team in 1994, CIAA All-Tournament team in 1995, All CIAA, All-Tournament team, Shaw University student-athlete academic award and Most Improved Player in 1996. Ms. Gaston was awarded a

Post-Graduate Women's Enhancement Scholarship from the NCAA in 1996 to continue her education in the area of sports administration. Presently, Ms. Gaston is a graduate assistant in the Auburn University athletic department under the leadership of the Associate Athletic Director, Mr. Jay Jacobs.