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AN EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN AN ATHLETIC DEPARMENT

by

Sara Sackett

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

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Under the Supervision of Professor Barbara LaCost

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AN EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN AN ATHLETIC DEPARMENT

Sara Sackett, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2011

Adviser: Barbara LaCost

The purpose of the study was to explore the utilization of student services and support programs by athletic personnel. The sample was comprised of eight academic advisors (4 males and 4 females) from eight athletic institutions who agreed to participate in oral interviews. The institutions represented medium and large public universities. The participants expressed their perceptions of student services and support programs to the contributions and educational outcomes for student-athletes. The data analysis portion of the study produced two themes: (1) support services and programs in an athletic department; and (2) collaboration within the institution. The results helped athletic personnel to gain knowledge and experience of the importance in providing student support and services in athletic departments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been truly blessed with the support and opportunity to pursue my dream of having a Master's degree. This process has not been easy and the task has been very tedious. However, this wouldn't have been possible without the support of my advisor, the participants in my study, friends and family.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Student athletes in a higher education institutions are unique in that many require support for academics and athletics. Institutions provide each service to further the student development of the student athlete, which in turn benefits both the institution and the college student athletes. Student athletes play an important role in postsecondary institutions. They contribute to the richness of the campus environment by (a) giving school spirit and pride, (b) engaging students, alumni, and the community, (c) attracting new students by receiving national recognition for their institution and (d) raising alumni support through business involvement. Institutions support athletic programs because of the significant financial and social benefits; however, they have not been able to have support programs or services to assist student athletes (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 33).

Athletic programs play an important developmental role for student athletes. Student athletes are faced with a complex set of issues, such as demands on their time and stresses or challenges that may encompass one or more issues (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 3). This researcher explored how academic advisors can use student support services and programs to help student athletes gain and improve success in higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose for conducting the research was to explore how academic advisors in athletic departments used their student services and support programs. Hamilton et al. (2001) examined how being in college affects student athletes. Student athletes attending college have exposure and interaction with people from diverse racial, ethnic or cultural

backgrounds that may differ from their own. Broughton et al. (2001) examined the advising and counseling of student athletes. They stated:

> Approximately 10 percent of American student athletes require serious counseling. Parham identified six demands or challenges confronting college student athletes: balancing athletic and academic endeavors; balancing social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits; balancing athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium; balancing physical health and injuries with need to keep playing; balancing the demands of various relations, including coaches, parents, family and friends; and dealing with termination of an athletic collegiate career. (p. 47-48)

In this study, the researcher explored the support services and programs available for student athletes in higher education.

Research Questions

Three research questions were the focus of the study.

1. What is the perception and understanding of the student services and support programs in athletic departments?
2. Do academic advisors utilize their programs when working with students under going the transition process in higher education, and, if so, what services and programs are being used?
3. How are academic advisors using these services and programs to enhance the developmental and education outcomes for student athletes

Definitions

- Student-athlete: An individual who is competing at the varsity level where his/her sport is sponsored by the institution in which he/he is attending.
- Collegiate athletics: Sports and competition are organized and funded by institutions of higher education.

- NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is a semi-voluntary association of institutions, conferences and organizations that organize the athletic programs of many colleges and universities in the United States.
- Learning Specialist: An individual who specializes in working with "at risk" student athletes to provided assistance to help them with their academics.
- Student Life Center: An area created specifically for athletes to socialize study, develop and practice athletics.

Delimitations

There are several delimitations in the study. The researcher employed a qualitative research method. Data collection was limited to individual participant interviews. Eight participants from eight institutions were invited to participate in the study. The selected institutions were in multiple states and population size varied. For the purposes of this study, the research focused on academic advisors' perceptions of student services and support programs in an institution. The researcher was a previous student athlete in an institution with numerous student services and support groups. Her knowledge and positive outcome of student services and support groups may have affected the results.

Limitations

Limitations pertaining to the study included only academic advisors in athletic departments. Since the study was limited to the eight academic advisors from eight different institutions, participants may not have realized that services and programs are not beneficial to all student athletes. The results may be limited because the researcher gathered no information from the student athletes. Academic advisors may not have

reported student athlete's perceptions accurately; also, programs preferred by participants may have been centered on ensuring success of the athletic program and may not have assisted student athletes to the degree desired.

Chapter Two

Selective Literature Review

The goal of this study was to explore the use of student services and support programs in athletic departments. Casual comparisons of student athletes to general college students may yield only subtle differences. Both attend college; one plays collegiate sports whereas the other does not. Both must succeed academically to graduate. Including collegiate sports in their daily lives adds an unexpectedly complex layer to their lives.

Competitive intercollegiate sports in postsecondary education were not introduced in the United States until the nineteenth century (Watt & Moore, 2001, p. 8). The first intercollegiate game was in 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008, p. 131). Before that date, neither training nor the coaching had been specialized (p. 132). Participants paid their own expenses and equipment design was quite simple (p. 131). After 1880, athletics had changed the college experience of athletes (p. 131). The sport of football had quickly surpassed the sport crew version (Watt & Moore, 2001, p. 8). By then, the media coverage and scholarship for athletic events began to take form, and college athletes became a lucrative business (p. 8). Training intensified and was more in demand (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008, p. 131). Coaching became technical and specialized because decisions made on the field garnered a salary for those doing the coaching (p. 131). Because of the high demand for training, equipment cost mounted rapidly, and alumni started to play a major role in managing the teams (p. 132).

In 1927, $50,000,000 profit was made on college football games because 30 million spectators paid for tickets (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008, p. 345). Because the

revenues were so important, many college administrators saw this as a "good business" (p. 132). Those institutions were awarded lucrative scholarships for winning a football game or gaining the "ringer" (p. 132). Winning athletes provided college presidents with enthusiastic supporters of big-time athletics and also provided positive advertisement for the schools (pp. 132-133).

The NCAA was developed to reform college football (p. 8). Because of the reform introduced by the NCAA, corruptions in college athletics expanded (p. 9). Since the 1900s, the NCAA has implemented policies and programs intended to improve the college experience for student athletes (p. 9). Some question the academic performance of student athletes in a university environment (p. 11). Kaplin and Lee (2007) stated:

> An athletic scholarship will usually be treated in the courts as a contract between the institution and the students. Typically the institution offers to pay the student's educational expenses in return for the student's promise to participate in a particular sport and maintain athletic eligibility by complying with university and, conference, and NCAA regulations. Unlike other student-institutional contracts, the athletic scholarship contract may be a formal written agreement signed by the student and, if the student is underage, by a parent or guardian. Moreover, the terms of the athletic scholarship maybe heavily influenced by athletic conference and NCAA rules regarding scholarships and athletic eligibility. (p. 564)

By 1983, the NCAA was collecting data on graduation rates across all divisions (Sharp & Sheilley, 2008, p. 10). Graduation rates affirmed three phenomena: (a) rates measured the success or failure of student athletes in the NCAA institutions. (b) Participation in sports leads to persistence with graduation. (c) Student athletes who graduate held their academic life with higher regard (p. 11).

Watt et al. (2001) stated that college student athletes have faced all the challenges experienced by non-athletes (e.g., social adjustment, career exploration and intellectual growth). In addition to a daily student routine of attending classes, eating in the cafeteria,

and participating in social events, student athletes have responsibilities associated with their sport-related activities. Student athletes are constantly battling the dual role of student and athlete (p. 7).

Who are Student Athletes?

Student athletes in higher education are a unique group faced with challenges and needs that differ from their non-athlete peers. Individuals in this group are expected to be successful in the classroom and in their sport. The demands of academics and athletes are difficult to balance, especially for freshman student athletes. Most Division I schools have a high-quality support service program to assist students athletes in managing academics and athletic tasks. Gayles (2009) stated, "Some of the harshest criticism suggests that athletic programs create a separate culture in which student athletes experience lower levels of academic performance, graduate at lower rates, cluster in certain majors, and are socially segregated from the general student population" (p. 33-34).

The Institution's Obligations to Athletes

There is a serious challenge to ethical decision-making that can affect the relationship between the athletic department and the division of student affairs on campuses. The greater the revenue the athletic program brings to the institution, the greater the pressure to ensure compliance for student athletes who violate university policy. However, there is also pressure to be more lenient with athletes than with non-athlete peers because major private donors support athletics or other personal projects within the institution. Donors can be the source of pressure to ignore the rules for student behavior (Komives, Woodard & Associates, 2003, p. 125).

In order to better serve student athletes, student affairs professionals must have a better understanding of the degree and depth of the conflict between the athletic and academic worlds of the student athlete. Professionals should be aware of the guidelines placed on the athlete by the NCAA. The guidelines and regulations are not only important to the student but also the institution (Sharp & Sheilley, 2008, p. 34). Kaplin and Lee (2007) stated:

> Postsecondary institutions have extensive authority to regulate both the academic and the nonacademic activities and behavior of students. Within the confines of constitutional law, public institutions may create rules for student conduct and develop systems to determine whether a student has violated one or more rules, and if so, what punishment should be mete out. Private institutions have somewhat more leeway than public institutions, but the rules of private colleges must comport with state law and any state constitutional protections that may exist. (p. 408)

Watt et al. (2001) stated the marriage between athletics and higher education has been turbulent (p. 8). Through media, college sporting events have turned athletic programs into a big business. Universities depended on sports to attract televised sporting events for increased enrollment, alumni support, and the overall image of the university (Kaplin & Lee, 2007, p. 564). The NCAA member institution provides letter-of-intent documents to prospective student athletes. The student athlete's signature functions as a promise that the student will attend the institution in exchange for the institution's provision of a scholarship or other financial assistance (p. 564).

With the increased commercialization of college sports, universities have found greater difficult in closing the gap between college sports and the institutional mission. Sharp et al. (2008) stated, "Not only do typical athletes in big-time sports enter at an academic disadvantage, they often encounter a diluted educational experiences while attending their schools (p. 103)." NCAA member institutions are required to report

graduation rates and provide support to ensure the academic success of their student athletes (Watt & Moore, 2001, p. 11). Kaplin & Lee (2007) stated:

> Ross v. Creighton University is a high publicized case because the plaintiff was awarded a basketball scholarship from Creighton even though his academic credentials were quite below average of the average Creighton student. The plaintiff alleged that the university knew of his academic limitations but nevertheless lured him to Creighton with assurances that it would provide sufficient academic support so that he would, "receive a meaningful education." While at Creighton the plaintiff maintained a D average: and on the advice of the athletic department, his curriculum consisted larger of courses such as "Theory of Basketball." After four years, he "had the overall language skills of a fourth-grader and the reading skills of a seventh grader." The court reviewed the plaintiff's allegations that the university failed (1) to provide adequate tutoring; (2) to require that the plaintiff attend tutoring sessions; (3) allow the plaintiff to "red-shirt" for one year to concentrate on his studies and (4) to afford the plaintiff a reasonable opportunity to take advantage of tutoring services (pp. 566-567).

Pope et al. (1999) conducted research about student support services for student athletes. The population sample consisted of all athletic directors and senior student affairs officers. The instrument was designed to measure perceptions and opinions about the academic supports services available for student athletes. Officials of student affairs and athletic directors agreed on the importance of aiding student athletes. The results indicated that student affairs professionals did not know how to fulfill the student-athletes needs nor did they know what could be done to improve or expand services at their institutions. The NCAA has worked to make sure the importance of the educational process and academic success are the interest of the student and college.

Advising and Counseling Student Athletes

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) collects data on the academic performance and educational experiences of student athletes on college campuses. Their website (wwww.ncaa.org) annually publishes the academic progress rate (APR) by school; that report summarizes the APR and graduation rate data for each

institution. Results show that the graduation rates of student athletes completing their degrees are higher than that of non-athlete peers. When data are compared by sport, gender and race, the numbers differ. Male athletes enter college performing at lower levels compared to their peers. Also athletes, who competed in secondary athletic sports, enter college with lower academic high school levels and have lower first-year grade point averages in higher education. However, athletes who participate in college athletics were found to have increased motivation to complete a college degree (Gayles, 2009, p. 37).

In the 1970s, advising and counseling in athletics focused on three main areas: class scheduling, academic tutoring, and time management. Five years later, the National Association of Advisors for Athletes (N4A) was established to address the academic and personal issues for student athletes. The N4A wanted athletic advisors to help student athletes maintain athletic eligibility and achieve higher graduation rates (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 48).

Academic advisors may only focus on maintaining academic eligibility and graduation rates rather than enhancing the academic, personal and athletic development of the student athlete. Hinkle (1994) stated, "Counselors must recognize the individual and group difference that characterize the athletic population" (p. 3). For example, women and minorities may differ in their sports, and issues can arise in the participation (p. 3). Furthermore, the transitional period from secondary to higher education is very stressful to student athletes (Hinkle, 1994, pp. 2-3). Athletes who experienced difficulty with transitions have been identified as becoming clinically depressed and suicidal (p. 3). A practical approach to advising and counseling college student athlete includes four

areas: academic advising, life skills development, clinical counseling and performance enhancement.

Academic advising is a tradition and a popular approach to supporting athletes in athletic departments. Athletic programs became more extensive and assumed responsibility for the provision of extensive assistance to student athletes. Advisors implemented interventions to educate and raise student athletes' awareness of the difficulties that lie ahead. Essentially, advisors assist student-athletes in evaluating their academic performances and achieving their athletic goals (Hinkle, 1994, p. 4).

The life skills development approach focused on personal, practical and emotional issues. Athletic departments incorporated drug and alcohol education, interpersonal communication skills training, time management, career development and selection and appropriate sexual relationships. These training programs, taught in an academic course or a series of workshops, are designed to assist student athletes with issues they face during the college years (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 49).

Clinical counseling is another form of advising and counseling for student-athletes that has been introduced in the field. However, student-athletes were reluctant to use clinical counseling because they feared for their confidentiality or privacy. Furthermore, student-athletes face time limitations because of academics as well as practice and competition schedules. Also, attempts to seek counseling have not been helpful because counselors have been inadequately trained in athletic issues (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 49).

Performance enhancement is a new advising and counseling category for helping student athletes achieve their top performance. This type of counseling or advising

happens as a group of individuals and is focused on topics such as goal setting, visualization, energy management, attention control, game-preparation strategies, and post-performance analysis. Those who achieve success have the physical skills as well as psychological skills to reach their full potential (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p. 50).

Summary

Institutional administrators continue to argue over the appropriate role of athletics in higher education institutions. This encompassed the missions and policies of universities and other governing bodies such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The New England Small College Athletic Conference decided to limit post-season play. After an eight-year study of the decision to limit post-season play in NCAA conferences, the college presidents decided to reinforce academic achievement as the purpose of higher education (Hill, Burch-Ragan & Yates, 2001, pp. 66-67).

The NCAA continues to reevaluate rules and regulations of athletic departments, but the main goal of the evaluation is to structure and honor the missions of the divisions and set standards to university presidents, athletic department administrators, and athletics. Student affairs professionals need to be aware of the reforms that regulate university athletic programs and student athletes' lives. These professionals play an important role by helping student athletes learn to take individual responsibility for their actions and take advantage of positive opportunities and experiences in higher education (p. 67). Orientations need to be held for student-athletes to outline requirements for

eligibility, rules compliance, university codes of conduct, athletic policies and procedures, financial assistance, employment, and disciplinary action (p. 67).

Trends and issues present both challenges and opportunities for developing effective policies and practices. Student athletes must balance a dual role and multiple influences. For this reason, they need assistance that will help make them successful in higher education. Student athletes must be informed of the rewards of responsible behavior and the consequences associated with inappropriate choices. Student affairs professionals need to play an important role by helping student athletes learn to take individual responsibility for their actions and value the opportunities and experiences available in higher education (Hill, Burch-Ragan & Yates, 2001, p. 67). Institutions should foster a creative approach to support the development of student athletes while maintaining to institutions mission (p. 75).

Chapter Three

Research Methods

In this chapter, the researcher provides the research problem and questions, the design, the sample selection, a description of the instrument, the data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Research Problem

Student athletes are a unique group in a campus environment. Many juggle more than a 12-hour academic load and the 20-hour work schedule. In addition, there are factors that distinguish one athlete from another athlete; these differences can contribute to the multiple ways that student athletes' experience life at a postsecondary institution. The demands on a student athlete in college require additional resources to be successful at the collegiate level. The purpose for conducting the research was to explore how academic advisors in athletic departments used their student services and support programs.

Design

The researcher engaged a qualitative process to gather data about the topic. Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated that "qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables" (p. 12). Qualitative researchers have a natural curiosity that lead them to studying worlds that interest them and that they might not have access to (p. 13). Furthermore, qualitative researchers enjoy playing with words, making order out of seeming disorder, and thinking in terms of complex relationships (p. 13). The researcher selected interviews as the primary method for data collection.

Research Questions

Three research questions were explored:

1. What are the perception and understanding of the student services and support programs in athletic departments?
2. Do academic advisors utilize their programs when working with students under going the transition process in higher education, and, if so, what services and programs are being used?
3. How are academic advisors using these services and programs to enhance the developmental and education outcomes for student athletes?

Site

The research took place at the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4a) Convention at the Hyatt Regency in Dallas, Texas. The organization offers a diverse education service and is both professional non-profit. Members are engaged in academic support and student services and are dedicated to enhancing the opportunities for academic, athletic and personal success for collegiate student-athletes (http://nfoura.org/about/). The national convention is held every year for all members of the N4a. The interviewees represented several large universities and one medium college located across the United States. The sites included both public and private higher education institutions. Descriptions and classifications of each institution are provided below using guidelines of the Carnegie Foundation:

"A University." "A" University was a large, research based, four-year, private not-for-profit, university with a high graduate coexistence. Undergraduate programs

include arts and sciences/professions with graduate programs available. The approximate enrollment population of "A" University was 14,350.

"B University." "B" University is a large, research based, four-year, public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program at B University consisted of arts and science/professions. The approximate enrollment population of B University is 30,049.

"C University." "C" University was a large, four-year, public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program at C University consisted of a balance of arts and sciences/profession. The approximate enrollment population of C University was 27, 241.

"D University." "D" University was a large, research, four-year public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program at D University was a balance of arts and sciences/profession. The approximate enrollment population of D University was 32, 817.

"E University." "E" University was a large, high research based, four-year, public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program of E University was a balance of arts and science/professions. The approximate enrollment population of E University was 20,435.

"F University." "F" University was a medium, research-based, four year or above, public institution with some graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program of F University was mainly arts and science. The approximate enrollment population of F University was 7,874.

"G University." "G" University was a large, high research based, four-year, public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program of G University was a balance of arts and science/professions. The approximate enrollment population of E University was 31.237.

"H University." "H" University was a large, high research based, four-year, public institution with a high graduate coexistence. The undergraduate program of E University was a balance of arts and science plus professions. The approximate enrollment population of E University was 41,674.

Sample

The sample consisted of eight athletic personnel from athletic departments in eight university settings. Only individuals involved with advising student athletes or who had previously advised student athletes were invited to be participants. Initially, Teresa Evans-Hunter, the Executive Director for the N4a, identified the participants for the study and made initial contact by phone (Appendix B) to determine if the participants were willing to be interviewed. Then, the researcher contacted the prospective participants by e-mail (Appendix C) and invited them to participant in the study.

The participants had four or more years experience in advising student-athletes. Two had doctorate degrees-both in educational counseling and psychology. Six participants had Master's degrees in the categories of: art education, student personnel, physical education, counseling, sports psychology, informational technology, and sports administration. All participants had varied experiences in athletics such as: (a) previous student-athlete, (b) internships with athletic departments, (c) liaison for the athletic department and (d) graduate assistant during a graduate program. Anonymity was

assured to each participant; the researcher is not identifying the participant with the site nor using names to ensure anonymity.

Instrument

The data collection instrument (Appendix A) was a 15-question interview protocol developed and administered by the researcher. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), "interviews are designed around a balance of main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (p. 152). The authors advocated, "… the researcher should look for depth and detail, vivid and nuanced answer, rich with thematic material" (p. 129). The instrument was critiqued with a group of graduate students engaged in a research class. Feedback was provided by class members and relevant changes were made to improve the clarity and structure.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data were collected, primary researcher sought approval from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (Appendix D). Upon approval, the researcher contacted Teresa Hunter who had agreed to identify and make initial contact with participants from those who would be attending the N4a conference. Once the names were given to the researcher, e-mails were sent (Appendix C) to each participant inviting them to participate. When the participants agreed to participate, an Informed Consent Form was provided at the interview explaining in detail the particulars of the study. The researcher reserved a quiet area at the Hyatt Regency to administer the 15-question face-to face interview. All interview questions pertained to the participants' academic support services and programs, work history, and their perceptions, opinions and understanding of their student support services and programs. Each interview lasted

between 50 and 55 minutes. Prior to each interview, the participant signed the informed consent which provided permission to use two digital hand-held recording devices to secure the comments during the interviews. The researcher transcribed all digital recordings after the convention. All recordings and consent forms were kept in a lock box in the investigator's home for one year following the close of the study.

Data Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated, "qualitative analysis can be a daunting process (p. 20)." Rubin and Rubin (2005) indicated "analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining material from the interviews to extract the meaning and implications to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative (p. 201)."

Rubin and Rubin (2005) maintained that the first step is to keep the original interview on file and make a copy to mark up the analysis (p. 206). The investigator read over each transcribed interviews several times to become familiar with the participants. The researcher used an open coding method to organize the data. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated, "Coding involves systematically labeling concepts, themes, events or topical markers so that you can readily retrieve and examine all the data units that refer to the same subject across your interview" (p. 207). Corbin and Strauss (2008) emphasized that "coding should begin soon after the first interview or observation/video is complete because the first data serves as a foundation for further data collection and analysis" (p. 163). After reading through the transcriptions several times, the researcher circled and underlined key words, phrases, events and ideas that stood out in the data. Codes then were assigned to the data.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) directed researchers to "[s]ummarize the file by sorting your data in a file of coded data (p. 225)." The investigator followed this method by cutting up the transcripts according to coding categories. Then the data were organized into groups related to similar patterns or meaning. The data were then re-organized into themes with subsets.

Researcher Bias

The researcher in this study was the main data instrument and all data were filtered through her. Consequently, there was an opportunity for the analysis of the data to be biased. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated, "Interviewing is the understanding that the interview and interviewee are in a relationship in which there is a mutual influence, yet the individuality needs to be recognized" (p. 33). However, the researcher was under the supervision of Dr. Barbara LaCost who identified two biases. The researcher had had experience as a student athlete and positive experiences with a university that provided substantial student-athlete support services and programs. Also, the researcher was a volunteer coach at an institution that provided support and services to student athletes. Furthermore, the researcher held a high value and strong positive opinions about the institution's obligation to provide support to student-athletes. These experiences with athletics had the potential to influence the process on how the researcher analyzed and interpreted results. However, the researcher maintained an awareness of those biases during coding and sorting and conferred with the advisor while analyzing data; thus, the researcher was confident that controls for bias were in place.

Chapter Four:

Results and Analysis

Student athletes are a unique group in a campus environment. Many juggle more than a 12-hour academic load and the 20-hour work schedule. In addition, there are factors that distinguish one athlete from another athlete; these differences can contribute to the multiple ways that student athletes' experience life at a postsecondary institution. The demands on a student athlete in college require additional resources to be successful at the collegiate level. The purpose for conducting the research was to explore how academic advisors in athletic departments used their student services and support programs.

Research Questions

Three research questions were explored:

1. What are the perception and understanding of the student services and support programs in athletic departments?
2. Do academic advisors utilize their programs when working with students under going the transition process in higher education, and, if so, what services and programs are being used?
3. How are academic advisors using these services and programs to enhance the developmental and education outcomes for student athletes?

Overview of Themes and Sub-themes

In this chapter the researcher presents the themes and sub-themes that were documented through the voices of the athletic personnel interviewed. Two themes and seven sub-themes emerged from the data.

Themes and Sub Themes

Support Services and Programs a. Challenges and Issues b. Programs Available c. Program Implementation	Collaboration within the Institution a. Building relationships with Campus Entities b. Communication with Coaches c. Communication with Professors d. Communication with Student Athletes

Theme One: Support Services and Programs

According to Carodine et al. (2001), student athletes are a diverse special population because of their roles on campus (p. 19). Some enter campus with low entrance scores and poor high school grades and must try to cope with the time demands, regular class work and public scrutiny (p. 19). All participants agreed that student athletes are a special group to work with in higher education. Three of the academic advisors stated that it is the institution's obligation to serve the student athletes with the resources needed to be successful. The researcher cautions that participants' perspectives may have been influenced because of their experiences as student athletes or the job experiences. Reviewing the participants' views emphasized the importance of the value in developing programs and services for student athletes to be a successful part of society after college athletics. The following sub themes elaborated multiple aspects of the

participants' views gathered from the interview: (a) challenges and issues, (b) programs and services available to student athletes and (c) program implementation.

Challenges and Issues. "The one intriguing thing about the whole profession is that you are doing an impossible job and trying to do it well, but you are in a situation where it is very difficult to win," said one participant about advising student athletes. Five of the participants referred to the words of "Time," "NCAA," and "Stigma" when describing the challenges and issues to develop support programs and services. Three participants reported that time was a student athlete's worst enemy. Participant C stated,

"I feel student athletes are stretched so thin, and their time is so valuable. It is the biggest challenge in helping them balance the time-management of scheduling classes, practice and meetings. . .." She added, "That is not to say that regular students don't have that challenge with things like that, but it's different pressure with student athletes."

Another participant whose student athletes were expected to take classes for the full year revealed, "I think the biggest challenge that we have working with student athletes is the time demands of their sport. It has changed since I have played and it continues to get more and more where we put a lot on their plate." He continued, ". . .it is a year round full of expectations now and I think those time demands of them make it extremely difficult to be successful as a student athlete and potentially of their major of choice."

Participant H agreed with the other participants and noted, "I think it is time; it's resources; and student athletes today, believe it or not, are different than they were 10 years ago and 20 years ago."

Participant A shared concerns about the NCAA's influence on time for academics. ". . . NCAA regulations and laws continue to change while they think they are helping students; a lot of times they are hampering student athletes . . . every year there is a different change and that can hurt student athletes."

Participants emphasized that they were challenged by work with student athletes and they saw that as limitation. Howard-Hamilton and Sina (2001) stated participation in college athletics have an effect on student athletes in many ways (p. 35). Participant F noted that ". . . some athletes don't follow through, and some don't necessarily listen to your recommendations . . .." He added ". . . you feel like you are chasing them and babysitting."

Participant A reported that student athletes have responsibility to learn to make decisions that are best for themselves. She emphasized, "Ultimately it is on them and not on me. There is only so much I can do . . .." She also commented: "I see a lot of the student athletes wanting to do the hard majors; they want to do econ; they want to do pre-med; they want to do engineering; but they can't always handle it." On the same topic, Participant D confirmed, ". . . making the student aware of the situation that he/she finds himself/herself in is his or her responsibility. . ." She also added, ". . .the moment the coaches get involved, it is a blame game sometimes, and that is very unproductive."

Participant H was familiar with handling more problems than handling positive outcomes. He stated, "I am dealing with behavior issues, academic dishonesty and choices that will affect eligibility." He elaborated,

> We had a student athlete who claimed to have ADHA. She was recruited to our institution and from a long distance away had a very low-test score. So she came in as an at-risk student athlete. She did have a horrible fall semester and the coach blamed my program and me because we didn't provide services for her

> ADHD, and our response was [that]we asked her to provide documentation. She never did. We asked her to do some proactive things just in study hall and tutorial. She didn't respond. So it took us a semester to get her in for testing. A lot of that had to do with her lack of cooperation and responsiveness to issues about documentation. The coach feels we let her down, and I feel very strongly she let herself down, her parents let her down, and the coach recruited her.

Two other participants mentioned the challenge in promoting the importance of having an education and a degree. In an attempt to educate student athletes on the value of an education one participant said, "There is a disconnect between 'I want to have a degree,' and 'I want to become educated.' Everyone wants their degree, but they are not necessarily willing or have the time to put into actually becoming educated. Or they just don't care to put in the time. They think it is just a piece of paper." Another participant commented,

> I try to educate a lot about the value of their degrees and more importantly not just having the paper itself, but the education behind it. We tell our students there is a difference between earning a degree and earning an education. You can have the paper; there might be no meaning behind it because you barely skated through classes; you actually never learned anything, so you are going to have a time putting it to use.

One participant mentioned that lack of motivation is an issue with student athletes. Lack of motivation in student athletes at an institution of higher education could limit the use of support services and programs for academics. Participant G said,

> I don't understand the lack of motivation for some individuals. I have always been a highly motivated individual. I couldn't understand why some folks didn't have that motivation towards academics and bettering their future and expecting themselves. I wondered how they can turn it on and off. How can you expect so much from yourself and be so driven in one aspect of your life, but be completely lack luster and not motivated or driven in a different area of your life?

Participant B observed,

> Lack of motivation is the biggest issues I face-especially in the men's basketball side with the enticement of being able to go to the NBA. Sometimes being able to

> play professionally, you get a lot of the kids that are just like, 'Ehh…it is not my thing.' So it is really dealing with the lack of motivation on a regular basis."

Hill et al. (2001) stated student athletes' experiences are affected by more than what happens in colleges and universities. Global economic influences, social and moral issues affect the athletic competition at the college level which provides a popular means for mass entertainment (p.65). Academic advisors are faced with external issues that are linked to student athletes brought into the institution because of their athletic prowess and who are expected to succeed.

Two participants focused on unprepardness for higher education. This issue can be a burden to the institution, academic advisor and the student athlete because the institution can not offer services for them. Participant B said,

> They are coming in less and less prepared for college. I think that is a hindrance right off the bat. I think, especially, when you are at a tough academic school and the part where you are looking at your standard population. This student athlete is the incoming freshman class, and he/she is not even close in where they are ACT, SAT or even GPA wise.

Participant D added, "It's working with students that are extremely, extremely under-prepared for college. They are diagnosed with learning challenges, but, beyond having that learning disability, they also probably do not belong in college, in a sense."

When asked to expand on the topic, the following example was presented,

> …These students are at a reading level maybe at a 3rd or 4th grade level. It puts you in a very hard situation because you want to work on skill building, but then a paper is due. Ethically, a lot of the students that I have, because they quickly realize that they might not be equipped to be in college, their defense mechanism is to turn to maybe cheating. When I become aware that they have become engaged in some form of cheating, then I educate the students. I explain that I would rather have them fail doing it the right way then fail doing it the wrong way because there are going to be consequences. I am constantly educating.

In addition to current issues and challenges with support services and programs, some participants mentioned the future issues are likely to arise with student athletes that could prevent the institution from providing services or programs. All the participants believe the structure landscape and everything will blow apart in athletics.

Participant D said, ". . . Rules are continuing to change, so you are continuing to get the students who are very challenged. I feel like they are getting "hand held" rather than actually developed, where their days are planned, their lives are planned."

Participant C agreed and stated,

> I don't think the landscape is going to look the same in 10 or 15 years. I think the lawsuit using student images and the escalation of coach's salaries and facilities expenditures, eventually something or the bubble is going to burst and either we are not going to be seen as a non-profit anymore.

She added, ". . . Collegiate athletics is going to end up making a shift, and that is certainly going to affect our student athletes." Participant H mentioned people would finally see college athletics for what they really are: Entertainment industry. He stated,

> The thing is going to blow apart. This thing is a house of cards. Gambling incidents, what's happening at Ohio State is more prevalent than not. All these things are going to blow, and the house of cards is going to fall down. People are going to look and see us for what we are which we are an entertainment industry located on a college campus. And if we would just understand that, and say, "Ok, now since we are. Let's recognize this, and how do we treat these student athletes."

He also commented,

> If they would enforce 20 hours a week, what a novel idea but we create rules we can't enforce, and then we hire coaches who will break them, and we hire athletic directors who will ignore them, and college Presidents who just want to get by.

Programs Available. All participants have implemented and used support programs for their student athletes. Academic advisors have created many successful programs that were useful in helping student athletes succeed. Participant A implied that incoming

freshman require their academic advisor hold their hands a little more than what they really like to do. She mentioned, "We are not a school that will do everything for them all four years; we put a lot of responsibility on them." Two participants explained their program implemented is used to help incoming freshman student-athletes begin their success academically. Participant D explained, ". . . It's called pods. It is a program to make a transition, for in-coming freshman, in summer to the fall." Participant F elaborated on their program for incoming freshman – a program similar to participant D,

> We call it the "Academy" and it is like an extended orientation [that] a lot of incoming freshman go through during the first few days of living on campus – going through an orientation experience, where students are required to go to workshops, required to go hear speakers and learn about support services, __ just learning about having success on college campus.

He added,

> We do that throughout the first semester of their freshman year, so they are obligated to meet one night a week. It's not a class they are not getting credit, but they sign a contract if they are participating on a varsity team they have to partake in the "Academy." Their obligations would include attending one night a week workshop. We have various subjects that we cover, we have speakers from the career center come in and talk, and we will talk about the honor code. We have educational speakers on drugs and alcohol. We had a hazing speaker come in and talk abut what is hazing and what is not hazing. We know everyone tries to have those team bonding activities but we want to make sure they know where the line is and not to cross it.

Participant C related many programs that her institution gave to student athletes. She noticed many student-athletes who were also parents, as a result the athletic department offered to do workshops to educate these young parents.

> There are a lot of guys and girls who have children, or a couple who are married. So doing some of the family support workshops such as: 'Where can you get food stamps if you need them right now to help support your child?' or 'What kinds of low cost child care are available so that I can be in school, go to practice and my spouse can be work or going to school?'

Participant G's institution offered programs for academics but also for relationship building. He explained, "As a director my focus has probably changed to more faculty/staff relationship building." Elaborating further, he said they have created a program to try to continuously build those relationships,

> We do this every month from September to March and then we do recognition cards, where we hand write cards to faculty. For the handwritten faculty cards, we have a graduate assistant go to our institutions website and do administrative duty to check the website once a week, so when a faculty member is recognized for winning an award, or getting a grant, or being honored by their association, we write them a handwritten note card and all our staff signs it; then we send it over in the mail. We don't need anything from them. We wanted to create a program where we recognized them for just being them, and not because we needed something from them.

Participant H shared his program to promote student athletes and give positive communication to the campus.

> The newsletter I first developed at my current institution, but implemented at another, was designed to communicate positive stories about students and their accomplishments. [It was about] students writing articles about the student athletes and the student athlete advisory committee, the community service issues, leadership issues, citizenship issues as well as being a communication device to students about things on campus. That was a promotional piece we would send to campus. We wanted to distribute this newsletter to our stakeholders throughout the university.

He further elaborated,

> At the current university I am at, we went to an electronic format. The newsletter is produced by student leaders and becomes somewhat of an advertisement for our hours and our services. It addresses compliance issues, student issues and citizenship services leadership. It is a positive communication device about things that student athletes are doing well. Again, we use it across campus and throughout the department.

All participants pointed to a favorite program they deemed to be a successful intervention for their athletes at their institutions. Participant G mentioned, ". . .

implementing an academic playbook, where we utilized a playbook from their sport and take the language that the coaches are using and put it in the academic side so that the expectations are consistent from athletics to academics and there's not a drop-off where we expect high things athletically but be eligible academically." He emphasized that the playbook developed young men and women and was intended to help them be

> … more successful for the forty years after they leave our institution, than the four years they are at our institution. If our only goal was to make sure they are only successful for four years, they would hate graduation and then we have kids with have "X's" on their backs. We then haven't done our job appropriately. But if we prepare them to be extremely successful once they leave our institution then we have done our job.

One participant also explained an experience of having no resources available after graduation and decided to implement a mentoring program to provide excellent support for his student athletes.

> *Tigers for Tomorrow* is really the key of what we do. I don't think some schools, unfortunately, focus on that. They focus on the eligibility and potentially graduation, but as a former student athlete the biggest negative that I remember being a student athlete and having a lot of programming available to me while I was an athlete, but as soon as my eligibility came to an end, then I was shown the door. All the programming went away.

He added,

> So, to me, what that said was that as long as you are a resource to us, we are going to help you, but as soon as we don't need you anymore, than we don't really focus on you anymore. When we did exit interviews, a lot of our student athletes, before we implemented *Tigers for Tomorrow* approach . . . all stated as soon as they were done with their eligibility that they felt the programming was not for them. We had a lot of student athletes leave with a negative perception of their time at our school, and not only our school, but all schools, because of that lasting negative experience.

Participant C described her three favorite programs. She said,

> We really get to recognize students for what they are doing off the field or off the court. I think so many people don't realize how many strong students we have and how great they are. You hear always the bad things that happen so it's really fun to recognize them. We invite professors and faculty member to that event so it is nice to see them and have them say, "Oh my gosh! I didn't know our student athletes were so good," or "Student athletes do have a lot on their plate." Also I really enjoy our Welcome Back event. At the beginning of every fall semester, we have a big picnic. It's picnic style and for everyone who comes back we go over sportsmanship and expectations. It is fun to see everyone back and refreshed and energized.

Participant C commented on a mentoring program similar to Participant G. She stated, "…We are going to be starting Lobos supporting Lobos. Where every team is going to pick one home event that they want to highlight and they want to get as many other student athletes as possible. "

Participant F found sports psychology to be useful. He added, ". . . It worked on the whole mental preparation and fear of failure. Using that energy in converting it into positive energy."

Participant H highlighted his favorite program on relationship building.

> My favorite program is teaching staff members to have maximum contact with their students. Because that is what makes us different, an advisor on campus will have 20-minute appointments twice a semester and that is all they get. It's all they want and they are an 8 AM to 5 PM people. We have relationships with the student athletes and if we are going to impact them then we have to connect with them, maximum contact.

When student athletes first enter college, it is crucial for them to be able to succeed during their four years in college. Carodine et al. (2001) stated student athletes must cope with public scrutiny and extensive time demands on top of regular class work (p. 19). The participants all reported implementing skills to help students be academically prepared.

Participant H said,

> If can create an atmosphere that promotes connectiveness to the University, that student athlete comes into campus and says, "Okay, this place cares about me. This place is going to serve me." And then they are taught in return that they need to respond in kind and meet expectations.

He added,

> If I can establish connectiveness then those students are going to take better care of their University and they will take better care of themselves. That connectiveness is everything, especially for the risk behavior kids….this may sound funny but just doing the fundamentals can help too. We do fundamentals which are: required study table, effective tutoring, it is structured and rigid because the students have to understand it and use it.

Participant D gave some different examples to illustrate what would be best to prepare her students academically.

> It's day by day that I try to work with a lot of them on their time management. I need to be very familiar with their syllabus. It's kind of a process per semester I have to become very familiar with the courses they are taking, the requirements of those courses, the due dates and the expectations. As much as they need to be held accountable and know those things, I need to become familiar with them.

She elaborated further,

> For some students it is a process of a year, who know through their freshman year where I don't have to remind them to bring something, they figured it out they need to do it or I don't have to put certain things on the "to do" list anymore. They are doing it independently without a text message reminder. On the bigger scale, some students, it would be that they are taking notes in class, they have learned that taking notes is a good study habit, they have to do it so if I say we are going to study for a test today they just don't show up with their book, but they show up with their book, notes, flashcards and highlighters.

Participant C identified a similar program,

> We have a freshman transition course, which touches on reading skills. For example, how is reading a college textbook different than reading a high school textbook? Also, what are professors looking for differently than high school teachers? With some of the student athletes it is more than preparing and putting their schedule together for them and you being there when they are doing it so you know it is getting done. And then you are still teaching them those same study skills so the kids that come in and say, "I studied but all I did to study was

> read my textbook and reread my notes." And then for kid who you are giving them skills such as how to type a note card or bingo games.

Participant B pointed out having knowledge of the environment and student athletes to help make student athletes successful academically.

> I think knowing your campus and knowing your students really try to balance out their schedules so they are not difficult and tough schedules the whole time. I truly believe in a plugging away mentally so having them take classes, like math and English in their first two years without waiting to the last two years of school. We can put the students in a position where they having to take math in probably four years. I think you are doing a disservice.

Additionally, Participant B said, ". . .knowing that students are normally very competitive helps because I do academic groups. There are four people in a group, and I try to balance them out with high level student, middle, low and then the low-end student. Then I have those group compete academically against each other."

Participant B added another academic preparation tool to help his student athletes. He said, ". . . calendar and planner, it sounds silly and it's not something that is expensive, and it's not elaborate, but we started doing notebook and planner checks. We started to check to make sure they are taking notes in class and all of a sudden kid's grades go up."

Study hall was mentioned by six academic advisors as a type of program that was implemented into their athletic department.

Participant F said,

> I feel the structure and nature of having a mandated study hall, telling them where to go, and what time to get these things done. We feel it helps them with the overall time management, and being able to balance their schedule better. We mandated study hall for all sports. All incoming freshman are required to attend study hall for a minimum of one to two nights a week depending on the agreement that has been prearranged with the coaching staff and myself.

He added,

> Then there are the "at-risk" group, depending on their GPAs it will determine how many nights a week they are obligated to attend study hall. The closer they are to a GPA 2.0, the more nights they attend study hall. The maximum number nights of study hall one individual student athlete could be mandated is four nights a week. Our philosophy in mandating for all sports is not assumed just by looking at grades and SAT scores. We know our incoming athletes are prepared for college, but I believe there is still a transition where no one is really ready for the time management of that first year. In that respect we just want to be careful and put our athletes in a situation to be successful.

Participant B stated,

> I mandate study hall for basketball because it is the nature of the sport. It is an at-risk sport and is high profile. It is the only sport sanctioned by the NCAA that goes year round, and you have to be eligible yearly. Baseball has gone to that direction, now football is headed in that direction, but men's and women's basketball truly was the only sport, and it's the only sport that goes across two academic semesters.

He elaborated,

> We do a lot more individual objective base type study hall. We will bring them in sometimes in groups. Sometimes, we will have a group that will come in the morning just based on the class schedule. We could have a group in the afternoon before practice, and probably another group come in the evenings, but everything is objective based. They are working with a tutor, mentor or academic coach either getting their assignments done, or having the ability to leave once they complete their assignments for the day.

Participant H identified similar study hall recommendations,

> There is a certain GPA cutoff. All first year students have to attend study hall and after that there is a GPA breaking point where they would be mandatory. We have mandatory Sunday sessions from 1 PM to 3 PM. Then we actually have study hall from 8 AM to 9 PM and we sit down with the students and allow the students to identify the times they would want to come in. We tried to give them some input and we felt they would be more motivated and be productive if they had some input. Plus they also know when they are most productive.

He added,

> If they are a person that is productive in the mornings, then they have some input in coming in the mornings. I don't want to put someone in at 8 AM or 8:30 AM study time if they are someone who studies better in the evening, such as after dinner or after practice is over with. The student athletes know when they study the best and it is dialogued and we work together on those.

Participant E discussed how her study hall is implemented by the athletic department: "Students have to have a minimum of 6 hours of study hall per week for incoming students and students whose GPA is actually above a 2.0. We are trying to raise it because of the retention issues."

Participant A mentioned she doesn't mandate study hall, but it varies from team to team,

> I have only two teams that mandate study hall, that's women's soccer and women's lacrosse just for freshman. At our institution, study hall is "on your own" where I have them sign in and sign out. We don't have a study hall monitor. The student comes to the main study hall area during the daylight hours so all their study hall is between 8 AM and 5 PM Monday through Friday, so I am up there when they are there.

Participant D emphasized,

> I run the study hall program at our institution so I coordinate football and men's basketball monitor study hall. I am actually in there physically two nights a week with them. All of the freshman student-athletes have mandatory hours, but not structure study hall per say. They have eight hours as a freshman that they have to put into our academic center in the form of mentoring, tutoring, or independent study. We track all those hours.

Study hall is important for preparing the student athletes, but also an important program available to student athletes is mentoring. Three academic advisors said mentoring is extremely important.

Participant G said,

> Academic mentors are extremely important to what we do. We have them work with the student athletes on the ground level stuff and the detail oriented issues. That first year transition for freshman is so difficult in every aspect athletically or academically, also socially, emotionally and physically. There are so many

> transitional issues they have to deal with, but the mentor focuses on building the relationship and spending a lot of time with them. They meet two to three times a week for four to five hours a week, this probably is the most important things we can do to help them transition well.

Participant D mentioned, "Academic mentoring is the best for my students. I feel that a lot of times people need a tutor for a class. It's not that they don't understand the context of the subject matter, it's that they don't know how to approach how to study and that's where the mentors come in."

Participant E discussed,

> Mentors can interact with students in a way that we just don't have time to. Through them being a generalist type of program the students have what is like a peer mentoring program. These are students but not student athletes usually but sometimes they are. They know the campus and the resources available. The peer-to-peer works really well. The student athletes don't need tutors through all their subjects, but they do need a generalist that say, "You're having trouble with your psychology 100 class and let's get the book out and see." This way they are modeling for student athletes.

Not only is it important to provide programs, but also building resources for student athletes. The idea of a student life center for student athletes to gather was mentioned. An academic advisor indicated having a place for student athletes could be important to their success in higher education.

Participant E said,

> I think it is really important to have a student life center. Our center there is no press allowed. It is a place for them to have a sense of ownership. Sometimes it can seem like social hours, but they don't have lounges. I think having a place where they can meet with someone and have privacy, so they can let their guard down and be vulnerable and work on their things they need to strengthen is so important. They are out in the public eye because we are the only institution in town. It is an interesting thing because people know who they are. I think it is really important for them to have a place that is theirs.

Participant G and Participant H both agreed it is important for student athletes to have a place that will support and give resources while participating in athletics.

Participant G said,

> I played at a Division II university that didn't have a resource for anyone other than their football and men's basketball team. So as a baseball player, there wasn't anything and the impact that I feel we make at our institution because of the services we provide is tremendously different than what I saw what some of my teammates go through.

Participant H said,

> If you can create an inclusive area for students in which it is almost a sanctuary where they can get on a computer, they can meet with a counselor, they can solve a financial aid issues and they can meet with a career person plus do quiet study and most importantly meet a tutor. If you can do that one stop shopping in a safe environment, I think that is a preeminent consideration because efficient/effective use of time. Student athletes need their privacy especially-in tutoring and the studying and confidentially.

He also added, "Student athletes need some kind of protection. I mean, there are medical facilities to go to for medications and they have training facilities to do their training, and practice facilities to do their practice, so why not have a place where they can develop their career and academics?

Program Implementation. Academic advisors have a passion for student athletes and the will to continue to help provide services and programs for student athletes. Many have stated if resources were not an issue, then they would continue to better develop their programs.

Participant G emphasized if money was not an issues he would continue to work on his *Tigers for Tomorrow*.

> I think we do a good job at preparing them for that next step but what we need to do is a better job of actually placement/recruitment and building relationships with companies around the country and having that network of companies that we can get student athletes to go to that next movement. Everybody talks about student athletes that get the most attention are the at-risk and high profile sports. But that is a small portion of our student athlete population. That is 50 athletes of 500, that is ten percent of our students, the 450 athletes are extremely well

> prepared, are very successful and will be extremely successful once they leave our institution. Just because they are good, proficient and can be responsible doesn't mean that they don't need the programming and help.

Participant F gave a similar example.

> It would be difficult to manage but it would be more or less like a program specifically designed to assist student athletes with career preparation. I would like to see career services doing something where they have alumni service as mentors and they have their information listed on the website. If you are majoring in this particular major you can call these people who are alumni, who can possibly help with internship opportunities and other things. I wish we could have former student athletes who have graduated within three to seven years ago, and they are established in their careers. They come back and do a career presentation to assist student athletes from resume writing to mock interviews. I think student athletes have a special bond and special relationship.

Participant D gave an example, ". . .enhancing our occurring mentoring program and reducing the number of students per mentor so they can spend more time with our athletes. Then they can spend more time not just worrying about that particular week of assignments, but actually work on the skill building set."

Participant C wanted to focus on a leadership program because he has seen the lack of leadership by the student athletes.

> . . .We don't have bad kids or anything, but I feel like they don't know what it means to step up and take the initiative and be a leader and role model all the time. I think one of things I would really like to work on especially with SAAC is teaching a leadership theory because people don't realize how applicable it is to everyday life.

Participant B gave an example of a slightly different program. She said, "I'd like to teach mini sessions such as note taking and an etiquette type programming, really trying to give them tools to be successful young people for the transition from the campus to the real world."

When you are trying to implement a program there are always limitations, frustrations and barriers that will not make the process easy. The participants perceived that the NCAA can hamper the student athlete development. Participant H stated,

> There are escalating requirements, academic requirements, there is the initial eligibility standards that create this gap between the two, and the NCAA blames institutions for admitting the students that don't meet their profile, but we have competitive advantage issues. The NCAA is the biggest pack, they sell amateurism and integrity, they are selling this and it is not true. If you unplugged the TV sets and you pulled television from college athletics then no more televised contest of any kind. It would take it back to the 50s and 60s where it became more whole where someone really did it for the love of the sport and for the love of the school. We sell that but it is not true. The NCAA has every rule and regulation about, "I'm a student first and amateurism and integrity." But it is not true.

Participant D indicated, ". . .Legislations and the rule changes are going to start to feel a dependency. There is going to be more pressure on how good your tutoring or your mentoring services are."

Participant B said,

> ". . .rules that are being placed by the NCAA sometimes I don't think they truly think about what is best for the student athletes. I think some of the knee jerk reactions, especially the men's basketball rule going to six hours in the summertime. Summers are short enough as it is and it is the only time in the year where even as an advisor you can get a semi-break. So say now you have to add six hours now are looking at having to track that summer a little differently and really you have to be more engaged with the student during the summertime so things don't fall apart. Some of the rules from the NCAA could hinder us."

Participant E added,

> Athletics is a business and education is not a business. The two don't always mesh well. I applaud the tightening of the rules because I didn't like it when I first started, and you saw people who were in school four years and nowhere near graduation, although they might have a lot of credits. I think there does need to be some wiggle room somewhere so students can have an opportunity to really be successful.

Another challenge academic advisors face is the job profession. As much passion and dedication to the job advisor cannot always be at their job 24 hours a day.

Participant H said,

> Every part of the job has pressure. You are doing an impossible job and trying to do it well. But you are in a situation where it's a very difficult to win. The academic requirements are raised, they are higher and the preparation of the student is lower. The demands on the students are out of sight. Media pressure, scrutiny, pressure from coaches it is a very unsavory profession. For the last 20 years I have been trying to create programs that better service students and working with staff to develop those programs.

Participant G stated, "… Being at an institution that didn't have a lot set up – I was at work a lot."

Participant D gave an example of a different challenge in the work force to help student athletes succeed. She said, "I want to trust my students, but unfortunately you can not. The profession we work in – you have to have all your ducks in a row. I am a "see it to believe it" person."

Even though academic advisor have challenges and issues with the NCAA and in the profession, they are all dedicated to believing student athletes can succeed. Four of the eight participants gave their opinion on what they wanted for the student athletes.

Participant F said, "Basically our goal is to make satisfactory progress toward their degree each and every semester and as long as we do that the NCAA stuff will take care of itself."

Participant C and Participant A continued, "The overall goal is to always have them add onto their experience in a way that is going to be positive for them and give them something they can take away."

Participant A stated, "I just want them to be happy, and I want them to be successful, but not necessary at our institution level."

Participant E indicated that he tried to "…figure out what their goals are and what they want."

Theme Two: Collaboration Within the Institution

Hill et al. (2001) stated all student affairs should develop an understanding for student athletes (p. 73). They should learn the understanding of compliance regulations, legislation and university rules that apply to their areas of responsibility (p. 73). Also student affairs officers can provide leadership by contributing knowledge and skills to shape the culture that embraces student learning (p. 73). All the participants had an understanding of why it is important to work as a team in an institution. The following section elaborates three sub themes: (a) building relationships with those who come into contact with the student athletes, (b) communication with the coaches and professors, and (c) communication with the athlete that allows the academic advisors to work with everyone on campus.

Building Campus Entities. The participants also felt it is important to collaborate all those in the institution who want to provide better support services and/or programs for student athletes.

Participant F said, "We hold our study hall in the library which it is a nature setting and they are in there with all the other students. We don't segregate them."

Participant D indicated a response of encouraging student athletes to be involved on campus:

> …A lot of times student athletes are so isolated in the world of athletics, the athletic center and athletic facilities that they miss out that part of college. . .. I

> realize that as a student that there were other things I could have done on campus. . .. I didn't either know about it, didn't have the time, or nobody encouraged me to do it.

However, Participant D added, "I know that a lot of them don't have the time, but whenever I see something – for example, I had a student who had an interest in theatre, so I encouraged him to find his niche, and he found theatre club."

The connection to collaborate within the institution was evident in Participant A' comment:

> We don't serve as the office academic advisor for our student athletes; they all have their own academic advisor on campus, but then, all of us in our office are academics advisors, so we have our own set of what we call "[name provided]," traditional students or non-traditional students, so that is a really good resource for us. We are involved in all the on campus advising events and programs that traditional advisors have to go to.

Participant A explained,

> We have started a program where we will bring in different speakers to our Olympic sports. We will have speakers from the law school, business school, MBA programs – different professors that will speak to these students and talk to them about athletics being important, but we need to [help them] think about what you are setting yourself up for after you graduate from our institution.

Academic advisors have praised their institutions for all the services and support programs that are available for their student athletes. Academic advisors expressed praises for all the involvement and support they do give student athletes. Participant B indicated encouraging words of how the campus has tried to reach out to student athletes. He said, "…Definitely can't do without the learning specialist and disability services on campus. We try to integrate not only within our own office of student athlete, but integrate within the campus."

Participant H expressed the importance of the campus playing a big role in the programming and said, "Student organizations help weave that connection between the athletes and the general student."

Participant C also indicated the importance of how the institution is providing the best support and development for the student athletes:

> [Name] is the offsite campus that does tutoring for everyone on campus. They have a satellite office in our office and we work with them to explain our specific needs and what is a little different about our population. They do a better job of training our tutors than I could just because I am so busy. They do a good job of getting in what we need.

In speaking of using the resources on campus to build relationships with the campus, Participant C continued,

> …We have a lot of cultural centers at our institution and we have an African American student service center, and I think that is very beneficial. Our institution has a lot of diversity, but not a lot of African American population. Connecting them with people who have that same bond through that culture is one big thing. We don't have a lot or huge Native American population in our athletic department, but we do on campus ,so connect our Native American population with the Native American student services office. It's the same with our Hispanic student athletes – those are kind of a big minority populations we see just because of where we are located. That is one big thing; we try to connect them is to their culture center. International students as well – connecting them with the international student office and any each other so they can support each other through a whole new brand new culture.

However, two participants perceived challenges in working with building relationships with the campus. Participants E and F have stated frustrations with professors who don't understand the student athlete and working with them to build the relationships.

Participant E said,

> I think definitely the professors are the ones that give the student athletes a hard time. They have no concept of the student's commitment to their sport. Sometimes I feel it's nice for me to be in a position to be an advocate for them. Because professors will say, "Well, they just shouldn't be traveling anymore." The faculty doesn't realize the stress on the student athlete for travel for our

> institution is horrendous. You can't go anywhere without getting on a five-hour flight at least. We have the worst travel in the nation I'm sure. Our football team sometimes stays two weeks on the main land. It's awful and stressful for the students and then their teachers will sometimes have the idea it is a vacation for them. They also think the students can make the decision that they shouldn't go on the travel. They don't understand the student can't make that decision because otherwise they wouldn't be at our institution going to school. It's a hard place for a student to be in.

Participant F, reflecting on his own experiences working with professors, said,

> It's the relationship that we have with professors. It is part of the business that some professors understand the importance of athletics and understand it is a place on a college campus so the occasional missing of class, accommodations that have to be for athletes because they are missing exams and quizzes. You face issues with the professors that may not have as much as an understanding and may not want to work with athletes as much.

Participant F later added, "I try to get to as many of the functions as possible. We invite our professors to different awards banquets and functions to celebrate the success of our student athletes, so they see how tough it is and how much success our students have with all the stuff on their plate."

One academic advisor focused on the challenges of keeping up with the technology in the new generation of student athletes coming to college and the universities who admit students without providing services.

Participant G said,

> The continued evolution of online courses is a challenge. The new generation of student athletes coming in now and how they learn different and what their expectations are in terms of instant access and instant information and very visual such as YouTube and all the different ways to do that. There are going to be some challenges with the new generation of students coming in and how you present and utilize information and technology. We have to be creative in how we use some of those tings so we can connect with them.

Participant G also added, “I don’t think it is right for institutions to admit students who do not fit their student profile, if they are not willing to provide the services necessary that the student needs to be successful on campus.”

Communication with Professors. Even though academic advisors are faced with challenges of professors not being cooperative, there are needs for communication. Academic advisors understand it is important to communicate to build the relationship with the professors to help student athletes be successful in higher education. Also, academic advisors know it is important for students to be able to approach the professor for help on academics. Participant A said, “…Talking with professors is huge thing at our school because it is so small. The professors want to work with them and if they are struggling the last thing the professor wants to do is fail them and the athlete drops out.”

She added, “I usually leave talking to professors alone and let the student do that, but if there are major issues I try to work through their Deans. I want the students to take care of them and I want the student athletes to deal with issues.”

Participant C’s stated. “It is important to make sure that the professors understand our philosophy and the mission statement of our office and what they are trying to do as an office, so they don’t feel like you are the helicopter parent.”

Participant D indicated a similar response, “I send an email to the professors to ask questions on, “How can I better help the student on this assignment, or they are having troubles reading this assignment are there any suggestions?” Any time we have a success story we include them to remind them that their work was worth the effort.”

More specifically, in relation to the student development, some academic advisors emphasize the importance of the student making the effort. Participant E said, “We try to

get the students to work with the instructors. It is good for them to work with the professor or teaching assistant because the student athletes can gain a relationship with the professor.

Communication with Coaches. Communication is very important when working with student athletes. Three academic advisors reported that coaches can be the key motivator and support to help student athletes be successful in college.

Participant A illustrated the importance to be in communication with coaches, "I'm sure my colleagues would agree that the support that we get from the coaches is top notch."

Participant A also expressed the importance of being visible. She said, "…If I need something from the coach or student and they are not responding, I will go out to practice and then they know that it is serious. Sometimes I just go out to practice just to watch too."

Participant F indicated communication with coaches on student athlete's progress:

> I communicate with coaches on a weekly to every two weeks bases as far as if there are any concerns, study hall attendance (we send reports to coaches every week, some teams want the reports every night and we find a way to send it to them), we follow up with reports with a call if there are issues (there's an explanation or we need information saying maybe suspensions is merited on the frequency of a particular athlete, maybe they are not being compliant). We communicate with them by phone and email.

Participant B also expressed the importance to communicating with coaches and professors to help make his student athletes succeed and said, "You document it, and tell the coaches and professors you are going to work with the student athlete to help them improve their grade."

Participant F carried on the importance of knowing your coach in order to get them involved with the student athlete's success:

> It is really important to be very clear and know exactly what needs to be done and why. Knowing your coach helps you to determine your communication style. I have one coach that never is in his office, so if I need something, it needs to be a cell phone call. Knowing all my coaches and how they deal with things, and what they prefer, whether it is e-mail or meeting with them at least once a week, and see them face to face at least once a week.

Communication with Student Athletes. Six academic advisors further indicated their feelings of value toward communications with student athletes. They viewed building relationships by engaging student athletes with discussions and thought about their academics, sport or life outside athletics. However, advisors expressed this in many ways. Participant G expressed his opinion about communication and said, "…Communicate often and consistently and in a consistent format and again if you do so accurately the communication is great."

Participant B indicated looking at the student holistically to make sure they are in a good place. He said, "It gives me an opportunity to make think outside the box and do some extra programming if that is needed for the student."

He went on to give an example of how communication can be difficult with the student athletes; however, it is his role as a professional to help the student athletes be safe. He explained,

> I had a student that was really struggling in life, academics and sport. I was like we need to figure out what is going on with her and she just wouldn't share. One day I closed the door and said, 'Look you don't need to share with me, but you need to share with somebody.' And I kind of told her what I felt was going on in her life. She didn't say anything and got up and left. Probably a month later came into my office and really just let go of all the stuff that was going on. Since then academically she has done better.

Participant H said, “I use metaphors all the time, because when you go at the student athlete, unlike a coach who barks at them, I get the students to respond, which I learned a therapeutic technique.”

Participant C indicated that communication is a frustration with some student athletes. She explained,

> Student athletes communicate anymore by texting. They don’t check their e-mail all that often. Teaching them to check their e-mail is important. Sometimes I wish that since Facebook sends alerts to your e-mail, I wished Facebook could get alerts from your e-mail so when you have an e-mail, you get an alert from Facebook. I don’t communicate with them on Facebook though, I do e-mail still and sometimes it is e-mail and then texting, “Hey I just sent you an e-mail, make sure you look at your e-mail.”

Communication has to have some relationship building and showing the student athlete that you are invested in them. Participant A said, “I really have thrown myself into it, and it is really my life.”

Participant A also responded that she loves her job and wants to work one-on-one to get to know the individual as a person and not as an athlete. She recounted feeling fearful her first year about relationship building, “I feared they wouldn’t like me, but they took well to me.”

She also added that building relationships with her students meant, “I can say ‘I understand’ and ‘I have been there and done that,’ but as a student athlete, they have such a great opportunity in front of [them]. I will travel with the team and go watch them at practice. They see me supporting them and wanting to get to know them”

Participant G used a similar example, but also used his personal story to build the relationship. He said,

> There are certain athletes that come from different homes and backgrounds, and some of them have major trust issues. It takes time, and once they get to know

> you, and understand you. I feel (especially works with football) that they need to know me so they don't see that name on my door and think, "It is some academic person that doesn't care about me and was spoon-fed as a baby with a silver spoon." I tell them that I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. I tell them, "I come from a large Hispanic family in Arizona, and growing up I lived in the poor part of Tucson. My success is driven from motivation and worth ethic." Once you share yourself and allow them to get to know you as a person, it opens the doors.

Participant G also indicated he is a relationship person and that has helped build those relationships with his student athletes:

> I'm a relationship person; I am a people person; I think everything that we do in life is built on relationships. If you are able to sit down with a student athlete and talk with them, and if they trust you that you have their best interest at heart, then that conversation is going to go much better. I also think it is spending time with host individuals and building relationships so that a trust is built where they believe you, and they are invested in you and you are invested in them.

Participant C explained a similar approach and said, "One-on-one meetings are huge, but you can really talk to them and break it down and find out what it is they are interested or what their goals are."

Participant F felt building relationships with his students because it is the most rewarding part about being in the profession. He said,

> I enjoy interactions, I enjoy being around the athletic department, and what I enjoy most is being able to experience the full cycle of incoming freshman walk across the stage on graduation day. You are going to build relationships with people that will never forget you. I see students coming back, and seeking me out for assistance or just to come back to give me credit.

He elaborated and said,

> I particularly had one student this past year graduate that I was told on the phone by a faculty member that he would never graduate from college in that particular major. Behind closed doors the faculty member basically told me that the student athlete had to change his major. I brought the student in, and asked what he wanted to do. He chose to stay in that major. He got through, and graduated and he sent me a text on the day of graduating saying, 'I'll never forget what you did for me.'

Chapter Five

Research Questions Answered

Conclusions and recommendations were made based on the interviews and findings presented from Chapter Four and connected to the literature in Chapter Two. In this chapter, the answers to the research questions are presented:

1. *What is the perception and understanding of the student services and support programs in an athletic department?*

Participants in this study were positive about support programs and services for student athletes. The academic advisors in the study described services and support programs as the institution's obligation to provide support for the athletes that are admitted. All participants viewed themselves as a resource to enhance academic success for student athletes. Eight participants reported and proclaimed that the outcomes of their programs and services are the connection between structure and engaging students in higher education.

The challenges of helping students succeed are described by the participants as frustrations or barriers. The academic advisors understood there are things they can or cannot control; however, for the issues they can control, they appear to have a grasp on how to solve the issues that arise with student athletes. Most participants described their student services and support programs as beneficial; they believed it is necessary to have a student life center for student athlete growth. Alternatively, participants stated that resources on campus are just as helpful without a student life center, and student athletes develop just as equally as those who do have a student life center on campus. These

participants reported detailed information on the challenges and problem solving events that have occurred to ensure success for their student athletes.

2. *Do academic advisors utilize their programs when working with students undergoing the transition process in higher education, and, if so, what services and programs are being used?*

Seven participants confirmed that they use a program(s) or service(s) to help student athletes with their transition process in higher education. Some of the program(s) or service(s) used by academic advisors were: (a) orientation for freshman; (b)having a bridge program in the summer for freshman athletes; (c) study hall to help students learn structure; (d) mentoring; tutoring; (e) Champs Lifeskills; (f) Google calendars; (g)student-athlete recognition banquet; (h) programs on building relationships; and (i) orientation using speakers on campus to talk to student athletes about careers and academics. Two participants reported their job profession was the best service the institution could give to the student athletes, but they also understood that they could not cover all areas all the time.

3. *How are academic advisors using these services and programs to enhance the developmental and education outcomes for student athletes?*

Participants suggested that their roles in the profession were to make sure student-athletes are successful, even after experiencing the higher education environment. When the student enters the office, relationship building is initiated between the student and academic advisor. There is a need to help build a relationship with the student that can provide assistance in the areas where the student may lack development. Two participants suggested the use of an informational assessment as a guide to direct students

academically and emotionally in building their career goals. The Meyers Brigg's test was one example mentioned. This test may have many uses; however, a few indicated that the Meyers Brigg's test could be used to help students find a major for the future. Three participants referred to their support service(s) and program(s) as a means of creating a structure for all student athletes. Another participant offered the use of structured study hall as a means of building structure for student athletes understand the discipline at the institution.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter the researcher discusses recommendations and conclusions selected from Chapter Four. The recommendations apply to athletic departments that employ academic advisors, universities that employ athletic personnel, and researchers who pursue contributions on the topic of support services and programs by academic advisors.

The results of this study had a number of positive points related to how the support programs and services can assist student athletes in the excellence in higher education. Academic advisors in the study confirmed that support programs and services should be developed if the institution admits student athletes. Academic advisors are in a position to offer a stable and safe foundation for student athletes to have an expressive interaction about issues or concerns.

Academic advisors will likely be expected to continue development of new support program(s) and service(s) given the frustration associated with the NCAA and the new generation of students entering higher education. Fundamentals could be the key to helping with success of the many different individuals entering higher education. Fundamentals such as planner checking, study hall, classroom checks, and calendars have potential for contributing to the development of a structure for many athletes.

Academic advisors emphasized a positive perception of student athletes. They believed that using support programs and services have benefited students, perhaps in more ways than just academically. Most academic advisors have educational backgrounds and training in working with student athletes. The experiences have

provided a basic understanding of the development issues and experiences of young men and women. All the participants in the study enjoyed working with student athletes and viewed their jobs as "special." They expressed dedication to working outside beyond the work environment and helping guide student athletes even after graduation.

Some academic advisors saw communication as the best type of support for their student athletes. This generation is known as the "Millennials." Coomes (2004) stated that millennials have found a multitude of ways to stay connected, including talking or texting on cell phones, instant messaging their friends, staying connected to distant parents through e-mail, reading and posting to public bulletin boards and just entering their philosophical ramblings in their personal blogs (p. 28). Academic advisors try to keep the communication open by using the e-mail and cell phones. The academic advisors who have been in the profession longer have had a challenge keeping up with the latest technology of communication. Additionally, academic advisors tend to create their own styles of communication from their previous education and experiences with student athletes.

Support programs and services are an important dimension of an athletic department; however, these programs and services may have some limitations and concerns. Even though all the interviewees portrayed their support programs and services positively, most shared some frustrations or limitations with the programs and services. The most common frustration mentioned was the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) demands on student athletes. The NCAA places demands that student athletes must pass a certain amount of hours total for the year. If the student athlete does not meet those requirements, then the student athlete is considered ineligible

for the coming year. Due to the demand of credit hours that a student athlete has to pass, the concern is the amount of time a student athlete has to balance. The student athletes only have a small window in which they may organize their days. They are working with scheduling, practice, study hall, tutoring sessions, mentoring, community involvement and class schedule. If the NCAA continues to place greater demands on the student athletes, many academic advisors may not be able to address the potential increase developmental needs and issues of the student athlete.

Building relationships acted as a guide for academic advisors for interaction with the student athletes. They looked for non-verbal and verbal cues to be able to direct student athletes. Building relationships also could be used to help students solve problems academically. Knowledge of a student athlete's background, goals and philosophy could foster challenges and support to student athletes in way that can help them develop skills in higher education. Finally, as academics advisors assist student athletes with the foundation of development, the support programs and services used are likely to influence the actions of the student athletes as they enter higher education and move beyond.

The academic advisors expressed the need to continual building resources and making them available for student athletes. Various reasons were given; however, the most notable was that the resources assisted students in being successful thereby increasing their graduation from the institution. Fundamentals, programs and services must begin when the student athlete enters as a freshman. During this time, academic advisors are preparing student athletes, not for where they will be in four years from now, but where they will be 40 years from now. Creating opportunities to gather ideas from

other colleagues will assist academic advisors in remaining close to the issues developing among student athletes who come in as a freshman.

Recommendations

The researchers developed several recommendations from the results that pertain to athletic departments who employ academic advisors, universities who employ athletic personnel, and others who want to contribute to further research on the topic of support services and programs by academic advisors.

Athletic departments should review programs and services to determine those that are most successful in the environment in which they are implemented. Due to their mission statement, funding and structure, some athletic departments may be inclined to have more programs and services available than others. Although academic advisors enter the field with some type of graduate degree; not all advisors have experience, understanding and/or have appreciation for student athletes resulting from their graduate school experience. If the importance of understanding, appreciation and experience were integrated with the support programs and services by academic advisors, then hiring individuals with a passion and competence would enhance the intended outcome of the student athlete's development.

Academic advisors should create an opportunity to initiate conversation with student athletes to review over what programs and services best serve the student athlete. Academic advisors may neglect the relationship building process and only focus on the immediate and academic issues that naturally arise in the athletic department. A focus on the developmental issues and needs that student athletes present in the academic advisors office may become clearer as professionals develop more support programs and

services. Additionally, the student athlete population is becoming more and more diverse. Keeping up with new research and topics on student athletes may aid in developing and understanding how to effectively implement and interact with the changing population. Collaboration with student affairs departments can assist in developing a relationship with professors and deans to enhance sharing information about best practices with student athletes. Relationships buildings such as staff meetings, faculty luncheons, faculty appreciation day and recognition for services to student athletes may enhance success with developing new programs and services.

Individuals and graduate students who are pursuing a profession in athletic advising would benefit from the knowledge and understanding of student athletes and the importance of successful program(s) and service(s). The researcher suggests those interested in becoming an advisor for student athletes would excel professionally if they completed course work in counseling or student development, attended the N4a (National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics), and had discussions with experienced professionals about issues or concerns. These efforts could prepare individuals to overcome the challenges that student athletes face during their four years in college.

In conclusion, this study provided a snapshot of the use of support services and programs in athletic departments in eight institutions. Further studies should involve more diverse samples to obtain an idea on the student athlete success. The researcher narrowed down this study to student support services and programs; however, other topics emerged during the data collection. The participants discussed additional topics relevant to student services and programs, some of which were: bridge programs for freshman, NCAA's affect on student athlete's career success, roles and responsibilities of

student athletes, challenges with student athletes, outcomes for implementing support programs and services; involvement on campus; issues declaring a major, collaborating with student affairs, study hall, mentoring, tutoring, student life centers, and the education and learning of how to communicate with a student athlete. Future research on these topics will add to the useful literature that one could turn to for knowledge and understanding of the success of student athletes.

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Appendix A

Phone Script

Hello! My name is Teresa Hunter. I am the Executive Director for the National Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A). Sara Sackett is a graduate student from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is gathering information for her thesis on exploring student services and support groups by academic advisors in athletic departments. This is a qualitative study where Sara will interview you during the N4A convention. The interview is given once and will last about an hour. If you choose not to participate, this will not have any affect on your affiliation to the N4A or your institution. If you'd like to have further information about this study may I pass your contact information to Sara?

She can provide further information once she has received your contact information and you can then decide to participate or not participate at that time.

Thank you for your time in helping this student.

Appendix B

E-mail Script

Dear NAME:

I am a Masters student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and currently enrolled in the Student Affairs Administration program. For my thesis, I would like to conduct a qualitative study on the use of student services and support among athletic advisors who serve in an athletic department. Teresa Hunter has so kindly helped me by contacting you because you work with student athletes. I understand she has contacted you and you will help me with my study. I am inviting you to participate in an interview. I am going to be heading to Dallas, Texas on June 2, 2011 for the National Association of Academic Advisor for Athletics. I am wondering during that time at the convention if you would be willing to be a participant.

The interview would be approximately one hour in length. The interview questions will pertain to student services and support programs in an athletic department setting. All efforts will be employed to maintain your anonymity and I would be more than happy to share the results of my research once they are completed.

I am particularly interested in this area of research. I have been a former student athlete and in 2010-2011 I was an academic tutor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln academic department. I truly enjoyed the opportunity working with student athletes and hope to be able to find a career in athletic advising. Being able to contribute to this area of Student Affairs would be satisfying to me as I expand my knowledge and understanding in this field.

Please let me know whether or you would be willing to participate in an interview while attending the National Association for Academic Advisors for Athletics. I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

I hope to hear from you soon. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sara Sackett, Masters Candidate, Primary Investigator
Barbara LaCost, Ph.D., Supervisory Investigator

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

1. Please describe your educational background.

    Probe 1: Do you have a Master's Degree?

    Probe 2: Do you have a Doctorate Degree?

    Probe 3: In what area(s) do you have your degree(s)?

2. Please explain your experience and background in athletic advising.

    Probe 1: How long have you been working in the advising at the athletic department

    Probe 2: What positions have you held in the advising at the athletic department?

    Probe 3: What do you enjoy about advising student athletes?

    Probe 4: What are some of the challenges associated with academic advising?

    Probe 5: What has drawn you to advise student athletes?

    Probe 6: How many sports do you advise?

    Probe 7: How many times a day do you meet with each student athlete?

    <u>If you meet more than once</u>:

    Probe 1: Why do you meet more than once?

    Probe 2: Do you mandate a study hall for certain sports?

    <u>If the answer is "Yes":</u>

    Probe 1: Why do you mandate certain sports to attend study hall?

    Probe 2: What time does the study hall start and end?

    Probe 3: What are the factors that student athletes have to attend mandatory study hall?

Probe 8: Have you developed any services or programs for student-athletes in your position?

<u>If they answer "Yes":</u>

Probe 1: What are the services and/or programs for student-athletes that you have developed?

Probe 9: Do you use other resources on campus help student athletes?

<u>If the answer is "Yes"</u>:

Probe 10: What resources on campus do you use?

Probe 11: What is your perception as an advisor to student athletes?

3. Do you attend any regional or national conferences?

4. What is your role as POSITION TITLE?

Probe 1: Can you give me an example of a time when you first stated out advising students athletes?

Probe 2: What was the toughest part about your first year of advising?

Probe 3: What was the most rewarding part about your first year advising?

Probe 4: How did you prepare yourself for working with a group of student-athletes?

5. What types of issues typically do you face advising student athletes?

6. Do you communicate with the coaches, family members, student athletes and professors about concerns or success with academics?

<u>If the answer is "Yes":</u>

Probe 1: How do you communicate with them?

Probe 2: Describe an issue were there problems with the communication between the family members, coaches or professors?

Probe 3: If there is a problem with a student athlete becoming on the verge of being academic in eligible how do you communicate with each group about the situation?

7. How do you prepare for the freshman student athletes making the transition to college versus the senior student athletes who make the transition to life after athletics?

8. How many programs or services do you have for student athletes?

Probe 1: Describe your services or programs that you offer to student athletes at your institution.

9. Do you have certain support services or programs for each sport?

<u>If the answer is "Yes":</u>

Probe 1: If so, what are the support services or programs for each sport?

Probe 2: Explain the program(s) for each sport, what is accomplished in the program.

<u>If the answer is "No":</u>

Probe 1: If you could develop a program or service for student athletes, what would it be and what would it entail?

10. Did you participate in any courses or seminars on student athletes during your undergraduate or graduate study?

<u>If the answer is "Yes</u>":

Probe 1: What was your reaction the seminars?

Probe 2: Were you familiar with advising student athletes before you took the class/seminar?

Probe 3: Would you discuss some of the issues the course/seminar covered about student athletes?

Probe 4: Did you feel that the course/seminar was useful? Why or why not?

11. Would you describe the process you go through with students who come to see you regarding academic issues?

Probe 1: Talk me through the steps you would take as you work with a student who is on the verge of becoming academic ineligible.

Probe 2: Does each case involve a similar approach?

Probe 3: What do you discuss when a student is meeting with you?

Probe 4: Do you discuss other matters or areas of the students' lives aside from the academics and if so what do you discuss an why do you discuss these things?

Probe 5: When you meet with student athletes are there any particular aspects of cues that you look for?

<u>If the answer is "yes":</u>

Probe 1: What do you look for?

Probe 2: Why do you look for these things?

12. Please describe your overall goal when working with student athletes who come to see you regarding instances of academics or career.

Probe 1: What do you hope to accomplish?

Probe 2: How do you accomplish this goal?

Probe 3: Are there any particular tools, common practices or resources that you use? Please explain.

Probe 4: Are there common frustrations, barriers or limitations that make accomplishing this goal difficult? Please explain.

13. What is your perception of student athletes?

Probe 1: How would you define a student athlete?

Probe 2: How does the nature of your position allow you to help students develop either morally, ethically, socially, and/or cognitively? Please explain.

Probe 3: How do you educate the student athletes on the importance of student first then athlete?

14. What support services are useful for student athletes? Please explain.

Probe 1: What services or programs do you perceive to be most useful to student athletes?

Probe 2: Why are these services more useful than others?

Probe 3: How might these services be helpful to students undergoing the transition of being a student and/or athlete?

Probe 4: How might these services be helpful to academics advisors working with students who are undergoing the transition of being a student and/or athlete?

Probe 5: What are some frustrations or concerns that academic advisors might have with student athletes?

Probe 6: In your position, do you feel that there are limitations or concerns dealing with student athletes?

<u>If the answer is "Yes":</u>

Probe 1: Can you describe the nature of these perceived limitations and/or concerns?

Probe 2: If these limitations were removed, how would you help student athletes to develop and change in higher education?

<u>If the answer is "No":</u>

Probe 1: Are there any concerns or limitations that you see developing in the future for student athletes?

<u>If the answer is "Yes":</u>

Probe 1: What are any concerns or limitations that you see developing in the future for student athletes?

Probe 7: What types of conditions or circumstances might be useful for the success advising student athletes in athletics?

Probe 8: Do you believe there's a difference in the outcome of students-athletes who have a student life center than those who do not?

<u>If the answer is "Yes"</u>:

Probe 1: What would be the difference(s)?

<u>If the answer is "No"</u>:

Probe 2: Why wouldn't there be a difference in the outcome?

15. What advice would you recommend to a new academic advisor in the field about working with student athletes?

Appendix D

IRB Approval

IRB# 20110411711EP
Date Approved: 04/27/2011
Valid Until: 04/26/2012

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Identification of Project:

A study of student services and support programs by academic advisors in an athletic department

Purpose of the Research:

This research project will identify the services and support that academic advisors use to help student athletes develop in higher education. You must be 19 years of age or older to participate. You are invited to participate in this study because you are an advisor to students in athletics.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will require approximately one hour of your time. I would like to conduct an interview with you in about your experience working with student-athletes. Interviews will be given on June 1-5 in Dallas Texas. There are 14 questions asking you about services and support programs you use to help student-athletes develop in a higher educational setting. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission. I will transcribe the information after the interviews. The audio recordings will be erased after the recordings are transcribed. Finally, the transcription is going to be sent a week after to the interviewer through e-mails for approval. The transcriptions will be kept in a locked box in the investigators home and will be terminated after a year.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Please inform me if you have had any issues before during or after the interview.

Benefits:

You may find the learning experiences insightful and helpful to you when you study on how to help support student- athletes transition at the higher educational level. The information gained from this study may help us better to understand the support and services that can be used to help student athletes in higher education.

Confidentiality:

Any information explained during this study, which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a locked box in the investigator's home and will only be seen by the investigator during the study and terminated after a year when the study is completed. The information gained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, and investigators thesis but the data will be reported as aggregated data. If you would like to see the research result please submit your request to the primary investigator at sarasackett20@gmail.com. The audio recordings will be erased after transcription.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may be able to ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may also call the investigator at any time (402) 617-2963. You may also contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for any questions that you may have regarding your rights as a research participant.

Freedom to Withdraw:

This participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and N4A organization or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

IRB Approval
IRB# 20110411711EP
Date Approved: 04/27/2011
Valid Until: 04/26/2012

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision to whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

_____ Check if you agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Signature of Participant:

_____ _____

Signature of Research Participant Date

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

Sara Sackett, Principal Investigator Office: (402) 617-2963
Barbara Y. LaCost, Ph.D., Secondary Investigator Office (402) 472-0988

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