University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996)

People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions

4-26-1996

Removing the Limits to Participation: A Discussion of Isolation and Resistance in the Collegiate Athletic Experience

Juan Hill
Cleveland State University

Adam Banks
Cleveland State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi1st

Part of the Race, Ethnicity and post-Colonial Studies Commons

Hill, Juan and Banks, Adam, "Removing the Limits to Participation: A Discussion of Isolation and Resistance in the Collegiate Athletic Experience" (1996). *Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996)*. Paper 34.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi1st/34

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Removing the Limits to Participation: A Discussion of Isolation and Resistance in the Collegiate Athletic Experience

Juan Hill
Cleveland State University
Adam Banks, Co-Author
Cleveland State University

"The approaches used by many colleges and universities, while well-intentioned, have created an environment that isolates student-athletes from the rest of the college campus in an attempt to protect them from potential diversions."

Much has been said of the state of athletes who have either graduated or used all of their eligibility only to find themselves unprepared for the demand of life outside of college. Colleges and universities across the country have begun to critically examine their retention and graduation rates, agreeing on more stringent college entrance requirements and promoting academic achievement more thoroughly for student-athletes who participate on their campuses. The approaches used by many colleges and universities, while well-intentioned, have created an environment that isolates student-athletes from the rest of the college campus in an attempt to protect them from potential diversions. To worsen the effects of this isolation, student athletes become resistant to the strategies that athletic departments have designed to further their academic and personal development.

This paper will examine the attempt by athletic departments to provide for all of the academic and personal development needs of their athletes in light of recent scholarship on the effects of isolation on student achievement, and in light of data collected from current and former student-athletes at Cleveland State University. Information about the student-athletes will be obtained through a survey and focus group discussions. These instruments will gauge the degree to which they feel connected to people, departments, and initiatives on the campus that are related to their personal goals, the degree to which they were encouraged to set and pursue goals "off the court," and their acceptance of or resistance toward efforts currently in place in their school's athletic department. The use of a survey and focus group discussions will provide both quantitative and anecdotal information for consideration.

This paper will argue that colleges and universities have long been concerned about the academic achievement of their student-athletes, but that those concerns often revolve around the goal of keeping a student eligible to play rather than fostering his or her all-around development, and that this goal leads to the use of strategies that devalue the academic achievement and personal development for their own sake. Information gathered from the responses of current and former student-athletes will show the degree to which this devaluation is reflected in the attitudes and perceptions of student-athletes.

The paper will conclude with suggestions of strategies to counter the isolation that athletic programs create for their student athletes and the resistance that the student-

athletes develop toward their program's efforts in an attempt to move away from the complete service provider model in place in many athletic departments.

PRESENTERS

Juan Hill is currently a graduate student in Psychology at CSU, and a former member of the men's basketball team. He is pursuing his interest in developing strategies to allow athletic departments to become more responsive to students' needs away from their sports.

Adam Banks is Coordinator of Cleveland State University's Black Male Initiative, a program designed to improve retention and graduation rates among African American male students at CSU. His work has focused on the effects of isolation on Black male students and the unacknowledged tension that is often a part of student-teacher relationships.