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## An Orientation to Ease The Transition Of A Minority Student-Athlete

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# **An Orientation to Ease The Transition Of A Minority Student-Athlete**

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**“How college professors teach, the greater independence required of students, writing skills, and the requirement to make individual and group presentations, may be different from what the minority student athlete experienced in high school.”**

Most minority athletes entering predominately white institutions face significant problems adjusting to the new environment. Many of these students attended high schools where most of the other students shared the same racial or ethnic background. Therefore, these students will be exposed to daily multi-cultural experiences not previously encountered.

In addition to peer environment, the minority athlete will be forced to manage personal responsibilities on a scale beyond what may have been expected of him or her before leaving home. There are issues of separation from home, family and friends, budgeting of time and money; study habits; financial aid; dealing with the media; discrimination; and, maintaining a sense of identity. While some colleges and universities attempt to address one or more of these issues, their strategies fail to approach the concerns from a cultural perspective of the ethnic minority athlete. What the minority student hears in these "support" forums is how white students manage such issues, based on Anglo American cultural values and perspectives.

The classroom poses a different set of challenges. After the ethnic minority athletes struggle with the social pressures and learn to adapt their athletic skills to the college/university environment, they must still attend class and earn a grade point average that maintains their eligibility to play their scholarship sport. How college professors teach, the greater independence required of students, writing skills, and the requirement to make individual and group presentations, may be different from what the minority student athlete experienced in high school. While it may seem misguided that academic studies were mentioned last, in spite of "a college education" ostensibly presented as the reason for leaving home, classes are rarely the first issue these students must address.

This session outlines issues colleges and universities must address to create an environment that assists ethnic minority athletes in managing the interpersonal, athletic, and academic challenges they face. Suggested strategies will also be presented.

## **PRESENTERS**

**Reginald A. Morton** received a B.A. from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where

he played on the men's basketball team for two years. He is a founder of the University of Colorado Student Athlete Association. Morton has been a Project Coordinator at Community Research Associates (CRA), in Denver, Colorado for the past three years, under contract with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Specific areas of his expertise include cultural competency, disproportionate minority confinement and community based juvenile delinquency programming. He has provided technical assistance and training to over 25 states and territories on minority issues.

**Michael Lindsey** received a B.A. in psychology and political science from Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte, N.C.), a Master's in teaching, University of Louisville (Kentucky), a Master's in clinical-correctional psychology (University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa), a law degree from Villanova Law School (Villanova, Pa), and a Ph.D., in clinical psychology from Hahnemann University (Philadelphia, Pa.). Dr. Lindsey has served as adjunct professor at a number of universities (currently University of Texas/Arlington). He is also a management, organizational, and diversity consultant.