

Exploring student-athlete support services at two NCAA Division I universities

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Exploring student-athlete support services at two NCAA Division I universities

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to utilize an exploratory research design to help identify current student-athlete support services educational programs at two NCAA Division I institutions. The researcher considered the overall student-athlete experience by identifying and describing what resources student athlete support services provide, how student-athletes are or are not utilizing these services and applying high impact educational practices to these services. It is clear that just within a single division, overall athletic spending and funding can drastically vary across institutions. This overall discrepancy helped establish a cause for concern in the overall resources and educational programming received by Division I student-athletes. Two NCAA Division I institutions were studied using 24 semi-structured interviews with student-athletes and administrators and presented several themes including: (1) the utilization of structured programming as a driving force to student-athlete support services, (2) the student-athlete perspective on available support services and benefits, (3) the student-athlete barriers to utilizing student-athlete support services, (4) the student-athlete/athletics split campus “bubble” and (5) the implementation of high impact educational practices. The researcher also explore what services are missing and how they could be implemented in the intercollegiate athletics setting moving forward. The results presented are likely of importance to college administrators interested in understanding how to develop meaningful student-athlete support services directly related to high impact educational practices, while supporting student-athlete interests and constraints. For example, administrators can learn to establish programming for their students on campus and create a comfortable climate and connection between athletics student-athlete support services and on-campus resources while striving for positive outcomes in academic progress rates (APR), graduation success rates (GSR), and grade point averages (GPA).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States.....	1
NCAA Division Levels.....	2
FBS vs. FCS Intercollegiate Athletic Programs.....	4
High Impact Educational Practices.....	7
National Survey of Student Engagement.....	10
Intercollegiate Athletics Role in Culture.....	11
Research Purpose, Implications, Goals, and Research Questions.....	11
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	13
Characteristics of Today’s College Student.....	14
College Access.....	17
College Choice.....	22
Campus Climate and Diversity.....	26
Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model.....	29
College Environment.....	31
Retention Theory.....	33
High Impact Educational Practices	35
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration.....	37
Undermatching.....	41
Intercollegiate Athletics.....	43
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics.....	45
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals.....	48
Student-Athlete Support Services.....	50
The Role of Athletic Support Staff.....	52
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	54
Qualitative Approach to Research.....	55
Exploratory Approach.....	55
Research Questions.....	56
Data Collection.....	57
Participants.....	58
Institutional Profiles.....	60
Data Analysis.....	61
Reliability and Validity of Data.....	63
Trustworthiness of Data.....	64
Researcher Personal Interest in Topic.....	66
Ethical Issues.....	66
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS.....	68
Structured Programming as a Driving Force to Student-Athlete Support Services.....	68
University Leadership and Development Program.....	68

Life and Leadership Champions.....	74
Summer Bridge Program.....	77
Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.....	79
Mandatory Academic Programming.....	83
Student-Athlete Perspective on Support Services and Benefits to Participation.....	86
Benefits to Participation in Student-athlete Support Services.....	86
Feedback on Additional Programming.....	92
Financial Literacy.....	92
Career Counseling/Mentorship.....	94
Self-Advocacy and Responsibility.....	98
Mental Health.....	99
Issues with Student-athlete Support Services.....	102
Student-Athlete Barriers to Participating in Student-athlete Support Services.....	106
Student-athlete Time Commitment.....	107
Awareness of Programs.....	110
The Student-Athlete and Athletics Campus Bubble.....	112
The Campus Disconnect.....	113
Utilization of On-campus Resources.....	116
Differences between Student-Athlete Support Services.....	123
Number of Resources/Staff.....	124
Institution One Student-athletes Decision to Attend (Recruitment).....	127
Institution Two Student-athletes Decision to Attend (Recruitment).....	129
Recruiting to Parents of Student-athletes.....	131
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	134
High Impact Educational Practices in the Student-athlete Setting.....	134
First-year Seminars and Experiences.....	135
Common Intellectual Experiences.....	137
Learning Communities.....	139
Writing-intensive Courses.....	140
Collaborative Assignments and Projects.....	142
Undergraduate Research.....	142
Diversity/Global Learning.....	143
Service/community-based Learning.....	145
Internships.....	146
Capstone Courses and Projects.....	147
The Role of Funding on Overall Resources at FBS and FCS Institutions.....	148
Concept of Student-Athlete Bubble.....	151
Athletics-Campus Relationship.....	154
College Choice, Decision to Attend and Characteristics of Today's Student.....	157
College Access and Student-Athlete APR, GSR, and GPA.....	159
Implications and Directions for Future Research.....	161
Limitations.....	163
Conclusion.....	164
APPENDICES.....	166
REFERENCES.....	177
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	191

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Football Bowl Subdivision Average Spending.....	5
Table 1.2	Football Championship Subdivision Spending.....	6
Table 2	Literature Review Organization.....	14,17,22,26,29,31,33,35,37,41,43,45,48,50,52
Table 3	High-impact Educational Practices and Descriptions.....	36,166
Table 4	Participant Profiles.....	59
Table 5	Institutional Demographics.....	61
Table 6	Qualitative Raw Interview Data Coding Example.....	62
Table 7	Validity and Credibility Procedures.....	65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 FBS Institution Core Curriculum Goals.....138

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States

Marcus (2018) described intercollegiate athletics as part of culture, deeply woven and cursed with money. From misplaced values and inattention to inequality to cultural reproduction and scandals, intercollegiate athletics have commonly exhibited a reputation muddled with controversy (Shorette II, 2014). While this may be the case, intercollegiate athletics continue to grow ever more popular among fans and students. In order to elucidate the overall success of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), one must exhibit the overwhelming amount of money connected to this organization and its athletic programs. In 2017, the NCAA's revenue surpassed one billion dollars for the first time in its over century long existence, largely due to an outstanding \$821 million in revenue from television and marketing deals (Berkowitz, 2018). Specifically, the NCAA's agreement with CBS Sports and Turner Broadcasting to broadcast the March Madness Division I NCAA Men's Basketball Championship nets them over ten billion dollars over 14 years (Revenue, 2016).

While the NCAA continues to set record revenues within their organization, the 24 NCAA sanctioned sports and over 400,000 student-athletes that participate in them see very little of it (Student-Athletes, 2016). As intercollegiate athletics continue to grow, academic literature continues to help showcase the overall relationship exhibited between higher education institutions and their intercollegiate athletics programs. Although intercollegiate athletics continue to play a large role in the overall U.S. college culture with a tremendous amount of value placed on athletic success, does this value ultimately shift the focus away from student and more towards athlete (Brunet, Atkins, Johnson, & Stranak, 2013)? While the NCAA is classified into three divisions, NCAA Division I is the likely culprit associated with revenue gains and

aforementioned NCAA controversies. In order to gain a greater understanding of the NCAA as an organization, it is important to look at the three NCAA Division levels and how each is operated.

NCAA Division Levels

Until 1973, the NCAA operated as a single membership organization. In 1973, the reorganization of the NCAA was approved in an effort to improve overall competition and legislative processes. Ultimately, three division levels were formed – Division I, Division II, and Division III (Divisional Differences, 2018). Currently, there are 351 Division I institutions (32%), 308 Division II institutions (28%), and 443 Division III institutions (40%) within the NCAA. The median undergraduate enrollments are 9,629 students, 2,485 students, and 1,748 students, respectively. Student-athletes make up one in 25 students at Division I institutions, one in 11 students at Division II institutions, and one in six students at Division III institutions (Our Three Divisions, 2018).

Divisional differences are centered around the number of sponsored sports, contest scheduling, scholarships, and athlete participation. For Division I member institutions, at least seven men's and seven women's sports, including two team sports for both men and women, must be sponsored. An exception is made if there are six sports for men and eight for women (Divisional Differences, 2018). Division II and Division III institutions have similar requirements regarding sponsored sports. According to the NCAA Divisional Differences (2018), Division II and Division III institutions must sponsor at least five men's and five women's sports while providing each gender with two team sports across both the fall and spring seasons. While this is the case, Division II institutions are able to provide four men's sports and six women's sports; however, Division III must have at least five for each.

Furthermore, overall contest scheduling varies from division to division. In all sports, but basketball and football, “Division I schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents – anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50 percent Division I” (Divisional Differences, 2018, para. 1). This varies for men’s and women’s basketball, who are required to play all but two of their scheduled games against Division I teams. Men must also play at least one-third of their games at home (Divisional Differences, 2018). Division II institutions have no scheduling requirements outside of football, men’s basketball, and women’s basketball, who must complete against Division II or Division I opponents in at least 50 percent of their games (Divisional Differences, 2018). Division III is the least restrictive when it comes to scheduling. Division II institutions have minimum number of games and participants for each sport; however, no scheduling restrictions otherwise (Divisional Differences, 2018).

One of the largest differences associated with division levels is the scholarship and financial aid format. At Division I institutions, minimum financial aid awards must be met within the athletic program, while also not exceeding maximum financial aid awards across each sport. Fifty nine percent of athletes receive athletics aid at Division I institutions (Our Three Divisions, 2018). At Division II institutions, on the other hand, “Many Division II student-athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans and employment earnings. Division II athletics programs are financed in the institution's budget like other academic departments on campus” (Divisional Differences, 2018, para. 2). Sixty two percent of athletes receive athletics aid at Division II institutions (Our Three Divisions, 2018). Unfortunately for Division III institutions, student-athletes receive no financial aid for athletic ability; however, 80 percent receive non-athletics aid (Divisional Differences, 2018; Our Three

Divisions, 2018). While scholarships and financial aid vary across institutions, student-athletes must maintain eligibility. All students, “who want to compete at a Division I or Division II school must meet standards set by NCAA members. For Division III, athletes must meet the admissions standards set by the school” (Our Three Divisions, 2018, para. 2). While it is important to understand the differences across the three NCAA Divisions, the overall purpose of this study explore educational programming for student-athletes at the NCAA Division I level. Within the Division I level exists two subdivisions, including the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS). In order to explore the student-athlete support services across two Division I institutions, an FBS and FCS institution were chosen in an effort to represent both subdivisions. The differences between FBS and FCS institutions will be discussed further.

FBS vs. FCS Intercollegiate Athletic Programs

Within Division I institutions who sponsor football, there exists a distinction between FBS (formerly Division I-A) and FCS (formerly Division I-AA) institutions. There are 108 public institutions in FBS and 77 in FCS (Knight Commission, 2015). While FBS programs are allowed 85 scholarships, FCS programs are only allowed 63 scholarships with some conferences allowing fewer (Kirshner, 2017). Of these scholarships, each must be awarded in full to one player at FBS institutions, while the value of 63 scholarships are able to be split up amongst 85 players (Kirshner, 2017). According to the NCAA, “Football Bowl Subdivision schools are usually fairly elaborate programs” with minimum attendance requirements set at 15,000 people per home game over a two-year rolling period (Divisional Differences, 2018, para. 1). There is no such requirement at the FCS level. Ultimately, what it comes down to is money. According to Kirshner (2017):

FBS teams have a lot more of it than FCS teams. They have far better broadcast deals. They get more scholarships because they're able to fund more of them. They can finance nicer facilities and hire more expensive coaches than FCS programs, and that all goes into FBS teams being better (para. 11).

The monetary differences are made even more clear when examining both athletic spending and institutional spending per athlete based on FBS or FCS programs. According to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2015), athletic spending per athlete at the FBS level averaged above \$111,000 with football specific athletic scholarship funding topping \$157,000. This is in addition to the \$27,194 spent in institutional funding for athletics per athlete. The average full cost of attendance per full time student at these FBS institutions is \$15,780, well below the funding received (Knight Commission, 2015). The change in funding from 2010 to 2015 for FBS institutions is illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Football Bowl Subdivision Average Spending 2010 - 2015

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ACADEMIC SPENDING PER FTE STUDENT+15% from 2010-2015					
\$13,700	\$14,033	\$14,445	\$15,192	\$15,580	\$15,780
ATHLETIC SPENDING PER ATHLETE+21% from 2010-2015					
\$91,493	\$96,948	\$104,490	\$107,149	\$110,964	\$111,107
INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING FOR ATHLETICS PER ATHLETE+46% from 2010-2015					
\$18,640	\$19,988	\$20,103	\$23,963	\$28,405	\$27,194
FOOTBALL SPENDING PER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP FOOTBALL PLAYER+21% from 2010-2015					
\$131,021	\$138,149	\$153,084	\$154,411	\$155,220	\$157,910

Amounts reflect current dollars.
(Knight Commission, 2015)

FCS programs tell a similar story except at a much smaller scale. Athletic spending per athlete at the FCS level averaged just below \$42,000, less than half of that at the FBS level (Knight Commission, 2015). Furthermore, football spending per athletic scholarship just tops

\$44,000 and, again, well below the \$157,000 FBS average. While this is the case, institutional funding for athletics supported more per student at the FCS level, averaging \$29,197. The average full cost of attendance per full time student at FCS institutions was \$13,806 (Knight Commission, 2015). Table 1.2 illustrate the change in funding from 2010 to 2015 for FCS institutions.

Table 1.2: Football Championship Subdivision Average Spending 2010 - 2015

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ACADEMIC SPENDING PER FTE STUDENT+16% from 2010-2015					
\$11,909	\$11,964	\$11,825	\$12,649	\$13,494	\$13,806
ATHLETIC SPENDING PER ATHLETE+25% from 2010-2015					
\$33,593	\$36,112	\$38,958	\$38,362	\$41,085	\$41,989
INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING FOR ATHLETICS PER ATHLETE+22% from 2010-2015					
\$23,886	\$25,763	\$26,880	\$27,830	\$28,883	\$29,197
FOOTBALL SPENDING PER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP FOOTBALL PLAYER+30% from 2010-2015					
\$34,134	\$35,910	\$39,162	\$38,843	\$41,907	\$44,230

Amounts reflect current dollars.
(Knight Commission, 2015)

It is clear that just within a single division, overall athletic spending and funding can drastically vary across institutions. While this is the case, it is important to understand the student-athletes at the NCAA Division I level continuously have access to greater academic programs and support in relation to the Division II and Division III counterparts (NCAA Recruiting Facts, 2018). Therefore, while these differences exist between the two subdivisions, the two NCAA Division I institutions will be explored as a whole in an effort to describe the services offered at the NCAA's highest level. In this dissertation, the student-athlete support services and use of high impact educational practices across these two institutions will be studied using qualitative data to help further understand what services exist, how they are or are not utilized by student-athletes, and what missing services could be helpful to student-athletes. First,

it is important to understand what high impact educational practices are and how they are measured.

High Impact Educational Practices

Within higher education research, there exist best practices that have been developed as effective in providing positive educational results for students from diverse backgrounds across several institutions (Kuh, 2008). These best practices, also known as high-impact educational practices, are a set of ten practices consisting of: (1) First-Year Seminars and Experiences, (2) Common Intellectual Experiences, (3) Learning Communities, (4) Writing-Intensive Courses, (5) Collaborative Assignments and Projects, (6) Undergraduate Research, (7) Diversity/Global Learning, (8) Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, (9) Internships, and (10) Capstone Courses and Projects (Kuh, 2008). According to Kuh (2008), “Deep approaches to learning are important because students who use these approaches tend to earn higher grades and retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates” (p. 14). Overall, students who attribute such behaviors typically are more engaged within the high-impact practice offerings at the institution (Kuh, 2008).

While the overall impact on each individual student may vary, Kuh (2008) posits that high-impact educational practices are particularly effective because a significant amount of time and effort is required, the practices demand faculty and peer interactions, students are more exposed to diversity, students receive frequent feedback on performance, and the practices are able to be applied in diverse settings (Kuh, 2008). While Kuh (2008) recommends participation in at least two of these high-impact practices throughout the students’ academic career, these practices must be done well in order to provide positive outcomes. This includes scaling up the practices and ensuring students a real chance to participate – at least one available to every

student every year (Kuh, 2008). The primary contributors to effective utilization of these practices are university faculty. According to Kuh (2008),

What faculty think value does not necessarily impel students to take part in high-impact activities or engage in other educationally purposeful practices. Rather, when large numbers of faculty and staff at an institution endorse the worth of an activity, members of the campus community are more likely to agree to devote their own time and energy to it, as well as provide other resources to support it—all of which increases the likelihood that the activities will be available to large numbers of students and that the campus culture will encourage student participation in the activities (p. 22).

Past research has found high-impact educational practices to be beneficial to students from a wide-array of backgrounds (Kuh, 2008; Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2014; Soria & Johnson, 2017). These HIPs lead to greater student engagement and outcomes, while opening pathways to critical thinking, cognition, intercultural effectiveness, and overall student success (Kilgo et al., 2014).

Several studies have illustrated the overall importance of participation in intercollegiate athletics as a way to increase academic success, involvement, engagement, and retention for the student-athletes (Duggan & Pickering, 2008; Gayles & Hu, 2009; LeCrom, Warren, Clark, Marolla, & Gerber, 2009; Comeaux, Speer, Taustine, & Harrison, 2011; Evans, Werdine, & Seifried, 2017; Huml, Svensson, & Hancock, 2017). Furthermore, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have suggested that participation in these types of engagement practices for first-year student-athletes can create similar benefits as seen with non-athlete students. Similarly, overall engagement in high impact educational practices has been found to create a positive impact on college outcomes for student-athletes (Gatson-Gayles & Hu, 2009; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, &

Hannah, 2006). Whereas this is the case, situations may exist in which, “negative stereotypes toward student-athletes may in fact hinder the quality of their engagement in educationally purposeful activities” while also making it difficult to establish positive relationships with the campus community (Comeaux, Speer, Taustine, & Harrison, 2011, p. 47).

Furthermore, recommendations have been established to consider interventions that are acclimatized to the specific environments and student in which they are serving (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Therefore, the study of higher education interventions, or in this case, high impact practices and student-athlete support services, must still be studied within the NCAA Division I student-athlete environment. Although the outcomes of intercollegiate athletics participation have been studied, educators, or more specifically student-athlete support staff, must strive to identify high impact educational practices, while encouraging administration, coaching staffs, and individuals across athletic departments to apply a theory-to-practice connection using these HIPs (Comeaux et. al, 2011; Patton et. al, 2016).

Kuh and O’Donnell (2013) identified eight key elements that must occur for practices to be high-impact. Specifically, these eight key elements include: 1) performance expectations set at appropriately high levels, 2) significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time, 3) interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters, 4) experience with diversity, 5) frequent, time, and constructive feedback, 6) periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning, 7) relevance of learning through real-world applications, and 8) public demonstration of competence. Through NSSE (2017) data and the NCAA Study of Student-Athlete Social Environments (2016), Bell, Ribera and Gonyea (2018) determined that being a student-athlete encompasses all key elements except, faculty and peer

interaction, reflecting and integrating learning, and relevance of learning through real-world applications.

These specific outcomes are measured through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or similar institutional surveys. While past studies have shown the effectiveness of these practices, the implementation and research of such practices can be applied further within the student-athlete setting, specifically between FBS and FCS student-athlete support services. NSSE serves as a unique resource in helping identify these high impact practices and how they affect the students.

National Survey of Student Engagement

The National Survey of Student Engagement is a higher education tool that helps measure overall student engagement across institutions. According to NSSE (2018), “student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort student put in to their students and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources” (para. 1). In order to measure this, NSSE collects annual information at four-year colleges and universities to gain a better understanding of what student time is being spent on and what they gain from their activities (NSSE, 2018). Specifically, NSSE surveys first-year students and senior students with survey items that represent each of the high impact educational practices and the overall educational outcomes associated with them (NSSE, 2018). While these surveys do not ultimately assess student learning, institutions are able to utilize the service results to identify areas of improvement and growth. The institutions are able to use this data, “to identify aspects of the undergraduate experience inside and outside the classroom that can be improved through changes in policies

and practices more consistent with good practices in undergraduate education” (NSSE, 2018, para. 5).

Intercollegiate Athletics Role in Culture

Intercollegiate athletics continues to play a significant role in the overall culture of U.S. higher education. Without the acceptance of these programs across the country, U.S. college and universities would struggle to survive (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). Furthermore, intercollegiate athletic programs play a significant role in establishing universities as organizations through the generation of necessary resources that would otherwise not be available to them. This is important to note within the context of this study because Beyer and Hannah (2000) illustrate, “the danger of this situation is that athletic programs will lose their educational focus and become just another form of big business” (p. 118). Unfortunately, if this becomes the case, overall student-athlete support services could be affected, resulting in greater need to utilize on-campus resources and academic personnel at the institutions.

Research Purpose, Implications, Goals, and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore current student-athlete support services at two NCAA Division I institutions. Furthermore, the researcher compared these support services differ between these two types of institutions. The researcher identified in what ways student-athletes are or are not utilizing these services and what missing services could be helpful within the student-athlete setting. Overall, high-impacts practices have been widely tested and have contributed to positive outcomes for students of a variety of backgrounds. Moreover, the implementation of such active learning practices has allowed institutions to assess practices that contribute to student cumulative learning (Kuh, 2008). According to Kuh (2008), "However, on almost all campuses, utilization of active learning practices is unsystematic, to the detriment of

student learning" (p. 9). In order to further explore and described available student-athlete support services at the NCAA Division I level, the following research questions were proposed:

RQ1: What services does student athlete support services provide at Division I institutions?

RQ2: In what ways do student-athletes utilize or not utilize these services?

RQ3: Using high impact educational practices, what services that are missing could be helpful to student-athletes and what would this look like in intercollegiate athletics?

The author acknowledges personal interest in the research subject matter and brings background knowledge on the issue. The author has prolonged engagement in student-athlete support services at a large, Division I university. This prolonged engagement combined with the personal interest in the examination of this context and setting provides ample opportunity for the author to relate to participants in an effort to dig deeper throughout the process.

The literature review will help provide an overview of essential studies related to relevant higher education research, including the characteristics of today's college student, the input-environment-outcomes model, college environment, involvement and engagement, and the application of high impact practices. Furthermore, topics regarding the intercollegiate athletics connection to higher education will be discussed, including the financial impact, student-athlete support services, and the role of student-athlete support services staff.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Throughout this dissertation, higher education theories will be utilized to help explore the student-athlete academic environment, specifically as it relates to student-athlete support services at two Division I institutions. In order to help garner a greater understanding of college students and their environment, a magnitude of topics will be explored to illustrate the current higher education landscape. The concepts understood as a whole will help demonstrate the current state of higher education and how student-athlete support services programs play a role in the overall college student experience. To take this further, the literature review will provide insight on college athletics and its relationship with higher education.

The author will first explore today's college student and how student demographics have shifted throughout history. Specifically, we will find out who they are, what they need, and how they learn. The author will then focus on several higher education theories and frameworks, including college access and college choice, which ultimately lead to a discussion on the Input-Environment-Output (IEO) Model. The IEO Model plays a vital role in the overall understanding of the college experience for students. The author will describe the model and, specifically, focus on the importance of the college environment. The primary framework being studied are high impact educational practices, which are part of the college environment. Each of the ten best practices will be utilized and described within the literature review. Finally, the role of intercollegiate athletics and its relationship with higher education will be discussed. The primary focus will include intercollegiate athletic revenue, academic scandals and student-athlete academics. Table 2 provides an organizational layout of the following review of literature.

Characteristics of Today’s College Student

Table 2

Literature Review Organization

Topic
Characteristics of Today’s College Student
College Access
College Choice
Campus Climate and Diversity
Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model
College Environment
Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

With an estimated 19.5 million students expected to be enrolled in higher education by 2020, the overall undergraduate enrollment has continued to increase over the past forty years and will continue to do so. The early 2000’s saw tremendous growth in the undergraduate enrollment with an increase upwards of 24 percent in just an eight-year period (Renn, 2012). Furthermore, this growth has also seen an increased proportion of students of color, consistent with demographic changes in the U.S. and overall college-going rates for these racial and ethnic groups of students. Renn (2012) also explains, “The percentage of white students in higher education has decreased over the last several decades. Although the overall percentage decreased, the total number of white students actually increased by 54 percent over the same period” (p. 7). While this may seem like a significant increase, it pales in comparison to the

growth seen in Asian American, Native American Pacific Islander, and Hispanic Students. This population of students experienced an average of 528 percent growth while American Indian, Alaska Native, and African American college students increased by an average of 146 percent (Renn, 2012).

Diversity is not only limited to race and ethnicity, but also among attitudes and beliefs of current college students as well. Trend data suggests that college students are becoming more accepting and progressive in regard to their attitudes of lesbian, gay and, and bisexual issues. Similarly, Dey and Associates (2009) found that “93 percent of students responding to a survey supported the notion that contributing to a larger community should be a major focus of a college education” (p. 5). This supports Dey and Associates’ findings that over the past two decades, the percentage of first-year students who indicated they would engage in volunteer work during college increased from 17 percent to 31 percent (Renn, 2012).

These findings can certainly be applied to Generation Y (Gen Y), or Millennials who are those born between 1981 and 2001, and primarily are today’s students. Alison Black (2010) focused on how this generation uses information and learns within higher education. She explains:

The student population in higher education has shifted from U.S. native born to a mix of immigrants in this country. As the United States population continues to shift from a predominately middle-class European American composition, those changes will continue to impact who students are, what they need, and how they learn (p. 93).

Gen Y’s changing nature shows a student body that lacks basic skills, is collaborative in nature and learns best as a group, is assertive and confident, is supported emotionally and financially by “helicopter parents,” or parents that pay extremely close attention to their child’s

experiences and is dependent upon technology and its expectations as a learning tool (Black, 2010). Educators must be aware of these characteristics in “helping students gain the skills to live, earn, and work successfully within society” as Gen Y students (Black, 2010, p. 100).

While these characteristics apply to today’s college student, student-athletes exhibit their own unique set of characteristics. Just as the overall percentage of the white student population has decreased over the past several years, similar trends can be seen within the student-athlete population. According to the NCAA (2018), white males and females made up 64.5 percent of the total student-athlete population in Division I, II, and III institutions combined. The percentage of white male student-athletes participating at the Divisions I, II, and III levels combined decreased from 64.9 percent in 2015-2016 to 63.7 percent in 2016-2017 (NCAA, 2018). In 2016-2017, white male student-athletes comprised 56.7, 58.3, and 72.5 percent of all male student-athletes in Division I, Division II, and Division III, respectively. During the 2016-2017 season, African-American male student-athletes comprised 22.2 percent, 20.4 percent, and 12.2 percent of all male student-athletes in Divisions I, II, and III, respectively (NCAA, 2018).

Similar data can be applied to the white female student-athletes, who in 2016-2017 saw a 1.1 percent decrease from 66 percent of all Division I women student-athletes to 64.9 percent. Their female African American peers also saw a decrease, but at a much smaller scale from 12.6 percent to 12.5 percent of the all-female student-athlete population (NCAA, 2018). As you move from Division I to Division II and Division III, that number decreases to 9.5 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively, but increase to 70.8 and 80.3 percent for Division II and Division III white female students, respectively (NCAA, 2018).

In examining characteristics of today's college students, including NCAA student-athlete demographics, college access and choice issues become clearer as they relate to their importance in higher education.

College Access

Table 2

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Higher education has long been an area of deep debate in regard to postsecondary access and choice for students. Some argue that the United States does not have a college access problem based on a substantial increase in college enrollment; however, through varied research and statistics there are striking college access and choice challenges present within today's educational system based on varied race/ethnicity, family income, and other demographic characteristics (Perna and Kurban, 2013). In order to dissect these challenges facing college access and choice, it

is important to understand the characteristics of today's college students, who has access to college and who doesn't, undermatching, and college choice theories.

A hundred years ago, only two percent of twenty-three-year-olds had a college degree while today:

You will find something like fifty million Americans, about a sixth of the population, sitting under the roof of a public-school building, and twenty million more are students or on the faculty or the staff of an institution of higher learning. (Renn, 2012, p. 3)

This current generation of students is not only the largest generation of students in the history of this nation, but also has been called the most diverse not only in areas of race and ethnicity, but also in areas beyond race and ethnicity including a generation with "more openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, and more religiously diverse students, than ever before" (Renn, 2012, p. 4). There are growing trends for higher education in the United States as they relate to an increasingly diverse student body.

When discussing factors relating to college access, one of the most important characteristics that significantly affect both college access and college choice is family socioeconomic status. Although median parental income of incoming first-year students continues to rise, an "enrollment gap still exists for lower-income students, even after accounting for academic achievement. Academically talented students from lower-income families are less likely to attend college than equally talented peers from higher-income families" (Renn, 2012, p. 13). Unfortunately, this illustrates the issues relating to college access and the idea that lower performing students with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to attend college than their higher performing peers from lower socioeconomic status. The Postsecondary Education Opportunity on Unequal Family Income and Unequal Higher Education 1970 to 2013 suggests

that high school graduation, college continuation, college participation, and estimated bachelor's degree complete by age 24 all show powerful relationships to family income.

Over the past 44 years, high school graduation rates were lowest for students born into the bottom quartile of family income, including males and females, and for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. Similar findings hold for high school continuation rates. College participation rates and full-time college enrollment are also lowest for students born into the bottom quartile of family income as well. These general findings are related to family income for each racial/ethnic group as indicated by the graph (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2013). Unfortunately, these disparities have been growing since about 1980 and demonstrate that, "The unequal distribution of family income and the benefits and handicaps that family income has imposed since birth sort students into different paths, and these different paths produce different and quite predictable outcomes (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2013, p. 20). These barriers are more greatly magnified when college attendance costs are nearly impossible for families to pay for without the use of financial aid (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2013).

Strikingly, Heller (2013) demonstrates that, "The odds of attending college were roughly the same – about 77% or 78% – if you were a high-achieving, yet poor, student, as they were if you were a lower-achieving, yet wealthier, student" (p. 102). This brings about a sad conclusion in regard to college access that higher socioeconomic status families enjoy financial and social advantages over lower socioeconomic status families no matter the academic achievement levels. There are several initiatives that attempt to help students transcend socioeconomic barriers that typically limit enrollment at expensive, private institutions, including Prep for Prep, The Posse Foundation, and Stanford University. These programs attempt to:

Identify and nurture students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who would benefit from attending independent schools and private boarding schools (Prep for Prep), prepare urban students for successful transitions to postsecondary institutions where they would be minoritized in cohorts with others from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, (The Posse Foundation) and implement institution-based no-loans and zero-contribution initiatives (Stanford University) (Harper & Griffin, 2011, p. 51-52).

Harper and Griffin (2011) demonstrated that through these programs, low-income and working-class black male achievers were able to access highly selective, high-cost colleges and universities and recommended that policy makers become aware of such initiatives in order to expand higher education access in order for these lower-income persons to enroll and succeed.

Perna and Kurban (2013) identified four categories that determine enrollment and choice: financial resources, academic preparation and achievement, support from significant others, and knowledge and information about college and financial aid. Research consistently shows that grant aid is positively related to the likelihood of college enrollment, especially need-based aid. More specifically, “Changes in tuition and financial aid have a larger effect on college enrollment for students from lower-income families than higher-income ones, and for African Americans and Hispanics than for Whites” (Perna & Kurba, 2013, p. 16). Academic preparation and achievement also created access barriers for these demographic groups in which only six percent of Black and eight percent of Hispanic high school graduates in 2009 took a rigorous academic curriculum of at least four English credits, four math credits, biology, chemistry and physics, and at least three foreign language credits (Perna & Kurba, 2013).

By applying Perna and Kurba’s (2013) four categories of college choice, it is interesting to look at college access for student-athletes. Unfortunately, intercollegiate athletics have their

own issues regarding college access. Although the perception and visibility of college student-athletes indicates, “the most visible college athletes – the ones running across bar TV screens or in full-color photographs on newspaper sports pages – tend to be black;” however, “the black men in these two sports [college football and basketball] are not the reality of who has access to college sports” (Desai, 2018, para. 3). Specific examples exist at universities across the country, especially when it comes to elite institutions and the role of intercollegiate athletics as an illustration of affirmative action for rich, white students (Desai, 2018).

The discrepancy of admissions and college access are illustrated at institutions like Harvard, where the ranking system utilized admits athletes at a rate nearly 1,000 percent higher than non-athletes applying to the institution (Desai, 2018). According to Hextrum (2018), advantaged student-athletes “secure greater access to elite colleges for white middle-class communities via athletic participation” and “due to their community and social networks, are better at navigating this process” (p. 360). This helps further illustrate Perna and Kurba’s (2013) four categories as advantaged student-athletes more likely possess financial resources, academic preparation and achievement, support from significant others, and knowledge and information about college and financial aid. Hextrum (2018) even went as far to determine specific “instances where if you knew someone who knew someone, you could use that advantage to get a shortcut route into athletics” (p. 360). These college access issues, including academic preparation, make way for undermatching, a common phenomenon especially for low socioeconomic status students and families. If families and their students are able to navigate these barriers, the college choice model attempts to describe the overall decision-making process.

College Choice

Table 2

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The enrollment decisions facing high school graduates have increasingly become an important indicator of societal and educational issues. For example, Kinzie et al. (2004) suggested that federal, state and institutional policy-makers often base decisions about education equity and access on specific information obtained from the postsecondary students, including sociological and economic background. In fact, many parents and families utilize college rankings, such as the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, to determine which institutions are attracting the top students (Kinzie et al., 2004). Recently, early decision admissions programs at elite institutions have even been scrutinized by members of Congress (Kinzie et al., 2004). For many reasons, how students choose colleges and the factors that influence those choices have become important to diverse segments of American society.

College choice is defined by Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (2003) as, “A complex, multistate process during which an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, followed later by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution of advanced vocational training” (p. 7). College choice has led to the development of several models that help describe the development of making a college decision.

The college choice model is a developmental model that suggests a three-phase process: predisposition, search and choice (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). The first stage is labeled as the predisposition phase and is the stage in which students decide whether they are interested in continuing into higher education after high school. If they wish to do so, students enter the search phase, or a period in which they obtain information in regard to higher education institutions that they may be interested in. In this phase, students determine which “choice set” of institutions they intend to apply for admission (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). The third stage involves choice and the decision on which college or university the student will attend.

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) suggested that college choice is a complex phenomenon that admissions, marketing, and financial aid decision makers should carefully analyze as part of their recruitment activities. However, professionals in higher education, including admissions and marketing personnel, view:

All their recruitment activities as influencing the selection of one institution over another. This means that they are directing their efforts at the choice phase, when in fact, the most critical phase is the search phase. The best way for institutions to expand their applicant pool is to reach students at the search phase (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987, p. 218).

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) turn to the practice of early recruitment as an effective method to attract students through awareness of the institution targeting sophomores and juniors in high

school. Hossler et al. (2003) recognize the importance of college choice and suggest that where students choose to complete their education beyond high school has significant outcomes not only for the individual, but for society as well and; therefore, should drive the interest of policy makers in the postsecondary setting.

Hossler et al. (2003) suggest that college characteristics are also identified along with admissions selectivity as important in the college-going model advanced by Kohn, Manski, and Mundel (1976). Moreover, a range of college attributes such as the size/graduate orientation, masculinity/technical orientation, ruralness, fine arts orientation, and liberalness are also suggested as factors of important in the college choice process by R. Chapman (1979). D. Chapman (1981) presented a model of college choice applicable to traditional age prospective students. The choice of which college to attend is influenced by the characteristics and background of both the student and the student's family as well as, "by a series of external influences. These include the influence of significant persons, the fixed characteristics of the college, and the institution's own efforts to communicate with prospective students" (p. 503).

This systematic, theory-driven research on college choice can enhance the knowledge on student college choice and can lead to, "an improved understanding of college choice, which can lead to aid policies, high school guidance activities, and marketing activities that make college more accessible to students and that increase the likelihood of student fit" (Hossler et al., 2003, p. 38). While this is the case, college choice factors play a different role within the student-athlete experience. Past studies have largely determined that academic programs or major were the top priority when it comes to student-athlete college choice; however, other factors exist, including who the head coach is, what academic support services are present, academic reputation, career development opportunities, and sport atmosphere (Kankey & Quaterman,

2007; Letawsky, Palmer, & Schneider, 2005; Pauline, 2012). However, college choice factors can largely vary per sport. For example, Klenosky, Templin, and Troutman (2001) examined NCAA Division I football players and determined the coach/coaching staff was most important in their decision, but also the location and friends on the team made them feel comfortable with their college decision. The literature illustrates college choice factors that are unique to student-athletes; however, Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, and Palmer (2003) note, “although student-athletes have different factors that influence college choice, non-athletic related factors are just as important as athletic related factors” (p. 604). Administrators and recruiters must learn to find the appropriate balance between these two factors.

This can provide further consideration for higher education institutions; however, there has been little research on college choice model as it fits within high impact educational practices and student-athlete support services across universities. Prior to discussing the inputs-environment-outputs model, it is important to understand how campus climate and diversity play a role within higher education.

Campus Climate and Diversity

Table 2

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College Environment
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The Role of Athletic Support Staff

One of the key college student outcomes associated with campus climate is successful transition and retention of diverse students in college. According to Rankin and Reason (2008), climate refers to the, “current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students that concern the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential” (p. 264). Unfortunately, students of color experience specific challenges that makes it more difficult for a successful transition to college. Students of color, “have the added burden of adjusting to college in what they may perceive as a hostile racial climate. Their presence on campus is often scrutinized and their talents and abilities are doubted” (Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, & Oseguera, 2008, p. 259). Although White students may experience racial aspects, this scrutiny and burden is at a lesser magnitude. These racial dynamics go beyond the

social level and can unfortunately be applied to the academic arena as well. Past research has sighted psychological and behavioral dimensions of the climate for diversity as barriers for academic success, retention, and graduation of minority students (Locks, et. al, 2008). Locks, et. al (2008) also sites that institutional climate and commitment is typically seen through academic, social, and financial support; however, “institutions may ignore the fact that these levels of support are affected by campus racial dynamics” (p. 263).

Another aspect of college climate that was studied is how gender and race moderate the effect of interactions and perceptions of the campus environment. Laird and Niskode-Dossett (2010) concluded only trivial differences between men and women in perceptions of the campus environment; however, this was viewed much differently for racial/ethnic groups. The authors found that African and Hispanic American students found their institutions supportive versus Native American, White, Asian American, and multiracial/ethnic peers, while Hispanic Americans and White students tended to view student and faculty relationships as most favorably in both first-year and senior years. These relationships were viewed least favorably by multiracial/ethnic seniors (Laird & Niskode-Dossett, 2010). There is little to explain why African American students would rate institutional supportiveness high, but supportive relationships low; however, it might be explained by the, “negative responses they sometimes receive from mono-racial students on campus or the way in which institution policies, programs, and procedures often reflect only a mono-racial paradigm” (p. 347). Unfortunately for these students and others that perceive a negative campus climate, there are ill effects related to educational attainment and development versus their peers, who perceive a positive campus climate and experience more positive learning outcomes through a supportive climate (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006).

Campus climate also uniquely affects student-athletes throughout their experiences as well. One of the biggest factors within the campus climate that impacts overall academic performance for student-athletes is the presence of faculty and staff, both on-campus and in athletics, that are dedicated to their success and supportive of their endeavors (Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002). Just as campus climate matters for the general student population, it also matters to student-athletes and influences both their overall academic and athletic success (Rankin, Merson, Garvey, Sorgen, Menon, Loya, & Oseguera, 2016). According to Rankin et al. (2016), “the strongest impact was the influence of student-athletes’ interactions with faculty members on their academic success...Campus climate has a substantial impact on student-athletes’ academic and athletic outcomes, impacts that would not have been evident if we had examined demographic characteristics alone” (p. 721). Campus climate must be understood more, and institutions must support students who fall outside of a set of categories generally used to talk about race and ethnicity on campus (Laird & Niskode-Dossett, 2010).

Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model

Table 2

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Retention Theory
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Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
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The impact of college on student outcomes has been well documented in the literature. Student outcomes that have been studied include personalities, values, types of institutions and programs, behaviors, and lifestyles (Astin, 1993; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005; Seifer, Gilling, Hanson, Pascarella, & Blaich, 2014). Originally developed by Astin (1993), the Input-Environment-Output, or I-E-O, model attempts to illustrate the overall impact unique college environmental factors have on determining whether students grow or change based on these conditions. Furthermore, this model is of importance as it, “provides educators, students, and policy makers with a better basis of knowing how to achieve desired educational outcomes” (Astin, 1993, p. 7). In order to understand the I-E-O model, it is important to illustrate the differences in each stage of the model. Inputs are described as initial individualities present

within the students prior to their entry into the institution, environments comprise of the programs or people that the students are exposed to while at the institution, including educational experiences and policies, faculty, and peers, and, lastly, outcomes are the characteristics that emerge for the students after they have been exposed to the environment (Astin, 1993).

Several researchers have used this model to explore the impact of faculty and student-athlete relationships and interactions as it relates to academic achievement on the collegiate level (Harrison, Comeaux, & Plecha, 2006). Previous research primarily views the environmental experience involving student-athlete and faculty interactions as a negative educational influence (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen, 1995; Sailes, 1993) and suggests that there are unappealing, negative attitudes toward student-athletes on campuses; however, there is limited research when it comes to studying “student-athlete academic success rate as they related to faculty members” (Sellers, 1992; Comeaux and Harrison, 2011).

Such research shows varying degrees of effect on the student-athlete’s academic success. Jacob (1957) understands that faculty members can have a significant influence, especially “at institutions where association between faculty and students is normal and frequent, and students find teachers receptive to unhurried conversations to class” (p.8), while Milem and Berger (1997) see a larger benefit from student-faculty out-of-class communication because there is a greater sense of academic integration, which plays a key factor in academic success, is happening. Harrison, Comeaux, and Plecha conclude that, “Faculty who are willing to extend communication beyond the classroom and are connected with students in an intimate enough way to discern personal qualities have the potential to significantly influence the students’ lives, and vice versa” (p. 278). This research also helps illustrate the vital role of the college environment within the I-E-O model.

College Environment

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Topic
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Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model
College Environment
Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

When assessing the role of student-athlete support services and high impact educational practices, the author is focusing on the college environment as part of the I-E-O model. Due to its importance regarding student retention, the college environment plays a vital role in the overall student experience and must be studied. While students enter college with a unique set of individual characteristics as part of their inputs, they must also interact with the unique environment present within their institutions. Within this interaction, “several psychological processes take place that, for the successful student, result in positive self-efficacy, reduced stress, increased efficacy, and internal locus of control. Each of these processes increased a student’s scholarly motivation. These internal processes are reciprocal and iterative with continuous feedback and adjustment” (Bean & Eaton, 2000, p. 58).

These internal aspects play a critical role for positive student outcomes for students from different genders diverse cultures that perceive the world differently. These psychological processes combined with the initial characteristics affected by institutional environment, allow students to react to new academic and social interactions. If these interactions go well: “students will begin to perceive that they are in control of their academic and social destiny and be motivated to take action consistent with perception. The result of these intermediate attitudes and behavioral choices are the intermediate outcomes of social and academic integration and, hopefully, academic success” (Bean & Eaton, 2000, p. 58).

Unfortunately, there is opportunity for these interactions to not go well, particularly for marginalized students experiencing a negative campus environment. Within the college environment exists the idea of safe spaces within the classroom. Specifically, a “safe space” is described as “classroom environment in which students are willing and able to participate and honestly struggle with challenging issues” (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 49). These students may represent an “inclusive group of learners,” who are underrepresented or marginalized based on a variety of factors (Gayle, Cortez, & Preiss, 2013). For example, Sedlacek (1999) provides an example of African American students in the classroom. At a predominantly white university, African American students felt much more vulnerable in the classroom than their non-African American peers. While this is the case, past research has also indicated that, although vulnerable in the classroom, a more engaged classroom provides them with a greater sense of belonging (Booker, 2007). This is incredibly important, especially for underrepresented or marginalized student populations because, “A large majority of students stated that safe classroom environments were important in both what and how much they learned” (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 58). Students felt more challenged and aware in a safe classroom while also indicating the

opportunity to be more openminded to their own viewpoints and the viewpoints of others (Holley & Steiner, 2005). Safe classrooms have often been viewed as an opportunity to create a college environment open to all; however, often times student are unaware of the role they play in creating these types of environments. Specifically, most students felt that the teacher was the primary influencer on how safe the classroom was without realizing their own power in helping drive to classroom to a safe space (Holley & Steiner, 2005).

Retention Theory

Table 2

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The college environment is essential to study because of the role that it has on college student retention. According to Bean and Eaton (2000), students enter college with a complex variety of personal characteristics in which they input into their college experience. As they interact within the institutional environment, "several psychological processes take place that, for

the successful student, result in positive self-efficacy, reduced stress, increased efficacy, and internal locus of control. Each of these processes increased a student's scholarly motivation. These internal processes are reciprocal and iterative with continuous feedback and adjustment" (p. 58). These internal roles play a different role for students from different cultures or of difference genders that perceive the world differently. These psychological processes combined with the initial characteristics affected by institutional environment, allow students to react to new academic and social interactions. If these interactions go well, "students will begin to perceive that they are in control of their academic and social destiny and be motivated to take action consistent with perception. The result of these intermediate attitudes and behavioral choices are the intermediate outcomes of social and academic integration and, hopefully, academic success" (p. 58).

Specifically, certain factors contribute to overall student-athlete retention and academic success as well. Factors including scholarship support, gender, and sport-type have been determined to be significant predictors of retention for student-athletes (Le Crom, Warren, Clark, Marolla, & Gerber, 2009). Furthermore, relationships established outside of teammates, including faculty and peers, have been shown to be directly related to academic success (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Similarly, interorganizational relationships within student-athlete academic centers help increase overall effectiveness of academic support services (Evans, Werdine, & Seifried, 2017). Adler and Adler (1985) suggest additional academic support through role models and advisors outside of athletics to avoid the "athletic personnel masquerade[ing] as academic advisors" (p. 249). While positive engagements within the college environment provides a strong predictor for student retention, it is important to further

investigate specific high-impact educational practices and how they apply within the student-athlete setting.

High-Impact Educational Practices

Table 2

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Overall, high-impact educational practices take unique forms based on the characteristics, priorities, and contexts of the universities utilizing such practices (Kuh, 2008). While these practices have been widely tested and have illustrated beneficial outcomes for diverse college students, the practices remain unsystematic at the institutional level. For the following practices, educational research has suggested an increase in student retention and student engagement upon implementation and participation (Kuh, 2008). As previously mentioned, these high-impact educational practices include: (1) first-year seminars and experiences, (2) common intellectual experiences, (3) learning communities, (4) writing-

intensive courses, (5) collaborative assignments and projects, (6) undergraduate research, (7) diversity/global learning, (8) service learning, community-based learning, (9) internships, and (10) capstone courses and projects. The following Table 3 provides a brief overview of each practice exerted from Kuh (2008).

(Table 3 about here)

Learning in college takes place both in-class and out-of-class. Seifert, Gillig, Hanson, Pascarella, & Blaich (2014) noted a list of principles of good practice in undergraduate education. These principles include student faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback to students, time on task, high expectation, and a respect for diverse students and diverse ways of knowing have been significantly and positively, “linked to desired aspects of cognitive growth during college” (Pascarella et al., 2006, p. 254).

Enhanced and enriched educational opportunities, such as learning communities, service learning, research with a faculty member, study abroad, internship, and culminating senior experiences are known as high impact practices because of their positive effect on student learning and development (McCormick, Gonyea, & Kinzie, 2013). According to NSSE (2013), “these experiences call on students to invest considerable time and effort, facilitate out-of-class learning, engage students meaningfully with faculty, encourage interaction with people unlike themselves, and provide frequent feedback on performance. Students often describe their participation in these activities as life changing” (p. 13).

Involvement, Engagement, Integration and High-Impact Educational Practices

Table 2

Literature Review Organization

Topic
Characteristics of Today's College Student
College Access
College Choice
Campus Climate and Diversity
Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model
College Environment
Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Involvement, engagement, and integration are frequently associated with the positive outcomes from the implementation of high impact educational practices. Ultimately, the opportunity to enhance the overall college environment is ever-present through these aspects. While these opportunities are present, unfortunately, there are several negative consequences or issues related to race and ethnicity when studying involvement, engagement, and integration.

One of the most troubling negative correlates that Astin (2003) found in was that there was very weak commitment for both public 4-year colleges and especially public universities in regard to student involvement in community service. This can be troublesome since Astin (2003), "already determined that participating in volunteer service during the undergraduate years has positive effects on such post-college outcomes as enrolling in graduate school, being

committed to promoting racial understanding, and socializing across racial ethnic lines. It even increases the likelihood that the student will donate money to the college (p. 506). Similarly, there is a substantial decline in student participation in community service activities between high school and college, where the number of student who frequently participate in community service declines by half, whereas the number of nonparticipants more than doubles. This suggests that:

Faculty and student affairs professionals are missing out on a great opportunity to maintain and promote student involvement in community service activities and volunteer work during the undergraduate years. In other words, there is a tremendous untapped potential in our undergraduate students for greater participation in volunteer work (Astin, 2003, p. 505).

This along with several other important outcomes are negatively affected by non-involvement that isolates peers or removes students from campus including living at home, commuting, attending part-time, being employed off campus, being employed full-time, and watching television (Astin, 2003).

Being employed full-time is a significant aspect in regard to negative effects on student engagement as well. Heavy work commitments were found to hinder engagement and had a negative effect on campus environment perception for students while grades were slightly lower for those working more than twenty hours a week (Kuh, 2009). As students age, this negative affect does not become significant for college seniors. Employment is just one aspect of engagement that affects students, but equally important, “compared with White students, many students of color expend more time and energy on some activities but report benefitting less, including earning lower grades” (Kuh, 2009, p. 694). This can be due to varying learning

productivity in students or the variability in implementation of educational practices from institution to institution (Kuh, 2009). Astin (2003) suggests that:

We have not done enough work on the varieties of engagement and what kinds of involvement are positive, or related. For example, political involvement is negatively involved with retention, and satisfaction, it's not a uniformly positive experience. [We need to] look at exceptions and think about why some forms of involvement are negatively related to development (cited in Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009, p. 414).

Academic and social integration theory was developed by Tinto (1993), "to explain voluntary student departure from undergraduate institutions" (Wolf-Wendel et. al, 2009, p. 414) and includes three phases when an individual joins a group. These phases include: (a) separation from the past, (b) transition, which the individual begins to interact with new setting and people, and (c) incorporation in which the individual adopts the norms and expectations of the new group (Wolf-Wendel et. al., 2009). Unfortunately, Tinto's model has been critiqued for failing to account for the, "implication that integration into predominately White environments might be difficult to accomplish for students with racially and ethnically diverse groups" (Wolf-Wendel, et. al, 2009, p. 423). This leads to the assumption that integration involves abandoning history, heritage, and outside interests for students of different race/ethnicity, age, and full-time enrollment status. This problem associated with integration must be addressed because if these diverse students are under this assumption, it may result in unsuccessful integration, ultimately resulting in departure from the institution. Involvement, engagement and integration all offer unique definitions and measurements that involve physical and psychological energy, collaborative efforts on the part of the institutions and students, and the sharing of attitudes and beliefs, respectively. These are all aspects associated with the college environment and climate.

Involvement, engagement, and integration all differ in their definitions and how they are measured. Involvement is the psychological and physical energy that is exerted and devoted by a student within their academic or social experiences. In this case, involvement is measured by both time and energy as well as the quality and quantity that is exerted (Astin, 2003).

Engagement involves more of a collaborative effort and involves both what the student does and what the institution does in creating and fostering educationally purposeful activities (Kuh, 2009). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2001) captures several levels of engagement through their five provided benchmarks of effective educational practice including academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. Tinto (1997) defines integration as the sharing of attitudes and beliefs among the students and their peers and faculty. Additionally, the institutional rules and policies of the institutions are shared within the student themselves as well. It is important to note that integration is not only found on the academic level, but also on the social level as well. This is a vital aspect for institutions to understand because it is predictive of voluntary departure from the institution (Tinto, 1997). When establishing best educational practices, involvement, engagement, and integration all provide substantial opportunities to enhance institutional environment and, ultimately, outcomes.

These opportunities will help foster mattering in students. Mattering is defined as, “the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension exercises a powerful influence on our actions” (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 8). This sense of mattering will typically urge students to greater involvement and lead to the accomplishment of goals. Institutions that focus on this idea of mattering and greater student involvement, “will be more successful in creating campuses where students are motivated to

learn, where their retention is high, and ultimately, where their institutional loyalty for the short- and long-term future is ensured” (p. 14). According to Harper, William Jr., & Blackman, “Black male student-athletes graduate at 5.3 percentage points lower than their same-race male peers who are not on intercollegiate sports teams. That an average of 49.8% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses do not graduate within six years is a major loss” (p. 7). These high impact practices must be displayed within the athletics department, whether implemented by the athletic department itself or the institution as a whole, in order to foster that sense of mattering and involvement, ultimately leading to higher graduation rates within the Black male student-athlete population.

Undermatching

Table 2

Literature Review Organization

Topic
Characteristics of Today’s College Student College Access College Choice Campus Climate and Diversity Inputs-Environment-Outputs Model College Environment Retention Theory High Impact Educational Practices Involvement, Engagement, and Integration Undermatching Intercollegiate Athletics Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals Student-athlete Support Services The Role of Athletic Support Staff

According to Smith, Pender and Howell (2012), “Academic undermatch occurs when students’ academic credentials permit them access to a college or university that is more selective than the postsecondary alternative that they actually choose” (p. 247). Unfortunately, no matter the academic credentials, undermatching exists and occurs in over 40 percent of the student population and most commonly among students from rural areas and low socioeconomic status (SES) families with less educated parents (49.6 percent of the time for Lower-SES students versus 34 percent for higher-SES students) (Smith, Pender and Howell, 2012).

Belasco and Trivette (2015) developed similar findings in which SES and undermatch had a significant and negative relationship. African American, Asian and Hispanic students were found less likely to undermatch, with “African Americans exhibiting a significantly lower likelihood of undermatch by selectivity” (p. 251). These studies also indicated that students who placed greater importance on low college tuition and living at home were more likely to undermatch and suggests the significance of social class in determining postsecondary destinations of students (Belasco and Trivette, 2015). This significance in social class is also prevalent when describing the college choice developmental model.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Table 2

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College Environment
Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Collegiate athletics have long been a source of revenue for programs and institutions across the country. Several studies have identified the significance of financial resources within collegiate athletics and its importance. Hoffer, Humphreys, Lacombe, and Ruseski (2015) noted that there are substantial investments in maintaining high-quality collegiate athletics programs with one of the primary purposes to, “attract student-athletes to play on the university’s football and men’s basketball teams, since universities cannot compete for the services of athletes on a price (salary) basis. Universities that are successful on the playing field generate substantial revenues through ticket sales, concessions, parking, television broadcast rights fees, donations, licensed merchandize sales, and bowl appearances (Hoffer et al., 2015, p. 577). One of the top revenue producing avenues for collegiate athletic programs are the football bowl payouts, with

the top five payouts ranging from \$3.5 million to \$22.3 million (Hoffer et al., 2015). These successes on the playing field have also shown increased applications, increased state appropriations, and other benefits to the institutions, which will be discussed further.

Hoffer et al. (2015) also applies Bowen's (1980) revenue theory of costs in higher education to intercollegiate athletics, which is when, "nonprofit colleges and universities collect revenues from students in the form of tuition and fees and set expenditure to always equal this revenue. When revenues rise, expenditures increase in lockstep" (p. 577). The authors noted significant increases in revenues within intercollegiate athletics that can allow the revenue theory of costs to be applied in which, "the observed increases in intercollegiate athletic expenditure occur across all big-time athletic departments because they set expenditure equal to revenue and have experienced large revenue increases" (Hoffer et al., 2015, p. 577). This research on collegiate athletics and the revenue involved is only a snapshot of what takes place within these athletic programs in terms of revenue. With this brief overview, additional studies can be presented that illustrate the importance of collegiate athletics in the realm of higher education.

Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics

Table 2

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Retention Theory
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Intercollegiate Athletics
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Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
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Financial impact has also been studied in terms of revenue at institutions with successful athletic programs. Chung (2015) found that football and basketball success has a significant impact on their corresponding revenues. Specifically, in football, Chung (2015) found that regular season wins account for most of the increase in revenue for established schools whereas invitations to prestigious bowl games play a big part for less established schools. In basketball, he found the correlation between revenue and success in terms of the fraction of wins to be linear with an added effect for established schools. However, Chung (2015), “[found] no conclusive evidence of cross-promotional spillover from football success to basketball revenue, and vice versa. We find that the size of the student body and education quality diminishes the effect of athletic success on monetary gains” (p. 17). What was found is significant carryover effects in both basketball and football

revenues, which Chung (2015) explains is a great indication, “that the financial impact of having a successful athletics program is persistent over time and can have a substantial long-term monetary effect” (p. 17).

Stinson and Howard (2007) found that alumni donate more total dollars than nonalumni; however, this is because there are more alumni making gifts than nonalumni to the institutions. Nonalumni were found to be less likely to make smaller gifts to the institution, which results in higher average gifts (Stinson & Howard, 2007). The same pattern of results holds for alumni versus nonalumni giving to academic and athletic programs in which alumni gave more to athletic and academic programs where most was allocated to support intercollegiate athletic programs (Stinson & Howard, 2007). Additionally, “Alumni are no more or less immune to the influence of athletic success on their giving patterns than are nonalumni. Although athletic performance does not appear to differentially influence either alumni or nonalumni, team success does appear to influence donors of athletic programs more than donors of academic programs” (Stinson & Howard, 2007, p. 258). The researchers noted that gifts given to academic programs do not appear to be related to athletic influence and are independent of this factor. Although athletic success might not be directly related to academic giving:

It does appear to influence the percentage of total charitable dollars donated to academics. Across the schools included in this study, the percentage of total gift allocated to academic programs is falling, whereas the associated percentage of total gift allocated to athletic programs is increasing. Higher levels of football winning percentages and a strong football tradition are associated with increased allocations to athletics. Overall model fit also improves with the addition of athletic success measures (Stinson & Howard, 2007, p. 258).

Berry (2015) offers a suggestion that would help slow down the race to spend on athletics by looking at the availability of excess funds for academics. Suggesting setting aside a share of overall NCAA postseason income, including revenue from television and ticket sales, to be used for academic programs and student welfare, Berry (2015) believes that, if the NCAA and conferences are serious about ‘student-athlete’ and not just athlete, then some of the income from the postseason contests in revenue sports should be allocated to academic programs in the university for all students” (p. 6). Setting aside a portion of income prior to it reaching athletic departments would help to slow this race to spend on athletics and would strengthen academic programs at these universities along with academic success.

Lastly, Walker (2015) studied private financial contributions for institutions with athletics success compared to all other higher education institutions. His results show a significant statistical difference of more than double percentage increase of overall private financial contributions associated with institutions with athletics success with a small difference found for private (greater financial contributions) versus public institutions as well (Walker, 2015). However, this difference seems to be temporary as, “no difference was found by region, for history of athletics success, or between basketball or football athletics success for those institutions experiencing athletics success (p. 1). This link of financial impact to athletic success provides ample implications to university foundations, athletic programs and academic programs in terms of their fundraising and donation goals and objectives.

Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals

Table 2

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Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Intercollegiate athletics scandals are becoming more and more prevalent throughout the media, especially within the realm of academic scandals. While the NCAA continues to grow in participation and revenue with more than 460,000 student-athletes competing across 24 sports, more eyes have caught sight of the negative attention surrounding several NCAA institutions, including the University of North Carolina. Although research has placed immense value on successful athletic programs, this may illustrate a shift away from an academic focus (Brunet, Atkins, Jonson, & Stranak, 2013). Unfortunately, the shift away from academics has shed light on several NCAA scandals on and off the court.

In 2017, the University of North Carolina (UNC) was not punished by the NCAA despite, “running one of the worst academic fraud schemes in college sports history, involving fake

classes that enabled dozens of athletes to gain and maintain their eligibility” (Tracy, 2017, para. 1). While this was the case, no punishment was enforced by the NCAA because these so called “paper” classes were not being exclusively offered to athletes at the institution and, thus, could not conclude that an NCAA academic rules were broken (Tracy, 2017). This incident was not a unique occurrence across the NCAA. Academic fraud has been noted in several Division I institutions, including the University of Missouri and the University of Notre Dame. Both of these cases involved athletic staff members, including an academic coordinator and athletic trainer, completing a significant amount of coursework for basketball and football student-athletes, respectively. A one-year postseason ban was imposed for Missouri basketball, while Notre Dame football was put on one-year probation (Associated Press, 2016; Palmer, 2016). While constant media attention was placed on these programs during the time of scandal, little media attention is placed on strong academic performances and practices that are or can be implemented in the student-athlete environment.

Student-athlete Support Services

Table 2

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Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
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Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Intercollegiate athletics programs spend a significant amount of resources to provide additional personnel support relative to their non-athlete student peers (Huml et al., 2017). Specifically, personnel including academic advisors, tutors, and coaches all contribute to the student-athlete academic experience; however, this additional support extends greater than the staff available for the general student population and, ultimately, results in a sense of dependence on resources prevalent within their respective athletic departments versus utilizing outside resources for their academic development (Huml et al., 2017).

Although a greater dependence on athletic department staff is imminent, staff housed within athletic academic centers on campus play a vital role in the development of their student-athletes. For example, past research has noted the importance of academic centers as “an integral

role in building a positive team academic subculture” where, “student-athletes prefer to study...with reduc[ed] outside distractions” (Rubin & Moses, 2017, p. 326). Furthermore, career decision making self-efficacy, which refers to how confident a student-athlete might be in their overall career decision making process, was higher for those student-athletes that were more satisfied in their department’s academic support services (Burns et al., 2013). Whereas academic centers provide the necessary space for student-athletes, issues continue to surround the idea of access to university opportunities, particularly high impact educational practices. Specifically, non-athlete students indicated a greater access to university opportunities versus their student-athlete peers (Weight, Navarro, Huffman, & Smith-Ryan, 2014).

Lack of access combined with the growing concern of hostile campus climates and isolation of student-athletes from other areas of campus can have an adverse effect on the overall participation in educationally purposeful activities outside of their respective athletic departments (Adler & Adler, 1991; Comeaux et al., 2011; Huml et al., 2014). This raises an area of concern, indicating a need for further support and promotion of educationally purposeful activities within the student-athlete setting. This is where the importance of the role of athletic support staff in this study comes into play and should be further explored.

The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Table 2

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College Environment
Retention Theory
High Impact Educational Practices
Involvement, Engagement, and Integration
Undermatching
Intercollegiate Athletics
Financial Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Scandals
Student-athlete Support Services
The Role of Athletic Support Staff

Literature on student-athlete support has continued to demonstrate the vital role of athletic staff to provide further direction and promotion of high impact educational practices or other educationally purposeful activities. It all begins with the need to understand the diverse group of student-athlete demographics and needs on campus. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) indicate, "because student-athletes enter college with varying attributes and lived experiences, student affairs leaders might...work closely with these students to scrupulously understand their cultural backgrounds and to identify factors that might impede or facilitate their learning and personal development" (p. 242). As student-athletes grow academically and socially within their college environments, student-athletes begin to view staff members in the athletic department and their sport organizations as a part of their family, particularly filling a void from the

comforts of home and their past traditional support systems. Many times, athletic advisors are the first step in any issues the student-athletes encounter (Huml et al., 2014; Berg & Warner, 2019).

Building upon this phenomenon, athletic academic staff and coaches are put in a unique position to assist student-athletes in creating positive learning environments, strengthening their connection or relationships with resources, faculty and staff across campus, and increasing overall academic accountability (Comeaux et al., 2011; Rubin & Moses, 2017). Of most importance, is committing student-athletes to engage in high impact educational practices and maximizing meaningful relationships outside of athletics in an effort to obtain “positive gains in general academic self-concept for student-athletes” and “gains in learning” (Comeaux et al., 2011, p. 48), ultimately leading to greater graduation and retention rates among student-athletes (Rubin & Moses, 2017).

Student-athletes have often indicated overall satisfaction with their academic support, athletic advisors, and educational opportunities; however, athletic academic support staff must continue to promote and “assess program delivery models to ensure student-athletes are able to purposefully engage not only in athletics and educational endeavors, but also as holistic human beings” and “are not just becoming involved, but actively engaging in meaningful activities throughout the higher education experience” (Weight et al., 2014, p. 400-401).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

According to Gratton and Jones (2004), research involves a set of five important stages that attempt to go further than merely searching for facts. Rather, “research is a systematic investigation to answer a question” (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 5). While research can be conducted for different purposes, including providing solutions to a problem or generating new knowledge, the five important stages to the research process remain consistent (Gratton & Jones, 2004). The five important stages include: (a) the stage before data collection, (b) the stage of designing how to collect the data, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, and (e) reporting data research findings (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

Each stage provides an important step for the researcher to complete that guides the overall research study. In stage A, it is the researcher’s job to develop a plan of action to their research project. In this stage, the research question, overall research objectives, and theoretical framework are chosen in order to guide the research. In stage B, the “how” of the research is answered. How will the data be conducted? Similarly, stage C focuses on the data collection process itself and commonly referred to as the methodology of the study. In the final two stages, the data has already been collected. In stage D, the researcher attempts to interpret the data collected based on the chosen theoretical framework. The data analysis process helps pull together the previous stages of the research. Lastly, stage E allows the researcher to report their findings (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Overall, this dissertation attempts to utilize Gratton and Jones’s five stage approach to the research process. Furthermore, this dissertation will be conducted as a qualitative research study.

Qualitative Approach to Research

According to Gratton and Jones (2004), qualitative research, “aims to capture qualities that are not quantifiable, that is reducible to numbers, such as feelings, thoughts, experiences, and so on, that is those concepts associated with interpretive approaches to knowledge” (p. 22). As the purpose of this dissertation is to explore student-athlete support services at two NCAA Division I institutions, qualitative research was deemed most appropriate. As Marshall and Rossman (2016) state, “qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena” (p. 3), which allows researchers to be emergent and involved in social contexts.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) were able to further expand on the uses of qualitative data. While the basic, fundamental differences describe qualitative research as emphasizing "processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity amount, intensity, or frequency" versus quantitative research emphasizing "the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 13), the authors expand on these research styles through five points of differences. The five points of difference include uses of positivism and postpositivism, post modernism, capturing the individual's point of view, examining the constraints of everyday life, and securing thick descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Through examination of these differences among qualitative and quantitative research, it becomes clear that the qualitative approach was most appropriate.

Exploratory Approach

Within this qualitative research, the primary purpose was to be exploratory in nature. Particularly, this type of exploratory research, “seeks to investigate an area that has been underresearched. The data garnered is preliminary data that helps shape the direction of future

research” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 10). This method is especially advantageous as it allows for the use of open-ended interview questions and probing, which “gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses” (Mack et al., 2005, p. 4). According to Yin (1994), exploratory research ultimately creates a valuable look into new insights into what is happening, while also assessing phenomenon in a new light. Particularly, exploratory research is characterized by its overall flexibility (Dinesh, 2016). Ultimately, the researcher attempted to narrow the information gap and relationship between themselves and their participants (Cresswell, 2017).

Qualitative research’s interpretive nature plays a large role in the overall development of data. According to Creswell (2017), “the researchers make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background...to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world” (p. 25). Through the interviews conducted within this research study, the researcher was able to analyze and describe what student-athlete support services are prevalent at the NCAA Division I level, how these services are or are not utilized by student-athletes, and what services can be added that would be helpful for student-athletes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed:

RQ1: What services does student athlete support services provide at Division I institutions?

RQ2: In what ways do student-athletes utilize or not utilize these services?

RQ3: Using high impact educational practices, what services that are missing could be helpful to student-athletes and what would this look like in intercollegiate athletics?

Data Collection

The researcher utilized an exploratory approach in an effort to answer each research question proposed. In this particular study, NCAA Division I administrators and student-athletes helped the researcher understand student-athlete support services within this unique setting. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 administrators or student-athletes across two NCAA Division I institutions, one in the Midwest and West. Semi-structured structured interviews were utilized for data collection because this method provides an advantage in assessing the original questions asked within the study, but also allows the researcher to dig deeper through unexpected findings and data that are likely to transpire throughout the individual's interview process (Gillham, 2000).

In order to help answer the proposed research questions, semi-structured interviews were be conducted until data saturation was reached. Data saturation is described, "where any further data collection will not provide any different information from that you already have, that is you are not learning anything new" (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 153). The researcher served as the "miner" in the interview process and assumes "ideas and knowledge exist within the interview partner; the interviewer's responsibility is to dig nuggets of knowledge out of a subject's pure experiences; identifying the kernels or seams of priceless ore and mining them" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 148).

According to Gillham (2000), the advantage of this method is that data conforms to the original requirements of the study, but also enables the researcher to view unexpected and interesting data that emerges from individual respondents. An interview guide (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) was used in the process to help direct the conversation toward the topics and issues the author is interested in. Each interview ranged between 19 and 37 minutes and included

around 15 questions related to educational programming for student-athletes at each institution.

An interview guide is available in Appendix C. Some example questions included:

- What current educational programming is being utilized within student-athlete support services?
- What programming do most student-athletes participate in and how are they drawn towards these programs?
- What do you believe the benefits of these educational programs are for the student-athletes?
- How do you think athletics resources and funding play a role in the implementation of educational programming for student-athletes?
- As a student-athlete, what type of educational programs do you participate in on campus?
- As a student-athlete, what type of benefit do you see from attending these educational programs?

All interviews were conducted over the phone after initial email recruitment to athletic directors. The researcher asked for interview access to 10-15 student-athletes for the purpose of the study. Ultimately, a convenience sampling was utilized based on the overall response from a select few institutions.

Participants

The convenience sampling consisted of 24 total participants from two NCAA Division I institutions. Of the 24 participants, 14 were from Institution One and ten were from Institution Two. Seventeen total student-athletes were interviewed, nine from Institution One and eight from Institution Two. Of the 17 student-athletes, seven were female while ten were male. The sports of each student-athlete varied, but included football, golf, wrestling, track and field, basketball,

softball, baseball and rowing. A total of seven administrators were also interviewed for the purpose of this study. Five were from Institution One, while two were from Institution Two.

Three females and four males were interviewed and ranged in positions from graduate assistant to associate athletic director. Two faculty athletic representatives were included in this sample.

Table 4 details the participant profiles along with the appropriate pseudonyms utilized within the results section of this study.

Table 4

Participant Profiles

Participant	Gender	Position	Institution	Sport
Student-Athlete 1	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Football
Student-Athlete 2	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Football
Student-Athlete 3	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Golf
Student-Athlete 4	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Wrestling
Student-Athlete 5	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Track & Field
Student-Athlete 6	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Basketball
Student-Athlete 7	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Football
Student-Athlete 8	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Softball
Student-Athlete 9	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Football
Student-Athlete 10	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Track & Field
Student-Athlete 11	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Golf
Student-Athlete 12	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Football
Student-Athlete 13	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 2	Baseball
Student-Athlete 14	Male	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Baseball
Student-Athlete 15	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Track & Field
Student-Athlete 16	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Rowing
Student-Athlete 17	Female	Student-Athlete	Institution 1	Rowing
Administrator 1	Female	FAR	Institution 1	N/A
Administrator 2	Female	Assistant AD	Institution 1	N/A
Administrator 3	Female	GA	Institution 1	N/A
Administrator 4	Male	Assistant AD	Institution 1	N/A
Administrator 5	Male	Director	Institution 1	N/A
Administrator 6	Male	Associate AD	Institution 2	N/A
Administrator 7	Male	FAR	Institution 2	N/A

Institutional Profiles

In order to address the purpose of this study, the author utilized two NCAA Division I institutions that particularly represent this division. Each institution possessed different institutional demographics for both the general student population and student-athlete population in an effort to capture both the FBS and FCS subdivisions prevalent within Division I. Both institutions are classified as 4-year, public universities. Institution Two is a medium, Western, Division I FCS institution with a student population of approximately 13,000 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The institution's overall endowment is approximately \$80,000,000 (Endowment Market Value and Change, 2017). Institution One is a large Midwestern, Division I FBS institution with a student population of approximately 25,000 (Board of Regents, 2017). This institution's overall endowment is approximately \$1.5 billion (Endowment Market Value and Change, 2017). Both of these institutions help represent NCAA Division I as a whole, particularly within academics, the average percent of student body participating in athletics, and the number of teams per school. On average NCAA Division I institutions report a graduation success rate (GSR) of 87 percent (NCAA Recruiting Facts, 2017). The two institutions are representative of the GSR at the Division I level with scores of 85 and 89, respectively. Institution One participates in 17 sports with student-athletes representing approximately three percent of the student body, while Institution Two also participates in 17 sports with student-athletes representing approximately four percent of the student body. The average number of teams per school at the NCAA Division I level is 19, while the average percent of student body participating in athletics is four percent (NCAA Recruiting Facts, 2017). This data helps conceptualize the chosen institutions as representative of NCAA Division I.

Table 5 presents additional data concerning institutional demographics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Table 5

Institutional Demographics

	Institution 1	Institution 2
Location/Campus Setting	Midwest, City: Small	West, City: Midsize
Type	4-year, Public	4-year, Public
Student Population	25,000	13,000
Student-to-Faculty Ratio	17:1	18:1
Undergrad Gender	51% Female, 49% Male	65% Female, 35% Male
Undergrad Race/Ethnicity	71% W, 8% H, 5% A, 4% AA	58% W, 20% H, 4% AA, 2% A
Graduation Rate (6 year)	63%	48%
Retention Rate	83%	71%
ACT Score (25th/75th percentile)	23/28	19/25
Average GPA	3.50	3.23
Academic Progress Report (S/A)	945	951
Graduation Success Rate (S/A)	85	89
Average GPA (S/A)	3.11	3.19

Data Analysis

The results were analyzed by the author using the interview transcriptions of the audio interviews. As results were originally presented in audio format, transcription is necessary. In an effort to reduce and analyze data, the audio interviews were transcribed verbatim and then coded utilizing Gratton and Jones' four steps of the coding framework (Gratton & Jones, 2004). To begin, all data was carefully read in an effort to connect the interview responses to related research questions and, ultimately, assigned a code (Gratton & Jones, 2004). The researcher used this first step in an effort to create all necessary codes or categories. In step two, all relevant statements within the interviews were fit into the codes developed in step one of the process (Gratton & Jones, 2004). While, in this stage, "the researcher rereads the qualitative data, and searches for statements that may fit into any of the categories," at this point additional codes or categories may be developed and is also referred to as axial coding (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p.

220). Once step one and two were completed, the researcher moved to a more analytical process by helping explore patterns or explanations to the provided codes and data (Gratton & Jones, 2004). The last step in the process helped the researcher “look for patterns or regularities that occur” in an effort to “illustrate or describe the situation you are interested in” and is known as selective coding (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 221-222). This coding process is also illustrated in Table 6.

The open-ended survey responses were analyzed using Gratton and Jones’s framework to identify emergent themes. Both deductive and inductive reasoning were used during open coding analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Responses were coded independently by the author based on priori themes from existing literature and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, postpiori themes were developed through observation of prompt responses. Once themes were analyzed, representative quotes were chosen to display appropriate justification for themes and results. These representative quotes were presented verbatim using psuedonyms selected by the author and applied to discussion and previous literature. Table 6 illustrates an example of the data coding process. NCAA Division I institutions were used due to the significant amount of resources presented within student-athlete support services and the access for the researcher. This study obtained approval through the author’s university Institutional Review Board.

Table 6

Qualitative Raw Interview Data Coding Example

Raw Data	Preliminary Codes	Final Code
It’s a stigma that all student-athletes are only the best. They’re in the best shape physically, but I think mentally a lot of people don’t see that it’s okay to not be okay and so we’re building a program for that and having staff	Mental Health	Sub-theme: Mental Health
	Student Development	General theme: Perspective on Available Support Services
	New Programming	

I think is great for that. And I think also you can now never stop where you are for student development, especially mental health.

My first year as a student-athlete, we had to go to [ULDP] meetings. I had to meet with a [ULDP] advisor I think once a week or something like that and we just have to talk about my experience so far and my transition. We talked about how I was adapting and my feelings and all that stuff. We were required to do this.

University Leadership and Development Program

Requirement

Mentorship

Sub-theme: ULDP

General theme: Structured Programming as Driving Force to Student-athlete Support Services

A huge deal of what SAAC does is reach out into the [FBS town] community and the greater area because the University has so much power when working with the community and especially with children and a lot of different other non-profit organizations. Student-athletes, especially from [FBS institution], have a whole lot of power and so we would work with the police department, we'd work with the Boys and Girls Clubs, things like that. Not really to ever promote the [FBS institution] athletics, but to always give back to the community and, in return, support for us was just insurmountable.

Student-athlete Advisory Committee

Community Service

Student-athlete Support

Sub-theme: SAAC

General theme: Structured Programming as Driving Force to Student-athlete Support Services

Reliability and Validity of Data

According to Heale (2015), validity refers to “the extent to which a concept is accurately measured,” while reliability is “the accuracy of the instrument. In other words, the extent to which a research instrument consistently has the same results if it is used in the same situation on

repeated occasions” (p. 66). In order to account for reliability and validity, the author will follow strategies presented by Marshall and Rossman (2016) including, searching for alternate explanations, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, triangulation, soliciting feedback, member checks, rich data, and comparison. Furthermore, Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) present five verification strategies for research that add to Marshall and Rossman’s (2012) strategies, including having an appropriate sample and thinking theoretically. According to Morse and Richards (2002), “determining reliability and validity remains the qualitative researcher’s goal” (p. 168).

Trustworthiness of Data

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), “articulating the elements of sound design for trustworthiness has been critical for the development of qualitative methodologies” (p. 44). Fortunately, Lincoln and Guba (1985) address central questions that help determine trust and capture concerns of validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability. Addressing these central concerns helps researchers stray away from just calling themselves reliable, but rather, researchers move to, “distinguish[ing] the traits that make use personally ‘credible’ and ensure that our interpretations of the data are ‘trustworthy’” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 44). Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) procedures to help ensure standards of trustworthiness that will be used in this dissertation include: being in the setting for a long period of time (prolonged engagement), sharing data and interpretations with participants (member checking), triangulating data through multiple methods, and discussing emergent findings with colleagues (peer debriefing).

Trustworthiness and ethics play a vital role in the research process. Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) procedures help capture the concerns of trustworthy data interpretation through alternative

constructs, including “credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Moreover, they offered a set of procedures to help ensure that these standards of trustworthiness would be met” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 46). Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) validity and credibility procedures presented are organized below.

Table 7

Validity and Credibility Procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Term	Definition
Prolonged engagement	“Qualitative researchers [being] in the setting for a long period of time” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 46).
Member checks	“Share data and interpretations with participants” (p. 46)
Peer debriefing	“Triangulate by gathering data from multiple sources, through multiple methods, and using multiple theoretical lenses; and discuss their emergent findings with critical friends to ensure that analyses are grounded in data” (p. 46)

While Lincoln and Guba (1985) originally put forth such constructs, more current works have developed similar procedures to help ensure research trustworthiness and ethics based on this past work. Creswell and Miller (2000) developed the following list of procedures, including: “Triangulation, Searching for disconfirming evidence, Engaging in reflexivity, Member checking, Prolonged engagement in the field, Collaboration with participants, Developing an audit trail, and Peer debriefing” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 46-47), while Maxwell (2012) developed a similar list with the addition of, “Searching for alternative explanations, Soliciting feedback from those familiar with the setting and from strangers, as well as Rich data and Quasi statistics” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 47). These strategies are able to show the progression of research and writing in trustworthiness and ethics.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) modernized terms of "credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability need to be considered at the research design stage" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 47). The research design stage is a vital process to ensuring the overall trustworthiness and ethical practices of proposed studies. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), "Decisions at the proposal state forecast what the researcher intends to do during implementation of the study, thereby demonstrating how the study design will likely ensure that the data and their interpretations will be sound and appear credible" (p. 47)

Researcher Personal Interest in Topic

The author acknowledges personal interest in the research subject matter and brings background knowledge on the issue. The author has prolonged engagement in student-athlete support services at a large, Division I university. This prolonged engagement combined with the personal interest in the examination of this context and setting provides ample opportunity for the author to relate to participants in an effort to dig deeper throughout the interview process.

Ethical Issues

According to Guillemin and Gillam (2004), developing a sound proposal involves not only providing a cogent and persuasive argument, but must also demonstrate sensitivity to everyday ethical issues. While "the principles of ethical management of role, access, data collection, storage, and reporting serve as essential reminders" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 52), the author will utilize the following procedures to help combat any ethical concerns. Besides the oral consent form, the researcher strongly emphasized that participation in the study is voluntary via email. The participants had the option to end the interview at any point in time.

Once the participants completed the interviews, the audio files were uploaded to a password protected computer and deleted once the transcription process and open coding process

has occurred and the study has concluded. If requested, a report (with no individual identifying information) of the relevant findings will be compiled and sent to the participants at their request. Subjects may withdraw at any time. If they do so, the interview will not be utilized for this study. The interviews were recorded and kept on a password protected computer. The author was the only one who has access to this information. Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions were also be kept on the same password protected computer. After the study has been completed, the data will be destroyed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Through the administration of 24 semi-structured interviews, several themes emerged that are presented in this chapter. The analysis of the qualitative data led to the following general themes, which will be discussed in order: 1) the utilization of structured programming as a driving force to student-athlete support services, (2) the student-athlete perspective on available support services and benefits, (3) the student-athlete barriers to utilizing student-athlete support services, (4) the student-athlete/athletics split campus “bubble” and (5) the implementation of high impact educational practices. Once common themes are established, differences between NCAA Division I student-athlete support services will also be discussed, including: (1) numbers of resources/staff, (2) the student-athlete support services role in decision to attend, and the (3) role of parents in recruiting through student-athlete support services.

Structured Programming as a Driving Force to Student-athlete Support Services

Both NCAA Division I institutions focused on structured programming through their University Leadership and Development Program (pseudonym) or Life and Leadership Champions (pseudonym) programs as part of the student-athlete support resources. Within these programs, student-athlete support staff is able to develop curriculum to assist student-athletes in career development, financial planning, mentorships, and special events. While both institutions relied on this type of structure for their student-athlete support services, it is important to understand the resources available for their student-athletes within each structured program.

University Leadership and Development Program (Pseudonym). According to Institution One’s website, the mission of the ULDP is, “to develop committed student-athlete leaders who represent the University and its intercollegiate athletic programs with pride, integrity, and intense competitive spirit” while focusing on student-athlete development in areas

like “leadership training, community engagement, and professional development to enhance the student-athlete experience” (About [ULDP], 2019, para. 1-2). Within this institution, ULDP also houses the student-athlete advisory committee.

When asked about ULDP, the administrators described it as a large piece of the overall student-athlete support programming, particularly for the freshmen first beginning their student-athlete experience. Administrator 2 described, “the larger piece of programming does come through [ULDP] because they have the leadership program that they do with freshmen, and that I think they've condensed a little bit where I think it's now an eight-week program, but they do that.” To expand particularly on the freshmen leadership program, it is important to understand that this is where the connection to student-athlete support services begins. Administrator 5 described it best:

We've built this eight-week curriculum where we have one-on-one mentorship with our student-athletes, and we meet with them for 30 minutes throughout the period of eight weeks. This curriculum talks about what it means to be a [FBS institution mascot], to identity, and we talk about diversity and inclusion, how important it is to personal brand, protecting your personal brand, it truly starts to get to dive in that, not only just as an athlete, but we're going to equip you with tools and skillsets to really help you be successful, not only during your four years here, but also as you graduate. So that's really where our programming begins, and we really believe we're in the forefront of this.

Specifically, the eight-week curriculum hopes to help student-athletes explore their interests as they enter their majors. For example, according to Administrator 3, finding your strengths and interests are built into the ULDP leadership program through “a lot of strength-based assessments, so DiSC and personality-behavioral assessments like DiSC Personality Test,

StrengthsFinders, a few different things like that kind of as a means to help students explore what degree path do I naturally gravitate toward.”

For FBS student-athletes, the first familiarization with student-athlete support programming came through the mentorship program their freshman year. According to Student-Athlete 17:

My first year as a student-athlete, we had to go to [ULDP] meetings. I had to meet with a [ULDP] advisor I think once a week or something like that and we just have to talk about my experience so far and my transition. We talked about how I was adapting and my feelings and all that stuff. We were required to do this.

The ULDP freshmen mentorship program at the Institution One was consistently referenced as one of the requirements of a student-athlete coming in as a freshmen or new student-athlete. As a requirement, some described the repetitive nature of the meetings; however, several benefits and important topics were discussed. For instance, “[ULDP] opened the door for so many different opportunities to kind of hone in on those leadership skills.” While this was a requirement for freshmen students at the Institution One, a student-athlete was able to describe what the 30-minute meetings looked like as well as some of the additional benefits associated with them. The Student-Athlete 16 stated:

The one thing I remember being required was the freshman leadership life skills or life skill. Basically, we had a 30-minute meeting every week with- I had mine with Jose and we would just talk about your transition to college, checking in, make sure you're doing okay. At first, I was like, "Oh, this awesome," but then towards the end of it, I was like, "I do not have 30 minutes a day." But it was good. I think, at least for me, I would say I'm pretty confident, and I was like, "Oh, yeah, things are going great" and all this stuff, but

maybe for someone who isn't as confident or was very homesick, I think it was really good for them.

Once freshman are more acquainted with the ULDP program at the institution, ULDP administrators begin to introduce other programs throughout the careers as described by a Administrator 2:

There are career components and everything from etiquette dinners to making a strong first impression and etiquette dinners for sophomores, strong impression for juniors. We have the career fair, which is open to everybody, and that's specific for our student-athletes. And then, they also will do one on one sort of resume things. They do leadership retreats where coaches will nominate individuals from their team that they want to develop into stronger leaders, and then, they go on a weekend retreat and focus on those skills. And then, they also work with students in terms of helping them with graduate-level things, so kind of that next step out as well.

This feedback by Administrator 2 continues to illustrate the importance of connecting freshmen with these structured programs at the start of their academic careers as a way to continue to build upon the overall mission of the programs. Additionally, it can help student-athletes understand what they have available to them. Student-Athlete 6 stated she, "honestly didn't know what SAAC was, what ULDP was prior to these meetings." Even programs like etiquette dinner spark interest within the student-athlete setting. Student-Athlete 3 stated:

I've been to the Etiquette Dinner. It's nice because things that I think I knew, like some of the stuff, but there's tons of stuff that you have to know when you go see or meet with people who are higher than you. It's really important, and it's good thing that they are doing it for only us through [ULDP] and it's just nice.

While every freshman will meet with a leadership mentor to help make the transition to a college student-athlete; ultimately, its “another way that you were shown what [ULDP] was, and ultimately SAAC.” Through this initial contact with student-athletes, administrators are able to continue to drive student-athletes to beneficial programming and high impact educational practices available directly through the athletic department. As Administrator 5 stated, through the ULDP connection at the mentorship level, student-athletes are able to more clearly continue their involvement if they choose to do so. For example, “From SAAC, there's other opportunities thrown into the larger university. Like there's the [FBS institution] Student Senate, which is part of the Student-Athlete Representative.” ULDP is just the stepping stone into other organizations or programs within the athletic department. Specifically, groups and programs exist for the marginalized student athletic population or for faith-oriented student-athletes all within ULDP programming. Administrator 2 notes the importance of beginning strong through programs that best fit your identity as a student-athlete:

RISE, and that's going to be for our marginalized student population and then also FCA, so, for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. You see things like in- the participation with [ULDP], like the leadership program, you see that strong in the beginning because it's required.

While the leadership/mentorship program is required freshmen year, it is important to illustrate that outside of this commitment, very few programs are required for student-athletes to attend through any ULDP programming. For instance, “There's nothing you ever need to join, but they have so many opportunities if you are willing and you want to be a part of them.” However, ULDP administrators indicated that the set-up at Institution One is unique in terms of all the support and programming available to student-athletes. Particularly, the separation of

academic support and ULDP staff plays a vital role within the athletic department at Institution One. According to Administrator 4, for example:

[Institution One] is unique in that we have a ton of resource here in academic support, which is fantastic. Very few schools in the nation have what [ULDP] is. Everyone has some type of student development thing. Most departments have that laced in with academic support, and so the fact that we have two separate staffs for this that can put so much more intention to one direction, that makes a huge difference. Every recruit who ever meets with [ULDP], they're just blown away by the time they're done meeting with them because what they do is incredible - it's significant. It's special. It makes a huge difference. That is our biggest recruiting tool, hands down.

Similar sentiments were expressed from academic support staff as well. To further illustrate the importance of the ULDP program, Administrator 4 described the staff and available support for student-athletes. In addition, the FBS administrator noted its importance within the recruiting process as a complimentary resource to incoming student-athletes. This is particularly of note as similar programming within the FCS setting does not have separate support staff in this area, rather it is run through academic support and compliance staff, which will be discussed later. Administrator 4 stated the following:

From a [ULDP] perspective they kind of take care of the student development, career development, community involvement, which I think is phenomenal for our guys to be involved in and our student-athletes to be involved in. And they've got five or six person staff, but they are really involved with putting on workshops and events at least once a month anywhere from resumé building, to dining etiquette, to job fairs, to community service, I mean it's absolutely crazy. And what I tell our recruits is all this stuff is free,

all you got to do is show up and so our guys and gals have a phenomenal opportunity to do a lot of things here with our services.

While ULDP programs play a significant role in the overall recruitment process for student-athletes at Institution One, Administrator 5 also noted its importance in overall retention of student-athletes as well and stated:

A lot of other athletic departments have something similar like this, but they do it as in classrooms or- that one-on-one is really important, when you can meet them where they're at. And I think that's super-important, when you foster that environment of belonging and- we build that commitment and that helps our retention from student-athletes and just- you see them here among the hallway more often than their freshman year.

As administrators and student-athletes demonstrated what programming is available through ULDP programs as well as their overall significance and benefits for student-athletes at Institution One, at Institution Two similar structured program was in place to help drive student-athlete engagement beginning their freshmen year and beyond.

Life and Leadership Champions (Pseudonym) (FCS). According to the Institution Two's website, the idea of Life and Leadership Champions (LLC) stems from the mission of, "building champions for life by providing opportunities to deserving student-athletes" (Blue and Gold Club, 2019, para. 1). Similar to the Institution One's ULDP program, LLC provides life skills and development opportunities throughout the student-athletes' careers at the institution. While not as extensive as Institution One, the Institution Two works to utilize both athletic department and on-campus resources as part of the student-athlete support service environment rather than separating academic support and student development as seen with Institution One.

While ULDP programming consisted of a required freshmen mentorship program that led to additional opportunities throughout the student-athlete's freshmen to senior year, LLC operated in a way that had required programs throughout their academic careers. Student-Athlete 8 described some of the different sessions available to student-athletes and said:

It was actually for everybody. There'll be different sessions for the freshmen and sophomores. There were different topics just because they didn't really need to worry about finding an internship yet or doing interviews, whatever it was. But juniors and seniors, there was more focus on what I need to do to find a job after college, what I need to do to be successful on that job interview, or whatever it was.

While a diverse set of topics are discussed throughout the LLC program, oftentimes, it is up to the student-athlete to determine whether or not their participation is necessary. Particularly, targeted programming based on year in school was utilized. The above representative quote helped establish this idea of targeted programming and specific needs for student-athletes. While the LLC administrators started to, "make them mandatory," referring to the LLC presentations and programs, other FCS student-athletes didn't participate until their senior year. For example, Student-Athlete 2 stated:

My senior year, I started doing what we call [Life and Leadership Champions], and individuals would come in and they would talk to us about how to build a resume, how to make a good impression when we are doing an interview, and stuff like that, and how to be a person after college and how to be able to be successful in the real world. I wish they would've done stuff like that before in the earlier years just because it would've been really helpful.

Interestingly, unlike the ULDP program at Institution One, the responsibility of the Life and Leadership Champions program falls under academic support and the compliance department as the Institution Two does not have separate support staff for student-athlete development.

Ultimately, the “compliance director, she would be the one to organize all of that stuff, but it was run through the academic support staff as a whole.” This begins to illustrate some of the staffing prevalent within student-athlete support services, which will be discussed further in the results.

While this is the case, Institution Two still manages to provide programming similar to Institution One. In fact, student-athletes are given a say in what programs should be offered within LLC. Student-Athlete 10 noted:

I mean speaking on the [Life and Leadership Champions] aspect of it, with that whole ordeal, once that was brought about, the student-athletes kind of had a word and a say in how they wanted to be in that whole program. So, we kind of shaped it to what we want to talk about and so that’s what they based their workshops on. So, I think because we had such a big word in it, it’s something that the athletic administration was getting us to go to since we had such a big impact on what they talked about.

One of the most common programming topics discussed as most useful by student-athletes was financial literacy, specifically within the Life and Leadership Champions. Student-athletes at the Institution Two noted the significance of being taught topics that you wouldn’t learn in the normal classroom. Ultimately, student-athletes and administrators are looking to partake in and create programming that is supplemental to the in-class learning at the institution. For example, Student-Athlete 1, referring to LLC, said, “We recently just had a recent one that was just about financial awareness and how to spend money We learned all about how to balance your checkbook. Just stuff like that. Stuff that normal classes don’t teach you.” While, “it’s more of a

requirement,” financial literacy programs were consistently brought up as the most impactful program within LLC at the Institution Two. To expand, Student-Athlete 1 noted its significance and asked that these programs continue to be part of the LLC curriculum. The student-athlete stated:

I think that also through athletic departments, they could continue to do more like we had one [LLC]t about stuff that school doesn't teach you. I'd like both campus community-wide and for athletes on how to manage your money and do stuff like that, especially athletes on that next level that athletes go broke within three years of retiring. So, I think that that would be huge for any program or any athletic facility just to continue to have classes that teach you how to finance and how to spend your money right.

While Institution One focused on mentorship through first year programs for freshmen student-athletes, Institution Two was able to provide similar programming, but in a different structure. Particularly through different sessions each year as a student-athlete. As both programs strive to obtain student-athlete support for their freshmen student-athletes, an additional opportunity arises through summer bridge program between senior year of high school and freshmen year on campus to engage student-athletes and promote a comfortable transition.

Summer Bridge Program. Through the semi-structured interviews, additional structured programming was discussed as a way to help drive freshmen student-athletes to student-athlete support services and attempt to aid in the academic transition from high school to college. Both Institution One and Institution Two implemented similar programming regarding summer bridge. According to Student-Athlete 4, for the several student-athletes at Institution Two:

We actually came in on a summer bridge program. So, two or three weeks after high school graduation I came in. It was six credit hours, then they kind of transitioned us into

the college experience. We'd have class Monday through Thursdays and then we'd have mandatory study hall hours.

This situation helps illustrate the overall attempt by student-athlete support staff to help acquaint student-athletes and educate them on what to expect as a college student. For the Institution One, this is in addition to the aforementioned freshmen mentorship program that is required for new student-athletes coming in. This continues to demonstrate the use of structured programming freshmen year and, in this case, the summer before to help drive awareness on student-athlete support services available to them. Interestingly, programs like summer bridge are also available to the general student population. For example, Administrator 2 mentioned:

We use the bridge class the University has as a way to bring in our students during the summer prior to their freshmen year. We're really fortunate that at least in the summer, for the most part, is a student-athlete section. So, they're able to really focus on that cohort of people. So, I think that's super important.

Doing so also allows student-athletes to begin building their social network through the teammates and student-athletes that are also participating in similar programming. Ultimately, the summer bridge program can be seen as an extension to current student-athlete support programming, especially based on the topics that are covered during the summer session. For student-athletes at Institution One:

It was about twice a week in June right when our guys get here and our newcomers whether it's soccer, track, football, basketball, baseball etc. That was usually twice a week for about an hour and each one of those had a different topic, whether it was tour of the facilities, so they can understand where and what was there. We had a campus scavenger hunt, so they knew buildings that were important, where to go for the registrar, where to

go for the admissions, things of that nature. And then we would bring in somebody to talk about financial literacy, credit cards, and APR, what all that means to you, kind of a consumer financial class. And then we bring in somebody to talk about career choices, major exploration, how do you figure out what would be a good major for your interest. We had somebody talking about social etiquette and we had somebody talk about [ULDP] in the program, everything they offer. So I'm kind of infusing what we do into our freshmen starting off on day one. So it's not, they get to their sophomore and junior year and like, "I've never heard of [ULDP]." That's not what I want to hear. So, I let them to know from day one, who does what, and why we do what we do.

Student-Athlete 6 previously mentioned that they did not know what ULDP was prior to attending their required freshmen mentorship meetings; however, with programming like summer bridge, this helps provide an additional stepping stone into student-athlete support services and help avoid having student-athletes that are not familiar with the types of resources available to them prior to coming on campus or attending meetings.

Student-athlete Advisory Committee. After assessing athletic department or on-campus involvement outside of team-related activities, practices, and games for student-athletes, the role of the Student-athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) at both Institution One and Institution Two became a clear stepping stone to participation in student-athlete support services once freshmen have become acquainted with opportunities and resources available to them. While some of the student-athletes were directly involved in SAAC as a committee member or team representative, others showcased involvement by attending open meetings. Student-Athlete 14 helped describe the overall impact of SAAC and its purpose within the student-athlete community:

SAAC is a way to bring the student-athlete community together. There's a huge communal part of it because when you're on a sports team you're really isolated to that because you're traveling with each other every day, you end up taking classes together, and you're really isolated. So, you don't get to know very many people at the university, you're not part of the campus community. And so, our realization was that the student-athletes ourselves, we're a community and we need to figure out a way to bridge that gap.

This helps echo the overall campus SAAC goals presented by the NCAA (2019) that includes "building a sense of community within the athletics program involving all athletics teams," "organizing community service efforts," and "creating a vehicle for student-athlete representation on campus-wide committees (e.g., student government)" (para. 5). By understanding the ultimate purpose and goals of an on-campus SAAC, the importance of the committee within the student-athlete support services community is illustrated.

For example, Student-Athlete 14 helped address the primary goals of campus SAAC when asked about their involvement outside of sport-related activities. Through activities like:

Back-to-school barbeques to mingle with student-athletes...[they] bring the overall moral of student-athletes together because there's this general friendliness. That they would show up to each other's games, support each other. And being a student-athlete, that means so much to see fellow student-athletes supporting you rather than confining themselves to their teams.

Although SAAC helps contribute to the social environment for student-athletes through activities like the back-to-school barbeque; ultimately, SAAC helps establish a sense of voice for student-athletes not only within the athletic department, but across the campus community as well. As a committee member on Institution One's campus SAAC, Student-Athlete 16 echoed the

importance of SAAC as an avenue for discussing problems within the student-athlete environment and stated:

SAAC is really just trying to give a voice to student-athletes to bring problems or if you have a question about something pertaining to the athletic department as a whole. That's kind of where we're able to hash it out and talk about it. And really present topics that we feel that we want to bring forward to the administration. This can be choosing some of the things that we dealt with, like student-athlete development activities.

The overall purpose of SAAC is not only prevalent in talking to Institution One's student-athletes, but also with Institution Two's student-athletes. Student-Athlete 10 echoed the same sentiments regarding providing an opportunity to share their voice as student-athletes. The student-athlete said, "It's about creating awareness and communicating with other students and student-athletes across the [Institution Two's conference] and just try to have student-athletes have a voice." Part of the awareness includes making student-athletes aware of SAAC and the opportunities provided to them throughout the year. Whether it's through coaches, advisors, peers, or members of SAAC, student-athlete participation is often driven by incentives or acquisition of benefits. According to Student-Athlete 6, often times at Institution One:

It's a lot with incentives and if we say like, "Hey it's going to build your resume," you really want to be part of it. We give out free food, free t-shirts. We can make them feel bad like, "Hey they came to your game, why don't you come to theirs?" Stuff like that. I mean I know we can't get everyone as much as we would like, but even fun stuff like [event name] that not many schools actually have them, we just remind them how grateful we are and tell like, "We don't get many of these opportunities. Take advantage of them."

Another common way to initiate the overall sense of awareness is by, “working with administration here to be more involved in the community.” In general, community service programming was common across a majority of participants from both Institution One and Institution Two student-athlete advisory committees and feeds into the goals presented by the NCAA. At the Institution One, Student-Athlete 6 stated:

A huge deal of what SAAC does is reach out into the [FBS town] community and the greater area because the University has so much power when working with the community and especially with children and a lot of different other non-profit organizations. Student-athletes, especially from [FBS institution], have a whole lot of power and so we would work with the police department, we’d work with the Boys and Girls Clubs, things like that. Not really to ever promote the [FBS institution] athletics, but to always give back to the community and, in return, support for us was just insurmountable.

A large emphasis was placed on work within the local community that the two universities were located in. Student-athletes at Institution Two demonstrated involvement through a “local organization in northern [state of FCS institution] to help sex trafficking and kind of fundraise, donate money to the cause,” “a Spikeball tournament to help raise money to several different causes,” and “sexual violence and harassment prevention programming.” While these are just some of the different causes that SAAC at these institutions have focused on, and Student-Athlete 14 stated:

The student-athlete advisory committee kind of helps build up those skills. And so every semester, there seems to be kind of a new focus that they want to kind of help. Mental health is another initiative that they're trying to really focus on. So, they try to pull up

some different programming and things like- whether it's to the NCAA or SAAC will identify these are the areas we want to do things.

Ultimately, it is up to members of SAAC to help drive specific student-athlete programming, particularly with local community initiatives. As with other programs previously mentioned, SAAC helps continue to connect student-athletes to the available opportunities for them, especially if they choose to participate in their own time. An Institution One member of campus SAAC reiterates the importance of SAAC involvement and what that meant throughout their academic career. Student-Athlete 16 stated:

I think for me, the biggest is opening other doors to other opportunities that I probably wouldn't have gotten. Being involved with SAAC I was able to get into a lot of mentorship programs and working with elementary-aged school kids. First, for over a year just going to your classrooms, that was definitely something that changed from being a benefit of being in SAAC and being a student-athlete. I've definitely gotten a lot of opportunities to expand my knowledge in terms of what I could possibly do with my SAAC background.

As campus administrators continue to rely on structured programming as a way to introduce and guide student-athletes to their support resources, the student-athlete advisory committee provides that opportunity for both Institution One and Institution Two student-athletes. Although not a required element of student-athlete support services, based on the organizational goals, missions, and statements from student-athletes and administrators, it becomes clear what impact participation in SAAC has on student-athletes alike.

Mandatory Academic Programming at Institution One and Institution Two. One of the greatest consistencies across both NCAA Division I institutions studied was the utilization of

mandatory academic programming as part of student-athlete support services. Both institutions required freshmen year tutoring or study halls, with potential for additional sessions based on GPA. At the Institution One, one-on-one or group tutoring sessions are utilized, while Institution Two relied more on team study halls with additional tutoring, if needed. Regarding the Institution One tutoring sessions, a director of tutoring, tutoring coordinators, learning specialists and over 100 student-athlete specific tutors are employed to help run the tutoring program. Overall, the resources provided through tutoring are unique according to Administrator 4. The administrator stated:

We're lucky, here, we've got a director of tutoring services, who oversees our football tutoring services, which is very, very unique compared to the other places I've been. There's always been one tutor coordinator for all sports and here we've got technically three tutor coordinators, which is really cool.

This helps illustrate the overall significance of staff when it comes to student-athlete support services across NCAA Division I institutions. While mandatory academic programming is consistent across both types of institutions, one major discrepancy is the number of staff members assigned to academic services, which will be discussed later in the dissertation. However, it is still important to discuss how these positions operate, particularly at Institution One. For example:

The [director of tutoring] does a phenomenal job. She oversees all hundred or so tutors so our guys have access to a lot of support. She does a great job of not only hiring and vetting our tutors, but she does the scheduling too. So, we shoot her a time or recommendations based on a student-athlete's academic standing or a student-athlete may come in and say I'm really struggling with this calculus class, can I get some help? We shoot that off to the

[director of tutoring], she sends it back and says he's scheduled Tuesday and Thursday at seven o'clock pm. And so, she really does a lot of the groundwork. We kind of just give her recommendations based on our guys.

On the other hand, the Institution Two primarily operates with a study hall system.

According to an Administrator 6, "Yeah. No, it's required for your freshman year, and then after that, if you have over a 3.0, you don't have to go, but it's run through- we have our own study room for them, the athletics department, and there is only athletes in them." This requirement is also communicated to the student-athletes, who were aware of this requirement. Student-Athlete 13 stated, "Study hall is required. They require eight hours every year with study hall and if you, after freshman year, if your grades are at their standards you can move off of study hall."

Ultimately, the purpose of this requirement is set, "Because especially if you're a freshman coming on campus, it keeps them stable with their grades. It holds them accountable, especially if they are a new student." While it is mandatory freshmen year, it is important to note the role coaches play within the study hall programming. Student-Athlete 4 stated, "I know my coach's mandatory is to get eight hours all semester for the freshmen regardless of their GPA. But I know for other freshmen, I think if that first semester, they drop them to like four hours or two hours of study hall that next semester."

As the responses have illustrated the consistencies present with required academic programming, several differences arose regarding staffing structure of the two programs. This discrepancy among staff will be further explored. As the past representative quotes have suggested, structured student-athlete support programming is the driving force to student-athlete support services at both institutions. Interestingly, both institutions work to drive freshmen participation from the time they step foot one campus and throughout their academic careers.

Specifically, summer bridge, freshmen mentorship, and life and leadership champions program help launch an awareness of support services and opportunities for incoming student-athletes.

As administrators continue to work on establishing programming the help drive overall participation, it is important to explore the benefits that student-athletes perceive from such programming as well as what programs are most or least impactful to them based on personal experience.

Student-athlete Perspective on Support Services and Benefits of Participation

Student-athletes and administrators have consistently demonstrated the benefits of student-athlete support services at both the NCAA Division I institutions. Nearly all student-athletes expressed that they have seen personal benefit from attendance or participation in support services provided by their respective institutions. As representative quotes illustrating the benefits from a student-athlete and administrative perspective are explored, it is also important to draw focus on what programs seem to have the most or least impact on student-athletes overall. In addressing the benefits and impact of student-athlete support services at both the institutions, administrators will be able to develop programming of most interest to student-athletes in hopes of driving overall participation and engagement with these activities.

Benefits to Participation in Student-athlete Support Services. Student-athletes and administrators were asked about the personal benefit or impact of participation in student-athlete support services programming. Overall, the majority of participants indicated a positive personal impact through participation in a wide variety of programs or activities. Specifically, Administrator 2 described the overall impact based on the structure that is provided to student-athletes through things like tutoring and ULDP. The administrator said:

I think whether they admit it or not, they enjoy the help. Whether it's [ULDP] or it's tutoring, I think they all sort of enjoy the structure. I mean, our athletes live in a world of structure. Practice, weights, eat, sleep, repeat. And so, I think they like the structure. So, our tutoring is all structured out. So, our guys will know every week on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, they have this tutoring. On Tuesday, Thursday, this tutoring. On Sunday, they have this tutoring, but I think they really benefit from meeting the tutors and I think our tutoring program, our tutors, are phenomenal. I think they care about our student-athletes. I think they want to be here and help our student-athletes and I really do believe at the end of the day, if you ask our student-athletes, they appreciate that.

Furthermore, Administrator 5 noted the use of things like student-athlete identity research to help establish programming that they think would be most beneficial in an effort to help them grow outside of their identity as a student or as an athlete. The administrator noted:

I think as we look at research, student-athlete identity is real and something that is happening all the time. So, as we look at putting these events together for other student-athletes, it's an opportunity to not only just see themselves as student-athletes but expand on that. And I think sometimes, because I was a student-athlete, I was just so closed off, and that's all I saw who the student-athlete was and our idea is the ability to have them see through other lenses, as not only just athletes, but they are students. They're also members of the community and so kind of helping them to see through different lenses as they navigate their four years and equipping them with the skill sets of these students after they graduate.

Although student-athletes may not necessarily be thinking of their identities as they participate or engage in student-athlete support services, they are still able to identify specific

benefits to their participation and what it means to them through their own personal experiences at both the NCAA Division I institutions. Student-Athlete 8 expressed the overall benefit of utilizing the resources around you, particularly your athletic academic advisor and said:

Absolutely. So, personally, they helped me figure out what it is I wanted to pursue my career in. I wanted to pursue my career in exercise science, so they really did help me figure it out and if I wanted to change my major, they were very helpful in guiding me into what I needed to take, what I should be done with by my junior year, how much I should be done with by my junior year, and whatever the case was, so, yes.

Along with the benefits of personnel support, student-athletes also discussed positive impacts regarding professional or career development. Specifically, Institution One provides a stipend to purchase professional clothing if a student-athlete attends a career night. This was particularly impactful for some student-athletes because, “in athletics, you get \$400 to spend, \$300 on attire and \$100 on shoes. To get that money, you have to go to these career nights, so here I am, going to the career nights.” Student-Athlete 5 expressed a similar sentiment regarding overall impact and said:

I think in my student-athlete experience we have these opportunities that are beneficial, especially if they have the formal wear stipend- there's certain requirements. Basically, the department will buy you a suit and so those are certain requirements, so especially if you're lower income student, this is beneficial. Then, you can go to one of [the career nights], and then, they will buy you an interview suit, so stuff like that is really cool. And then, just experience in interviews and stuff was huge, but I wouldn't consider that as an athlete experience. It was more of a life experience, which is cool.

Outside of a physical stipend for student-athletes to purchase professional clothing, Student-Athlete 16 described their involvement in SAAC as a stepping stone professionally and into an internship. Specifically:

Being a part of [ULDP], which led me to be a part of SACC, which led me to be on the [Institution One Conference] SAAC, which led me to my spot now with an internship at the [Institution One Conference] headquarters, so it is very important to me not only as a student-athlete but also professionally because this is where I wanted to be. So, I think my vision of things were probably a little skewed in the fact of like, "Okay. I have to do this, and I can do this and then this is going to help me later on in my career."

Student-Athlete 17 offered a similar description of personal benefit referring to where they are at now with their internship and professional experience.

So positive for me, especially personal benefit, because I am where I am now because of the programming and I know that there were probably areas where they can improve, but I think it also has to do with maybe there just wasn't a lot of participation or something. I think [ULDP] is going in a very good direction. But yeah, there was never a time when I was like, "Man, I am not happy I have to go to this meeting. This is so detrimental" things like that.

As student-athletes grow and develop through student-athlete support services, they begin to see the benefit and, ultimately, continue to attend sessions. This is particularly of importance due to its significance in continued engagement for student-athletes through the provided opportunities and resources, but also for administrators to help engage student-athletes early in their careers. For example, Student-Athlete 14 stated:

In my experience, the more I went, the more I wanted to go to because I realized how much I could actually benefit from these events. And it goes back to what I said before - if you want these resources, and you want to partake in them, they are there for you. There's so many opportunities in the networking events and things like that. So, the more you went to, you actually realized how beneficial they were, and that was one of the issues that we emphasized with SAAC is that how do we get more student-athletes to attend these? Because it's really difficult for them to know how awesome they are without them physically being present.

Similarly, Student-Athlete 9 found it particularly helpful in standing out as a student-athlete and said, "The positive impact was just the connections and stuff like that and just going and practicing my elevator pitch and what not. And some of the people mention it to other people and ask, "Who was that kid?" and remember my name and whatnot. That was the positive."

While professional and career development benefits were certainly part of the conversation overall, Student-Athlete 2 was also able to pinpoint the importance and positive impact of community service through student-athlete support services. With this, the student-athlete describes the opportunity to meet new people from different sports and stated:

Oh, I definitely think that these programs are beneficial. I mean, there are other athletes basically working together so you're not only meeting other athletes but you're doing things like your charity things, your volunteer things, getting other students involved. So, it's definitely beneficial to attend, obviously, and you definitely meet a lot of people, a lot more people attending these types of programs.

This type of networking also extends beyond the campus, particularly for those involved with their respective SAAC committees on campus. In Student-Athlete 16's involvement in SAAC, the overall benefit included:

[Going] to a lot of different things with a lot of different student-athletes from different schools, those [Institution Two's Conference] schools, a lot of different conferences, and so that was a huge networking opportunity for me, and it opened my eyes to a completely different world and it ultimately shaped me into what the career I want to get into. So, the resources that this university gives to student-athletes, if taken advantage of properly and efficiently, can ultimately change your experience as a student-athlete, especially post-career.

Overall, the importance and benefits of programming extends far beyond what is required. Whether it's through SAAC, career nights, or networking opportunities, ultimately, both Institution One and Two's student-athletes and administrators understand the positive impact such programming provides. Regarding study hall, Student-Athlete 12 noted, "I did. I found it really helpful. It helped me stay on track" when asked about the benefit. However, it is important to note that it is up to the student-athletes to help drive their own participation in these activities and whether or not they see a positive impact is likely based on what's important to them and how much they want to be involved. Student-Athlete 13 determined:

It's had a huge impact on my experience as a student-athlete. And again, I want to emphasize that I was able to get such a large, positive impact that's been, and in no way do I mean this arrogantly, but it's because it's what I wanted to get into, and I wanted to research and be a part of something other than in my immediate athletic team. And so, it's had a huge impact on me because it opened up a lot of doors.

By understanding the perceptions of the benefit of student-athlete support programming at both NCAA Division I institutions, it becomes clear that most student-athletes and administrators feel that the curriculum is structured in a way to reach as many student-athletes as possible and provide the greatest benefit possible. Although similar feedback was expressed through these representative quotes, several student-athletes and administrators felt the need to add additional programs or opportunities as part of the student-athlete support services.

Feedback on Additional Programming

Through conversations with the participants, it was found that while there were perceived benefits across student-athletes and administrators from both institutions, there were several areas in which student-athletes and administrators recommended improvements or additions to the student-athlete support services curriculum. When asked about improvements or additional curriculum, common themes centered around financial literacy, career counseling/mentorship, self-advocacy and mental health.

Financial Literacy. Although both institutions have some financial literacy education built into their ULDP and LLC curriculum, both student-athletes and administrators demonstrated its importance and recommended expanding programming based on its overall impact for student-athletes. Specifically, Administrator 4 describes its importance as student-athletes obtain their scholarship checks and stipends. In fact, the administrator said:

I think number one is financial literacy. Our guys and gals get scholarship checks or some of them don't and it's how do you survive on your stipend check or your aid check or just life in general? How do you manage money? Because what you're going up to work at some Fortune 500 company. You're going in the NFL. You're going to have to learn how to manage your money, one way or another. I think financial literacy is so huge to our

guys and girls, especially with our transfer kids that don't necessarily have to live on campus.

Particularly, the Administrator 4 notes the unnecessary or irresponsible spending of stipend checks, leaving student-athletes without money after the first week. For example, referring to their football student-athletes, the Administrator 4 noted:

So, they get a check for the first time, and they get \$800 and their housing is already paid for. What are they going to do? They go buy five pairs of shoes and you're gone in a week, and they don't have any money for anything else. So, I think that's a big one.

Interestingly enough, this same issue was described by Student-Athlete 16 referring to the same situation regarding stipend checks. The student-athlete said, "Not to call out any teams in particular, but I know football players when they get their stipend check at the beginning of the month they blow \$500 in four days almost. So just kind of learning to spend your money wisely I think is important." The student-athlete recommending programming seen at a peer institution in the conference they are in and said:

So [other Institution One conference school] actually has a financial literacy class that they offer through their version of [ULDP]. And actually, a guy on the staff who was a football player who represents them at the [Institution One's conference], he's an accountant, or he was an accounting major, and he was the one who kind of kick-started that program. And he's got the entire football team involved. And a lot of times those guys are coming from areas where they don't have a lot of money.

Although a specific team may have been pinpointed in this specific example, it is clear that student-athletes believe financial literacy programs are beneficial to the entire group of

student-athletes, not just one specific group. When asked about expanding or added programming, Student-Athlete 7 referred to their personal finances and said:

Financial education. I'm a big proponent of that now because, well, now I have to take care of my own money and there's not a lot right now. But, no. I think that's an area where a lot of schools are lacking, and I think just having the opportunity to educate student-athletes more on that would be amazing.

Although many student-athletes at the either NCAA Division I institution will not turn professional, an Institution Two student-athletes recommended additional money management programs, not just within the athletic department, but also campus-community wide because, “especially athletes on that next level that athletes go broke within three years of retiring. So, I think that that would be huge for any program or any athletic facility just to continue to have classes that teach you how to finance and how to spend your money right.”

In addition to financial literacy, there has also been a big push to help establish career counseling through faculty engagement rather than just the academic advising or student-athlete support services. As with financial literacy, several programs are currently offered regarding the topic of career counseling and mentorship; however, little connection exists with the student-athletes' professors and faculty.

Career Counseling/Mentorship. ULDP and LLC administrators are continuously looking to provide the highest quality and most impactful programming for their student-athletes. Based on the two institutions studied, administrators and student-athletes are well aware that only a small percentage of college student-athletes make it pro. With that, student-athletes and administrators must concentrate on overall progress to degree and the next steps out of college. Keeping this in mind, career counseling and mentorship exists as a large part of student-athlete

support services; however, both institutions are striving to implement programming that can help student-athletes take in one step further regarding their career development. For example, at the Institution One, there have been greater efforts to create an on-campus connection with student-athletes' faculty. At Institution One a new initiative wasn't heavily attended; however, "we are running a faculty mentoring engagement and so we had a much lower student-athlete turnout than we had hoped for, but that was kind of a combination of this being a new initiative that we're doing and also again hitting on that they're tired and they're hungry and they just got back and they don't want to do whatever." Specifically, according to Administrator 1, with the new initiative, student-athletes have the opportunity to:

Meet with a faculty mentor and get that person in your corner, because you're going to need rec letters eventually, and you're going to need guidance on how to get into a career path, because what we do here is we're generalists. I work with students in whatever degree they want. I we don't do one specific degree path, so I'm not a specialist in one degree area or one career area, so it's good for us because we can help a lot of them in a lot of different ways, but can only help so much and so the benefit of them partnering with faculty is that they get hands-on advice and just networking directly into the field that they're trying to go into. So the benefit of an accounting student meeting with an accounting professor is far greater than anything I can do for them because I don't know what it's like to go into that route, and so I try to communicate that when I'm meeting with them.

Student-athlete support services encompass a wide variety of areas and topics. When addressing specific areas for improvement, Administrator 6 focused on their task as academic staff when promoting specific programs related to academic and career counseling. The idea of

focusing on their perspective as academic staff brings up an interesting point regarding the ultimate roles and responsibilities of administration at the student-athlete support services level. Particularly, the administrator addresses the most importance area of improvement as a perspective of academic staff:

It's so hard. It's so hard at this level, because every stakeholder that has to do with a student-athlete's life, that's the most important thing to them. So, to me, the academic and the career counseling. Those are the most crucial parts of what we're doing here. A head coach, the most crucial part is how they're performing on the field, because that's their job on the line, right? In our business office, drawing like the bottom line is the most important part. Are we getting revenue? Are we coming out on top? Things like that. And so, we all have a different perspective on what the most important thing is for them. At the end of the day, we need to all be on the side of this is their experience and how are we impacting them on all sides of that experience, and how we're making the best we can possibly make it for them, but it's really hard because I have a very biased opinion that a lot of the stuff we do, I think, is unnecessary.

In addition to addressing the roles of staff throughout the athletic department, the Administrator 6 explains that the primary responsibility of all staff should be centered around the student-athlete experience. Through the separation of roles, it becomes difficult for administrators to try to balance what's most important to the student-athlete. Considering that each staff member might consider their role the most important, the administrator, using their own personal student-athlete experience, describes the issue and says:

Do we need to practice for this many hours in the off season? When they could be going to mock interviews and they could be going to career fairs and things like that. But I don't get

to make that decision and I can only suggest to them and tell them from my experience, because I didn't do any of that stuff when I was a student-athlete. I didn't know about any of it. I didn't care about any of it. It was just I want to go to practice and I want to do well, and I wanted to compete and then I wanted to go home and do nothing and I do wish somebody would have been on my blood a little bit more and told me, "Hey, you are going to graduate and be done with this at some point. You need to get ready for that" and so I try to do that with the students that I work with and communicate with the coaches too. That way they're hearing it from coach, because at the end of the day, their head coach is so much more influential than I am, and I know that, but I can't pinpoint exactly which types of programming I think are unnecessary, or how I would add- I've thought a lot about it, but it's just- it's difficult.

While it is difficult for administrators to address this specific dynamic between when should student-athletes be students and when they should be athletes, utilizing student-athlete interest and feedback regarding programming can help address. For instance, Student-Athlete 15 stated:

I definitely think they should do a career night more than just once a year because I mean, at least from my understanding, I don't think they had one last semester for the athletes. Don't take my word for it, but I didn't hear anything about it. All I've seen is one this semester. I definitely think they should provide that more than just that night or that afternoon for people who just can't be there because of other commitments.

Through these representative quotes, the topics of career counseling and faculty mentoring play a large role in terms of what student-athlete support services are being offered. Since both ULDP and LLC programming already addresses these topics, it is up to

administrators to expand on and promote additional programming within this area as a way to help address student feedback and concerns regarding career development.

Self-Advocacy and Responsibility. As student-athletes transition from high school to the college environment, they must learn to not only adapt their schedules, but also begin to develop as adults through their added roles and responsibilities on campus. As many student-athletes move away to college and away from their support systems, self-advocacy and responsibility, both personal and social, play a role in who they are as student-athletes and their development as an individual. According to Administrator 2:

I think it's going to vary, obviously, by program. But for the most part, I think so much of it is just providing the resource and the education, and as teaching them how to self-advocate. It's really teaching them and providing them the tools to develop as an individual. And it could develop in so many different ways because for some people, they use it as a launching pad into their career.

The illustrated importance of self-advocacy and responsibility translate into specific programming at Institution One as well, particularly in the aforementioned summer bridge programs. At Institution One:

I think social responsibility is a big one, especially in a school like [Institution One], where so many people are watching you, whether it's social media or out in the community. It's really being aware that you're not only representing yourself and your family, but you're representing an institution. And so, I think those are two big things that our guys need to see. And that's why, in the summer bridge, that's one of the staples because I think that is so important for our guys and girls.

As student-athletes grow as representatives of their respective communities, many look to increase their overall community service as they enter college. At both institutions, teams often participate in their own forms of community service with some programming provided through SAAC as well; however, student-athletes hope to be provided with additional opportunities in this area. Student-Athlete 7 said:

I feel like we should do more of volunteering, giving back to the [FCS city] community, things like that. I don't want to say charity but volunteer events. Because when I was in high school, I was involved with clubs that did a lot of volunteering and stuff, and I know that made me feel really good and it would, obviously, help the community. I think we should definitely include more of that and try to get more people involved in doing some volunteer things as well.

Student-athletes, as with the general student population, are a representation of the institutions they attend; however, student-athletes, especially at the NCAA Division I level have the potential to be in a greater spotlight than their non-athlete peers. As the administrators illustrated, the idea of self-advocacy and social responsibility might be new to student-athletes as they enter college, but it is still of significance in the overall feedback given regarding student-athlete support services.

Mental Health. A common sentiment, primarily expressed by administrators, centered around the idea of providing additional mental health resources for student-athletes.

Administrators stated, “the big thing is mental health” and “more mental health support.”

Ultimately, administrators are attempting to provide programming to let students know “it’s okay to not bet okay.” According to Administrator 5, “mental health is something that we’re trying to

cover. It's a hot topic right now within society, not just student-athletes." Unfortunately, mental health issues are often left with a stigma surrounding it and is described by Administrator 5:

It's a stigma that all student-athletes are only the best. They're in the best shape physically, but I think mentally a lot of people don't see that it's okay to not be okay and so we're building a program for that and having staff I think is great for that. And I think also you can now never stop where you are for student development, especially mental health.

As the administrators are "always trying to look at the trends, where we're heading," mental health plays a large role in that direction. Taking this into account and in an effort to "try different things on our end," administrators at Institution One are using an approach that allows resources to extend into marginalized populations, including minorities, international student-athletes and LGBTQ+ student-athletes. By providing safe spaces for student-athletes, administrators are attempting to avoid "[going] to the extreme that there's an issue, that there's a problem" when referring to mental health. Their programs include:

RISE, which is good for students of color or marginalized student-athletes. Right now, we're working on looking for a safe space for international student-athletes and helping a lot of them transition from wherever they're at in the world to the University. We're working on creating a safe space for LGBTQ student-athletes and allies. So always trying to look at the trends, where we're heading. The big thing is mental health. So, again, I think we're always trying to improve that and, not only just make it a one thing, but integrate it with other programs that we're doing. That's how we try to do it.

Echoing similar sentiments expressed by other administrators, Administrator 3 attempts to focus on the positives of mental health and raises an important point on the stigma or

connotation associated with mental health. The administrator explains, “So mental health, I think, sometimes has a negative connotation and actually can be very positive. So, I think anything there can be really helpful that we could maybe add in.” Although the negative connotation may exist, administrators must find time within their own busy schedules to help assist in overall support, including mental health. Administrator 2 finds it difficult to make mental health part of the agenda and says:

For some people, they'll launch into a new major interest or they find the resources so that maybe for mental health purposes, they can be in a safe place again. So, I feel like the benefits, it's personalized to who that person is. But I think from my point of view, it also helps take off the pressure that we have to do everything or I have to know everything. Because we're already as academic and career counselor, we're so focused on, I have maybe 15 minutes or 30 minutes with them and in that 15 or 30 minutes, I got an array of things I need to ask them and sometimes I can't get to that because we're dealing with something else that's come up. And so, knowing that there's somebody else out there that can talk to him, I can connect them for their career part or I can connect them if they're feeling isolated on campus or there's other resources there. And so, for the selfish part of me says the benefit is, is there somebody else who can give them the attention and the knowledge that it deserves and not me just piecing them together? But on their personal level, I think it's the tools and the development that they gain from it.

The feeling of isolation mentioned by this administrator provides a strong indication of possible mental health related issues that student-athletes may be dealing with. Although illustrated as an issue for student-athletes, mental health extends beyond the field or court and even beyond the athletic department. Often student-athletes are bombarded with requirements

and activities that can carve into their overall time management skills and challenge their mental health. To expand, Administrator 1 explains:

You've got this thing going on. And I've got this activity. And I've got family life at home, and other stuff. How do I balance my time in a way that is effective, right, in terms of getting the tasks done, but also from a mental health perspective? Because we have a lot of students on campus, we have a lot of student-athletes who are just drowning and can't say anything, won't say anything, and don't know how to get themselves out of a hole. So, to me, that would be the programming that would be most useful. And again, I think that applies to student-athletes a lot because they have all these demands on their time and things they have to do, but I think it applies to every student on our campus as well.

Another administrator expresses similar sentiments regarding finding a balance for student-athletes and states, “The programming that would be very useful for students is trying to figure out what’s the balance between the activities that I'm doing and getting leadership experience, and having a full resume but having a resume that actually makes sense, and not killing myself in the process?” As administrators work to improve upon or build mental health programming within student-athlete support services, ultimately, many agreed that, “anytime we can provide more mental health support I think would be definitely a benefit for students.”

Issues with Student-athlete Support Services. Although a majority of student-athletes supported the benefits of student-athlete support services at their respective institutions, several student-athletes found issues or concerns with the programming overall, including academic services, advising, mentorship, and involvement. Student-Athlete 1 expressed concern with the idea that, “Regardless of what your major is, I know of maybe two people that actually sit there

and do eight hours of homework, so to have eight hours of study hall in freshman level classes, I really never saw a point to that.” Referring to the required freshmen study halls, the student-athlete expressed discontent as to why study hall was required for everyone. In response to concerns from student-athletes, Institution Two administrators have worked to redevelop the study halls from eight hours required for all freshmen to different levels of requirements. For example, Student-Athlete 7, referencing their freshman year, said, “when I was a freshman it's you have eight hours the first semester, eight hours second semester. There was no ifs, ands, or buts about it.” As a freshman, you were required eight hours first semester and second semester with hours dropping, “to either none or, maybe, two, four, six. And so now that was considered a punishment. You messed up, you got extra hours of study hall. That was a punishment. It wasn't really used as a tool to help succeed.” However, now in its first year:

If as a student-athlete as a freshman if they get over a certain GPA their hours will be cut in half. So, if they're having eight this semester, they got, I think, over a 3.4 or something like that, their hours got cut to four hours because they show that they know how to handle their grades. Now they're trying to use it more as this is a tool to help you learn not a tool to take up all your time if you don't have to. They change the culture of that.

This feedback for administrators makes it difficult to help find a balance between too much or too little support. Serving a diverse student-athlete community, it is likely that each student requires a different level of support. While student-athletes at Institution Two mentioned required study hall as a waste of time, how can administrators ensure that other student-athletes are provided appropriate support? Although the previous quotes represent one side of the spectrum, some student-athletes at Institution Two also felt there was lack of support in specific

areas. Student-Athlete 4 responded, “Student advising and stuff, man, I pretty much since my freshman year had to just kind of do it myself and look at what was the easiest schedule for me. Yeah, I feel like I've pretty much done everything myself since freshman year.” On the other hand, Student-Athlete 17 expressed sentiments regarding “over-advising” and said:

I don't think anything should necessarily be taken away. I think approaches to think like the [ULDP], our meetings with our advisors and stuff like that. I think they have been so frequently. At times it was just kind of like, "I don't really have anything to talk you about. I just told you last week, nothing's changed [laughter]." That kind of thing. So, I definitely think some programs could definitely be improved.

This may be the case for some student-athletes; however, it brings up a point of how aware are student-athletes of the student-athlete support services that they have access to? An additional issue that came up for Institution One student-athletes centered around the idea or “stigma” of what student-athlete support services are, including SAAC. One recommendation from Student-Athlete 14 was to:

Change the stigma of what these events are like and what SAAC is as an organization overall. It stems from people not being aware of what SAAC is, and what they actually do, and how powerful it is. And so, once the stigma, that has started to change in the past couple of years, and student-athletes realize the power that SAAC has immediately in [Institution One] athletics, and then nationally at the NCAA level, people are like, "Wow, we should really start paying attention." And so, that in turn would help promote these events because SAAC, who was affiliated with majority of programs, holds a lot more weight. And so, that's initially how we started to get more people to come and become aware of what we do.

This approach is not only prevalent in SAAC, but also in Institution One's ULDP program. ULDP administrators at Institution One hope to continue to drive overall participation across all programs within student-athlete support services. Unfortunately, like SAAC, ULDP administrators expressed that not everyone is familiar with all the programs and, if they are, it is already the high achieving students that are participating. However, it is up to these administrators to strive to promote the programming across a wider base of student-athletes.

Administrator 4 noted the following:

[ULDP], again, I think, the one knock, and they would admit this, is I wish we can get more of our student-athletes involved in [ULDP]. I think [ULDP] does such a great job, but unfortunately, really, our high achievement students are the ones that gravitate to that because they're the ones thinking about life after sport, where some of our student-athletes struggle with that transition and therefore they don't want to think about, well, "How do I network?" or, "How do I get an internship?" or, "How do I build my resume?", so. But when they get there, everybody says, I mean, even last night we were having that a handful of our football student-athletes went to SAAC and they walked away. I think it's just getting them there and they can really see how much they can obtain, but if you hit them so hard academically, then maybe they may be done with us.

This is the scenario that administrators do not want, especially considering the time and effort put in, but also the potential for positive impacts across a diverse group of student-athletes. Part of the issue stems from lack of buy in from coaching staff and the pressure pinned upon student-athletes to achieve athletically. While administrators understood the issue involving the lack of participation at some events or programs, Administrator 2 explains the importance of getting coaching staff involved and said:

I think we need to put a little bit more pressure on coaches to have our student-athletes attend [ULDP] events because it is so important. And especially in sports like football that you're talking about 3% of all college student-athletes are going pro. That's 100 and- I don't know 28 FBS schools. You're telling me not even one from every team is going pro necessarily if you're just looking at the numbers. So, we've got to really push our guys and gals to think about life after college.

When asked about issues with student-athletes support services, both administrators and student-athletes indicated that they don't not have any major concerns; however, there is always room for improvement and issues do exist. The representative quotes helped illustrate issues stemming from academic services, advising, mentorship, and involvement. Of importance is the idea that many administrators feel that attendance at events and programs are an issue. Thinking about the aforementioned busy lives and schedules of student-athletes, the responses bring to question the idea of student-athlete barriers to participation. The following section will explore if other student-athlete barriers to participation in student-athlete support services exist.

Student-athlete Barriers to Participating in Student-athlete Support Services

Through analysis of semi-structured interviews, it was clear that student-athletes are largely participating in at least some student-athlete support services and programming. However, when asked about why they do not attend some of the sessions provided to them, several barriers were listed regarding their failure to attend. Although student-athlete support services at both institutions attempt to make programs and resources available to student-athletes at their most convenient times, it becomes difficult to establish set schedules when dealing with hundreds of student-athletes at both the NCAA Division I universities studied. Not surprisingly,

student-athletes indicated that time and awareness were the two biggest barriers to participation in student-athlete support services programming.

Student-athlete time commitment. One of the most mentioned barriers included the time commitment associated with being a student-athlete. The participation in student-athlete support services becomes much more difficult due to the role time plays in the overall academic environment of student-athletes. Many participants stated that “I think time is the biggest issue” and many found it difficult to balance a, “busy schedule, you've got school, and then you've got your personal life at home and stuff like that.” Often times, student-athletes are left with difficult decisions on how to best balance their schedules, particularly when it comes to programming outside of practice or games. Student-Athlete 16 describes a personal example regarding participation in SAAC and says:

Unfortunately, our SAAC meetings were on Monday night at 8:00 PM. I would be exhausted, and I would either come running from practice and show up all sweaty and worse, I would have to miss dinner because the dining hall would close. I can distinctively remember times that I had to choose, "Do I want to go to this thing or do I want to go eat?" So that would be tough.

Student-athlete support services require a significant amount of time and effort in themselves, which is further affected by the lack of time available to hundreds of student-athletes at each institution. Even within the athletic department specifically, time plays a role in the organization of several of the programs discussed, like freshmen mentorship, career development, or study halls and tutoring. Although scheduling becomes near impossible when considering the schedules of hundreds of student-athletes, many times student-athlete support

services and programs are offered at night after athletic duties have ended. However, for student-athletes, that also puts them in a difficult situation. For example, Student-Athlete 16 noted:

So, the only time when a lot of these programs can happen is at night because our schedules are so hectic when it comes to our sports. Not just for rowing but for all of our sports. So, the only catch-all that we really have is to go later in the evening, which is fine except when A) you do have to eat and the dining hall closed at a certain hour, and B) you have to skip eating and do your homework. So, it's tough, and you want to go to sleep, and you don't want to be on your feet. I mean, I just would say time. Those limitations and the fact that everything has to be done later in the evening.

Even outside of athletic commitments and student-athlete support services, student-athlete find it difficult to participate in opportunities that are offered to the general student population as well, including activities or events through their majors or programs. Student-Athlete 12 was unable to participate in business school opportunities, like a study abroad trip even in the summer. The student-athlete said:

I think definitely for football players, we're here all summer, so any of those study abroad programs, we cannot do. So, through the business school, there was three or four opportunities that I wanted to do, over in Italy and over in Spain, a lot of these opportunities that students got to take advantage of that we just don't get to do. So, I think that's some of the main things we miss out on. But other than that- I mean, there's small things here and there. I think the benefits of being a student-athlete outweigh the disadvantages.

Particularly, integration on-campus becomes extremely challenging considering the tough balance student-athlete's attempt to find through athletic commitments, academic commitments,

and any student-athlete support services they utilize. For example, student-athletes have a difficult time:

Integrat[ing] into sorority life, into student senate, into those types of things because most of the students would tell you that are in those activities, there's a time commitment associated with that, and the time commitment with athletics doesn't necessarily mesh well with trying to do those other things."

Even when administrators attempt to foster "great relationships with people on campus as a whole...to help promote [on-campus programming] in athletics," often times campus programming is held at inconvenient times for student-athletes because, "speakers seem to be like at five or six o'clock and that's when the students are in practice, so they are not able to attend." Unfortunately, even if student-athletes attempt to be more involved or engaged on campus, certain NCAA rules and regulations apply that limit when they can and can't do things. A lot of it has to do with "NCAA and regulations or rules and that that might come in play on time demands for student-athletes and there was a lot of legislation that came out two years ago that talked about days off and certain hours that they could and couldn't do things."

Add this into trying to be a "normal" college student, the student-athlete time commitments continue to be an issue. For example, when evening hits:

They had either more tutoring or, ideally in like wonderful unicorn world, they're going home, and they will study for their courses. But also, we have to leave room for them to be a college student. So, to have that time to hang out with their friends, go to dinner, go to a movie, go down to ice cream.

This can certainly be an issue for even the most driven student-athletes. Although administrators believe that there may be, "very few [student-athletes] that are actually deeply engaged in

campus activities outside of athletics because of the time commitment that would be required” they continue to ask themselves, “what can you do to try and help that?” Unfortunately, through the student-athlete time commitment combined with NCAA rules and regulations, it becomes difficult to navigate the student-athlete support services landscape. Even if the student-athletes do have an hour or two free in their schedule, the other issue that has been illustrated throughout the interviews was the idea of awareness of resources and support services.

Awareness of Programs. Through further analysis of data, it became clear that along with the student-athlete time commitment, actual awareness of the programs and schedule was also seen as a barrier to participation in student-athlete support services. As student-athletes go about their busy schedules, they are often “bombarded too, with messages, ‘Do this. Do this’” from their coaches, staff, and advisors. Even when administrators attempt to “put information in front of them all day long,” it is often lost in the shuffle and the student-athletes, “they start to almost probably filter it all out. I mean a lot of students that I worked with, they very rarely read their email.” Whether it’s a lack of promotion or awareness on the coaching and advising end or whether it’s on the student-athlete to check emails and remember information, awareness plays a role as a barrier to participation. While part of it may fall on the student-athlete to check their emails on a regular basis an administrator mentioned that often times the biggest issue is “student-athletes not knowing of these opportunities because they’re not really promoted by all of the coaches.”

Administrator 4 goes on to describe the importance of communication between coaches and their athletes. Specifically, their coaches, along with their teammates, are the most constant factor when it comes to interaction both on and off the field. Coaches and teammates, “would be the greatest focal point of communication as they’re with their team every day;” however, this

also creates a barrier or issue if they are not mentioning services and programs available to their student-athletes. Administrators and student-athlete support services staff are unable to take full responsibility of the lack of awareness, “because there’s 500-plus student-athletes and there’s only so much that can be done, because we can’t ensure that everybody’s going to look at social media. We can’t ensure that everybody’s going to be reading their email.” Ultimately, this finding helps illustrate the overall importance of using all lines of communication, particularly through coaches and teammates, to help bring a greater sense of awareness to available programming across the student-athlete support services. While it is important to understand this ahead of time, one participant established the importance of holding coaches accountable as well and said:

We believe that coaches are part of the education experience, not separate from it. So, our job is to provide the resources, the coaches job is to provide the accountability to make sure that the student-athletes are taking full advantage of the resources that are available to them.

The combination of student-athlete time commitment and the lack of awareness creates a difficult scenario for both student-athletes and administrators. Opportunities exist to provide the greatest amount of support for student-athletes based on these struggles, including “At a time when they do have these time constraints, you know, our departments like career service, they’ll do a really good job with saying, ‘We’ll hold the event a second time for those that could not attend the first.’” Based on the analysis of interviews, administrators understand the barriers and commitments associated with being a student-athlete. Ultimately, Administrator 2 states:

Sure. I mean, I think that it is just a lack of awareness, time, applied that to the largest one that they can see. Their schedules are just so rigorous as it is. Many of them are up

early as early as 5:30 or 6 o' clock in the morning. Then they're doing class and tutoring. Then they have meetings and practices in the afternoon. And, they're watching film and they're doing, I mean whether you're in season or out of season, there's just an abundance of responsibilities that they have to take care of. Then they should also be eating of course.

It must be a collaborative effort by student-athletes, their coaches and staff, and administrators to help identify these barriers and concerns within their own unique student-athlete setting. By doing so, administrators and staff will be able to establish both programming that is beneficial and convenient for student-athletes to attend. Along with the time constraints and the lack of awareness, these issues help further the idea of a student-athlete/athletics bubble on campus, which many student-athletes have said they are a part of. The following section will explore this phenomenon.

The Student-athlete and Athletics Campus Bubble

As student-athletes enter campus their freshmen year, they have the opportunity to utilize student-athlete support services from the get-go. When partaking in freshmen mentorship with student development and academic staff through programs like University Leadership and Development Program, student-athletes become part of the student-athlete support programming and continue to grow and develop through the athletic department. While freshmen programming is required at the studied Institution One, it is important to explore how resources designed specifically for student-athletes contribute to the overarching concept of the campus “bubble” involving the student-athlete and athletics department. This concept was discussed by several student-athletes and administrators at both NCAA Division I institutions. Furthermore, how

administrators are working to connect student-athletes with the on-campus environment is also discussed.

The Campus Disconnect. To begin, this concept of the student-athlete/athletics bubble separate from on-campus extends to both student-athletes and administrators at Institution One and Two. For example, Administrator 1 said:

So, I certainly think that there is this concept of the bubble, and that is probably very true because, you're right that they have access to tutoring, but it's all by where they live and where they work. They have access to food and meals, but it's all in a particular spot, right? So, I do think that that is a reality that exists.

Administrator 7 also expressed similar sentiments regarding the separation of student-athletes and the general student population, particularly when interacting with students outside of their team or outside of athletics and said, "Well, what I think is the bubble exists as well. There is kind of a big separation between athletes and regular students. I think it's rare to find student-athletes being social outside of their athlete circle." This idea of the student-athlete/athletics bubble extends beyond campus. Administrator 1 describes the difficulty of university identity outside of athletics and even off campus. For example, the administrator stated:

So, I think the thing that's hardest for the faculty to on-campus- some of them on-campus to grasp that the identity of the university, whether we like it or not is very much connected to athletics. And so, to me, it is impossible to separate the two and to say, "We're an academic institution and then there's athletics." Because whenever I'm anywhere and people see a [Institution One mascot] on my shirt or my bag or whatever, it is identifiable usually because of athletics not because of I'm department chair or I'm in the history department or whatever. And when people that I don't know talk to me

about the university, they either talk specifically to me about my research, "Oh, what do you do in that?" or, "I love watching-" blah, blah, blah.

Interestingly, student-athletes also indicate the idea of the separation of athletics and on-campus based on the resources they have available in a certain area for them. While the bubble was part of the discussion for both institutions, Student-Athlete 1 describes that it may not be as large as larger Division I schools; however, it certainly exists. According to Student-Athlete 1:

I don't think it exists as much as per se like a Power 5 conference, like the Big 12. Just because I don't think that [athletics] is in the spotlight as much. I think they do a good job at our school really bridging that gap between our advisers. Encourage us to go get help from our teachers rather than just tutoring and stuff like that. So, I don't think there's as big as a bubble as a place like Alabama, where you've got more resources than we do, and they say, "Oh, talk to my adviser if you need to talk to me or someone like that." So, I still think the bubble exists, I just don't think we have the resources to have that kind of level of separation.

Student-Athlete 17 brought an interesting perspective into the equation. As a student-athlete who did not join until their junior year, the student-athlete describes their experience transition from a non-athlete to a student-athlete. Although not a traditional path for many student-athletes, she explains, "I think for me, the bubble was really clear for me from the beginning when I first joined the team because obviously, like I had friends, just that I made when I came here." The student-athlete began to notice how difficult it became to keep in touch and work with each other's schedule as she became a student-athlete. She goes on to state:

So, I definitely had a group of friends and then when I joined the team, it became hard for me to hang out with my friends who are not in athletics, just because of our

schedules and stuff. And then eventually, it was just kind of like, I'm still friends with them, but now I'm closer to my teammates and like other people in athletics because it's easier to work around our schedules together, rather than trying to work around somebody's work schedule and class schedule when we already have the same schedule.

This student-athletes experience helps illustrate how easy it is for student-athletes to become part of the bubble and siloed into the athletic department away from campus. This situation is one that Administrator 4 is particularly worried about at their institution. The administrator said:

I do worry about athletics getting siloed because we are kind of our own working body in here. You got marketing, compliance, and [ULDP] and us and facilities and all kinds of things, but we're all in one building. We're all geared towards athletics and so I think it is easy to get siloed. But I think our guys and gals maybe feel a little bit of that because they only go here and then to class and then here and to class.

Not only does this present a challenge to administrators to help connect their student-athletes and integrate into the campus community, but also for the student-athletes who are attempting to integrate themselves into campus. For example, in an attempt to be more involved on campus, Student-Athlete 16 describes her short experience as a member of a sorority and says:

So, I think that was definitely challenging for me. I also ended up joining a sorority while I was in athletics and that was brutal and then just now trying to balance everything, it's difficult. I definitely think I tried to branch out of athletics, but I see why people get so stuck in that bubble because it's so easy. It's so easy to just like, ignore everything else that's going on campus because it feels irrelevant to you. You eat, sleep and breathe athletics, so whatever team you're involved in, it really feels like that's your world, but I

definitely tried to take a step back at times and when I do have free time, try to focus on my other areas of my life instead of just trying to stick to being in sports, but it's hard because you're so tired. All these other things and you're just like, this is exhausting.

Having many resources available to student-athletes all in one area presents more of a convenience for student-athletes. Particularly in a case like this, the student-athlete states that it's easy to get stuck in the bubble based on your friends, interests, and resources available all in one place. At Institution Two, this also presents a unique challenge even just based on the location of athletic facilities and resources for the student-athletes. Student-Athlete 8 presents this as the reason for the bubble and says:

I would say, yes, we do have this bubble. Just because our facilities, our field, are all on the west side of campus, right around each other, but some student-athletes they did a very good job of getting involved in other things on the other side of campus. Whether that was into performing arts, the biology department and a lot of them were also in fraternities, too. So, yes, I would think that we were a part of the student-athlete bubble.

As student-athletes get siloed into their student-athlete/athletics "bubble" it becomes difficult to integrate in other aspects of campus; however, administrators are working to create a greater campus connection through on-campus resources and relationship building between the two areas. The following section will discuss what administrators are doing to help connect or drive integration within the campus community.

Utilization of On-Campus Resources. As administrators work on bridging the athletics bubble, an effort has been made to help drive integration into campus programming and resources. Through feedback from administrators and student-athletes, it is clear that effort has been made to drive on-campus relationships between the athletics department and on-campus departments.

The disconnect between athletics and campus stems from the convenience of offering student-athlete resources all in one place and how their schedules align; however, a faculty athletic representative noted the disconnect on the faculty level between how they view the student-athlete and campus relationship. When asked about the importance of buy-in from faculty and athletics staff to implement programming, Administrator 1 said:

So, trying to get faculty, who maybe think or are not necessarily fans of sport, or are worried that the athletics enterprise is diluting the academic endeavor. Trying to get them to understand that it's a vital part of our university, I think is something that's critical. And one of the things that I've talked to the chancellor about and to the university about and to the athletics department, is trying to help faculty understand the importance and the value of that. Because again, if you can support, promote, try and help people understand the value of that, then people will come. People will try and support that as well with their dollars or with their presence or with whatever.

One way athletic departments are helping drive the relationship towards campus and faculty is through the development or “reimagining of what the faculty mentoring program looks like.” One of Administrator 1’s responsibilities in the role of faculty athletic representative is to help with this project as a way to create opportunities for student-athletes to have someone on campus they can come talk to. One way in which they are working to reimagine and improve this program is by creating more meaningful connections for student-athletes and faculty. Prior to updating the program:

It used to be faculty mentors that were clustered with sport. So, I wanted to be a mentor for softball, so I do mentor for softball, maybe five other people would be, and we'd go to games, and whatever. But the interaction with student-athletes, it was because I like

softball, so I'm interacting with them because they play softball. And so, we kind of reimagine that to be an interaction based on major and interest in their educational goals. And so, we're trying to pair faculty in engineering with student-athletes, who are also in engineering to try and help them and create an opportunity for them to have somebody on campus to come to talk to, that second-friendly face.

For many student-athletes this helps create additional campus relationships for them in an effort to better integrate on campus. However, many student-athletes at both institutions also rely on the work of their campus academic advisors in addition to their academic counselors in the athletic department. The roles of these two positions vary as athletic academic staff are, “technically academic counselors, and we work with multiple degree plans. We always send them to their program specific academic advisors.” Typically, at both institutions, “they meet with their program advisors first, and then, based on what information they are given, we help create their schedule to best fit their athletic obligations.”

Fortunately, both athletic and major advisors have strong relationships and work together well at both institutions. Student-Athlete 2 stated, “Well, in my major and with my athletics advisor they both work together, and they make everything smoothly for me. If one doesn't know something the other one. They work smoothly together.” However, while they make things work smoothly, it can add additional time for student-athletes to get things figured out academically. For example, Student-Athlete 4 notes the roles that each of the advisors play. The student-athlete stated:

There's a lot of bouncing around because we have our- there's three student-athlete academic advisors and wrestling's assigned one. And then what they make you do- they give you a paper and they make you go to your major advisor. So, you have to go to your

major advisor and then talk with them and schedule classes. And you have to go after that, you have to go to your student-athlete academic advisor. And then they usually tell you like, "Oh. This doesn't work out if you do this." Or, "I've heard this professor's real harsh against student-athletes in this class." So, then you have to go back to your major advisor and kind of work out all those kinks. There's kind of a flood of cat and mouse.

Student-Athlete 4 also had difficulties balancing what major to choose. Referencing the classes he needed in order to be a dentist, the student-athlete illustrates the balance they must try to maintain with what the academic advisor says versus what the athletic advisor says. The student-athlete explains:

A lot of the times, you go to your academic advisor and then they say, "Well, you need these classes." And you go to your athletic advisor and they're like, "Well, you can't have" because of practice or lifting times. I said, "I originally wanted to be a dentist." So, in one semester, I had organic chemistry, physics, and cell biology. So I told my athletic academic advisor that those were the only classes I could get in that time in order to graduate on pace. And then they kind of were saying, "Oh. We don't want you doing that. We don't want you doing that." But the academic advisors said that's your only option at this point as a biology major. So, there's a lot of just bouncing around.

While each student-athlete's experiences may vary based on their relationships with both of their advisors, ultimately, many enjoy having an extra set of eyes when it comes to registration and academic tasks. When asked whether having two advisors is troublesome or helpful,

Student-Athlete 1 said:

No, I think it helps. I think it makes it a lot easier for us, as athletes, to kind of help us double check our work, and then we've already got a game plan when going into our

business or our specific major-related advisors of what we need and what times, everything else. So, our athletic advisors really set us up in those meetings pretty well.

Student-athletes noted that their athletic advisors are there to “help us with the smaller stuff if we have problems now,” but also it assist in “clos[ing] the gap between athletics and the business schools or the school life.” Ultimately, according to Administrator 3, appropriate measures must be taken to, “get the student-athletes to the position where they develop these relationships.”

The utilization of campus resources primarily falls within the use of major academic advisors. Outside of major academic advisors and faculty mentorship programs, Institution One attempts to utilize other resources that they deem beneficial for their student-athletes; however, “for the most part, athletics is kind of a one-stop-shop. I mean, we have somebody here that helps with the mental health component, we have our own trainers and medical staff, we've talked about career, we have tutoring, we have compliance.” While this is the case, a large part of Administrator 2’s job is:

Being on campus and continuing to cultivate those relationships. I mean, for the most part, the guys are taking the leadership studies class, which is the domestic violence prevention courses. We partnered with that group on campus in order to do that. First-year experience, we partnered with campus. So there's a lot of things that we go to main campus, like anything career-related, Ben's going to the campus career center. So, I think there's a lot of stuff that we know, we don't need to re-create the wheel. They're doing a phenomenal job. The University is putting money into it too. So, it makes sense to utilize it. But then, we just kind of have the opportunity where we have people over here who can help work those odd hours and work around practice time.

As administrators focus on “integrat[ing] with campus” and “building those bridges,” they must help encourage students to get there. As the results have indicated, one way to do so is by “trying to then use our faculty athletic representative to help build that bridge. So, bring faculty over that then they can connect within and have that connection point outside of just us.” In speaking with a Administrator 1 on her experience at an FCS university, she helped echo these sentiments and said:

What we did there was we did include a lot of the on campus. We had them come over and talk, we had them meet with tutors on campus, we had them meet with the multicultural staff, we had them meet with the LGBTQ staff. They came over and talked to our student-athletes. And so, at that smaller school, we had to do that.

The representative quotes have helped illustrate the utilization of on-campus resources regarding faculty mentorship, academic advising, and other programs. The administrators showcased the importance of on-campus resources in relationship with athletics and student-athletes. Particularly, athletic departments have partnered with multiple programs on campus, including the campus career center and domestic violence courses. As we continue to explore the different resources and the student-athlete bubble, it is also important to pinpoint the differences in resources present for student-athletes versus non-athletes.

When the faculty athletic representatives were asked about the differences in resources for student-athletes versus non-athletes, the biggest difference referenced the structures of tutoring and study hall. Administrator 1 noted, “Probably the biggest difference, just off top my head, is availability of tutoring. We talk about it all the time in engineering, that we don't have a lot of tutoring opportunities for students, especially as they become juniors and seniors.” As previously discussed, tutoring and study halls are part of the required, structured programming

found at both NCAA Division I institutions. These types of structured academic sessions are not as readily available to non-athletes. A faculty athletic representative goes on to explain how student-athletes differ from engineering students at the institution and states:

We may have some practice exam sessions for the intro physics, and the intro calc, and things like that, and the lower chem classes, but we don't have access to one-on-one tutoring and we certainly don't pay for one-on-one tutoring for students. So that's a big difference between what's available, I think, in athletics and what we can offer across campus.

Considering these differences, what also came to mind for administrators and faculty athletic representatives was the use of structured programming, like ULDP and LLC, for their student-athletes compared to what is found on campus. Administrator 1 made it clear that:

[ULDP] I think is a great program, and the students get a lot out of that. I think that there's opportunities that are similar to that on campus, probably not as regimented and staffed in terms of freshmen are going to do this and sophomores are going to do this, juniors, whatever, but I think in each individual program, through peer mentoring that may happen through career counseling, through whatever it might be, there are opportunities for students if they want to be engaged and if they want to have those conversations with faculty and the department. Through an advising session, I talk with the students, and I have them for four years, and I work with them and try and help them with internships, and everything else. I don't put them through intense programs to try and teach them leadership skills, and something that, but we have programs on campus, like our Self Leaders Program and SAAC, where students who want to do that can have those extra opportunities and be engaged. So, I think there are similarities, they're much more, I would

say, defined in the athletic side. In the academic side, they're much more based on your academic profile. So that would be the main difference.

Through exploration of the student-athlete/athletics bubble a few things became clear regarding the athletic and on-campus relationship. Specifically, with the overall campus disconnect and how student-athletes and administrators are utilizing on-campus resources for their programming. It was found that the primary campus connection came from the use of academic advisors from major-specific programs. While an effort has been made to integrate within campus, issues still exist for student-athletes and administrators. Both athletes and campus administrators must still continue to strive to burst the bubble in an effort to create a more inclusive campus environment among student-athletes and their non-athlete peers. Now that the types of resources have been discussed at both institutions, it is important to begin pinpointing which key differences exist across NCAA Division I institutions.

Differences between Institution One and Institution Two Student-athlete Support Services

The analysis of 24 interviews from both administrators and student-athletes from two NCAA Division I institutions led to the development of several general themes and subthemes that were discussed. These themes helped illustrate commonalities among student-athlete support services at both types of institutions. While the general themes and subthemes were laid out in accordance with the similarities in student-athlete support services, there were several differences that are also important to discuss and may vary across NCAA Division I institutions. These differences included the number of resources and staff, how programs were promoted, and the importance of student-athlete support services in the recruitment process and decision to attend.

Number of Resources/Staff. One of the largest concerns regarding discrepancies within student-athlete support services across NCAA Division I institutions is the number of resources and staff prevalent at the Institution One compared to the Institution Two. From tutors to advisors and beyond, it is clear that some NCAA Division I institutions are able to utilize a broader group of staff to help support student-athlete services across the athletics department. The comparison is made clear by several administrators who have worked at different NCAA Division I institutions. Administrator 4 illustrated this discrepancy in staff and said:

I've worked at a couple of other institutions that are FCS and their resources were so much slimmer in comparison. I mean, here we have three tutor coordinators, over a hundred tutors, I mean, that is just outstanding. But that's a commitment from our athletic director though. [Athletic director] committed the money and the resources because he understands the service we're able to provide and it's equating to numbers. And, he's a very numbers-based person and so our graduation rates are phenomenal. As long as we can keep on showing that our numbers are going up or are in a really solid place, then it's a solid investment.

Within this description of the staff, the idea of budget as they relate to the available resources for the Institution One student-athletes was described. Funding was also brought up by other administrators regarding available academic support for student-athletes. Academic support was particularly brought up when it came to funding within student-athlete support services.

Within student-athlete support services at Institution One, academic support was:

A primary focus in our funding in the department. We will never pull funding from academics if it can be pulled from anywhere else. That being said, with the new athletic director, we are all very mindful of the budget issue that we're going through right now.

That's a common theme throughout athletic departments in campuses across the country but that- for us it's important to stay on budget, but we're not getting our budget cut the way lots of other parts of the department are. We can't do that. We have this extensive tutoring service, we have a laptop system, we check out calculators when needed, and, you know, I couldn't put a number on how many tutors we have but well over 150, 200 tutors.

Unfortunately, not all NCAA Division I institutions are as lucky, especially when it comes to budget concerns and funding. Administrator 4 referencing his experience at an FCS institution, echoed these concerns. Budget cuts or lack of funding primarily affect the over student-athlete experience and what support services they are able to be provided, specifically staff to assist.

Unfortunately, due to financial constraints at many NCAA Division I institutions:

A lot more kids slip under the radar and obviously these institutions, they just don't have the budget to support that. And that's purely based on hours and manpower, and you can only do so much in a day. And, not that I think our academic counselors did a bad job, but I think they are phenomenal and part of me thinks they educated me really, really well because they had to give me the tools and just tell me, "Look, you need to get this figured out," you know?

Outside of those tutors, several staff members exist just within academic support, primarily as academic counselors, tutoring coordinators, and graduate assistants at NCAA Division I institutions. Comparing experiences at both FCS and FBS universities, Administrator 3 noted:

I can speak to my experience as a student-athlete because that was an FCS institution and here we are at an FBS institution. The resources could not be more different even across the Division I level. When I was in college, we had two academic counselors. Here we have 14 and 4 GA's. And so, think about that. I focus on one team, whereas my

academic counselor focused on 250 student-athletes and, so just the amount of intentionality and focus you can give to individual students, and you can just be so much more hands-on and aware of what they're going through versus just depending on them to come to you with questions.

Similar sentiments were echoed by several administrators when illustrating the stark differences in staff prevalent at both types of institutions. A former FCS administrator, now FBS Administrator 4 describes how, at the FCS institution:

We have three full-time staff members for 380 student-athletes. When we look at [Institution One] or the other schools I've been to, you have 15 to 18 to 20 full-time staff members for 400 student-athletes. At the FCS school I was at, we're talking about eight tutors, nine tutors for all student-athletes. We had eight or nine tutors in this building right now helping our student-athletes.

This is in addition to, “eight full-time academic counselors, 18 sports then assigned to them. We do have one, two, three, four, five graduate assistants that also help support. We have three full-time tutor coordinators as well.” While this creates a greater support environment for the student-athletes at larger NCAA Division I institutions, it also eliminates potential campus integration opportunities since:

The resources at those smaller schools, you have to use more on campus. You have to use the tutoring center on campus, the writing center on campus. You just have to be more efficient because our overall budget at that school that I oversaw, that budget was smaller than our tutoring budget alone here at [Institution One]. So, you can't have 100 tutors. You can't have 31 learning assistants, and you can't have the event workshops to this level, but you're very, very intentional on what you use your stuff for. Because even

at that school, we had resume building workshops at night once a month or we had dining etiquettes, or we had social networking and career nights. You had it, but you used the career services on campus to come in and talk. Where here, you can't employ your own, so. You just have to be efficient. Efficient in what you do.

Ultimately, what you are able to provide in terms of student-athlete support services is based on the financial situation at the respective institutions. Budgetary or financial concerns can affect several aspects of the student-athlete environment. Administrators must ask themselves, "Can we afford to bring in a speaker? Can we afford materials? Can we afford to buy pizza and bring the drinks? Can we be willing to commit to saying that it is important that we educate our students on this?" All of these are important questions regarding the support services that administrators are able to provide based on the own financial resources available to them. Whenever possible, it is important to be "invested in full-time positions, which says to people around that means we're serious about it because you've invested in a full-time role too inside of being someone's hat or someone's half-time role."

The analysis of differences between Institution One and Institution Two illustrated a common theme regarding the unique differences between student-athlete support staff available at each respective institution even across NCAA Division I. The financial role of student-athlete support services was clearly explained based on the information presented by athletics academic administrators. As the author continues to explore the differences in the types of programming available at two NCAA Division I institutions, an important question is raised. How do student-athlete support services affect recruitment and decision to attend at each institution?

Institution One Student-athletes Decision to Attend (Recruitment). Further analysis of the differences between two NCAA Division I programs illustrated a significant difference in

how student-athlete support services were utilized within the recruitment process and if they had any effect of the student-athletes' decision to attend. For nearly Institution One student-athletes interviewed, the student-athlete support services were mentioned in the recruitment process; however, it had very little effect, if at all, on their decision to attend the institution. Particularly in a revenue-generating sport, like football, Student-Athlete 9 states:

You learn about that as you get into the school and stuff. They do tell you about tutoring, but they're just worried about the program, just trying to get the best athletes so they can win. But I think as a coach, just keep it real, be honest. That's my point of view on things. Let's be honest because I know a lot of coaches will lie to you to get you here.

The student-athlete also expressed that the student-athlete support services had no bearing on his decision to attend and, again, was primarily based on what football had to offer over anything else. Although they talked about the services provided:

They got in-depth stuff going into that. What it was about, what they did with it, but to be honest that had zero play on whether I was going to come to [Institution One] or not. It was more football and what I have with that.”

When asked about the mention of student-athlete support services during the recruitment process, Student-Athlete 6 expressed similar sentiments and said:

Not so much during the recruiting process. My first week on campus, that's when I got all that information. It was probably more based on the athletic portion, but I honestly didn't know what SAAC was, what [ULDP] was.

Student-Athlete 3 went so far to say that it was so insignificant in the process that she forgot they even talked about student-athlete support services on the visit. While, “[ULDP]

participated a little bit on my official visit and did a little spiel about what they do, but, obviously, it wasn't super important to me because I don't remember it."

Although at a large, Division I university, these sentiments might not be surprising, however, interestingly, Institution One administrators are certainly aware of the lack of effect their student-athlete support services have on a student-athletes' decision to attend.

Administrator 4 said, "I'm going to be optimistic" and provided an estimate of how many student-athletes he thinks are driven by student-athlete support services:

Let's say 10%, it figures in. I think 90% is the coach, the facilities, the gear, are they a Nike school or Adidas school? And I've heard that from recruits. So that's what I'm drawing this upon. In my years of doing this, I'll be honest with you, I had one student say, "I chose this school because of football and academics." So, it's happened. But I'm going to say 10%. 10% and that's being positive.

Similar elements that play a role in the decision to attend were also provided by Administrator 2, who said, "I'd be naïve to say that I think that, yes, somebody chose coming here because we have an amazing leadership program." Rather, factors like:

Their sport is one of the bigger components. Their relationship with their coach, I think, is a really large component as well. But I think for some people when if they're really looking at apples to apples then they do start comparing well at this school they talked about they have seven people who work with football, and they have these resources, and they also talked about this too.

Institution Two Student-athletes Decision to Attend (Recruitment). Institution Two student-athletes, on the other hand, illustrate a much different approach to the recruitment

process and the role student-athlete support services have in their decision to attend. In fact, an Student-Athlete 12 said it was one of the best things his institution did well during the process:

That's one thing that [Institution Two] did really well. When I was on my visit- I came up here and we had one of the professors from the business school, so he sat down and kind of talked through what a 4-year plan would look like, and some of the career paths that some of the students have done, and some of the student-athletes that have gone to the business school. That was one part of it, and then for another part of it, we got to sit down with the academic success team and we talked everybody involved with that and made talk to us how study hall was run and what help is available to the student-athletes. And pretty much all the opportunities that come through the academic success team, they relay that information really well over. So, all of that information was nice to know, and it was clearly presented.

Another student-athlete was essentially worried about keeping up with a busy student-athlete schedule that the resources provided played a very large role in his decision to attend. Being young and nervous at the time, the student-athlete describes that he wanted:

To know that I was going to be able to have these resources available to me- because at the time coming in as a young 18-year old, I was nervous about how I was going to juggle academics and the rigorous schedule of athletics. And so, these resources and knowing that, for lack of a better way to put it, that someone would have my back on the academic side, to know that when I was struggling I would be able to get tutoring up to a certain point was a huge selling point for me.

As a first-generation college student, Student-Athlete 10 was completely focused on the academic side of things and was, ultimately, “all I could have asked for.” Expanding on this, the student stated:

I, personally, being a first-generation college student, I definitely wanted to have the academic success that was required at the college level to be able to graduate. So, for me, being able to hear that an athletic department supports athletes being successful is all I could ask for it, whether it's at my level or the FBS level.

The Institution Two student-athletes clearly expressed a different level of attraction to student-athlete support services within their recruitment process compared to Institution One student-athletes. It is evident that Institution Two student-athletes are more interested in someone “looking out for the best in me as a person and an individual academically.” These “huge attractors” were things like “wanting to get my education” or “tutoring and the emphasis on academics” versus the sports that Institution One students mentioned. Ultimately, Institution Two student-athletes also understand they are even more less likely do go pro than their Institution One counterparts, which allow things like “tutoring definitely helps getting me here and then emphasizing academics also helps because going pro and track is not something that's like a strong career or a strong possibility. So that was a really huge selling point.”

Recruiting to Parents of Student-athletes. However, whether it be at Institution One or Institution Two, administrators will be the first to admit, “On recruiting visits, we are selling parents more than we are students often.” While Institution Two student-athletes might be more drawn to the academic or student-athlete support services side of things, parents still play a role in the recruitment process. Administrator 4 notes the anxiety that parents are also dealing with throughout the recruitment process and says:

I think it's more of the parents that are interested. To be honest with you, just in my past years, as we're recruiting, we're talking about programming, we're talking about [ULDP], we're talking about tutoring and learning assistance, and all that stuff, I think it helps our recruiters understand what it's going to look like when they get here, but I think it's to alleviate the anxiety from the parents. Because they're nervous about their son or daughter coming to a school, whether it's half a country away or it's 15 minutes away. It's still the, "All right. How's Johnny or Suzie going to do well academically?" Like trying to go to practice, go to class and do all that kind of stuff. So, I think our guys, our recruits like it, but I don't think they're as engaged with it as the parents are.

Parents are looking at more than just the athletic opportunities. They're looking at support "not only athletically or academically, but also socially and professionally." These opportunities are all communicated to parents and their student-athletes during the process. While parents might be listening for the opportunities outside of athletics, student-athletes are "more focused on playing time, or with the coach, or anything else not related to academics." Student-Athlete 2 mentioned that the head coach spoke directly to his parents about grades and "how we're required to have study hall hours the first year that would keep us on track. And that's something he's always stressed outside of football to finish your degree." In an effort to show a more "holistic side of it – not just the student, not just the athlete," administrators share their student-athlete support services with recruits. By exhibiting a more holistic approach to being a student-athlete, "for any mom or dad or guardian, they typically that kind of really piques their interest because they recognize that the student and athlete as just as a very small component even though that's their master identity to the student."

Along with this, administrators understand that if you are being recruited by a Division I university in whatever sport that may be, you are already good enough to play. When you're already good enough to play:

They're now looking at the bells and whistles here. What does the locker room look like? What does the field look like? What kind of uniforms are we going to get? Like yadda, yadda, yadda. Most times, kids are just not at the point yet where they're concerned about what's the retention rate? What's the hiring rate in this program? So, a lot of that is [ULDP] and student-athlete support services selling our best selves to these parents.

Ultimately, for both NCAA Division I programs, similar sentiments were expressed regarding student-athlete support services within the recruitment process for parents. While student-athletes may or may not be interested in what's being offered outside of athletic field, for administrators, student-athlete support services is, "the biggest recruiting tool that we have outside of, again, the sport-specific facilities and things like that and scholarship."

Administrators must work to develop programming that piques the interest of both the student-athlete and their parents. It was very clear based on these results that the recruitment process is as much about parents as it is the student-athlete. Considering today's college students are becoming more and more diverse along with the idea of "helicopter" parents, these findings are significant in how administrators can move forward with recruiting. Once student-athletes step onto campus, administrators must also work to drive participation into their programs in order to follow through on specific services mentioned during recruitment.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The results of this study were presented in Chapter Four. Through the analysis of semi-structured interviews with 24 administrators and student-athletes, six general themes were formulated with additional sub themes provided. The six general themes and sub themes were examined using representative quotes from the in-depth interviews performed. Chapter Five will attempt to further drive the discussion by exploring the connection to past literature on student-athlete support service and beyond. Specifically, the author will connect student-athlete services to high impact educational practices, the role of NCAA Division I finances in the student-athlete support services provided, explore the college environment as it relates to the student-athlete experience, illustrate the importance of student-athlete support services in the decision to attend a university, and examine the importance of athletic staff in the athletics-campus relationship. Throughout the discussion, several representative quotes will be referenced to help draw a connection to the general themes and literature. Once the author analyzes and connects topics of interest from Chapter Two, the author will discuss implications, future research, limitations, and conclusion.

High Impact Educational Practices in the Student-athlete Setting

Throughout the results, it was apparent that both NCAA Division I institutions utilized a variety of student-athlete support services in an effort to provide positive outcomes for their student-athletes. While this was the case, it is important to develop an understand of how such services can further advance or promote the significance of high impact educational practices in the student-athlete setting. The researcher attempted to see how the mentioned programs and services fall within high impact educational practices and how additional services can be provided to implement these practices within the student athlete setting.

First year seminars and experiences. The utilization of first year seminars and experiences attempt to improve students' overall intellectual and practical skills (Kuh, 2008). These types of experiences play a critical role as they are often the first programs students participate in within the college environment, which plays a large role in student retention and overall psychological processes (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Fortunately, first year seminars and experiences have found their place within the NCAA Division I student-athlete setting, whether through the institution, the athletic department, or both. Specifically, NCAA Division I institutions utilized first year summer bridge programs for their student-athletes. Additionally, they established a freshmen student-athlete mentoring program through ULDP. The ULDP and LLC programs at the NCAA Division I institutions are in addition to any first-year seminars and experiences that may be utilized on-campus for incoming students. The institutions' required summer bridge programs work on practical skills in providing financial literacy training, diversity and inclusion instruction, classroom and professional etiquette courses, as well as career and volunteer services. As Administrator 4 stated, "The other thing is we're thinking about this summer is continued to implement the Summer Bridge Program, which cooperates with [ULDP] and that's mandatory because it's basically a class or a workshop." Similar sentiments were felt across the institutions within this study, including the utilization of specific first year programming built for student-athletes in combination with university programming. Specifically, the summer bridge programs allows student-athletes:

The opportunity to have someone look at a resume or start building a resume or start talking about social networking etiquette, which a lot of guys don't understand on Twitter there are lot of people are reading. So, what you put out there, you're getting watched or

Snapchat or whatever that may be. So, I'm trying to implement some of what [ULDP] does starting with our freshman.

Similarly, these programs are able to “bring a lot of people from on-campus and they take their time out of their day to come meet with our guys, but I think it is so important to have on-campus, get in front of our guys, get them to feel like we get over here.”

Additionally, both institutions attempted to provide a strong first year experience in an effort to make student-athletes aware of the resources available to them as they grow within their academic and athletic careers. Through the exploration of interview data and researching athletic department websites across NCAA Division I, it is clear that first year seminars and experiences are appropriately being utilized across campuses.

To further illustrate the opportunities available to student-athletes within this high impact educational practice, the researcher explored several NCAA Division I institution websites that helped describe the implementation of this practice within intercollegiate athletics. Particularly, at Vanderbilt University, incoming first-year student-athletes have to opportunity to participate in, “instructional sessions on topics ranging from academic integrity and college writing to financial management, networking and mental health as part of Vanderbilt Athletics’ Summer Bridge Program” (myVU, 2017, para. 1). California State University – Northridge’s Student-Athlete Summer Success Program supports similar instructional programming through individualized academic support, like skills, financial aid, meal planning, social media, and many other support services (CSUN, 2017). Washington State University’s website notes how difficult it can be to transition to a college freshmen but allows incoming student-athletes to take courses while also getting acclimated to the campus community (Washington State’s Summer Bridge Program, 2015). Similarly, Texas A&M University uses their Summer Bridge Program as an

opportunity for student-athletes to familiarize themselves with campus resources while being “taught study skills, time management techniques, and other college survival skills. Since the Summer Bridge Program is offered during the summer the class sizes are smaller, thus the students are given more personal attention” (Summer Bridge Program, n.d.). Both through the research conducted on the two NCAA Division I institutions and the exploration of college athletic department websites, institutions provide student-athletes the opportunity to participate in first year seminars and experiences as a high impact educational practice.

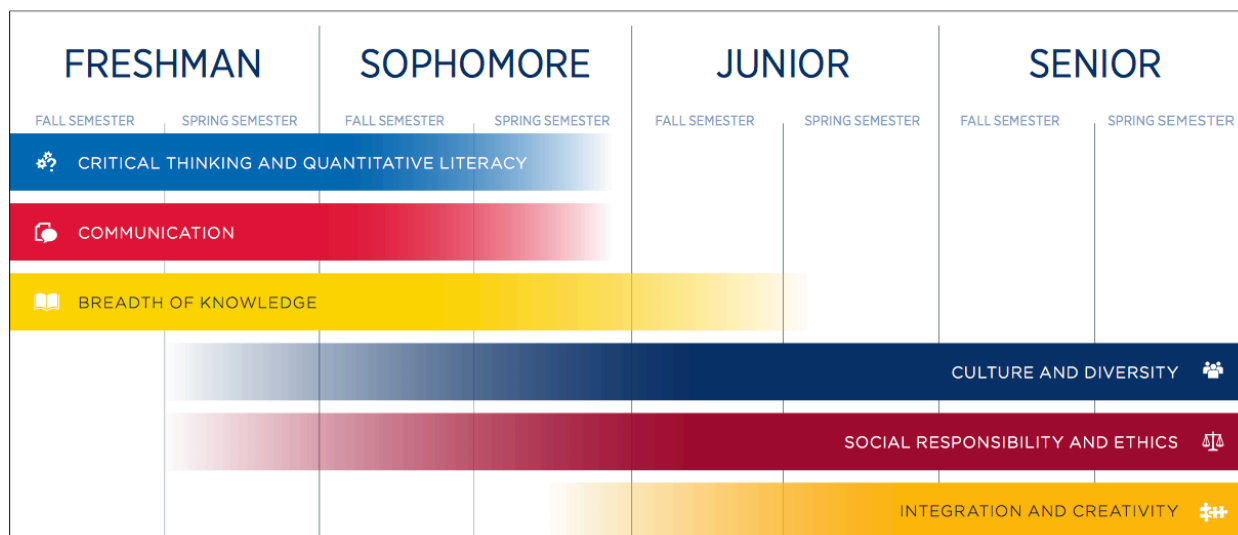
In attempting to illustrate whether or not HIPs are used within the student-athlete context, it becomes clear that first year seminars and experiences are currently part of the student-athlete academic environment and play a role both within athletics and the campus communities. Administrators must continue to provide similar opportunities for student-athletes in an effort to get them acquainted with the campus community and college structure. Unfortunately, for common intellectual experiences, many institutions did not implement such practices and, if they did, the implementation of core curriculum did not fall under the responsibility of the athletic departments.

Common intellectual experiences. While not expressed within the context of this study, common intellectual experiences are utilized at both Institution One and Institution Two based on their university websites. Common intellectual experiences refer to “core” curriculum featured at institutions as a way to explore big picture items in an attempt to foster a sense of broad knowledge in areas like science, history, and cultures (Kuh, 2008). Common intellectual experiences are controlled by the university only and, if implemented, are required by all university students as part of general education, whether an athlete or not.

According to the Institution One’s Core website, the programming “is designed to yield fundamental skills, build a broad background of knowledge, generate capacities and opportunities for blending and creating ideas, strengthen an appreciation of cultural and global diversity, and cultivate ethical integrity” (FBS Core, 2019, para. 1). The Institution One’s core program utilizes six educational goals with specific learning outcomes. These goals include: 1) critical thinking and quantitative literacy, 2) communication, 3) breadth of knowledge, 4) culture and diversity, 5) social responsibility and ethics, and 6) integration and creativity (FBS Core, 2019). Figure 1 demonstrates where these goals fitting into the student’s educational timeline.

Figure 1

Institution One Core Curriculum Goals



On the other hand, Institution Two utilizes different educational goals as part of their core curriculum, which is primarily focused on a liberal arts education. The mission of the program is to, “give students a foundation in the liberal arts enabling them to become responsible, well-educated citizens capable of contributing effectively to a rapidly changing, technologically advanced, global society” (FCS Core, 2019, para. 1). The competences in this program includes reading, writing, critical thinking, mathematics, and technology (FCS Core, 2019). NCAA

Division I institutions outside of the two studied provide additional examples of common intellectual experiences, including core curriculum, that are applied to the general student population. Columbia University describes their Core Curriculum as “the set of common courses required of all undergraduates and considered the necessary general education for students, irrespective of their choice in major” (The Core Curriculum, n.d., para. 1). Furthermore, this Core Curriculum attempts to “cultivate a critical and creative intellectual capacity that students employ long after college, in the pursuit and the fulfillment of meaningful lives” (The Core Curriculum, n.d., para. 1). This along with University of Nevada’s (n.d) goal of “exposing students to a variety of subjects and disciplines” (para. 2) is particularly applicable to Kuh’s (2008) idea of developing a broad knowledge through these common intellectual experiences. While not specifically utilized within the student-athlete support services setting, common intellectual experiences are present at the institutional level and required no matter if you are a student-athlete or not. Similarly, the idea of learning communities came with some uncertainty.

Learning communities. While, according to Kuh (2008), learning communities contribute to overall academic challenge, collaborative learning, student-faculty interactions, and supportive campus environments, especially for first year students, based on the results, there is learning communities were not part of the student-athlete support services. Unfortunately, this also goes against the idea of learning that takes place in and out of the classroom. Experiences, like learning communities, that may not be as readily available for student-athletes, have the potential to limit opportunities of cognitive growth through things like student faculty contact, active learning (Pascarella et al, 2006) and integrative learning (Kuh, 2008). In an effort to increase overall student-athlete involvement in learning communities, administrators must rely on promoting these on-campus opportunities to their student-athletes.

While not available directly within the athletic department, further online research makes it clear that learning communities are part of the learning environment for students across NCAA Division I campuses. Iowa State University has served over 80,000 students in learning communities since 1995 and currently offers 90 learning communities with over 77 percent of first-year students participating (Iowa State University Learning Communities, 2019). Particularly, the university has cited greater student satisfaction and engagement for learning community students, including NSSE benchmarks (A Success Story, 2019). In an effort to “support Wayne State University’s commitment to student learning and retention,” WSU offers over 35 learning community opportunities for their students and faculty to “learn and grow together” (Learning Communities, 2019, para. 1). Boston College cites collaboration, connection, and community as focus areas for their living and learning communities available on campus (Living and Learning Communities, 2019). As learning communities are an essential part of high impact educational practices, athletic administrators must work together with on-campus administrators to set student-athlete specific goals to participation in an effort to increase overall participation and engagement with this HIP on-campus. Clearly, NCAA Division I universities across the country offer these opportunities that align with Kuh’s (2008) overall goals and outcomes; however, additional collaboration is necessary to garner greater access for student-athletes.

Writing-intensive courses. Writing at all levels has continuously shown positive outcomes in improving overall literacy, reasoning, and communication (Kuh, 2008). While this may be the case, it is important to note that in athletic departments, “We basically don’t step into that much,” referring to their control over the writing courses. However, relating to writing intensive courses as a HIP, athletic departments have implemented supplementary

writing programs, including writing workshops, to assist their student athletes. Through the examination of the interviews, it was clear that, while institutions were implementing writing-intensive courses, additional resources would allow for more benefit for the student athletes. Interestingly, some NCAA Division I athletic programs did offer student-athlete specific writing programs; however, it was very uncommon. New Mexico State's Writing and Reading Comprehension Program provides the opportunity for pre-selected student-athletes to "work collaboratively with a reading and writing specialist" in an effort to "establish learning methods that will guide them from the early stages of a writing assignment to its final version" (Academic Support Programs & Services Center Overview, 2019, para. 7). Particularly, this is supplemental to sound education practices, like attendance, note-taking and time management, "which are imperative for academic success for all students" (Academic Support Programs & Services Center Overview, 2019, para. 7). It is difficult to apply specific recommendations regarding student-athlete specific writing intensive courses due to the academic controversies that have involved NCAA Division I athletic programs. Specifically, Ishaq and Bass (2019) note

It is likely that universities have concerns regarding athletics control over such programming due to controversies and scandals that have previously surrounded athletic departments... These scandals combined with strong media attention on intercollegiate athletic department scandals make for difficult decisions across institutions in how they handle academic programming among athletic departments (p. 188).

While this is the case, both on-campus and athletic administrators must learn to balance the difficult divide and work to establish student-athlete specific programming related to writing or be able to provide appropriate access points for student-athletes to participate in writing intensive courses throughout their academic careers.

Collaborative assignments and projects. Collaborative assignments include approaches like team-building exercises, study groups, group projects, and group writing in an effort to promote problem solving and learning to work together (Kuh, 2008). Fortunately, for student-athletes, collaborative work and team exercises are part of the nature of competing in sports. Fortunately, the prevalence of classes that offer these assignments and research projects, “set the stage for developing a meaningful relationship with another person on campus- a faculty or staff member, student, coworker, or supervisor...who share intellectual interests and are committed to seeing the student succeed” (Kuh, 2008, p. 14-15). The relationships established through these experiences help promote positive student development within the college environment (McCormick, Gonyea, & Kinzie, 2013).

Undergraduate research. Undergraduate research is often encouraged, but rarely utilized as it is often up to the student-athlete to reach out and organize such opportunities that they may not even know exist. It is important to note the use of “excelling kids” in this specific quote as high impact practices are intended to support all students, particularly those that have been underserved in the past and, with undergraduate research specifically, is intended to “involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions” (Kuh, 2008, p. 10). As a high impact educational practice, undergraduate research opportunities are available for student-athletes; however, based on the interview analysis, it is clear to see that many student-athletes are not participating in such opportunities and they are not directly related to student-athlete support services. While student-athletes may not be directly participating in undergraduate research, the opportunity to do so exists across several NCAA Division I universities, particularly those that have an Office of Undergraduate Research.

Northwestern University's Office of Undergraduate Research "strives to integrate student learning with experiences in the world beyond the classroom" (Our Role, 2019, para. 1).

Through opportunities for independent projects or guiding and advising students how to work with faculty, undergraduate research opportunities are prevalent (Our Role, 2019). Several other NCAA Division I institutions, including University of Illinois at Chicago, University of North Carolina, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Tennessee all have Offices of Undergraduate Research with similar goals of undergraduate involvement in inquired-based projects (Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, 2019). While it may be difficult for student-athletes to navigate their busy schedules with undergraduate research, student-athletes and athletic administrators must work to integrate among on-campus opportunities to garner greater access to high impact educational practices for their student-athletes. The lack of participation is also clearly illustrated in the implementation of diversity and global learning opportunities.

Diversity/global learning. Diversity and global learning encompasses diversity and inclusion classes and experiences like study abroad as a way to teach world views and explore cultures (Kuh, 2008). Ultimately, the utilization and diversity/global learning opportunities was limited due to barriers that existed, including time. Student-Athlete 12 noted: "So, through the business school, there was three or four opportunities that I wanted to do, over in Italy and over in Spain, a lot of these opportunities that students got to take advantage of that we just don't get to do." This thought was consistent with other student-athlete experiences. Unfortunately, with barriers to participation, these meaningful and often described as life changing experiences become limited to the student-athlete (NSSE, 2013). Fortunately, some NCAA Division I athletic programs provide resources to help student-athletes navigate specific barriers to study aboard or

global learning participation. North Carolina State University dedicates part of their website to student-athletes studying abroad and specifically state, “student athletes can and do participate in study abroad programs to gain global experiences. Study abroad provides student-athletes the opportunity to make the world their classroom and expand their horizons beyond the playing field” (Study Abroad, n.d., para. 1). The website also lists things to consider, including talking to your coach and teammates, the best time to study abroad, how to maintain training and nutrition, and how to stay in good standing with NCAA (Study Abroad, n.d.). Websites and programs like Student-Athletes Abroad provide study abroad programs specifically tailored to student-athletes with a mission to “offer international education programs designed to remove barriers that typically prevent student-athletes from studying or interning abroad while using sports as a vehicle to increase cultural immersion and maximize educational opportunities” (Student-Athletes Abroad, 2019, para. 2).

Other NCAA Division I institutions, including the University of Minnesota, offer similar resources as NCSU to their student-athletes. Particularly, University of Minnesota presents a student-athlete study abroad process, which links to six steps necessary for study abroad enrollment (Learning Abroad for Student-Athletes, 2019). UMN lists timing, credit arrangements, eligibility, and training as special considerations for student-athletes studying abroad (Learning Abroad for Student-Athletes, 2019). While the two institutions studied did not mention specific student-athlete diversity or global learning opportunities, many NCAA Division I institutions can continue to establish meaningful relationships with their on-campus study abroad offices to help expand overall resources utilizing NCSU, UMN, and Student-Athletes Aboard as an example. A more common HIP that has the potential to exhibit similar positive outcomes in service/community-based learning.

Service/community-based learning. Throughout the analysis of qualitative interview data collected, it was clear to see that this was one area that student-athletes excelled in and were certainly being implemented within the athletics setting. Service/community learning programs are as described as, “Field-based ‘experiential learning’ with community partners as an instructional strategy” in an effort to “analyze and solve community problems” (Kuh, 2008, p. 21). The importance of community service within the athletic departments were consistently present within each interview. Student-Athlete 6 stated:

A huge deal of what SAAC does is reach out into the [Institution One town] community and the greater area because the University has so much power when working with the community and especially with children and a lot of different other non-profit organizations. Student-athletes, especially from [Institution One], have a whole lot of power and so we would work with the police department, we’d work with the Boys and Girls Clubs, things like that. Not really to ever promote the [Institution One] athletics, but to always give back to the community and, in return, support for us was just insurmountable.

Similar sentiments were expressed by several student-athletes and administrators. While this opportunity is not something all student-athletes are able to participate in, many campuses require a service-learning component in their coursework, especially freshmen courses, as noted by one athletic director. The University of Southern California notes community outreach as “a vital piece of student-athlete development” (Community Outreach, 2019, para. 1). However, USC does also note that, “many student-athletes do not get the chance to maintain a job or internship during their college career,” but opportunities to “give back through community service helps student-athletes gain crucial volunteer experience and provides great resume

building opportunities” (Community Outreach, 2019, para. 1). Pennsylvania State University student-athletes contributed more than 8,000 hours of community service in 2016, while Southern Illinois University student-athletes added another 6,000 hours in 2019 (Penn State News, 2016; Weber, 2019). Clearly, service and community-based learning opportunities are being implemented in the student-athlete setting. Similarly, internships play a large role in the overall student-athlete experience.

Internships. Internships were one of the most widely utilized high impact educational practices within the context of the student athlete experience. Internships are intended to provide students with professional experience and “to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field” (Kuh, 2008, p. 11). Student-Athlete 16 credited ULDP for her internship with her conference at Institution One. One academic department at Institution One, “Makes each of our juniors and seniors meet with our student affairs staff during the fall and start to look at potentially getting an internship [or] shadowing work that they can do between their junior and senior [year].” Similarly, student affairs staff exist at some NCAA Division I universities to assist with internships and career development. At one institution, a career specialist is “somebody that’s going to do work specifically with our student athletes” to help provide “job shadowing and internships for student athletes. That’s really a high priority for us.”

Interestingly, while some internship programming is done within the athletic program itself, many athletic academic staff rely on specific programs or departments on campus for student athlete internship opportunities. For example, at Institution One, some majors, “like sport management [and] exercise science, is a required piece of your major, so that becomes a part of it. For other majors that don’t require the internship, it is maybe not talked about as much.” Athletic administrators must work directly with academic departments specifically in “building toward more of a centralized location and working with career services to indicate specific

internship opportunities for our student athletes.” Unfortunately, not many NCAA Division I universities offer student-athlete specific internship opportunities. However, Vanderbilt University offers a Student-Athlete Summer Internship Program. Within this program, Vanderbilt Athletics partners with the Office of Investments to provide a finance-based internship where, “student-athletes have the opportunity to assist either our investment or operations teams” (Office of Investments, 2019, para. 1). This program is designed specifically for student-athlete juniors or seniors. Although in the context of internships the method of implementation may vary, it is clear that internships as high impact education practices are being utilized across NCAA Division I institutions; however, not many offer student-athlete specific programming.

Capstone courses and projects. Capstone courses and projects are intended to help students illustrate and integrate what they have learned into a culminating paper or project (Kuh, 2008). There were no mention of capstone courses and projects specifically within student-athlete support services. Based on the results of this study, the use of capstone courses and projects certainly depends on the university being studied and the majors that the student athletes are enrolled in. However, institutions like University of North Dakota, University of Northern Iowa, University of Cincinnati, and Purdue University, have a list of Capstone Courses available on their website (Assessment of Learning, 2018; Capstone Courses, 2019; UND Capstone Courses, 2019; UNI Capstone Courses, 2019). Unfortunately, with capstone courses and projects, it becomes difficult to specifically implement within the student-athlete setting as several outside factors play a role in the overall experience of this HIP. While high impact educational practices play a significant role in overall student outcomes, several opportunities are missing specifically within NCAA Division I athletic programs. Whether administrators work to

bridge the gap in access of on-campus resources for student-athletes or develop student-athlete specific programming, very few high impact educational practices were discussed in the experiences of Institution One and Institution Two student-athletes. While the researcher was able to provide specific examples of high impact educational practices outside of the two institutions using websites, other important factors must be discussed based on the qualitative findings.

The Role of Funding on Overall Resources at Institution One and Institution Two

One of the primary concerns coming into this study was the drastic differences prevalent within student-athlete funding at NCAA Division I universities. Particularly, there are striking differences in athletic spending per athlete based on the institutional type. On average, athletic spending per student was just above \$110,000 compared to just above \$41,000 at the FCS level (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2015). This; however, does not paint the full picture. If full cost of attendance is thrown into the equation, the differences become more drastic. Specifically, the full cost of attendance are \$15,780 and \$13,806 for an FBS and FCS institution, respectively (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2015). The minimal average full cost of attendance differences between these two types of institutions translates into more than double the athletic spending per student at the FBS level relative to the FCS spending. While these figures take into account things like scholarships and media deals, these numbers should be concerning to FCS athletics administrators. What should be of greater concern for both institutional types is the lack of academic spending per full time student relative to the institutional funding for athletics per athlete. At both NCAA Division I institutions, institutional funding for athletics per athlete is approximately double that of academic spending per full time student. FBS institutional funding topped \$27,000 while academic spending was just under

\$16,000. FCS institutional funding reached just over \$29,000 with athletic spending just under \$14,000 (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2015).

While this is the case with both NCAA Division I funding models, this should not degrade the overall importance and financial impact of intercollegiate athletics. In 2017, the NCAA's revenue surpassed one billion dollars for the first time in its over century long existence, largely due to an outstanding \$821 million in revenue from television and marketing deals (Berkowitz, 2018). As revenues within the NCAA continue to grow, there remains opportunity to utilize funding for additional resources, particularly within student-athlete support services. Berry (2015) offers a suggestion that would help slow down the race to spend on athletics by looking at the availability of excess funds for academics. Suggesting setting aside a share of overall NCAA postseason income, including revenue from television and ticket sales, to be used for academic programs and student welfare, Berry (2015) believes that, if the NCAA and conferences are serious about 'student-athlete' and not just athlete, then some of the income from the postseason contests in revenue sports should be allocated to academic programs in the university for all students" (p. 6). Setting aside a portion of income prior to it reaching athletic departments would help to slow this race to spend on athletics and would strengthen academic programs at these universities along with academic success.

After consideration of these differences, ample evidence was provided within the results to help support and illustrate these stark differences and how they affect student-athlete support services. Unfortunately, funding at FCS institutions was found to have an impact on overall resources and staffing available against their FBS counterparts. As illustrated in Chapter Four, significant differences exist regarding academic staff and resources for student-athletes at FBS

and FCS institutions. Recall, Administrator 1 compared personnel at an FBS and FCS institution by indicating:

The majority of the athletics budget goes for personnel and whether that be coaches or support people, it's personnel that are wrapped up in there. So, where an FBS school would have a counselor and we may have that counselor responsible for a single sport or two sports, right? The FCS schools, they may have a couple of counselors that are responsible for all sports, right? And that they're trying to manage the student-athlete experience and trying to help them with their academic advising and everything else, but they're doing it for a larger number of students.

Participants spoke about the adverse effects that an athletic budget can have on the department's student-athlete support services, particularly at Institution Two. Fortunately, for Institution One, a strong support system within the administration, including the athletic director, have expressed their content with continuing to offer a large amount of financial support for student-athlete support services, especially if they continue to see positive outcomes. By considering the budget concerns and finances of all NCAA Division I institution types, Berry's (2015) recommendation to utilize athletic revenues and excess funds to provide supportive academic opportunities for student-athletes is plausible. Furthermore, as the NCAA continues to net record revenues, it is vital to monitor how each NCAA institution is affected by this trend.

As previously discussed in Chapter Four, FCS institutions do not have the budgets to support the use of several student-athlete support services personnel. Past research has indicated the importance of athletic academic staff as an integral part of the student-athlete support system. Specifically, this staff helps fill the void of support systems the student-athletes have left, like their families and friends back home (Huml et al., 2014; Berg & Warner, 2019). By understand

this literature, the issue confronting FCS institutions becomes clearer. Student-athlete academic support staff play a vital role in the overall student athlete experience and must be taken seriously. For administrators, this means being able to provide as many personnel as possible to help support the student-athletes, while also be wary of financial constraints within their athletic department budgets. Recall, in Chapter Four, the unfortunate illustration of “a lot more kids slip[ping] under the radar” due to institutions “not having the budget to support that,” referring to additional personnel. According to Berg and Warner (2019), “healthy social support permits athletes to manage various sources of stress and commit to the requisite amounts of advanced training that are needed to develop and maintain their elite talent” (p. 102). By ridding student-athletes of part of their support system, dire consequences might exist for student-athletes not only in the classroom, but also on the playing field.

While, student-athlete support staff is often seen as a vital part of the student-athlete’s support system, Huml et al. (2017) indicates that the support provided extends far beyond what the general student population has access to and, unfortunately, assists in the creation of a student-athlete bubble or athletic subculture on campus, where student-athletes are dependent on athletic resources (Rubin & Moses, 2017).

Concept of Student-Athlete Bubble

A general theme examined within Chapter Four was the idea of a student-athlete or athletics bubble on campus. Most student athletes interviewed in this study indicated that this concept of the bubble exists on their campus. Rubin and Moses (2017) call this bubble the athletic subculture within student-athlete academic centers. Physical academic centers, in combination with student-athlete support services, are often part of the issue of this separation seen across many Division I campuses (Rubin & Moses, 2017). Not only are student-athletes

often, “separated and often isolated from the rest of campus,” they also are part of their teams, who “have their own unique academic subculture that influences each student-athlete in his or her academic pursuits” (p. 317). Recall in Chapter Four, both student-athletes at Institution One and Two felt that they were part of a bubble on campus, but administrators felt that their student-athletes were siloed as well. Student-athletes indicated convenience and time as reasons for this separation. In order to fully understand this concept, it is important to take into account specific experiences from student-athletes surround this issue. One example from Chapter Four comes to mind, particularly from a student-athlete who did not become a student-athlete until her junior year. Recall the Student-Athlete 17’s experience:

So, I definitely had a group of friends and then when I joined the team, it became hard for me to hang out with my friends who are not in athletics, just because of our schedules and stuff. And then eventually, it was just kind of like, I'm still friends with them, but now I'm closer to my teammates and like other people in athletics because it's easier to work around our schedules together, rather than trying to work around somebody's work schedule and class schedule when we already have the same schedule.

While not all student-athletes get the opportunity to make friends outside of their specific sport of the athletic department, this student-athlete’s experience along with the numerous others help contribute to the idea of a subculture. Rubin and Moses (2017) note that, “student-athletes are immediately introduced to an academic support team once committed to an institution (p.317). Certainly, this creates a connection with the student-athlete support services team; however, it is evidence that this bubble or subculture is part of the initial point of contact for student-athletes. Student-athletes are very rarely, if at all, given the opportunity to interact outside of their athletic responsibilities even from the get-go do to their time commitments. The results surround the

student-athlete bubble help contribute to this literature through personal examples from student-athletes at both NCAA Division I institutions.

Unfortunately, while the contribution of student-athlete academic centers illustrate a positive resource for student-athletes, there are many negative effects associated with the isolation from the general student population. These academic centers, which are often the source of separation from campus into the student-athlete bubble, “are often designed for a very small number of students on campus. In comparison, campus student support centers are understaffed and underfunded while serving the entire student population” (Rubin & Moses, 2017). These student-athlete academic centers still can provide a place for extra support and a quiet area to work all in a convenient one-stop-shop for student athletes. Recall Administrator 1’s confirmation of the student-athlete bubble from Chapter Four:

So, I certainly think that there is this concept of the bubble, and that is probably very true because, you're right that they have access to tutoring, but it's all by where they live and where they work. They have access to food and meals, but it's all in a particular spot, right? So, I do think that that is a reality that exists.

Additionally, “for the most part, athletics is kind of a one-stop-shop. I mean, we have somebody here that helps with the mental health component, we have our own trainers and medical staff, we've talked about career, we have tutoring, we have compliance.” Because its convenience as a one-stop-shop, Rubin and Moses (2017) actually found academic centers to be an area that student athletes prefer to study in away from outside distractions and with access to one-on-one tutoring. While this is the case, the additional time spent in student-athlete specific center, the more it affects the student-athletes’ ability to connect with faculty on-campus or participate in outside organization on-campus (Huml et al., 2014). However, one thing does remain consistent

– the importance of athletic academic staff. Rubin and Moses (2017) illustrate the importance of academic professionals as:

They are in a unique position to assist student-athletes with strengthening their connection to all campus services, including encouraging student-athletes to develop relationships with faculty, staff, student leaders, and the community. This is valuable for retaining and graduating student-athletes (p. 326).

While the student-athlete results helped support the academic subculture associated with student-athlete academic centers, Rubin and Moses's (2017) work also sheds light on the importance of athletics establishing an on-campus relationship with faculty and staff at the university.

Athletics-Campus Relationship

The relationship between athletics academics and the campus administration plays a vital role in helping student-athletes integrate into the campus community. Kuh (2008) illustrates this importance of such a relationship by stating that university faculty are vital in the implementation of high impact educational practices and must endorse the programming intended to create positive outcomes for the students, both athletes and non-athletes. The implementation of student-athlete support programming requires time, energy, and resources in order to provide appropriate activities that will be available to as many students as possible and encourage their overall participation (Kuh, 2008). Kuh (2008) already posited that high-impact educational practices require a significant amount of time and effort, which is further affected by the lack of time available to thousands of students participating in collegiate athletics.

Within the results, administrators mentioned several ways in which they are pushing to promote the athletics-campus relationship. Specifically, recall the faculty athletic representative

speaking on the faculty mentorship opportunities the athletic department is looking to revamp.

Administrator 1 stated:

It used to be faculty mentors that were clustered with sport. So, I wanted to be a mentor for softball, so I do mentor for softball, maybe five other people would be, and we'd go to games, and whatever. But the interaction with student-athletes, it was because I like softball, so I'm interacting with them because they play softball. And so, we kind of reimagine that to be an interaction based on major and interest in their educational goals. And so, we're trying to pair faculty in engineering with student-athletes, who are also in engineering to try and help them and create an opportunity for them to have somebody on campus to come to talk to, that second-friendly face.

Ultimately, the college environment associated with the athletics-campus relationships help lead to positive psychological impacts for the students (Bean & Eaton, 2000), while creating a greater degree of involvement, integration, and engagement across the student body (Astin, 2003). Even if the athletics-campus relationship is not as prevalent at an institution, athletics academic staff must continue to push their students to establish individual campus relationships as well as a key to success (Comeaux et al., 2011; Rubin & Moses, 2017). In this case, the effort to integrate student-athletes on campus is clearly illustrated by several administrators throughout the results. While all student-athletes reported having a major advisor on-campus along with an athletics advisor, administrations must take it a step further to establish impactful programming on-campus that would allow for positive psychological impacts to take place. Part of Kuh's (2008) recommendations for student engagement is through faculty interaction. The aforementioned faculty mentor program certainly has the potential to provide that additional step between the athletics-campus relationship. Furthermore, there are other ways in which this

relationship can extend far beyond just another advisor on campus. Particularly for Administrator 2:

Being on campus and continuing to cultivate those relationships. I mean, for the most part, the guys are taking the leadership studies class, which is the domestic violence prevention courses. We partnered with that group on campus in order to do that. First-year experience, we partnered with campus. So, there's a lot of things that we go to main campus, like anything career-related, Ben's going to the campus career center. So, I think there's a lot of stuff that we know, we don't need to re-create the wheel. They're doing a phenomenal job. The University is putting money into it too. So, it makes sense to utilize it. But then, we just kind of have the opportunity where we have people over here who can help work those odd hours and work around practice time.

This attempts to avoid Kuh's (2008) point on the unsystematic implementation of high impact practices, or in this case, student athlete support services across all campuses. When HIPs are unsystematic, it becomes very difficult to reap the positive outcomes associated with their implementation. Furthermore, Kuh (2008) notes that in order for HIPs to be successful, campus administrators and members of the campus community must understand that a devotion of time and energy, and more importantly, resources to support it are vital in an attempt to increase overall participation of HIPs and the associated programing. Similarly, the commitment from student-athlete support staff is also imperative to the overall positive learning environments and educationally purposeful activities for student-athletes (Comeaux et al., 2011). This also plays a role in the overall relationships that are prevalent between the athletic departments and the campus administration. As illustrated in Chapter Four, administrators consistently understand the importance of creating a more inclusive campus environment, particularly when it comes to

student-athlete integration on campus. While athletics creates a convenient area for student-athletes to devote time, the only campus connection many student-athletes are making is with their academic advisor. Administrators must continue to push programs that take that extra effort to establish campus relationships for their student-athletes as they work towards integration on campus.

College Choice, Decision to Attend and Characteristics of Today's Student

While both the institutions offered similar student athlete support programming, Chapter Four also discussed some of the key differences associated with both institution types. One of those key differences addressed was the role of student-athlete support services on the decision to attend the university. Through data analysis of the semi-structured interviews, it became very clear that there was a significant difference between Institution One and Institution Two student-athletes when it came to the importance of student-athlete support services on their decision to attend their respective universities. This discussion stems from college choice literature that has produced a developmental model regarding the three-phase process of college choice: 1) predisposition, 2) search, 3) choice (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Although this developmental model applies to all students, each student, particularly student-athletes, brings in a unique perspective and represent different factors associated with college choice. For example, past studies have largely determined that academic programs or major were the top priority when it comes to student-athlete college choice; however, other factors exist, including who the head coach is, what academic support services are present, academic reputation, career development opportunities, and sport atmosphere (Kankey & Quaterman, 2007; Letawsky, Palmer, & Schneider, 2005; Pauline, 2012). Recall in Chapter Four, Institution One student athletes were much more concerned about the athletics side of things versus their Institution Two counterparts:

Let's say 10%, it figures in. I think 90% is the coach, the facilities, the gear, are they a Nike school or Adidas school? And I've heard that from recruits. So that's what I'm drawing this upon. In my years of doing this, I'll be honest with you, I had one student say, "I chose this school because of football and academics." So, it's happened. But I'm going to say 10%. 10% and that's being positive.

Institution One participants spoke about the importance of the athletics program in decision to attend, while Institution Two participants noted the importance of the student-athlete support services. This helps illustrate the concept of college choice as a complex phenomenon. A phenomenon that admissions, marketing, and financial aid decision makers should carefully analyze as part of their recruitment activities (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Through the analysis of data, it is clear that intercollegiate athletics recruiters can also be added to that list of decision makers when it comes to college choice.

Interestingly, the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process is also becoming more and more about the parents as well. Administrators at both the institutions studied indicated that whenever they are sharing information on student-athlete support services during the recruitment process, it is primarily directed at the parents. Recall what an Administrator 4 said about the recruitment process:

I think it's more of the parents that are interested. To be honest with you, just in my past years, as we're recruiting, we're talking about programming, we're talking about [ULDP], we're talking about tutoring and learning assistance, and all that stuff, I think it helps our recruiters understand what it's going to look like when they get here, but I think it's to alleviate the anxiety from the parents. Because they're nervous about their son or daughter coming to a school, whether it's half a country away or it's 15 minutes away. It's still the,

"All right. How's Johnny or Suzie going to do well academically?" Like trying to go to practice, go to class and do all that kind of stuff. So, I think our guys, our recruits like it, but I don't think they're as engaged with it as the parents are.

Administrators echoed the same sentiments regarding the recruitment process and parent involvement. Interestingly, this find helps support the characteristics presented about today's college student. In today's Generation Y, there are an abundance of characteristics that apply to today's college student, including student-athletes. Based on the findings regarding parents in Chapter Four, it is clear to see that these results illustrate the idea Gen Y's being support emotionally and financially by "helicopter parents," or parents that pay extremely close attention to their child's experiences (Black, 2010). In this case, the child's experience is the recruitment and college choice processes. Ultimately, if parents play a large role in the child's experiences and decision making, student athlete-support administrators play an even more significant role within the recruitment process in an effort to win over the parents of student athletes. According to Black (2010), Gen Y "helicopter" parents are ones who also have customer expectations of higher education. So not only should administrators and recruiters learn to find the appropriate balance between athletic and non-athletic related college choice factors, but they must also learn to develop recruiting programs for the next generation's "helicopter" parents.

College Access and Student-Athlete APR, GSR, and GPA

Past literature has identified four categories of college access, including financial resources, academic preparation and achievement, support from significant others, and knowledge and information about college and financial aid (Perna & Kurba, 2013).

Unfortunately, intercollegiate athletics have their own issues regarding college access. Although

the perception and visibility of college student-athletes indicates, “the most visible college athletes – the ones running across bar TV screens or in full-color photographs on newspaper sports pages – tend to be black;” however, “the black men in these two sports [college football and basketball] are not the reality of who has access to college sports” (Desai, 2018, para. 3). Knowing this, it is very important and interesting to discuss the institutional profiles of the FBS and FCS university as they relate to college access. Particularly, the college athletics landscape provides an interesting dynamic to study based on demographics. As mentioned previously, white males and females made up 64.5 percent of the total student-athlete population in Division I, II, and III institutions combined (NCAA, 2018). These demographics represent an ever-changing landscape regarding demographics at the NCAA Division I, II, and II levels.

Specifically, it is important to take a look at student-athlete academic reports, including academic progress rate (APR), graduation success rate (GSR) and average GPA. Academic Progress Rate, or APR, helps “hold institutions accountable for the academic progress of their student-athletes through a team-based metric that accounts for the eligibility and retention of each student-athlete for each academic term” (NCAA, 2018, para. 1). Another important factor is the NCAA’s graduation success rate, or GSR. In this specific case, “the GSR takes into account incoming transfers who graduate from a different institution than the one they started at and transfers who leave an institution in good standing” (NCAA, 2018, para. 2). Ultimately, by understanding what these numbers mean, the institutions are able to be explored further. Interestingly, Institution One student athletes had a lower Academic Progress Rate, Graduation Success Rate, and average GPA as compared to their Institution Two counterparts. Despite all this, the results presented in Chapter Four clearly illustrate that Institution One student-athletes

have more resources; yet, they don't affect their decision to attend as much as they would an Institution Two student-athlete.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

The continued success of the NCAA in terms of revenue will continue to put a spotlight on the intercollegiate athletics relationship with higher education. Specifically, there exists a significant gap in the amount of financial resources available across NCAA Division I institutions. The purpose of this study was to examine current student-athlete support services educational programs at two NCAA Division I institutions. The researcher considered the overall student-athlete experience by identifying which programs are available to student-athlete, whether or not they are participating in these programs, and how these programs apply to high impact educational practices. It is clear that just within a single division, overall athletic spending and funding can drastically vary across institutions. This overall discrepancy helped establish a cause for concern in the overall inconsistencies in resources and educational programming received by NCAA Division I student-athletes depending on the institution they attend.

The results presented are likely of importance to college administrators interested in understanding how to develop meaningful student-athlete support services, while supporting student-athlete interests and constraints. For example, administrators can learn to establish programming for their students on campus and create a comfortable climate and connection between athletics student-athlete support services and on-campus resources while striving for positive outcomes in academic progress rates (APR), graduation success rates (GSR), and grade point averages (GPA). Furthermore, the results indicated the importance of "helicopter" parents and their role within Generation Y. Administrators can work to develop programming and recruitment efforts focused on parents as well as they likely play a customer in the higher

education marketplace. In addition to these implications, administrators must continue to push programs that take that extra effort to establish campus relationships for their student-athletes as they work towards integration on campus. For example, administrators, both in athletics and on campus, can learn to establish relationships for their students on campus and create a comfortable climate and connection between athletics academics and on-campus resources. The results presented show very little integration across athletics and on-campus. Likely, student-athletes' only connection or relationship with anyone on campus is their major-specific academic advisor. Addressing this issue will help "pop" the student-athlete/athletics bubble existing on the campuses that were studied. Furthermore, academic staff can identify opportunities to work with the coaches in order to shape an understanding for their students on the opportunities available and how to make them plausible around their schedules.

Whereas this research provided an illustration of the differences in student-athlete support services across NCAA Division I, it is vital to continue this research in a direction that continues to benefit student-athletes, administrators, coaches, and parents in the academic setting. Moving forward, it will be important to compare NSSE data of student-athletes vs. non-student-athletes in order to identify if these high-impact educational practices are as effective for student-athletes. By understanding the data between student-athlete and non-student-athletes, future research can help identify whether student-athlete specific high impact educational practices can be created. Similarly, research has noted the benefits of being a student-athlete and participating in sports; however, can being a student-athlete be classified as a high impact practice in itself using standards set by Kuh's (2008) research.

Limitations

While this study presents insight on student athlete support services within two NCAA Division I institutions, it is not without limitations. Although important information was provided through the use of athletics academic administrators and student athletes, the data did not include insight from coaches, a key part of overall student-athlete support services. Particularly, coaches were mentioned several times throughout the data analysis process; therefore, would be able to provide an important perspective on their role in student-athlete support services. Although the student-athlete environment is important across all NCAA Division levels, the researcher utilized only two NCAA Division institutions. Furthermore, considering the qualitative nature of the study and its application in the NCAA Division I, the data results cannot be generalized across division levels. Each institution is likely to present unique characteristics, while students' outcomes also vary in their environment present at each institution (Astin, 1993).

Ultimately, to further the understanding of the topic and to build on the current implications of the study, it will be essential to bring in additional insight through multiple institutions across NCAA Division I and beyond. Furthermore, considering the qualitative nature of the study and its application in the NCAA Division I, the data results cannot be generalized across division levels, or even institutions.

Additionally, not all student athletes interviewed were aware of what student-athlete support services were available or did not participate in any. Some participants were much more knowledgeable in the subject area than others, which can result in more limited data from some participants over others. Similarly, the data could be limited based on the geographic location of the institutions utilized within this study, especially considering only two universities were used.

While one Midwestern and one Western institution participated in the study, participation was limited in other areas of the country and to only these two institutions. Unfortunately, the researcher is unable to tell if any differences would have resulted with a more diverse institution base.

The study focused on student-athlete support services at each institution; however, it is likely that not all of the support services available at each institution were discussed. Lastly, the presence of an outside researcher when talking about academics in collegiate athletic departments could have limited the amount of information shared due to fear of losing a job or saying something that would damage the athletic department. This could particularly be the case in response to specific athletic academic scandals seen throughout the media.

Conclusion

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative exploratory analysis of student-athlete support services at two NCAA Division I institutions was conducted. Through analysis of semi-structured interviews of student-athlete support services administrators and student-athletes, several applicable findings were discovered. As detailed in the findings and through the connection with previously literature, it is clear that even within the Division I level, student-athlete support services differ. Particularly of importance is the significant differences in available staff across different NCAA Division I institutions as well as the presence of a student-athlete bubble on the respective campuses.

While this study helps fill a gap in literature regarding the differences in available support services for student athletes, past research has attempted to describe the relationship between intercollegiate athletics, student-athletes and higher education. As each institution likely possesses unique characteristics in terms of their environment, but also within their student-

athlete population, institutions must continue to strive to integrate their student body's as one. Past literature has clearly illustrated the importance of college access, college choice, the college environment, and educationally purposeful activities; however, there still remains a discrepancy in the experiences of student-athletes versus their non-athlete peers. By helping illustrate, first, the financial gap between NCAA Division I institutions and, next, the student-athlete support services differences, institutions must strive to assist athletes within the student development process with the resources available to them. As intercollegiate athletics programs and their institutions work to balance the image of hefty coaching contracts with the elimination of student support services and resources, students, whether athlete or not, must remain at the forefront.

In closing, based on the results and the discussion of these results, it is recommended that intercollegiate athletics departments and the institutions they represent work together to develop immersive and integrative programming available to a diverse group of students in an effort to connect the student-athletes with their non-athlete peers. There was a strong emphasis placed on the structure of student-athlete support services and how they can improve to cater to their student-athletes, while also working to integrate better on college campuses. Throughout the study, an introduction of the issue was outlined. Relevant literature was discussed connecting higher education within the student-athlete experience. Results were then formulated and illustrated using representative quotes and connected to the literature via the discussion. Finally, several practical implications and direction for future research was provided in hopes of continuing to study the connection between higher education and the student-athlete experience.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 3: High-impact Educational Practices and Descriptions*(Kuh, 2008, p. 9-11), as excerpted below:*

High-impact Educational Practice	Description
<i>First-year seminars and experiences</i>	<p>Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research (Kuh, 2008, p. 9).</p>
<i>Common intellectual experiences</i>	<p>The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students (Kuh, 2008, p. 9)</p>

Learning communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link “liberal arts” and “professional courses”; others feature service learning (Kuh, 2008, p. 10).

Writing-intensive courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry (Kuh, 2008, p. 10).

Collaborative assignments and projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research (Kuh, 2008, p. 10).

Undergraduate research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students’ early and active

involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions (Kuh, 2008, p. 10).

Diversity/global learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address US diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad (Kuh, 2008, p. 10).

Service learning, community-based learning

In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life (Kuh, 2008, p. 11).

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member (Kuh, 2008, p. 11).

Capstone courses and projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well (Kuh, 2008, p. 11).

Appendix B

Sample Email to Participants

Hello,

My name is Farah Ishaq and I am a 3rd year doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas in the Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Sciences. I received your contact information from your institution's athletic staff directory.

I am conducting my dissertation about examining current student-athlete support services educational programs at Division I FBS level and Division I FCS level institutions and how they fit within higher education high impact practices. Furthermore, I will compare how the educational programming differs between these two types of institutions. I will strive to consider the overall student-athlete experience by identifying which programs the student-athletes participate in at the select institutions and what personal benefit they see from participation. Overall, high-impacts practices have been widely tested and have contributed to positive outcomes for students of a variety of backgrounds. Moreover, the implementation of such active learning practices has allowed institutions to assess practices that contribute to student cumulative learning (Kuh, 2008).

In an effort to accomplish the purpose of this dissertation, I am looking to interview 10-15 student-athletes, 5 administrators, and 1-2 faculty athletic representatives from your FBS institution. This dissertation will be approved by the University of Kansas's Institutional Review Board.

Your participation is expected to take about 30 minutes at most and will be recorded on an audio device. This interview can occur in-person, over Skype, or via telecommunication. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. You are under no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your participation at any time. Your participation in this study would greatly help my graduate studies as well as contribute to our understanding the academic environment of student-athletes. I truly hope that you are willing to participate in the study and I look forward to hearing from you. If you need any additional information about the dissertation, please do not hesitate to reach out at my contact information below.

Sincerely,

Farah J. Ishaq

Email:

farah.ishaq@ku.edu

Appendix C

Interview Guide - Administrators

Educational Programming

- What are your job responsibilities as an administrator? What role do you play with the athletes?
- What current educational programming is being utilized within student-athlete support services? Explain these programs.
- What programming do most student-athletes participate in and how are they drawn towards these programs?
- How are these programs promoted in the student-athlete academic settings? How does athletics help with this?
- What do you believe the benefits of these educational programs are for the student-athletes?

Resources/Funding

- How do you think athletics resources and funding play a role in the implementation of educational programming for student-athletes?
- How do you think your educational programming differs from an FBS/FCS school based on overall budget?
- If resources were not an issue, what type of educational programming do you think would be most important for the athletic department to implement for their student-athletes?

Interview Guide – Faculty Athletic Representatives

Read quote and ask questions:

According to Kuh (2008), what faculty think and value what faculty think and value does not necessarily impel students to take part in high-impact activities or engage in other educationally purposeful practices. Rather, when large numbers of faculty and staff at an institution endorse the worth of an activity, members of the campus community are more likely to agree to devote their own time and energy to it, as well as provide other resources to support it—all of which increases the likelihood that the activities will be available to large numbers of students and that the campus culture will encourage student participation in the activities.

Role as FAR

- What are your job responsibilities as faculty athletic representative? What role do you play with the athletes?
- As a faculty member involved in both athletic and non-athletic affairs on campus, how can you utilize such an approach in your role?
- How do you play a role in the overall relationship between athletics and campus administration?

Student-athlete Experience

- As a FAR how can/do you use your position to help enhance the overall student-athlete experience educationally?
- Does higher education theory, including the use of high impact educational practices, drive your decision making in the student-athlete academic setting?

Resources/Educational Programming

- What differences, if any, do you see regarding programming available to student-athletes compared to programming run on-campus?
- What role do financial resources play in your position dealing with both athletic and on-campus administrators?

Interview Guide – Student-athletes

Program Participation

- As a student-athlete, when you are not practicing or participating in your sport specifically, what are you involved in?
- Are you involved in any clubs, activities, or meetings on campus? Within the athletic department?
- Within the athletic department, what were you required to attend any meetings or programs as a student-athlete?
- How did you hear about these programs? What made you attend or participate in these programs? If you did not, what would make you want to attend?
- Who are you in most contact with within athletic administration? Coach? Academic advisor? Etc? How easily accessible are you academic advisors?

Opportunities and Experiences

- What was your experience like with these programs? What did you learn or talk about?
- As a student-athlete, why do you think some of these activities should or shouldn't be required for student-athletes?
- As a student-athlete, what type of programs/opportunities do you think can be changed or added in order to increase student-athlete participation and benefit?
- How do you think these programs affect your overall experience as a student-athlete? What impact, positive or negative, have these programs had on you? What is the personal benefit to being involved?
- As a student-athlete, did any of the activities or opportunities outside of your sport specifically play any role in your decision to attend your university?
- As a student-athlete, why do you think some of these activities should or shouldn't be required for student-athletes?
- As a student-athlete, what are some of the barriers to participating in additional programming outside your sport? Things like study abroad?
- What programs do you recommend being implemented for student-athletes? What would you add or remove?

- Are all your resources available to you through athletics or do you have to use outside resources?
- How much emphasis was placed on academics at your institution?
- Is there a student-athlete/athletics “bubble” represented at your institution and, if so, how does your administration attempt to minimize this?

Appendix D

IRB Approval

Date: August 24, 2018
 TO: Farah Ishaq, (farah.ishaq@ku.edu)
 FROM: Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP, IRB Administrator (785-864-7385, irb@ku.edu)
 RE: **Approval of Initial Study**

The IRB reviewed the submission referenced below on 8/24/2018. The IRB approved the protocol, effective 8/24/2018.

IRB Action: APPROVED	Effective date: 8/24/2018	Expiration Date : 8/23/2023
STUDY DETAILS		
Investigator:	Farah Ishaq	
IRB ID:	STUDY00142931	
Title of Study:	Examining the use of student-athlete support services at Division I FBS and FCS institutions	
Funding ID:	None	
REVIEW INFORMATION		
Review Type:	Initial Study	
Review Date:	8/24/2018	
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB Interview Questions_Farah Ishaq - FBS vs FCS.docx, • IRB Protocol Farah Ishaq - FBS vs FCS.pdf, • Updated Oral Consent Form IRB_Farah Ishaq_FBS vsFCS, • Updated Recruitment Email IRB_Farah Ishaq_FBS vs FCS 	
Exemption Determination:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation 	
Additional Information:		

KEY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES. Consult our website for additional information.

1. **Approved Consent Form:** You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the “Documents” tab, “Final” column, in eCompliance. Participants must be given a copy of the form.
2. **Continuing Review and Study Closure:** Continuing Review is not required for this study. Please [close your study](#) at completion.
3. **Modifications:** Modifications to the study may affect Exempt status and must be submitted for review and approval before implementing changes. For more information on the types of modifications that require IRB review and approval, [visit our website](#).
4. **Add Study Team Member:** [Complete a study team modification](#) if you need to add investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take [the online tutorial](#) prior to being approved to work on the project.
5. **Data Security:** [University data security and handling requirements](#) apply to your project.
6. **Submit a Report of New Information (RNI):** If a subject is injured in the course of the research procedure or there is a breach of participant information, an RNI must be submitted immediately. Potential non-compliance may also be reported through the RNI process.
7. **Consent Records:** When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.
8. **Study Records** must be kept a minimum of three years after the completion of the research. Funding agencies may have retention requirements that exceed three years.

Appendix E

Informed Consent

As a graduate student in the University of Kansas's Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Science, I am conducting a research project to examine current student-athlete support services educational programs at Division I FBS level and Division I FCS level institutions and how they fit within higher education high impact practices. Furthermore, I will compare how the educational programming differs between these two types of institutions. I will strive also to consider the overall student-athlete experience by identifying which programs the student-athletes participate in at the select institutions and what personal benefit they see from participation. I would like you to participate in an interview to obtain your perception on this topic. Your participation is expected to take about 30 minutes at most. The study will involve audio recording that is part of the research procedure. The use of this audio recording is required to participate in the study; however, you are under no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your participation at any time. If you discontinue participation, your responses will not be utilized.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of the student-athlete academic environment. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

The interviews will be recorded and will be kept on a password protected computer. The researchers will be the only ones who have access to this information and will be the ones transcribing the audio files. The transcriptions will also be kept on the same password protected computer. After the study has been completed and recordings transcribed, the data will be destroyed. The authors will utilize pseudonyms for specific personal identifying information. Because of these identifiers, the interview recordings and physical transcriptions will be kept on a password locked computer until deleted. The computer type is a 2017 MacBook Pro running on the newest system update MacOS Sierra Version 10.12.6. The MacBook Pro is password protected.

Participation in this interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jordan Bass (jrbass@ku.edu) in the Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Science or myself (Farah Ishaq; farah.ishaq@ku.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or email irb@ku.edu.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Farah Jiries Ishaq was born and raised in Glenview, Illinois. He graduated from Glenbrook South High School in 2010 prior to attending Iowa State University. In 2013, Farah completed his Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management. After working in a supervisory role with Marriott International, Farah decided to pursue a master's degree. In June 2016, Farah was awarded a Master of Art in Sport Administration from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. After completing work with Disney Sports and the United States Olympic Committee, Farah pursued his Ph.D. in Physical Education (Sport Management specialization) from the University of Kansas. In May 2019, Farah received his Doctor of Philosophy from KU and is currently employed as an Assistant Professor of Sport Management at the State University of New York College at Cortland.