EXPLORATION OF FACTORS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL IDENTITY IN COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES

BY

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to understand the vocational consequences and benefits of being a student-athlete in a large university and competitive level of sport, and how these contribute to the development of a student-athlete's vocational identity. A mass email was sent to the entire student-athlete population at a Division I university asking potential participants to reply to the email if they were interested in doing a one-time, one-hour interview on their career development process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the university campus with 14 student-athletes. The participants as a group were diverse, including eight females and six males, a variety of class years (freshman to graduate student), and representing eight different sports. With participant consent, each interview was audio recorded. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using an open coding process by multiple independent raters. A grounded theory approach was used as a guiding research framework for the data analysis process. Results were organized in terms of five research questions posed in the study. The overall factors that influence student-athlete vocational identity were as follows: (a) occupational engagement prior to college, (b) parental influence, (c) personality characteristics, (d) variety of social groups, (e) the academic environment, (f) coaches' attitudes regarding academics, (g) tailored career resources and services, and (h) understanding of NCAA and University regulations. Additionally, the developmental crisis concept of vocational action versus vocational delay was devised and discussed as a significant pattern in the data. Limitations of the current study are discussed, and directions for future research are provided.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Student-athletes are a unique population on a university campus. They are often distinct leaders on campus and can become a type of celebrity, especially at NCAA Division I schools. They earn not only the respect of their classmates but of the community and state. Often, student-athletes at these universities are given extra help and assistance by assistant coaches and other athletic department staff with tasks the typical student would do for him or herself, such as buying textbooks or registering for classes. Like some celebrities, student athletes often experience a lack of privacy and are socially isolated from the general student population. Some professors may not be as favorable towards athletes, giving them a more difficult time to complete the class with a suitable grade.

The schedule of a student-athlete often can run non-stop from 6:00 in the morning until 9:00 or 10:00 at night. Trying to fit in practices, trainings, meetings, and competition events between classes and study time can be incredibly difficult, and the life of a NCAA Division I student-athlete often requires a greater time commitment than a full-time job during the athletic season.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has conducted numerous surveys with NCAA student-athletes, with the most notable being the GOALS study (Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Learning of Students in College). The GOALS study was conducted in 2006 and 2010 with approximately 20,000 current student-athletes. The study examined areas of (a) recruitment and college choice, (b) ethical leadership issues, and (c) student-athlete time demands. The GOALS (2010) survey found that student-athletes can spend

more than 30 hours per week preparing for and attending competition events, even though the formal rule set by the NCAA is a maximum 20 hours per week of required attendance at competitions and training (Regulation 17.1.6.1, NCAA, August 2011). These findings were similar to the 2006 GOALS study. When student-athletes are dedicating so much of their time to their athletic role and being reinforced for it, it can be the case that student-athletes may be more neglectful of their role as "student," as well as their opportunities to explore potential career paths and the development of their individual identity. This may result in student-athletes, especially those in revenue sports, believing that they will "go pro" only to experience a deep sense of grief when their athletic career ends. Some researchers have found that since their identity had not been developed fully during their late high school and college years, these athletes tend to identify more with the "athlete role" in contrast to the "student role," and to have difficulty in life after sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Killeya-Jones, 2005).

Student-athletes can find themselves in a unique psychological situation due to the multiple roles they hold. For most university students, the "student role" is their priority, although they may also have a "social" role on campus that involves friendships and other social activities. When students hold a small part time job, it is likely to be a minimal role of providing income or social relationships, not because it is their career aspiration. In contrast, student-athletes have to be fully invested in their roles as both a student and an athlete. Since being a student-athlete can involve scholarship support, if these students do not do well in their classes, they risk not only suspension from athletics participation, but sometimes because of their loss of funding, their college education as well.

Due to high level of competition at the NCAA Division I level and the fact that coaching jobs are typically dependent on having a winning team, academics can often take a back seat to the athletic role for many student-athletes. In this regard, Adler and Adler (1987) found that student-athletes reported that many coaches gave mixed signals regarding the importance of academics, especially later in the season when winning became more important to the coach.

The amount of time spent in the "athlete" role may also be an issue in keeping both roles in balance with each another. The 2010 NCAA GOALS survey of 21,000 student-athletes found that the majority of student-athletes were spending more than the formal guideline of 20 hours per week on sport related activity (NCAA, 2011, August). Football players topped the list with an estimated 43.3 hours spent on athletic activities, followed by baseball at 42.1 hours, and men's basketball at 39.2 hours (NCAA, 2010). Other sports were found to range from 32 to 33 hours per week for both men and women. Brown, Glastetter-Fender, and Sheldon (2000) had similar findings about the time commitments of student-athletes from their earlier study. Although the NCAA has limited participation in athletically related activities to a 20-hours per week since 1991 (NCAA, 2011, August), many athletes and staff report this is a difficult violation to detect (NCAA, 2006; Pope, 2009, September 3). This imbalance of time allotted to their athletic role may lead to difficulties in student-athletes' transitioning to other roles.

Research has shown that an imbalance between the student role and the athletic role can lead to serious consequences for future psychological adjustment. In the 2006 NCAA GOALS survey, 70% of respondents considered themselves more of an athlete than a student. It seems plausible that when student-athletes do not do well in classes but they are doing well at their sport, they might decide to neglect academics in favor of athletics. Adler and Adler (1987) refer to this as "role distancing," and they found this occurring with many of the student-athletes they

interviewed. In turn, Killeya-Jones's (2005) found that student-athletes who had greater discrepancies between their role as a student and their role as an athlete were more associated with having negative psychological adjustment. She referred to this as "identity discrepancy" and defined it as "the degree to which the student and athlete roles were dissimilar in affective, descriptive, and evaluative attributes used by the individual to assign meaning to them" (p. 177)--that is, the degree to which student-athletes can resolve conflict between the two roles. Identity discrepancy is related to "role distancing" in that identity discrepancy can force a significant amount of distance between the two roles if there is a significant conflict between roles, and it can force a compartmentalization of roles. Killeya-Jones (2005) suggested that discrepancies between roles can increase negative psychological adjustment and may include symptoms such as depressed mood, high anxiety, low self-esteem, and low levels of life satisfaction. She suggested that for ideal psychological adjustment and well being, roles must converge as one, rather than remaining separate. Related to this, Blinde and Stratta (1992) found that athletes who left their sport suddenly and unexpectedly (usually due to a career-ending injury) and college athletes who identified more with the sport role than the student role had a more difficult time psychologically exiting the athletic role.

Matzeder and Krieshok (1995) have suggested that "the importance of a role is determined by commitment to the role, which includes attitudes and emotions, participation in the role, and the knowledge about the role" (p. 333). They refer to this as "role salience" and suggest that an important issue in career development is "how individuals integrate the various life roles" (p. 333). Many studies that have examined student-athletes' vocational identity development through college have found significant imbalances and separation between the "student" and "athlete" roles. For example, Killeya-Jones (2005) found that those student-

athletes who are more invested in their role as athlete than as student have a harder time transitioning from college to the world of work, and that student-athletes who are far more reinforced for their role as "athlete" than as a "student" are especially prone to this phenomenon. It is suspected that student-athletes in revenue sports and student-athletes that are male are at a higher risk of lacking career decision-making self-efficacy and of having lower levels of occupational engagement (Kennedy & Dimick, 1987).

Occupational engagement is activity that provides individuals with the opportunity to explore and learn more about careers and career-based skills, and has been shown to assist with effective career decision-making (Krieshok, Black, & McKay, 2009). Furthermore, career decision-making self-efficacy, originally devised by Betz and Luzzo (1996) from Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977), is an individual's ability to make effective decisions related to careers. Both of these concepts play a significant role in the development of vocational identity. However, with a student-athlete's limited time schedule, it may be difficult for a student-athlete to make time for occupational engagement and build a sense of career decision-making self-efficacy.

Vocational Identity: What is it?

For purposes of this study, "vocational identity" was defined as an individual's level of commitment to a particular career field or occupation, based on previous occupational engagement and a combination of rational and intuitive thought processes on career interests, goals and talents. Research on this concept has suggested that vocational identity is linked to clear and stable career goals, interests, personality and talents (Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980), job satisfaction (Carson & Mowsesian, 1993; Holland & Gottfredson, 1994), career exploratory behaviors (Gushue et al., 2006), and college major choice (Leung, 1998). Although participants

in this study may have not fully reached a sense of complete vocational identity, the purpose of the study was to examine its development. This was examined through participants' unique experiences and self-knowledge.

Other factors that contribute to vocational identity development were also examined, including role salience and levels of occupational engagement, as these issues are particularly unique for the collegiate student-athlete population.

Relevance of the Current Study

The impetus for the current study comes from a call by leaders in the field of sport psychology to further examine the issues surrounding vocational identity development with student-athletes. For example, Adler and Adler's (1987) qualitative study with collegiate student-athletes reported that as a result of the multiple factors that lead to lower grades and less chance of graduating in student-athletes, "in-depth, ethnographic investigation" is needed in these areas (p. 443). Brown, Glastetter-Fender and Shelton (2000) also expressed the need for qualitative research after assessing student-athletes on career decision-making processes with "paper-and-pencil assessments," stating that these types of measures "may restrict a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional and complex aspects of the career- and identity-development processes" (p. 60). Furthermore, Brown and Hartley (1998) stated that understanding the interaction between an athlete's dual role identities and other factors, such as the expected probability of becoming a professional athlete, could lead to a better understanding of identity development. Therefore, they suggest that an investigation of student-athletes' commitment to their differing roles could address questions regarding the effects of athletes' transitioning adjustment to life outside of sport, including the workforce.

Martens and Cox (2000) posed that the amount of research regarding the experience of college for student-athletes is "sparse" (p.172) and that the examination of career athletes' career

development over the course of their college careers could yield "significant and practical results" (p.179) for the field. Finally, Hinkle's (1994) review of counseling and developmental programming for student-athletes suggested that more research in athletic self-concept, adjustment difficulties, developmental barriers, self-efficacy beliefs of athletes, and career life planning for athletes would assist with the development of career interventions and programming for athletes.

It would seem that research on this unique group of individuals could help to better serve the Division I student-athlete population by understanding the process of vocational identity development, and help to advise university staff members how to assist student-athletes with career interventions and programming.

Purpose and Research Questions

With these ideas in mind, the goal of this study was to examine the development of vocational identity of the NCAA Division I student-athlete population. The study sought to understand what happens for student-athletes developmentally in terms of their career exploration, and what the process of vocational identity formation is like for them. What are their personal motivations for and against participation in career-based activities and using resources to learn more about occupations? A final goal was to understand how the opposing roles of "student" and "athlete" effect vocational identity development of student-athletes at the NCAA Division I level.

The overarching purpose of this study was to understand the process of vocational identity development for a typical NCAA Division I student-athlete. Because this question was quite broad, five questions were devised to help clarify the aspects of vocational identity

development on which the study would be focused and to provide structure for the study. These questions were the following:

1. What kinds of resources do they feel are available to them, and how do they choose or not choose to use them? More specifically, what resources are student-athletes taking advantage of for their vocational development provided by the athletic department, the university or another source?
2. How have their experiences over the years brought change to how they feel about their future career path?
3. What kinds of obstacles keep student-athletes from being in their optimal path for career exploration?
4. What influences do student-athletes perceive as affecting the development of their vocational identity?
5. How do student-athletes perceive their career development in accordance to their athletic identity? What transferable skills do they perceive from their experiences in athletics?

Grounded Theory Approach

Because this research question sought to address the general question of how the process vocational identity development happens for student-athletes, a qualitative/phenomenological approach was deemed most appropriate for this study. This approach has been cited by researchers as having value for this particular area of study (Adler & Adler, 1987; Brown, Glastetter-Fender and Shelton, 2000).

The study used grounded theory techniques to analyze the data. A grounded theory approach takes an inductive approach to the study of phenomena. Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory operates in a fashion almost opposite to traditional

research in that a theoretical framework is derived from the findings, instead of using a theoretical framework to guide the study. Hence, grounded theory derives its name from its process. First, the data are coded with key points, and then codes are grouped into similar concepts to make them more conceptually and more manageable numerically. From these concepts, categories are formed that create the foundation for a theory (or hypotheses about patterns in the data). In this way, a theory is built "from the ground up"—hence the name "grounded theory."

Due to the inductive nature of qualitative research, hypotheses that are made in grounded theory are likely to be general, as one creates a theory from the findings, rather than working from theory that already exists. The goal of grounded theory is to not find the "truth" but to focus on conceptualizing what is going on using empirical data. In the present study, this approach seemed especially relevant as the guiding research question focused on the *process* of vocational identity development in student-athletes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature covers several areas of research in order to provide a sense of the relevant factors the shape student-athlete vocational identity. One portion relates specifically to student-athletes and aspects of career development; another examines developmental aspects and identity issues related to student-athletes and college students that may affect vocational identity development; and the final sections reviews relevant vocational theories as they relate to the research questions posed in Chapter I.

Career Development and the Student-Athlete

A concern frequently discussed in the literature is student-athletes' lack of time for occupational engagement—that is, involvement in activities related to their own career planning and development (Martens & Cox, 2000). As a consequence, many student-athletes rather naively consider moving to the professional level of their sport as a career option, rather than following the traditional, non-athletic path of their non-student-athlete counterparts. Although this may be feasible for some, for the majority of student-athletes, professional and elite participation in a sport is not a realistic career goal. The NCAA (2004, August) reported the probability of moving from the college to the professional level as 1.3 % for men's basketball, 1.0 % for women's basketball, 2.0 % for football, 10.5 % for baseball, 4.1 % for men's ice hockey, and 1.9 % for men's soccer. Researchers have found, however, that regardless of these statistics, many student-athletes believe they will "go pro." (Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; NCAA, 2006).

Professional Athletics Career Expectations

Kennedy and Dimick (1987) found that of surveyed revenue sport athletes (football and men's basketball), 48 % expected to move on to the professional level. In addition, these expectations were higher among African-Americans than Caucasians, with 66 % to 39 % respectively believing that they would have a career in professional athletics. In the NCAA (2006) SCORE (Study of College Outcomes and Recent Experiences) survey (which consisted of over 7,000 student-athletes from a range of sports and division levels), participants were asked about their professional athletics aspirations. Researchers found that student-athletes who had already graduated college were significantly less likely to report having professional athletics career aspirations than those who were still attending college. Among those participating, women entering college were significantly less likely than men to report a desire to pursue a professional athletics career (26.2 % for female student-athletes, 55.4% for male student-athletes). One is left wondering how professional athletics aspirations begin and how they change over time.

Dreams of a career in professional sports do not happen overnight, and many times they begin in high school. In this regard, Kennedy and Dimick (1987) suggest that deficiencies in career development can happen in early adolescence and that interventions for student-athletes should happen earlier than the collegiate level—especially as many student-athletes have been playing a particular sport most of their lives, and for them the typical process of career exploration and identity development may not have taken place.

Building a student-athlete's career decision-making self-efficacy is one possible intervention. Self-efficacy, a concept developed by Albert Bandura (1977), is a individual's belief in oneself that she or he can successfully complete a task. According to Bandura's theory (1977), individuals low in self-efficacy tend avoid behaviors related to a specific domain whereas those high in self-efficacy in a particular domain will be more likely to engage in

domain-related behaviors. One might then hypothesize that individuals with little experience decision-making (and thus low decision-making self-efficacy) would avoid activities that would require them to do so.

This concept has been applied to theories and research in *career* decision-making. In studies involving career decision-making self-efficacy (Taylor & Betz, 1983), Brown et al. (2000) found that student-athletes who spent more time in the athlete role than in the student role had lower levels of career decision-making self-efficacy. Luzzo (1993) has also found a link between this concept and career decision-making attitudes, which he defined as the feelings and reactions of an individual about his or her career development process.

In addition to decision-making experience, another factor in the development of self-efficacy is *autonomy*. The experience of the transition to college can be a difficult time for many, as it involves leaving home for the first time and being on one's own. Although most college students learn how a university functions and how to be a college student, college student-athletes often are not afforded this same path. Adler and Adler's (1987) qualitative study of student-athletes found a significant lack of autonomy development resulting from the rigid scheduling and the over-involvement of coaching staff (e.g., assistant coaches buying textbooks for students, adding or dropping courses for them, contacting professors about their performances in class work). Many student-athletes also reported they could not pick certain majors due to practice schedules and other commitments to their sport. Parker's (1994) interviews with former college football players also examined the practice of coaches and athletic departments making the majority of decisions for students athletes based on "politics," By "politics" he meant how the power within the athletic organization is executed on a day-to-day basis, in much the same way that "politics" is a part of most work environments. Many of his

participants expressed frustration with the lack of power and control over their lives both in athletics as well as in academics. In another study, Kimball (2007) conducted interviews with student-athletes regarding their levels of autonomy, and found that student-athletes who were given the opportunity to explore their own interests and values and to build a sense of identity were able to make better decisions for themselves and had a greater sense of autonomy. Kimball reported that although many of her participants reported constraints on their autonomy due to their participation in athletics, few reported an entirely negative experience in athletics. In fact, many participants talked about the fact that they "signed the line" (p. 819) and that they accepted the limitations that come with participation in collegiate athletics. The 2006 NCAA GOALS study (NCAA, 2006) reported that a large majority of student-athletes expressed regret about missed educational opportunities due to participation in athletics, and made it clear there is a cost to participating in athletics. This may include a cost to career and identity development, however, this is area was not specifically assessed. Related to this finding, Brown and Hartley (1998) suggested that freshman should have limited participation in athletics in order to learn how to be a student first since the transition to college can be difficult and new in itself.

Psychosocial Development and Vocational Decision-Making

Ego-identity status, a concept first developed by Marcia (1966), is a psychosocial concept used to explain an individual's commitment to something, usually an occupation or a belief system. A status involves the level of commitment (high or low) to the occupation or belief, and the experience or non-experience of a "crisis" relative to that commitment. A "crisis" refers to the experience and knowledge needed to make a commitment. *Identity achievement* is the presence of both a commitment and the experience of a crisis. *Identity diffusion* occurs when there is no commitment, nor the experience of a crisis. *Identity moratorium* is the status of

individuals who have experienced a crisis but have no commitment. And *identity foreclosure* is when an individual makes a commitment but has not experienced a crisis. Identity foreclosure is the status many researchers believe student-athletes are likely to find themselves, since there is little time to be in a "crisis" mode before making a decision on a career path (Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000; Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

Blustein (1994) examined the role of ego-identity status through contextual means. He proposed that ego-status identities are integrated from two components: (a) the immediate context, which relies on the role of relationships in the development of identity, and (b) the broader context, which focuses on the role of social and environmental factors in identity development. Blustein explained that in the immediate context, identity exploration and commitment are most likely to occur within a family that has a secure attachment between the parent and adolescent, but that allows for adolescent individualization. This idea of connectedness and autonomy also plays a role in career decision-making. Beyond these ingredients, individuals can benefit from *mirroring*–the notion of having parents affirm, recognize, and accept their needs, which in turn encourages the development of talents and accomplishments and builds self-esteem and mastery experiences.

While addressing the broader context, Blustein (1994) discusses the idea of the "embedded identity." Embedded identity is composed of four sets of characteristics: self-knowledge, degree of commitment, familial factors, and sociocultural factors. *Self-knowledge* refers to one's core beliefs, values, and perceived attributes--most of which tend to be used in many career and occupational assessments. The *degree of commitment* is "the extent to which one has internalized the various content aspects of one's identity" (p. 147). *Familial factors* are the opportunities that influence how identity is developed by others. Receiving mirroring from

parents or receiving emotional support from a significant other are some examples of familial factors. Finally, *sociocultural factors* refer to the influences of one's culture that are inherent to one's identity, the degree to which one has membership in a particular culture, and one's opportunities for self-expression within culture.

Researchers have found that those who rely on others to make their decisions often fail to create and shape their own identity. Blustein, Devenis, and Kidney (1989) found that career exploration and occupational engagement provide opportunities for students to learn more about themselves and further develop their identity. In Ihle-Helledy's (2003) interviews with student-athletes, participants reported a simple benefit of being asked questions about their career development process--forcing them to think about themselves more deeply. Kimball (2007) reported similar findings in her interviews with student-athletes. She found when student-athletes were encouraged to make decisions for themselves, they would reflect on who they were and what they wanted.

Bluestein and Phillips (1990) found that individuals in foreclosure (i.e., in the foreclosure status) have a tendency to rely on a dependent decision-making style, a style suggested by Johnson (1978) as reflective of individuals who rely on external sources to make decisions than internal ones. Additionally, Blustein and Phillips (1990) suggested that a dependent decision-making style can lead to maladaptive decision-making, rely on an external locus of responsibility, and have a "broader, and perhaps more pervasive, sort of dependency" (p. 167). Brown and colleagues (Brown et al., 2000) examined the correlation between ego-identity status and career decision-making self-efficacy and found that student-athletes who were less foreclosed had greater confidence in their career decision-making. Additionally, they found that student-athletes who had an internal orientation (i.e., who relied on themselves rather than on

others) towards career planning had higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy. However, Brown et al. (2000) did not find a relationship between athletic identity and identity foreclosure.

More recently, Linnemeyer and Brown (2010) assessed career maturity and foreclosure among student-athletes, fine arts students, and general college students. Fine arts students were included due to the "performance demands" required of them to be successful in their field, which were thought be similar to those required of student-athletes to be successful in their sport. The researchers found that levels of identity foreclosure among student-athletes were significantly greater than those of the general student population and of fine arts students. The researchers found that student-athletes were more likely than general college students to exhibit a tendency to limit their options prematurely when committing to ideological aspects of their ego identity. Overall, Linnemeyer and Brown (2010) concluded that student-athletes, but not fine arts students, had a greater chance of being foreclosed within the domains of occupation, religion, and politics.

Career Maturity and Career Adaptability

As defined by Super (1990), *career maturity* is an "individual's readiness to cope with the development tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological and social developments and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development" (p. 213). In other words, it is the degree to which individuals are knowledgeable about and prepared to engage in career decision-making. Career maturity is composed of several elements, including self-appraisal of one's abilities and talents, having a wealth of occupational information, selecting appropriate goals, planning skills, and problem solving skills (Busacca & Taber, 2002).

A common finding (and hypothesis) among researchers is that there is a lack of career maturity amid collegiate student-athletes. For example, Kennedy and Dimick (1987) found that male college student-athletes in revenue sports had a career maturity level typical of what one would expect of a 9th grade student. Murphy, Petitpas and Brewer (1996) found that being a student-athlete was more likely to result in impairment or delay in career maturity, with the lowest levels of career maturity found in college male athletes in revenue sports. Martens and Cox (2000) argued that on measures of vocational identity student-athletes may score high because they have prematurely *foreclosed* on professional sports as a career path, but that they nevertheless can have low levels of career maturity. The previously referenced study by Linnemeyer and Brown (2010) of student-athletes, fine arts students, and general college students found that student-athletes and fine arts students were similar in their levels of career maturity, while the general college student sample displayed significantly higher levels of career maturity in comparison to the student-athlete sample. However, the difference was not large, and the researchers hypothesize that the gap may reflect recent trends in career intervention programming efforts for student-athletes.

Career and Academic Engagement During College: NSSE and NCAA Findings

The annual National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) surveys college students in the United States asking various questions on academic, campus, occupational, and recreational engagement, in addition to the quality of their experiences at their academic institution. For 2010, NSSE (NSSE, 2010) assessed over 362,000 college students at 564 baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities, making it one of the most extensive resources for information on the undergraduate experience. Many aspects of this survey examined parts of career development and occupational engagement. For the purposes of this dissertation, some of the most relevant

findings from this annual study were the contrasts between the entire sample of freshmen and seniors and the sample of student-athletes within the sample (institutions with more than 5,000 students).

The 2010 NSSE asked questions regarding student engagement with professors and other faculty members that can be informative in terms of understanding students' academic engagement, the availability of positive role models, and the students' identification with the academic world. When students were asked if they had talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, the answers were almost identical between the freshman sample and freshman student-athletes, and the senior sample and senior student-athletes, respectively. In evaluating their relationships with faculty members, students were asked to rank the quality of their relationships on a continuum from 1 (= unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic) to 7 (=available, helpful, sympathetic). The majority of both class groups of students ranked their relationships with faculty between scores of 5 and 7. Overall, both student-athletes and the entire student sample reported positive relationships with faculty and that they were likely to talk with faculty regarding career choices as they gained more experience in their college careers.

In evaluating their institutional experience, students were asked "To what extent does your institution emphasize…providing the support you need to help you academically; help you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.); provide the support you need to thrive socially; and emphasize attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc." The majority of the students answered "some" to "quite a bit" to this question, with most first-year student-athletes reporting better institutional support than their more experienced counterparts. Although it is unclear from these data whether

the athletics department is considered a part of the institution for the purpose of the survey, it is clear that student-athletes generally do feel supported by their university.

In regard to academic behaviors, many student-athletes surveyed by the NCAA have reported difficulties being both a student and an athlete. Although most student-athletes may report valuing their overall college experience, researchers found that student-athletes "may still feel short-changed on the academic end because of their commitment to sport" (NCAA, 2006, p. 12). When asked, "Did your athletics participation prevent you from majoring in what you really wanted?" 27.1 % of responses indicated that it did.

With regard to the amount of time spent in sport and in class, the GOALS (NCAA, 2010) study found that during the season, in Division I sports, student-athletes spent between 33 and 43 hours per week on athletic activities. The upper range included football (43.3 hours), baseball (42.1 hours) and men's basketball (39.2 hours). The average number of hours spent on academic activities during the athletic season at the Division I level, as reported by student-athletes, ranged from 31 hours to 40 hours. At the lower end of the range were student-athletes in baseball (31.7 hours), other men's sports (36 hours), and men's basketball (37.3 hours). The GOALS study found the greatest difference to be for student-athletes in Division I baseball, with a difference of 10.4 hours more in athletics than in academics while in season. The total number of hours spent in both athletic and academic activities while in season ranged from 73 hours to 81 hours, with the higher numbers characterizing football and men and women's basketball, with the total number of hours spent on both athletics and academics total roughly half of the number of hours in a week (48 %). With an additional eight hours of sleep a night (56 hours–33 %), this leaves roughly 31 hours during the week during the athletic season for other activities. This is reflective of the survey's findings that student-athletes expressed they would like more time for academics

and relaxing and less time for athletics. Of Division I student-athletes, the highest desire for more free time outside of athletics was among students in baseball (18 %), football (23 %), other women's sports (26 %), and women's basketball (29 %).

Differences Across Gender and Sport

Two aspects that have not received much study in relation to career development are the differences between (a) genders and (b) the type of sport played. Greendorfer and Blinde's (1985) survey of former intercollegiate athletes found that women showed significant differences from men in terms of the value of sport. They found that women put a greater importance on education than males throughout their college career and that the importance placed on their sport was significantly less than male athletes. Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) hypothesized that it might be easier for women to adjust to retirement from sport due an intrinsic love for sport, rather than relying on scholarships or professional careers like many male athletes do. The NCAA 2006 GOALS study asked approximately 900 student-athletes "When you entered college, how likely did you think it was that you be a professional and/or Olympic athlete?" Fifty-five percent (55.4%) of male student-athletes thought it was at least "somewhat likely," whereas only 26.2 % of female student-athletes said the same, yielding a statistically significant difference between genders. These results suggest that male student-athletes may be at more of a risk than female student-athletes to early identity foreclosure, or delaying vocational identity development. Although it is important to continue examining these gender differences among student-athletes, it seems clear from numerous studies that male athletes, especially those in revenue sports, may be more at risk for identity foreclosure and career dissatisfaction (Brown, et al., 2000; Brown & Hartley, 1998; Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; McQuown, Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010; Murphy, et al., 1996).

With regard to the differences in career development across sport, Martens and Cox (2000) found no significant differences in levels of vocational identity, occupational information, and barriers to vocational decision-making across different sports. In terms of belief about moving to the professional level (and possibly "identity foreclosure" status), Kennedy and Dimick (1987) found that basketball players believed they will more likely go pro (63 %) than football players (45 %). As cited earlier regarding the Kennedy and Dimick (1987) study, there may also be ethnic differences in this belief. In this regard, Adler and Adler (1987) hypothesized that the reason more African-American student-athletes believe they will make it to professional sport is due to the fact that sport is a racial or barrier-free career path.

What is Missing?

As several researchers have noted (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1987; Brown, et al., 2000, Ihle-Helledy, 2003), a limitation of the majority of the studies presented here is that they rely solely on quantitative methodology to answer the question of how student-athletes develop in terms of their career development and vocational identity. The career development process is something that is multidimensional and complex, and it simply cannot be studied meaningfully with simple paper-and-pencil measurements (Brown, et al., 2000). Additionally, Miller and Kerr (2003) have suggested that researchers should take a more developmental approach to understanding student-athletes, especially in that other researchers (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Brown & Hartley, 1998; Kennedy & Dimick, 1987) have found this problem starts well before college begins.

Transitioning into Adulthood

One way to understand the vocational developmental process for student-athletes is to examine it within the context of psychological development that takes place during early adulthood and in the transition to adulthood. That being said, the line between adolescence and

adulthood has become increasingly unclear with the change of societal expectations and in the workforce itself. Settersten and Ray (2010) recently reviewed the developmental changes occurring in early adulthood over the past century had noted that higher education has become the key to a good job in an unstable economy. “Once reserved for the elite, a college education is now a necessity for both men and women who want access to good jobs. Education and training are more valuable than ever because jobs are less secure and work careers have become more fluid” (p. 26). Settersten and Ray (2010) reported that approximately eight in 10 high school seniors plan to attend college or some form of training after high school. With college taking several years to complete, most students also tend to place their own career exploration on hold until college, or even later. Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, and Shanahan (2002), in their qualitative study on the process of occupational decision-making in early adulthood, found that many college students were not encouraged to make any career decisions in high school, but rather focus on to getting into college. As a consequence, some students who were not yet engaging occupationally during college were waiting for “clarity to happen” (p. 461) regarding an occupational choice.

With the increasing importance of attending college in order to attain a good paying job, attendance at college itself may cause more delay in reaching certain developmental milestones in life (e.g., living independently, getting married, and having children) than were previously achieved at younger ages when college was unnecessary for the middle-class.

Related to the above idea, Arnett (2000) proposed a new stage of life for individuals between the ages of 18 and 25; he called it “emerging adulthood.” Arnett (2006) suggested that there are five “stages” that define emerging adulthood: (a) the age of identity exploration, (b) the

age of instability, (c) the age of self-focus, (d) the age of feeling in-between, and (e) the age of possibilities.

The age of identity exploration refers to the degree of freedom and autonomy emerging adults experience as they have few social obligations or duties and commitments to others at this point in their lives. This opens the door for identity exploration in the areas of work and love. During *the age of instability,* emerging adults tend to make frequent direction changes in terms of work, love, and education. This instability is a result of identity development, which comes about as one determines one's likes and dislikes, areas of skill and talent, and personal values. *The age of self-focus* begins at a point in a person's life when he or she is able to take time for oneself, again due to having little social obligations or commitment to others. It is a time that encourages further identity development. *The age of feeling in-between* reflects that period of life when emerging adults vacillate in their feelings as to whether they have reached adulthood—that vacillating being with respect to accepting responsibility for oneself, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent. Finally*, the age of possibilities* refers to the optimism commonly found among young persons who see a full life of opportunities before them. At this point, a majority of emerging adults believe that they will likely find a soul mate for an ideal marriage, and find a job that not only pays well, but is also personally fulfilling. In addition, emerging adults that came from a more unstable or difficult family environments are now able to escape and create better lives for themselves.

Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell (2007) created an inventory measure using these five areas as a framework in order to empirically test Arnett's (2000) theory. Reifman and his colleagues found that the measure demonstrated high internal reliability and test-retest reliability. They also found that emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 25 scored significantly higher on all

factors related to the five areas/stages defined as emerging adulthood when compared to older adults and that they were also distinct from adolescents (age 13-17) in a majority of these five areas. Hence, it appears that although Arnett's (2000) theory is relatively new and still need further empirical validation, initial testing shows positive findings for scientific support.

Blustein and his colleagues (1989) examined the relationship between identity development and career exploration for emerging adults, using various psychological instruments with a sample of college students. They concluded that career exploration in itself is an activity important for emerging adults in order to learn about themselves in other "aspects of personality development" (p. 200).

Transition from College and Sport to Work

The transition from college to the workforce can be difficult, and this may be especially so for most student-athletes—for most of whom it is also often a time of adjustment to retirement from sport. For many of these individuals, athletics has been a major part of their lives and identity since they were very young. Greendorfer and Blinde's (1985) study of retirement from intercollegiate sports revealed that most student-athletes who complete eligibility or graduate experience a mild adjustment to life without sport. About one-fourth of the approximately 1,100 participants in their study indicated that they were "very unhappy" or "extremely unhappy" with their retirement; about half of the sample indicated "neutral" or "no feeling;" and one-fourth of the sample indicated they were "very happy" or "extremely happy" with their retirement from sport. Clearly, a significant proportion of student-athletes may have trouble leaving their sport, even when it is an anticipated event.

Although not always the case, many student-athletes face career ending injuries in college rather than their sport ending with the graduation from college or the completion of

athletic eligibility. Blinde and Stratta (1992) examined the psychological effects of involuntary and unanticipated exits from sport in collegiate student-athletes. Using Kubler-Ross' (1969) theory on death and dying as a framework for interpreting their data, they concluded that the more student-athletes identified with their athletic role, the more difficult it was for them to transition away from sport and their athletic identity. Depression (stage four in Kubler-Ross' theory) was found to be the most prolonged stage for student-athletes forced to exit their sport. Grove, Lavallee and Gordon (1997) examined how elite athletes handled retirement from their sport and transitioning to a new career in accordance with their athletic identity. The researchers found that athletes with high levels of athletic identity exhibited high levels of anxiety related to career decision-making and career exploration. Those with lower levels of athletic identity showed higher levels of pre-retirement career planning. Grove and his colleagues noted that assessment of athletic identity might be useful for identifying athletes who are at risk to experience difficulties with career transition.

Role Engulfment, Role Domination, and the Student-Athlete

Adler and Adler (1987, 1991) first established the concept of *role engulfment* and *role domination* in student-athletes through their qualitative interview studies throughout the 1980s. After researching student-athletes for over a decade, Adler and Adler saw a consistent pattern in which student-athletes began to encompass their identity of an athlete over being a student. *Role engulfment* is when a specific role an individual holds becomes a basis of identity. In this case, student-athletes hold two major roles or identities--one of a student and the other of an athlete. They also may hold other roles, such as friend, intern, significant other, or son or daughter. Adler and Adler (1991) suggested role engulfment as a major pattern occurring in their interviews with student-athletes and found that most experience this phenomenon (and the conflict it creates) at

some time during their college career. They also found that this coincided with professional athletic career aspirations. *Role domination* is when a particular role comes to dominate other roles in a person's life. Adler and Adler (1991) cite role domination for student-athletes as a process by which they "became engulfed with their athletic role as it ascended to a position of prominence" (p. 27). An example of this can be seen in the NCAA's GOALS study of student-athletes (2006), when asked to rate the statement, "I view myself as more an athlete than a student," 61.8 % of the sample stated that they agree (rated from somewhat to strongly agree).

Studies have suggested that if these two roles of "athlete" and "student" are not integrated properly to form one identity, there can be detrimental effects. As evidence of this, Yopyk and Prentice (2005) demonstrated the effects of the stereotypes of these labels as well as the distance between these two roles, by assessing student-athletes' knowledge when primed for either the student role or the athlete role. They found that when participants were primed for the athlete role, they did significantly worse than those primed for the student role. Killya-Jones (2005) also suggested the importance of the convergence of both roles, which increased satisfaction with the college experience—at least among Division I student-athletes.

Studies also have been conducted regarding the degree of identification with the "athletic identity" or athletic role in relation to leaving sport and career planning. Blinde and Stratta (1992) examined student-athletes who had suffered an involuntary and unanticipated exit from their sport. They found that those student-athletes who identified more with their sport or athletic role were also more likely to have difficulty with the exit from that role. Grove, Lavallee and Gordon (1997) studied semi-professional athletes' levels of athletic identity, their coping strategies for leaving sport, and their pre-retirement plans. They found there was a negative correlation between levels of athletic identity and pre-retirement planning. Additionally, they

reported that athletes with higher levels of athletic identity were more likely to use avoidance-based coping strategies to deal with retirement from sport. These findings suggest there can be severe consequences for athletes with high athletic identity who are not prepared psychologically to leave their sport.

Self-Complexity and Student-Athletes

Self-complexity, as originally operationalized by Linville (1985), refers to the number of self-aspects or cognitive representations of oneself and how they relate to (or in several cases, overlap with or connect to) one another. In general, the more self-aspects a person takes on and the more those self-aspects overlap and connect, the greater the self-complexity they have. For example, a college student may also be involved with the math club and volunteering as a "big sister." Since math is more academic, the student may identify her "academic" self-aspect with her "extracurricular" self-aspect since she is majoring in math, or since both are of academic nature. However, volunteering, for example, might not feel as related to her academic or extracurricular self-aspect, and therefore this student may consider her volunteering as another self-aspect, independent from the other two self-aspects. Linville proposed that those with higher levels of self-complexity are less likely to have mood swings and to have lower levels of depression due to the "spillover effect" of self-complexity. The idea goes like this: If a person has fewer roles, or if the person has many roles that overlap or share similar characteristics, the effect of negative feedback regarding one of those roles is likely to have a "spillover" into those related roles and the person is likely to conclude that he or she is performing poorly in each of the corresponding/overlapping self-aspects. For example, if the college student fails on a math test, not only will she feel negative about her student self-aspect, but if she has few self-aspects,

it is likely that she will also feel negative regarding her other self-aspects, such as a daughter self-aspect.

Linville (1987) believed that higher levels of self-complexity (i.e., more self-aspects or roles) could provide a buffer for depression and other stress-related illnesses. She describes this as the self-complexity buffering hypothesis. Linville (1987) has supported her hypothesis with research, although other researchers (e.g., McConnell, et al., 2009; Solomon & Haaga, 2003) have contested her findings. McConnell and colleagues (2009) found that individuals with lower levels of self-complexity had greater levels of self-esteem, lower levels of depression, more desirable personality characteristics, and fewer illnesses when they had greater levels of social support. However, they also found that individuals with lower self-complexity had poorer well being if they had a history of negative life-events. Solomon and Haaga (2003) concluded that the interaction of stress and self-complexity proposed by Linville (1987) was not consistent with Linville's buffer hypothesis, and they described Linville's views on self-complexity as a buffer from depression and stress as premature.

Other researchers, however, have been able to replicate Linville's studies and further validate her theory. Smith and Cohen (1993) examined the role of a relationship break up on stress levels by examining levels of self-complexity. The researchers found a positive relationship between the negative life events and psychological distress, such that the latter became weaker as levels of self-complexity increased. Smith and Cohen concluded that the strength and structure of a specific self-aspect is predictive of an individual's reaction to a negative event in a particular domain. This "break-up" may also be comparable to some student-athletes' transition experience from sport as a long and difficult process (Ballie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997).

Lutz and Ross (2003) explored the notion of self-concept differentiation (the lack of interrelatedness of roles) in comparison to self-complexity. The researchers found that individuals high in self-concept differentiation were more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression, loneliness, and dissociation. However, the opposite was observed for individuals high in self-complexity (low symptoms of depression, loneliness and dissociation), thus confirming Linville's buffer hypothesis. With respect to student-athletes, one could conclude that having multiple equivalent roles is an important part of psychological adjustment following departure from sport.

In sum, there have been numerous studies done regarding self-complexity, but questions still remain about central tenets of this theory due conflicting findings. Some studies have supported Linville's (1985; 1987) theory, while others have failed to find any connections between the spillover hypothesis and the buffer hypothesis.

Relevant Vocational Theory

There are many vocational theories that could be applied to this study, however five will be highlighted as especially relevant: (a) Super's life span, life space theory (Super, 1990), (b) the theory of career adaptability (Savickas, 1997), (c) the trilateral model and theory of occupational engagement (Krieshok, et al., 2009), (d) social-cognitive career theory (Brown & Lent, 1996), and (e) planned happenstance theory (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999), These theories take very different perspectives on understanding how the career development process unfolds for the individual. Although student-athletes were not examined specifically in the development of any of these theories, each of the theories are presented here as a foundation to assist in understanding and interpreting the results of this study, in terms of the research questions developed. Super's theory takes a developmental approach to vocational choice. This

theory helps us examine research question two, which asks how student-athletes' career paths have changed over time. Career adaptability is the ability to change, without significant difficulty, or to fit into a new or changed environment; and the theory provides a framework for our last research question on transferable skills from athletics experiences. The trilateral model and theory of occupational engagement focus on engagement in vocationally-driven activities as a vital part of the career decision-making process. This theory provides a framework for our first research question on the resources student-athletes use to assist them with vocational identity development, as well as examining the barriers to occupational engagement in research question three. Social cognitive career theory examines the variables related to career decision-making within the individual and their environment, and helps us look at Research Question 4 on the social environment's influence on vocational identity development in student-athletes. Finally planned happenstance theory examines how people's lives are determined by the situations they place themselves in. Planned happenstance does not apply to a specific research question, but still remains as a relevant concept in vocational psychology literature.

Super's Life-span, Life-space Theory

Super first devised his life-span, life-space theory in 1957. His theory is widely known for its unique developmental approach to career development and career exploration. The theory proposes that a person's vocational development occurs over a series of stages, within the context of our psychosocial development and societal expectations, and along with the opportunity for exploring occupations.

In addition to the concept of stages of career development, Super devised a concept known as career maturity. The term *career maturity*, sometimes now referred to as *career readiness*, was used to discuss readiness for career decision-making in late childhood and early

adulthood. According to Super this decision making should be based on the fit/congruence of the individual's abilities, occupational interests, and occupational preferences. Super noted, however, that as career development moves into adulthood, career/vocational milestones are less associated with age and are more associated with their ability to evaluate these abilities, interests, and preferences. An individual may go through the cycle of career development several times as they change their careers, thus requiring different skills, talents, or abilities to succeed in a new career. Because frequent career changes becoming more common in the modern workforce, the term *career adaptability*, rather than career maturity, is now used to reflect the need for adults to be able to transition to new work environments, in addition to being able to decide on making that change.

Super classified the lifespan into stages of vocational development: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. The *growth stage* (ages 4-13) is a time for children to begin learning about the world-of-work and to begin to have better understandings of themselves. Tasks have also been developed within the growth stage; these include fantasy, interest, and capacity. Super claims that children's natural sense of curiosity drives them to learn more about the work and how their interests would fit into that world. Over time, children begin to understand what they are good at, and they develop a sense of mastery and control in their abilities to make their own decisions. Later in the growth stage, children learn the importance of planning for the future and about how their behavior and activities in the present influence their future career.

In the *exploration stage* (ages 14 to 24) individuals now take the knowledge they have and begin planning for the future. Developmental tasks in this stage include tentativeness, transition, and trial. Super discusses the importance of the crystallization, or the clarification, of

occupational preferences. Crystallizing occupational preferences requires people to have the ability to clarify the type of work they enjoy—clarity that builds from self-knowledge acquired from the growth stage (i.e. transition). In order to crystallize occupational preferences, one must also be able to make decisions from a series of choices, and be able to discover the path required to get to that career decision (i.e., implementation)

In the *establishment stage* (ages 25-45), career development tasks are stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing. Stabilization refers to the point immediately after beginning a new occupation. It is a stage during which the individual evaluates whether his or her occupation provides adequate opportunity for self-concept expression. After stabilization, consolidation occurs. This involves focusing on being a dependable and stable employee, and developing a positive reputation in one's field. By focusing on these characteristics, individuals can then receive positions of higher pay and responsibility (i.e., advancing).

The *maintenance stage* usually spans from ages 45-65. Super describes individuals at this stage as facing tasks of holding, updating, and innovating; it is a time during which employees are confronted with the choice of either keeping up with advancements in their field in order to maintain or improve their level of performance (i.e., holding), or opting for changing to another occupational field. Those who change fields will likely start back at the beginning of the exploration or establishment stages, while workers who update their skills and become innovators in their field will become mentors and leaders to younger generations in the establishment stage.

Finally, the *disengagement stage* (ages 65+) is a point at which many workers begin to slow down in terms of their work abilities--physically as well as mentally. At this point, employees begin thinking about retirement and begin to disengage from their work. Individuals

at this stage tend to be concerned about physical, spiritual, and financial issues that accompany retirement.

The life space portion of Super's theory examines the importance individuals place on their work through their life roles. Super theorized that there are nine major life roles that people have throughout their lives; many times these roles overlap. These roles are: (a) son or daughter, (b) student, (c) leisurite, (d) citizen, (e) worker, (f) spouse/partner, (g) homemaker, (h) parent, and (i) pensioner. Super also suggests that these roles are played out in specific "theaters," that include home, school, the workplace, and the community. The goal of Super's theory is for individuals to have a maximal chance for values expression, and his theory holds that through effective participation in these roles, people can do so. However, because many of these life roles and theaters overlap, individuals may experience role conflict and find it difficult to achieve life-role participation. According to Super's theory, a student-athlete ideally would be able to participate in both the roles of a student and of an athlete equally in order to have the opportunity for maximum values expression. In turn, this would promote better self-understanding and values expression.

Another important component of Super's theory is the notion of the *self-concept*, which he defined as a "picture of the self in some role, situation, or position, performing some set of functions, or in some web of relationships" (1963, p. 18). In the bigger picture, self-concepts are a form of reference (i.e., self-understanding) for individuals when attempting to make career decisions. Self-concepts contain both subjective and objective evaluations of themselves. Objective evaluations are derived from individuals' direct comparisons of their work with that of others. Subjective evaluations, on the other hand, come from individuals' finding their own uniqueness through unique life experiences and stories. People use both of these methods to gain

better understanding of themselves (self-concepts) and to translate this into a suitable career. To conclude, Super's theory can be best summarized by these 14 assumptions, originally proposed by Super (1990):

1. People differ in their abilities, personalities, needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts.
2. People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
3. Each occupation requires a characteristic pattern of abilities and personality traits, with tolerance wide enough to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation
4. Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and, hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience, although self-concepts, as products of social learning, are increasingly stable from late adolescence until later maturity, providing some continuity in choice and adjustment.
5. This process of change may be summed up in a series of life stages (a "maxi-cycle") characterized as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into (a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage and (b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage. A small (mini) cycle takes place in transitions from one stage to the next or each time an individual is destabilized by a reduction in force, changes in type of manpower needs, illness or injury, or other socioeconomic or personal events. Such unstable multiple-trial careers involve new growth, reexplorations, and reestablishment (recycling).
6. The nature of the career pattern – that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of the trial and stable jobs – is determined by the individual's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, and self-concepts), career maturity, and by the opportunities to which he or she is exposed.
7. Success in coping with the demands of the environment and of the organism in that context at any given life-career stage depends on the readiness of the individual to cope with these demands (that is, on his or her career maturity). Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological, and social characteristics; psychologically it is both cognitive and affective. It includes the degree of success in coping with the demands of earlier stages and substages of career development, especially with the most recent.
8. Career maturity is a hypothetical construct. Its operational definition is perhaps as difficult to formulate as is that of intelligence, but its history is much briefer and its achievements are even less definitive. Contrary to the impressions created by some writers, it does not increase monotonically, and it is not a unitary trait.

9. Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of self-concepts.

10. The process of career development is essentially that of development and implementing occupational self-concepts. It is a synthesizing and compromising process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, opportunity to observe and play various roles and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meets with the approval of superiors and fellows (interactive learning).

11. The process of synthesis of or compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concepts and reality, is one of role playing and of learning from feedback, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counseling interview, or in such real-life activities as classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.

12. Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits, and self-concepts. They depend on establishment in a type of work, a work situation and a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experiences have led one to consider congenial and appropriate.

13. The degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts.

14. Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some persons this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even non-existent. Then other foci, such as leisure activities and homemaking, may be central. (Social traditions, such as sex-role stereotyping and modeling, racial and ethnic biases, and the opportunity structure, as well as individual differences, are important determinants of preferences for such roles as worker, student, leisurite, homemaker, and citizen.)

These assumptions reflect Super's attempt to integrate multiple types of theories into vocational theory, including trait-factor, developmental, social learning, and psychodynamic. Super's theory has been criticized for its lack of empirical evidence and testability, cultural bias, lack of recognition of individual differences, overreliance on cross-sectional designs (and lack of longitudinal design), use of retrospective recall methodology, and circular logic in defining stages (Betz, 2008; Swanson & Gore, 2000). However, his theory of vocational development has withstood challenges since its development in the 1960s. Recent additions and modifications

have been proposed for Super's theory, including Savickas' theory of career adaptability (see below) as a replacement for Super's concept of career maturity.

Theory of Career Adaptability

Savickas (1997) recommended amending Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory, specifically as regards Super's concept of career maturity. Savickas argued that since Super's theory was created nearly four decades earlier, theories in developmental psychology were now supporting adaptability versus maturity as a more useful construct in understanding the changes between adolescence and adulthood. *Adaptability*, as referenced by Savickas (1997), is the ability to change, without significant difficulty, or to fit into a new or changed environment. When applied to a career, it places emphasis on the ability to respond to novel circumstances and situations, as well as having multiple careers throughout the lifespan—both of which are in contrast to a traditional model of mastering occupational-related tasks. Career adaptability is also more reflective of the changes occurring in the American workforce over the course of the past 50 years, during which career change has become more common, making adaptability that much more important over mastery.

Savickas has argued that this change to Super's theory would make the theory more applicable to all ages, making career development interventions more focused on developing adaptability at any age, rather than focusing on career decision-making and finding that one "right" career for each individual.

Unfortunately, there has been little empirical research on this particular construct. Nevertheless, the number of studies has been growing and aspects of Super's theory are still subject to critique and suggested modification. One study (Duffy, 2010) examined the role of career adaptability as it relates to a sense of control in undergraduate students. In a survey of

nearly 2,000 undergraduate students, Duffy (2010) found that there was a strong positive relationship between career adaptability and sense of control (r = .54). In addition, Duffy also examined other factors related to career adaptability, including self-esteem (r = .44), social support (r = .35), and career optimism (r = .48)—all showing moderate to strong correlations. Duffy's (2009) study also may suggest implications for student-athletes who, in numerous studies (Adler & Adler, 1987; Kimball, 2007; Parker, 1994), have reported significantly lower levels of autonomy and control over their lives than their non-student-athlete peers.

The Trilateral Model and the Theory of Occupational Engagement

Following a philosophy similar to that of the theory of career adaptability, Krieshok, Black and McKay (2009) reviewed the connections among cognitive and experimental social psychology research and vocational psychology research in order to address the role of rational and intuitive thought processes and occupational engagement on adaptive vocational decision-making. Similar to Savickas' (1997) theory of career adaptability, adaptive career decision-making is reflective of the needs of the modern workforce where career adaptability and transferable skills are highly valued by employers and prospective employees. This comes about by making vocational decisions based on the constant reevaluation of the person-environment match—a view originally posed by Parsons (1909). Traditionally, most models of career decision-making have relied on rational thought processes in making vocational decisions. Rational thought processes are "typically deliberate, explicit, deterministic, systematic, and not generally subject to emotion." In contrast, intuitive thought processes are "typically habitual, implicit, associative, heuristic, and often emotionally charged." (Krieshok, et al., 2009, p. 278). In cognitive and experimental social psychology, rational thought processes are typically considered conscious processes, since they require the use of reasoning and critical thinking. In

contrast, intuitive thought processes are usually understood as unconscious processes, since intuition is relying on one's "gut feeling" with no real thought about the decision itself.

From various models and research in cognitive and vocational psychology, Krieshok and his colleagues devised the trilateral model of adaptive career decision-making that proposes that effective adaptive career decision-making involves a combination of intuition and unconscious thought processes (System 1), reasoning and conscious thought processes (System 2), and occupational engagement.

Krieshok (1998) previously described an anti-introspectivist theory, arguing that most cognitive processing (including that relating to career decision making) does not take place at the conscious level. Such processing is difficult to accurately describe and understand, and he believes that relying too much on rational thought processes (System 2) may be detrimental to good decision-making. In the trilateral model, Krieshok and his colleagues (2009) state that both rational decision-making (conscious) and intuitive decision-making (unconscious) processes inform one another in the adaptive career decision-making process. To help inform both types of decision-making, occupational engagement is needed.

Occupational engagement, as defined by Krieshok and his colleagues (2009), as "taking part in behaviors that contribute to the career decision-maker's fund of information and experience of the larger world, not just the world as processed when a career decision is imminent" (p. 284). In other words, occupational engagement is a steady involvement with activities that builds a bank of information about the self and the world that may or may not be related to an upcoming career-decision. The theory of occupational engagement (Krieshok et al., 2009) suggests that there are two parts of occupational engagement–enrichment and exploration. *Exploration*, as discussed in previous vocational theories, is the act of engaging in behaviors that

help a decision-maker obtain information in the interest of making of a career decision. In contrast, *enrichment* refers to the same activities when no decision is imminent. Although exploration tends to have an endpoint (i.e., making a career decision), enrichment is the continuing education about one's roles in the world. To make a similar contrast, Krieshok and his colleagues propose exploration as a *state* activity (temporary), whereas enrichment can be thought of as a *trait* activity (permanent).

Krieshok, el al. (2009) defined the qualities they believe to be characteristic of an adaptive career decision-maker. Such an individual: "(a) is persistently engaged, accepting that career decision making is an enduring process and that vocational security is illusionary, (b) does not rely exclusively on innate talents, but rather seeks to compensate for deficits to become a competent generalist, (c) is wary of specialization and how it can narrow vocational options, (d) is a life-long learner and integrates new knowledge with what he or she already knows, (e) cultivates a sense of foresight in respect to trends in the field as a result of persistent occupational engagement, learning, and the integration of new knowledge, (f) is never completely foreclosed, (g) is flexible and willing to act despite fears, (h) regularly questions his or her perceptions of the vocational reality with which he or she is faced,(i) is aware of the limits of reason and intuition and seeks to manage biases and heuristics, and (j) has an existential/zen outlook that affords numerous advantages, including an essential trust in the universe that allows him or her to see beyond appearances and transform seemingly threatening problems into opportunities" (p. 285).

Research examining occupational engagement in college students has resulted in multiple theoretically congruent findings (Black, 2006; Bjornsen, 2010; Conrad, Syme, Sharma, & Wells, 2007; Cox, Rasmussen, Jacobson, Wells, Rettew, & Sirridge, 2006; Rasmussen, Cox, Sharma,

Jacobson, Yang, & Cole, 2007; Scott, 2006). Measures originally designed by Krieshok and his research team to measure occupational engagement, including the Occupational Engagement Scale – College (OES-C), have established initial support for the construct of occupational engagement in college students and have found positive correlations between this construct and other vocational constructs (Black, 2006). Furthermore, McKay, Kerr, Hansen and Krieshok (2008) and McKay (2008) found some personality traits (as measured by the NEO Personality inventory) positively correlated with occupational engagement in creative/gifted high school students. These traits included Openness to Experience (r=.27), Extraversion (r=.24), and Conscientiousness (r=.25). Finally, Cox (2008) found occupational engagement among college students to be a contributor to factors that are important to student success, including college GPA, personal development, and vocational identity.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (Brown & Lent, 1996), which derives from Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, provides a complex framework for understanding how people develop career-related interests, make occupational choices, and achieve career success and stability. Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory maintains that an individual's behavior, other people, and environments mutually influence one another. Like Super's theory, SCCT is partially based on developmental theory and also upon trait-factor theory. (Trait-factor theory is a line of thought in vocational psychology that argues that people's interests and abilities are reflected in their career paths. SCCT attempts to "fill the gaps" lost in between these two lines of thought.)

SCCT focuses on variables within individuals as well as their learning experiences. Brown and Lent (1996) have suggested there are three person-variables of particular relevance in

a person's career path: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals. These variables influence the exercise of agency in the career development process for an individual. Self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977) are individuals' beliefs in their ability to complete a task or goal. Outcome expectations refer to beliefs regarding the consequences of performing particular behaviors. Whereas self-efficacy beliefs ask "Can I do this?" outcome expectations ask, "If I do this, what will happen?" Finally, personal goals are referred to as an individual's aim to pursue a specific activity or produce a specific outcome. Personal goals reflect the question, "How much and how well do I want to do this?"

Many of these beliefs regarding self-efficacy are related to and subject to different sources (learning environments): personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states.

Within this framework, there are three distinct yet interlocking process models. These models are interest, choice, and performance. According to the *interest model* (see Figure 2.1), self-efficacy and outcome expectations about certain activities help shape particular career interests. In turn, interests in activities are likely to increase when individuals view themselves as competent (i.e., self efficacy) at the particular activity, and anticipate that performing the activity will produce expected outcomes (i.e., positive outcome expectations). It is in this respect that people will not develop certain interests. For example, if a student-athlete finds himself getting frustrated with his homework and grades in some of his classes, his self-efficacy about his academic abilities decreases and he cannot foresee this outcome changing after trying his best. In contrast, if this same student-athlete is doing well at his role as a football player, feels good about his abilities on the field, and holds high positive outcome expectations about engaging in football, SCCT would suggest that the student-athlete would decrease interest in academics and

increase interest in football. Beyond the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, SCCT also maintains that without a positive interest in an area or activity, the individual will not set goals in the area and so will not practice or actively engage or select the activity to perform, which in turn will prevent performance outcomes and lower skill mastery of the activity.

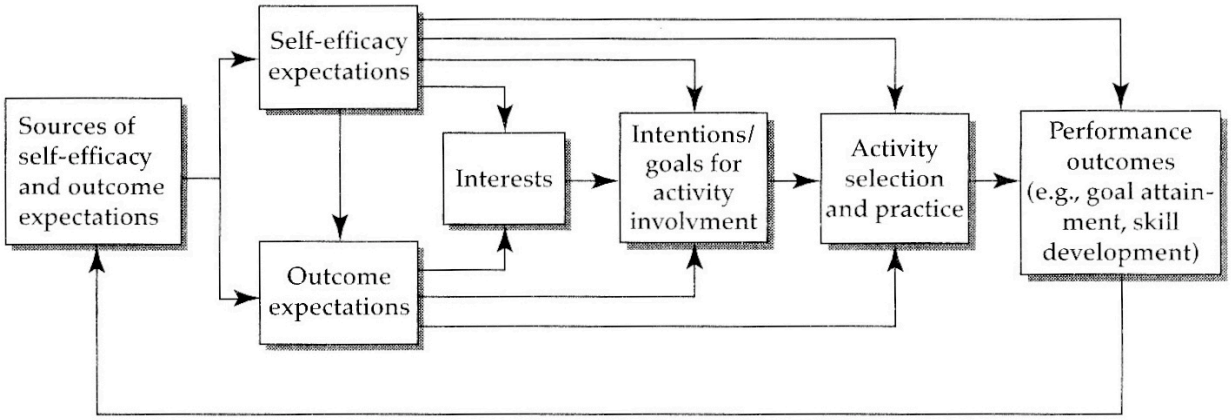

Figure 2.1 Interest Model of Social Cognitive Career Theory[1]

In the *choice model* of SCCT (see Figure 2.2), learning experiences play a central role, as do an individual's gender, race/ethnicity, disability/health status, and other predispositions. These learning experiences influence both self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. These two elements then influence the career interests of the individual, which in turn affect the goals to pursue that career path. These goals, then, motivate the choice actions or things an individual might do to get closer to a career goal. The choice actions are then followed by performance successes and failures, that then return and influence the learning experiences, and subsequently the self-efficacy and outcome expectations for the individual. For example, a student-athlete enrolls as an exercise science major but begins having difficulty with classes in anatomy and physiology. She later discovers that the work environment of an exercise scientist and the opportunities available in this field are not as appealing to her as she first thought. Through these

[1]Reprinted from "Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest,

learning experiences, this student-athlete may decide to revise her self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations regarding this career path and then turn to other potential career paths due to a shift in interests and goals.

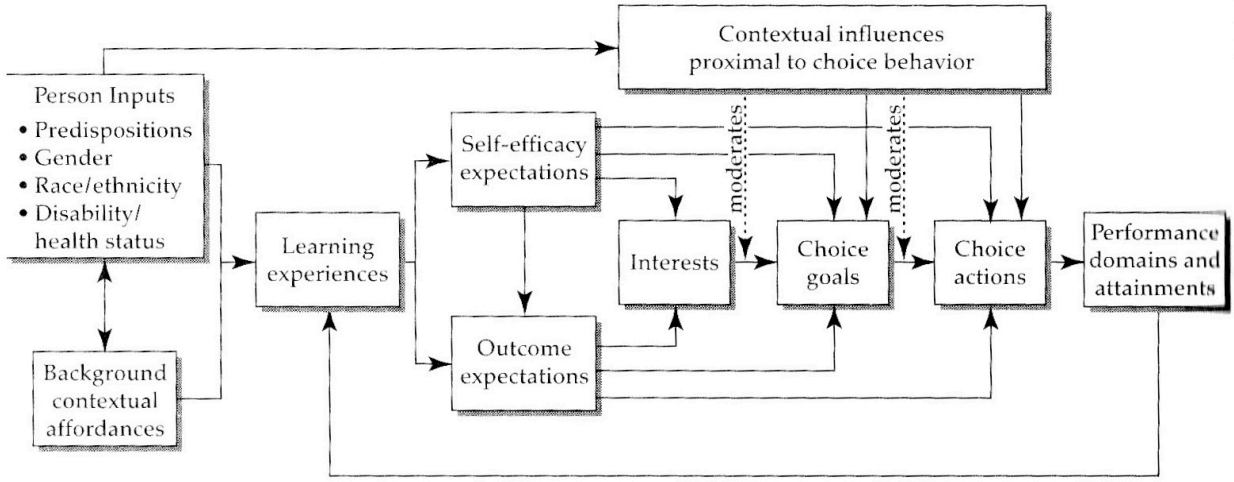

Figure 2.2 Choice Model of Social Cognitive Career Theory[2]

Finally, the *performance model* (see Figure 2.3) is one of a continuous feedback loop beginning with the current abilities and past performances of the individual, that in turn influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations. All of these elements together influence what career and performance goals will be set by the individual. Furthermore, these goals lead to performance attainment, which then leads back to influencing self-efficacy and outcome expectations again. SCCT maintains that as the cycle continues, self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations get stronger in the interest area and that these promote more ambitious goals, which in turn also helps to persist performance efforts.

[2]Reprinted from "Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance" by R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett (1994), *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45,* p. 79-122. Copyright 1993 by R.W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett. Reprinted by permission.

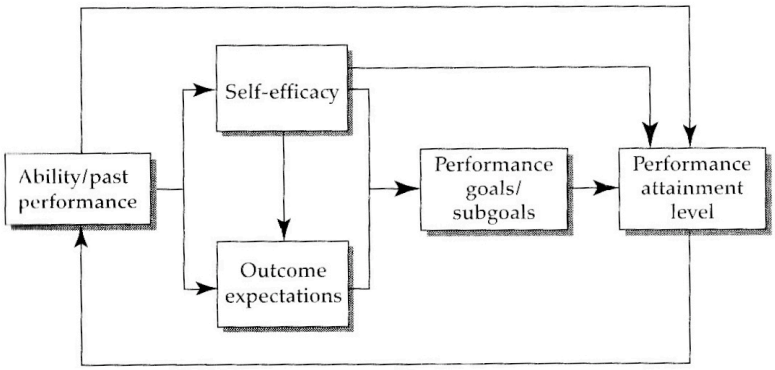

Figure 2.3 Task Performance Model of Social Cognitive Career Theory[3]

Meta-analyses done on research in SCCT have found numerous consistent findings, that were summarized by Lent (2005). The following are some of those findings: (a) interests tend to relate strongly to self-efficacy and outcome expectations, (b) an individual's ability/performance accomplishments are likely to lead to interests in a specific area insofar they cultivate a growing sense of self-efficacy in that area, (c) self-efficacy and outcome expectations are linked to career choices mostly through their link to interest, (d) past performance promotes future performance through both abilities and self-efficacy, which can also promote organization of skills and persisting through setbacks, and (e) self-efficacy appears to be strongly composed of past performance accomplishments, but can also be composed of vicarious learning, social encouragement and discouragement, and affective and physiological states.

To summarize, SCCT proposes that a person's career path is highly dependent on his or her self-efficacy and outcome expectations to determine career goals, performance outcomes, skill development, interests, and ultimately, the person's career. SCCT uses many elements from

[3]Reprinted from "Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance" by R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett (1994), *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45,* p. 79-122. Copyright 1993 by R.W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett. Reprinted by permission.

social cognitive theory of Bandura (1977), as it tries to explain why individuals choose to invest time and themselves into a new interest, and potentially, a new career.

Planned Happenstance Theory

A spin-off of social-cognitive career theory (SCCT) is Planned Happenstance Theory (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999)-- a conceptual framework that explains ways to create unplanned opportunities for career development and learning through attending events and other places that may likely provide these opportunities through chance meetings. Different from "magical thinking" or belief in fate, planned happenstance requires action by the individual to create opportunities for themselves.

Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) proposed planned happenstance theory as a way for career counselors to help clients discover their interests in an environment that is open to indecision. The authors note "(t)ypically, in our American culture, a decisive person is thought to be one in charge–one who knows the way. An undecided person is thought to be 'wishy-washy' and easily swayed" (p. 117). This is also a common belief in today's academic institutions, with many universities requiring students declare a major by the end of their sophomore year (and sometimes even earlier for student-athletes). By reinforcing that indecision is acceptable and by encouraging individuals to put themselves in activities, events, or other places that will help with chance learning opportunities, Mitchell and his colleagues believe that individuals will ultimately be happier and more satisfied with their career choices as a result of these chance learning opportunities.

Within planned happenstance theory, there are two essential concepts (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). The first is that exploration creates chance opportunities for increasing one's quality of life. Ultimately, the reason individuals engage in career exploration is to increase

quality of life; and by engaging in ways that will increase chance opportunities for learning, they will have a better sense of whether certain career paths are appropriate for them. If they continue to put themselves in situations around people that will reinforce those opportunities, it will increase the quality of job opportunities and ultimately quality of life. The second concept is that skills enable people to seize opportunities. By building on skills that are already developed or that need further development, learning opportunities are increased for those individuals.

Planned happenstance theory maintains that there are five skills that individuals need to develop enhance the likelihood of chance meetings that may lead to future career opportunities: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk-taking. *Curiosity* is especially important in that it is what drives us to pursue further learning about something, in this case, new learning opportunities. *Persistence* is essential part of planned happenstance as learning opportunities are based on chance. Individuals must persist to find opportunities despite setbacks or previous experiences. *Flexibility* is important as being open-minded provides more opportunities for learning, rather than limiting oneself to a few areas of interest or prematurely foreclosing on a specific occupation. *Optimism* is a skill relevant to planned happenstance as it keeps individuals viewing new learning opportunities as realistic possibilities for themselves. And finally, *risk taking* is an essential skill that helps individuals take action, even though the outcome may be unclear. Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz suggest that when these skills combine, they can help individuals maximize their opportunities for planned happenstance to occur.

Summary of the Literature

Clearly, there are a lot of factors that can potentially impact the development of vocational identity of collegiate student-athletes, from a micro level (student-athlete culture and dual roles) to a macro level (societal expectations and generational differences of college

attendance). Overall, there are numerous challenges for collegiate student-athletes to overcome in making time for occupational engagement, making good vocational choices, and furthermore, developing a deeper and more complex sense of vocational identity.

We can also view this situation from multiple perspectives from vocational theory, from a developmental perspective in Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory, to more modern approaches like the Trilateral Model and the Theory of Occupational Engagement. The data from this study was examined using these theories as a guiding framework in interpretation, in addition to being mindful of previous studies regarding student-athletes and the vocational decision-making process. Furthermore, the information discussed in this chapter supplied both additional evidence for the need for a qualitative research design in this topic area, and the foundation for design of the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

Fourteen student-athletes participated in the study. Of these, eight were female and six were male. The average age of the sample was 21.2 (SD= 1.9), with ages ranging from 18 to 24. Five participants were in graduate school, two were in their fifth year, two were seniors, three were juniors, and two were freshmen. The average grade point average of these student athletes was 3.45 (on a 4-point scale). The majority of sample (n=12) was Caucasian; one participant was Black and one participant was Hispanic. The participants represented variety of sports played at the collegiate level: Cross Country/Track (five participants), Football (three participants), Women's Basketball (one participant), Women's Soccer (one participant), Baseball (one participant), Women's Swimming (one participant), Women's Rowing (one participant), and Women's Tennis (one participant). These sports represented the majority of sports offered at the university; Men's Basketball, Golf, Softball, and Volleyball were not represented.

Instruments

Demographic questionnaire

All participants completed a demographic questionnaire prior to the interview. The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) took the participant no longer than 15 minutes to complete and included items about parental education and career paths, their use of occupational resources in their athletics department and on their university campus, and career interventions in which the participants had been involved thus far in their collegiate experience. These interventions included (a) classes having career development as a major component, (b) new student-athlete orientation, (c) internships, (d) attending a career or major fair, (e) career counseling sessions, (f) mock interview sessions, (g) attending "networking events," (h) using

online campus resources, and (i) attending career-related events. The median and modal number of resources used by participants up to this point in their respective college careers were MDN = 5, Mode = 6.

Interview

A semi-structured interview made use of a series of specific questions that were asked by the interviewer during an individual interview session with each student-athlete. Follow-up questions were added to the protocol and used in cases where they were applicable to the participant's experiences. (See Appendix A for the interview protocol.)

A pilot study of the interview questions was conducted in July and August of 2010 in order to ensure the interview protocol was properly structured in both question order and in depth. After completing three interviews, reviewing the interview recording, and reflecting on the content of the interviews in relation to the research questions and relevant themes, modifications were made to the interview protocol data collection process in order to enhance participants' responses. These modifications were made after noticing some initial patterns in the respondents' comments (data), in order to ensure that the remaining participants would be prompted to speak to these aspects during their interviews.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher using a responsive interviewing model (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), which allows the interview to be adapted to the personality and interviewing style of each interviewee. The responsive interviewing approach was used as a means of learning about the student-athletes' vocational identity development from their own perspective. The interviewer also asked about (a) resources they perceived as available to them to help in developing their vocational identity, (b) obstacles that interfered with their vocational

identity development, (c) influences on their vocational identity development, and (d) how their athletic identity contributed to their vocational identity development.

Procedure

The recruitment of participants for this study began by contacting the university's athletic department to request its assistance in informing student-athletes about the study and asking for their voluntary participation. Space (rooms) for interviews in the athletics building were also requested. Such rooms provided a familiar place for the student-athlete participants and were easily accessible to them.

In July 2010 and again on January 2011, an email was sent to all student-athletes asking for their voluntary participation in this study (see Appendix D). Interested participants were asked to email the researcher to coordinate a time for completing the demographic questionnaire and the interview. Student-athletes were interviewed in either the athletics building, in one of their tutoring center rooms, or in a private meeting room in the university union. Upon arrival for the interview, participants completed the demographic questionnaire and reviewed and signed an informed consent statement (see Appendix B) for their participation in the study. Afterwards, the researcher introduced herself as the primary investigator for this study and briefed participants on how the interview would proceed. The researcher encouraged the participants to talk freely in the interview. The interviewer explained to each participant that she was not employed by the athletics department and that their anonymity would be preserved. They were also told that they could return to any question during the interview if they had thought of something they later wanted to add.

Data were derived from the participants' responses to the questions used on the semi-structured protocol, as well as from their responses to other questions asked by the researcher

during the interview as a part of the responsive interviewing model. A semi-structured protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) was used to allow further questions or probes to be asked in areas that were unique to each participant. The semi-structured protocol seemed appropriate for the study as it kept the interview structured but allowed for individual participant differences that occurred in each interview.

Interviews were conducted using a responsive interviewing model (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) which adapted to the personality and interviewing style of each interviewer. Rubin and Rubin (2005) report that the responsive interviewing model is designed to have similarities to normal conversation, in that rapport should be build, empathy should be shown by the interviewer, and narratives and other stories should be a part of the interview. Throughout the interview, interviewers started with a topic in mind, and then modified their questions to match the knowledge and interests of the interviewees. Rubin and Rubin (2005) comment that this is done because "(q)ualitativeresearch is not simply learning about a topic, but also learning what is important to those being studied." (p. 15). They also state the importance of reflecting on interviews immediately thereafter, and to think about how the interview could be improved.

Questions from the interview protocol were developed around each of the research questions posed in this study (see Chapter 1). Interviews varied in length and ranged from approximately 25 minutes to one hour and 25 minutes, depending on the responses of the participant. Interviews were digitally audio recorded and transferred by the researcher to a digital file that was locked with a password for security purposes. All files were encrypted and each was assigned a participant code number to ensure confidentiality.

During the interview, the researcher listened to the participants' responses and posed additional questions (probes) about their answers until she was confident that the responses were

fully understood. Although each participant was asked a standard set of questions, follow-up questions varied considerably depending on the nature and content of the participants' responses. Although some of the questions were lengthy or confusing to some participants, the researcher noted other ways of wording questions or allowed the participant to clarify the questions. Participants often asked if they were answering a question adequately after they had given a response and the researcher would clarify whether their answer was clear and made sense to the researcher.

During the interview phase, all interviews were completed by the primary researcher, thereby eliminating variability if multiple interviewers had been used, and serving to increase reliability.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data began by transcribing all interviews from the digital audio files on to a personal computer. The researcher transcribed all interviews verbatim. Gibbs (2007) has noted that having the researcher transcribe the data allows one to start data analysis, become familiar with the content of the data, and start generating ideas about the data. The process of transcription of all interviews was also checked thoroughly to ensure there were no blatant mistakes in the data. For the process of transcription, a free software program, Express Scribe (NCH Software, 2010), was used to playback the audio files. A USB transcription foot pedal was used to assist with the transcription process. During this process, any themes, ideas, or questions to be examined further were notated in the file. A process of open coding the data began after all interviews were transcribed.

Five graduate students assisted with the coding of the transcripts, each serving as a reader and reviewing at least two transcripts to increase inter-rater reliability and bring multiple

perspectives to interpreting the data (i.e., reduce bias). Each of the 14 transcripts was reviewed and coded by the researcher and at least one independent reader. In order to help eliminate any bias, the independent readers were given little knowledge about the study, no information of the participants in the study (other than what could be gathered from the transcript itself), and no hypotheses or working conceptual framework on the preliminary findings of the study. The majority of readers had previous experience doing qualitative coding, and the researcher worked with readers without experience to ensure they understood how to code transcripts properly. Readers were instructed to designate their codes as specifically as they could in order for the researcher to understand what the respondents were trying to say, but broadly enough to fit within categories or themes within the data. This process helped increase both inter-rater reliability and the validity of the findings when codes were agreed upon across multiple readers, and it pointed to where further examination of the codes was needed when they did not match.

HyperRESEARCH (Researchware, 2009), a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program, was used to code the data and maintain the codebook. All transcripts were coded using the software, and a codebook was created on the basis of the codes entered. After all codes were entered, reports were generated using the software to examine code frequencies and case appearance frequencies (see Appendix F for codebook). Case appearance frequencies refer to the number of transcripts (out of 14) within which a particular code was assigned.

Consistent with a grounded theory approach, the process first consisted of going through each passage of the transcript and applying a relevant category for each *passage*; this is commonly referred to as *open coding* (Gibbs, 2007). A passage can be a sentence, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs within a transcript that can be coded with a single idea or concept (code). This process was repeated for each transcript. Next, *axial coding* was done. This is the process of

consolidating, refining, developing and connecting themes Finally, *selective coding* was done, during which core themes—themes that tie the codes together into a coherent story—were identified. At the end of the initial analysis, recoding was done to consolidate the open codes from the first analysis. This was done multiple times in order to adequately capture themes, concepts, and typology of the vocational process for student-athletes.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) outlined a series of steps to facilitate in the development of clear and consistent definitions of concepts and themes: (a) What am I going to call/label it? (b) How am I defining it? (c) How am I going to recognize it in the interviews? (d) What do I want to exclude? (e) What is an example? Using these questions, the researcher went through the process of re-reading interview transcripts and examining codes for predominate themes and related concepts to vocational development in student-athletes.

The researcher read through transcripts, line-by-line, as per the process suggested in grounded theory. After the process of coding, codes were then consolidated and sorted into related concepts, similar to what we might see in the process of selective coding, described above. After all of the coding was completed, I printed out a copy of the entire active codebook, and began to sort all the codes by apparent themes, and the questions they answered. While the majority of codes were classified into one of the categories devised (27 categories total), a small amount of codes remained unclassified.

After devising a list of initial code categories, the researcher began the process of consolidation and assigning categories to the research question they have a role in answering. Some categories were also reassigned as a sub-category as a part of consolidation. A final outline of all of these categories was devised, and became the guidelines for the results portion of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study was driven by an interest in understanding the processes affecting the development of vocational identity for collegiate student-athletes. Questions were created to help guide and structure the researcher on how to answer the initially broad research issue. These questions included: (a) What kinds of resources do student-athletes feel are available to them, and how do they choose or not choose to use them? More specifically, what resources are student-athletes taking advantage of for their vocational development provided by the athletic department, the university or another source? (b) How have their experiences over the years brought change to how they feel about their future career path? (c) What kinds of obstacles keep student athletes from being in their optimal path for career exploration? (d) What influences do student-athletes perceive as affecting the development of their vocational identity? and (e) How do student-athletes perceive their career development in relation to their athletic identity? What transferable skills do they perceive from their experiences in athletics?

The results of this study are organized into two sections by the themes found within the data. The first section discusses the students' perceptions of their experiences as participants in athletics at the Division I collegiate level. Although these are not directly related to the career decision-making process, these experiences were shown to be somewhat connected to the participants' vocational identity development process. These experiences reflect the psychology of student-athletes, laying the foundation for the next section, "Finding a Path." This section looks further at the process of choosing a career path for student-athletes and what influences this process.

The overall goal of this chapter is to describe the main themes and ideas identified in the interviews with the students as they related to the research questions discussed in Chapter I. Interpretations of these findings will be discussed in Chapter V.

The Athletics Experience

Childhood Histories in Athletics

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to provide a brief summary of their involvement in athletics, starting from childhood. A majority of participants indicated that they had been in some form of athletics most of their life and that they tried to play any sport they could.

Ben, like many of the participants in this study, reported playing sports at a very young age and playing multiple sports. "I had three older brothers growing up, and so we always just played sports outside. [I played] competitively start[ing] in 2nd grade in soccer. I played that until about 5th grade, and then I started playing tackle football, and I have played football ever since. I've also played basketball and ran track until about 10th-11th grade, and then I just focused on football."

Annie talked about the influence of her family (specifically her older brothers) in her involvement in sport. "Yeah, and my older brothers are very athletic too, they got me to play basketball in the driveway, because my oldest brother is 8 years older, and he would be out there with his friends and here I am, 6 [years old], like 'guys can I play?' and stuff like that."

Participants revealed that most grew up in an environment that supported athletics involvement. Additionally, many began in active competitions at a young age. And it appeared that participants had been acculturated into athletics from early on in their lives.

Changes from High School to College Athletics

The progression of vocational identity development can span from the high school to college transition, and the data show that this can be difficult, especially for the student-athlete. A recurring theme among participants was a feeling of loss and having to start at the bottom again after being a star on their high school team, while at the same time adjusting to the schedule of a Division I collegiate student-athlete.

Lacey reported the downside of being a top performer in high school and then coming to college and finding she had to start over again. “My first two years [in college athletics were difficult]. You’re used to being the best at your high school, so that was a really big [change]. You’re used to, no offense to some people, [but] you just get used to blowing them out [of the competition] and not even worrying about it, and then your confidence is high. You come here [to college] and all of a sudden you’re last on the roster, and you’re like, ‘Well I’m not even going to get a chance to play.’ Your confidence goes low and your game isn’t there anymore. So like to build that back up takes a lot.”

Sandy grew up in a rural area with little exposure to Division I competition. She stated that college was one of her first experiences of failure. “Just the competition [at the Division I level] was way different. I wouldn’t say it was a lot different from what I had expected; it’s just that I had never been so unsuccessful at something I had tried so hard at before. Especially leading up to that point I was so successful, being [from] such a small town. But I knew it would be hard. I didn’t think I would fail as often as I did [in Division I athletics].”

Eli shared that his high school athletics experiences led him to feel that he was better than he actually was as a track athlete, and that this made him set his college athletics goals too high. “So coming off of my senior year of track [in high school], I won the one-mile, the two-mile, and state. And coming to college, I knew it was going to be hard, but I thought by the end I could do

well. Maybe I wanted to be an All-American at some point, and that never happened. And [I] just didn't quite get there. But looking back on it, I just didn't think I had a full idea or full view of what my athletic ability was, just because the competition was watered down [in high school]."

Although most college students experience the difficulty of academic and social transitions from high school to college, student-athletes also have to go through the transition within athletics from being a star player to starting at the bottom. This is often when a student-athlete realizes that making it as a professional athlete may not be so easy.

Personality Traits and Attitudes Held by Student-Athletes

A notable theme that emerged from the data was the idea of types of personality that encourage vocational identity development in young adults. The following personality traits and attitudes were the most frequently occurring among the 14 participants in relation to the questions asked about their vocational identity development.

Independence. A prominent personality trait that emerged in the interviews with participants was a sense of independence, self-reliance, and self-motivation required throughout their lives to achieve their goals in athletics, academics, and life itself.

One of the participants (Casey) shared that her parents could not afford to pay for her college education after their divorce, and that she was a "walk-on" student-athlete who worked part-time jobs to pay for her tuition and to make ends meet. "I was never financially supported [by my parents or college]. I had to run [track] for myself to go to college. So my choice to work through high school and pay for college was the biggest thing, was my parents wanting me to work or not, and [they] supported it. That was the biggest part in being able to go through with the degree I have and get through college [without financial support]. [My] parents let me work [because] they knew they couldn't put me through college."

When asked if she liked having an athletics counselor to whom to be accountable during her undergraduate years, Sandy, a graduate student, replied that her sense of independence and self-motivation was likely above average. “I felt like I was very accountable to myself, so I never really felt like I needed somebody, which is why I think nobody [athletics counselors] really sought me out. I never felt like I really need[ed] to be sought out. There’s other people that maybe weren’t thinking about [career plans] yet, that needed someone to kinda push them.”

It should be noted that the majority of codes assigned to transcripts in the “independent” theme were assigned to participants who were graduate students (4 of 6). Consequently, this may be reflective of the sort of personality or temperament needed to be a successful graduate student.

Openness to new experiences. Openness, another personality trait, was the most commonly occurring personality-themed code. Twelve of the 14 participants mentioned some form of openness to new experiences in regard to their careers as athletes and as students. In reflecting on the psychosocial stages of development, individuals with openness to experiences may be categorized as being in identity moratorium, where a crisis (deciding on a career path) is present, but no decision has been made as the person is still exploring their options. As mentioned in the Chapter II, career adaptability and openness to career path changes are becoming highly desired skills to have as an employee in order to adapt to the frequently changing landscape of the workforce.

Some student-athletes talked about their college experience overall as a place to grow developmentally, challenging one’s thoughts and ideas about the world outside of their hometown. Jacob talked about his experience in college as a mind-opening experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. “And then just being more open-minded, especially coming

to [the university], it doesn't necessarily have to do with athletics, but coming to [the university] definitely opened my mind up to a lot of academic subjects and topics that I didn't know [about], that I didn't have very much information about [previously]. And, um, just the types of friends and social life that I have, too, as well, through players, and just students that I have had in classes [have brought diverse perspectives to my life]."

Participants also talked about an openness to experience in regards to their decision-making process. Jamie discussed how, during the time she was a student in high school, she decided to participate in a collegiate-level sport. "Actually I won everything *but* the state championship [in high school], so I just took it and ran [at college]. I was like, 'Why not?'" This openness to try new things was commonly noted among the participants.

Some of the participants talked about the importance of having back-up plans for their intended career plan, in case their plans did not work out the way they expect. Craig, a freshman in football, talked about the importance of "Plan B" and how athletics staff make sure student-athletes considering "going pro" still need to think about their career path after sport. "You need to match that [dedication to athletics] academically, because for a lot of people, football is going to end after college. You need that degree to fall on—to be able to do what you want to do. My athletic advisor, she's even telling me, 'Football is going to end, whether its college or NFL, and you are going to need to do something [else vocationally].' She stresses it more than the coaches do."

Determination. Another prominent personality characteristic that appeared throughout the interviews was a clear sense of determination and competitiveness among the participants. Some participants expressed a need to prove others wrong if told they couldn't do something, and others stated they used obstacles to push themselves to achieve their goals. While this

determination is a highly desirable characteristic among athletes, it also spread to other roles and aspects of their lives.

Jamie was told by an employer at a career fair that she had "too much personality" for a certain career path and she was upset at being told that she could not do something. "I was furious. They gave me this huge packet because they wanted me to intern with them. I honestly don't remember because I cared so little about that company and I immediately went and talked to another company. I can't remember the name now, but they [were] a financial place and so I was talking with them a lot longer because [I] don't [want them to] tell me what I can't do. You might think I am more outgoing than I should be for that job."

Joseph's sense of determination was brought out by professors and faculty telling him that he would not make it in his major while being a student-athlete. "Everybody [has an] opinion. But I know what I can and cannot do. I know my limits, and I know that I can do it. Obviously if [a professor] says that [I can't do it], I'm not going to say, 'I can too!' But you take it with a grain of salt and use it as an obstacle to push you. [They say] 'You can't do it'--watch me. I'll play [my sport] and I'll get a degree and I will come back to your office and say, 'Hey look I was player of the week, and I'm an engineer.'" From Joseph's response, it is clear that using the doubts of others, that he would not be successful in his major because of his involvement in athletics, helped fuel his determination to succeed.

Annie discussed how stereotyping of student-athletes also tended to bring out her inner sense of determination. "I think sometimes [stereotyping] almost gives you a drive to sound more intelligent. You want to go in and just want to sound knowledgeable. And almost not in the sense of [being] better than other people, but that you've put in just as much work and effort, if

not more, and you're there because you earned your spot to be there. And you know what you are doing and what is going on, and so that helps balance the role."

Although determination is an important part of being an athlete, it is also an important part of being a student-athlete as well.

Positivity and optimism. Positivity and optimism were other common personality characteristics among the 14 participants. Often these related to optimism in the job search process or in finding a suitable career path after professional athletics aspirations were no longer a possibility. Other participants expressed the importance of a positive attitude in achieving life goals.

Joseph's sense of connectedness (that "everything happens for a reason"), along with a positive attitude, assisted him with his transition away from sport. "I believe that you can find a positive thing out of every negative situation, and it makes your whole outlook, your whole situation, a lot better. I truly believe that God has been directing me slowly away from sports. Because I was SOOO much into [sports] when I was younger, if it [had] just crashed all at once, it would be really bad. But with that injury, I [took] a little time off, then I came back [to my sport]. [I had] another injury, [took] a little time off, got back into it. [I was] red-shirt[ed], [had a] little time off, got back into it. I think it's slowly weaned me from the game, and in an easy manner. So instead of looking [at the situation] like, 'Man I keep getting all of these frickin' injuries? Why does this keep happening to me?' Maybe it's just the Good Lord pushing me in the right direction that he sees fit; that's going to make me be that successful person that I aspire to be."

Casey reflected on a student-athlete that she had tutored, and how the power of a negative mindset can steer others away from what they truly desire. "The student-athlete that I was

tutoring had [an advanced physics class], it [was] like her only class left to graduate. She just had a mindset that she can't do it, and it's sad--dropping out of the course again and settling for a different degree. But she wanted to get the more prestigious degree, so she had to get this physics class done if she wanted to do it. She was my teammate too, so she's my friend. But it was so hard to communicate things to her because she already had the predetermined mindset that she couldn't do it. But in athletics, she's going to the Olympic trials, [so] the level of commitment isn't across the board for some athletes. They can be so committed to being an athlete, that nothing else matters."

As with determination, a positive attitude can assist with finding new potential career paths and using positivity. At the same time, going through the vocational development process can keep identity foreclosure from cutting the potential of a student-athlete short.

Able to see the "big picture." A personality trait that is commonly depicted in the classic personality assessment Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998) is the ability to see "the big picture" when making decisions. Some of the participants spoke of using this quality when they were making career decisions or when speaking about participation in their sport. The foundation of this theme was the demonstration of participants' knowledge of things that require time, patience, and nurturing to gain the full benefits, such as networking or finishing a college degree.

Jacob, a senior, was looking for a position on a coaching staff following graduation in a few months. He stated that networking was an essential aspect to his career goals. "Basically, in the college athletics scene, it's not necessarily <u>what</u> you know, it's 99% of <u>who</u> you know. That's the main avenue that I need to be going down right now…is trying to make contact with people. So that's what I am currently doing."

Sandy, a graduate student, was well aware of the importance of using networking in the pursuit of her career goals. She told a story of attending a career fair as a freshman, unsure as to why she went in the first place. "Well, I mean I was completely nervous when I talked to him [career fair employer]. He told me later that he was just so amazed that some freshman in college showed up. I did a lot of events with a lot of different firms, so I would see the same group of people from the firms probably five, six times a year. Over the course of four years, it's a decent amount of interaction. So I got to know people; I got to know them without them realizing they got to know about me. So when it was time for me to say I want to go to New York, they were more than happy to refer me. [This] versus somebody walking in and saying 'Hi, this is what I look like on a piece of paper and refer me to New York.' So I credit that course of interaction over the years to why I am going to New York."

Respect for Athletes. A less frequently occurring theme, but noteworthy nonetheless, was the participants' demonstration of a respect for athletes, and some saw their athletics participation as a bonus activity with their education.

Tammy stated that having a sense of sportsmanship and respect for athletes provided a good foundation for building relationships with others. "Being respectful to other people. Having good sportsmanship is one thing, but it takes a lot when you lose to another team to be sure to tell them 'good game.' I think that's more than being a good sport; it's being respectful, which will be helpful in the job field."

Setting high goals. The desire to set high goals for oneself was a frequent theme among participants, and it demonstrated that student-athletes are not afraid to take the rocky road to get to their goal.

Jamie discussed how she chose her university by how she would need to work for her worth on her team. "Actually, the only Division I schools recruiting [me] were XXXX University and YYYY State, which worked out, so then I knew, ZZZZZ College was [telling me], 'Alright you are going to be our number one runner from like the mile to the 10k, right off the bat,' and I didn't want that. And I knew with YYYY State, he sat down and was like, 'You're going to be in our top five right away,' and I was like, 'I don't want that.' So XXXX University, they were, like, 'So we can see you being on the travel team, but you are going to have to work hard.' And I wanted that. I didn't want to just be given the spot. I wanted to work and prove myself."

Zach, a graduate student, discussed his experiences tutoring and teaching students that were very challenging at first. "I see confused looks [from students] every now and again, then I have to reword it so all of these [students] can describe it. But now I [know] how can I reach that particular person. So that's given me a good sense of how to present things. Because teaching is all about communication. And if students can relate to you, it's like magic; it's like everything else just falls into place." Zach further described his sense of reward and accomplishment while teaching students what he was passionate about, and how he was looking forward to the day he would become a university professor.

Athletics as an Obstacle to Career and Vocational Identity Development

As addressed in Chapters I and II, student-athletes can experience several obstacles along the path to vocational identity development. During the interviews, participants were asked if they had experienced (or anticipated) any obstacles or barriers to their vocational identity development. They were also asked if they were satisfied with their involvement with their

career development. Participants frequently commented on experiences that caused conflicts between their dual roles as student and athlete.

Athletics as an obstacle to vocational identity development. When asked about barriers or obstacles to their careers, many participants directly stated that their involvement in athletics, being a student-athlete, inhibited their ability to be involved academically and vocationally. Eight participants cited athletics as a barrier to vocational identity development activities. Participants also talked about the role of high levels of athletic identity on vocational identity development as a potential barrier to being open and flexible to new career paths.

After being asked what barriers she perceived to be in the way of developing her future career, Gina shared that her intense athletics experience left her with a sense of emptiness about who she is and what her future would be. "Definitely just being an athlete [is an obstacle], period. I mean, I hate to say that that's an obstacle, but when you are missing so much class and doing different things, your mindset…--I don't want to say is not on school, but it's like, you want to do so good at this sport that, I know for some people, or even me sometimes you will be like so caught up in that sport…it's a part of your life. And then I think people just get shocked [when it's over] and then they are done. And then it's like, 'Okay, this [sport] isn't a part of my life anymore; now what do I do?' Because I feel like even now, I still feel like, what am I going to do [after sport]?"

In other cases, participants simply stated that athletics always received priority over academic activities. Jacob shared that in his field (education), students were expected to complete outside work to gain experience prior to graduation; but it was not possible for him. "In education they tell you to try to volunteer at high schools, middle schools, or get a job in the summer where you can work with kids, so you can put that all on your résumé. I didn't have the

time to do that just because I did give that [time] to football. And in the summers, we had to be up here for workouts, so I didn't have time to do [any volunteering]. So I dedicated it more to football, than my future after college."

Sandy cited another type of barrier to vocational identity development. She explained that at one point she had become an officer of a student club while she was a student-athlete and that she was afraid her team and coaches would discover her secret. "I always felt like the two things [academics and athletics] were very separate. Like I said, it wasn't like my coaches weren't supportive. But it was like, here is all the stuff I need to do for basketball, and I felt like if I let them know about anything I was doing on the side, that would appear like I was not focused, not committed, or that I was trying to do other stuff enough. So I always tried to keep it separate, like I said the honor societies that I was in and stuff…"

These responses just display some of the barriers to vocational identity development as a student-athlete, as there were a variety of responses from participants regarding their experiences with these obstacles.

Lack of time. As discussed in the introductory chapter, student-athletes are no strangers to busy schedules. During their in-season, student-athletes often awake in the early hours to workout, attend classes during the day, attend team meetings in the late afternoon, attend practice during the early evening, and spend the final hours of their day studying or working with a tutor. On the days competitions take place, student-athletes may have to miss classes and other opportunities to engage academically or occupationally. Almost without exception, participants stated that their busy schedules allowed little time for vocational identity development, produced scheduling conflicts with their academic role, and created barriers to their social lives.

Like Jacob, Annie was involved in education, a major that requires considerable of outside experiences as a part of the degree program. She shared her desire to participate in these experiences but that her schedule limited her ability to do so. “I know that there are things like Read for America and stuff like that. There are other programs that I would like to participate in, and I know I should because it’s just going to look better [on a résumé]. But it comes back to the thing of oh, it’s conflicting [with athletics], and I don’t really have time to do that. And I get one day off on Sunday, and what am I going to do on Sunday anyway? I want to sleep.”

Ben, a senior, also expressed a similar sentiment. “Personally, I think there is more that I could be doing [to develop vocational identity], like research and to obviously be getting more experience. But due to the time constraints, after I’m done I just want to sleep.”

Casey discussed how she successfully did it all by living out of her car during the day. “Just do it. You run from thing to thing. You leave the house at 6:00 in the morning, to go to school to do homework when it’s quiet on campus. I know I’m going to stay on campus for the next 16 hours straight. It’s planning ahead; it’s bringing enough food with you to not perish after a workout or two during the day, thrown in there. And I lived off campus, so having a car on campus—that’s my locker where I keep my extra books that I can switch out. Just planning ahead. It can all get done, yeah you’d have to miss some things to go to other things, but...”

Lack of time has numerous consequences for student-athletes’ academic and their vocational identity development, including lack of time for occupational engagement. Another consequence reported by participants was the high degree of stress and mental exhaustion—the topic of the next section.

Pressure, stress, and mental exhaustion. The stress and high pressures of being a student, as well as a Division I athlete can be incredibly high, especially when added together.

Stress, pressure, and mental exhaustion were typically cited due to an excessively busy schedule, the high demands of being both a student and an athlete, and the pressure to consistently perform well in both domains.

Gina discussed the high levels of stress that accompany Division I play and a busy student schedule. "On my busiest days, I go to practice in the morning, I go to class, I go to practice in the afternoon, and then I might go to tutoring and do some homework. But then all I'll be thinking about is 'I have to go to sleep so I can go to practice again.' It [sports] just takes so much of your time, and I feel like you just want to focus on it [on competing in sport] so hard and the coaches don't try to put pressure on you, but they try to put into you 'Every meet is important. This is important, you only have these four years to do this.' You're like, 'Okay. I think a lot of people think I only have these four years, I have to do everything I want to do now.' But at the same time, you still have to get this degree, and then get a job. So you have two important things that you have to be like, 'Okay, I have four years, hurry up and get all of these things [related to school] done now.' And then for sport, you're like 'I want to be a [conference] champion, or whatever, I want to do this I have to hurry-up.' It's just a lot."

Joseph shared the change he experienced from high school to college athletics, particularly the risk of losing a spot on the team for a lack of performance or poor time management. "You know in high school I played centerfield. I played centerfield for four years. I had a spot [on the team], I didn't have to stay for practice and hit 1000 baseballs. I didn't have to go run two miles. I'd go home, sit with my girlfriend, play XBOX, go to bed, go to school, and just go to practice. I would have the same spot. Here, if I go home, play XBOX, go to school, then go to practice, I'm going to get passed up. I'm not going to have a spot. So there is more time and dedication towards it. But with the school…that's where it comes back to you in how

you manage it all. I've been in an indoor hitting cage that we go to, and I've been in there at 1:00-2:00 in the morning because I have to get the work in, because I postponed it. But it's because where my schedule for that certain day has allotted for me to be able to do that, so."

Lacey, a major in journalism, stated that there was often a lot of stress when her school schedule and her athletic practices conflicted. She expressed a wish for free time in order to get organized and to have time for other work experiences in a demanding major. "You don't really have that much time to sit there and really get detailed, and spend a few days just getting your act together. [The lack of time is] real stressful. Even working with a TV station on campus or in Lawrence, they want you to have a certain amount of hours blocked off, to be able to do a shift. And I can't do that. I had to switch my classes to do a web design, versus a TV [position] and producing, because last semester when I did it, I had to take a day off of practice, and then make up for it that night. [I had to] practice by myself, and then you miss all week with the team."

Stress can be the result of a variety of variables for a student-athlete, including the high pressures of competition, completing academic requirements and experiences, lack of sleep, extensive physical exertion, and the lack of free time to relax and relieve stress.

Athletic politics. A generally unknown side of collegiate athletics is the politics that can make or break professional careers. Many are aware of the NCAA as a regulating body of collegiate athletics, sanctioning both institutions and athletes for inappropriate behavior. But there are also rules and guidelines on any team that are influenced by the broader policies and rules of the athletics department itself and that create a complicated web of unwritten cultural norms and rules.

Joseph explained the complexity of being a college walk-on student-athlete and how that affects getting playing time and the establishment of the reputation of the coach. "You can make

the team in college, and not be on any money [scholarship]. Then if Outfielder A has money, Outfielder B doesn't have money, well then Outfielder A that has money also has the coach's reputation. Because if Outfielder B plays [during the game] with no money, and Outfielder A that does have money [but does not play], it makes the coach look like he doesn't know what he is doing. So [the coach is] going to give [Outfielder] A as many chances as he can have to be able to perform [well], so when he does [play well], [it] justifies the money that [Outfielder A] is on. Whereas with [Outfielder] B, if B has more playing time, it doesn't justify the reason for B [having more playing time] having no money. See all the politics in there? Whereas in high school, you don't have politics." Joseph is basically saying that if a coach increases the playing time for players who do not have a scholarship, and benches those players that do have a scholarship, his reputation for choosing and funding good athletes is questioned, and his reputation is questioned as well as his effectiveness as a coach. It is these types of politics that can have a strong influence on the career paths of student-athletes.

Lacey gave an example of how much influence coaches have over their student-athletes. "[For] example, I'm trying to get the girls on the [student athlete] advisory committee. One girl is all super down [excited] for it, and the other girl is like, 'Well maybe if I can make it.' But then the coach says something [about joining the committee], and [they said] 'Oh gosh, what time should we be there?' So it's like a completely different mindset of them, it could just be our girls, but…"

Jacob elaborated more on why the majority of walk-ons have to work harder than student-athletes on scholarship in both athletics and academics, "Yeah that's actually a pretty big thing in pretty much any [athletic] program in the country. If you are going to come as a walk-

on, you got to have good grades, and usually the requirements are higher for walk-ons than they are for [athletes on] scholarship. I guess [that's] the way it is as far as that goes."

Although athletic politics are not a direct influence on vocational identity development, they may indirectly affect it by influencing in what activities a student-athlete can get involved inside or outside of athletics in order to promote occupational engagement.

Academic policies. Although a university has its own set of rules and policies for its students, an athletics department is regulated by the NCAA's rules and policies, in addition to its own and those of the university. Some participants discussed the policies and issues within their university experience that come up when their two worlds collide.

For example, Eli discussed his displeasure with the consequences of wanting to change his major following his sophomore year. "Well, I decided probably by the end of my sophomore year that I probably wanted to lean in a different direction. I would have liked to have gotten a business major or some sort of marketing or finance major, probably finance. But because of NCAA regulations, I was stuck where I was. The best I could do was get a business minor." Eli had started in a science field--a completely different field from business—and was, under NCAA rules, not allowed to change his major since student-athletes need to have a certain number of credits completed toward their major each successive year in school. If Eli were to have changed majors, he would have risked his eligibility as a student-athlete and his scholarship.

Another issue that arises in academic situations pertains to student class attendance and participation. Many courses have a portion of a student's grade based on attendance and participation, but student-athletes frequently have competitions during the week that cause them to leave class early or to miss classes completely. Such absences potentially affect their grade. While some professors may be willing to accommodate student-athletes, Carolyn recalled

instances during her undergraduate experience when professors were not especially understanding about such absences. “But there’s also those professors that are like, ‘if you miss class, you’re not going to get the points for being here, you can’t retake your quiz.’ I’ve never been in a situation where they haven’t let me retake a test, but just quizzes and attendance points.”

Craig, a freshman, reported hearing similar stories from his fellow student-athletes. “Some teachers aren’t happy with it because you’re missing class, you’re missing their time. You have your sport time; you need to be there for class; that’s the main thing. [Being] a student-athlete here is getting along with all of the teachers as being a student-athlete, making them happy and the coaches happy, and everyone happy at the same time. And that’s probably going to be one of the hardest obstacles here.”

Some policies and rules can make opportunities for vocational identity development more difficult for student-athletes, and this will be discussed in later sections.

Athletics as a Benefit to Vocational Identity Development

Participants were able to identify numerous benefits to being involved in athletics that contributed to vocational identity development. The benefits clustered into four categories: transferable skills, social benefits, financial assistance, and overall benefits.

Transferable skills. Within vocational psychology, transferable skills refer to learned skills that can be easily transferred to and used in many occupations. In light of the fact that multiple career changes often occur over the course of a person’s lifetime, both employers and employees increasingly value transferable skills. Examples of transferable skills discussed by the participants were the following: time management, a strong work ethic, self-discipline, team effort/teamwork, learning how to prioritize, and goal setting.

Joseph shared how his first year in college was a learning experience in terms of prioritizing and self-discipline. “I pull out a whopping 2.36 [GPA] that semester, because I chose to go to the bar [rather] than study for a test. Well then you make a 15 [%] on the test, you say ‘Hey, that wasn’t that great of an idea to go to the bar,’ so the next time the test came around… you don’t go to the bar. You learn, ‘Hey I need to study for this test,’ and make a better grade on the test. Same with baseball, if you have homework that’s due that night, and you have a game starting at 7:00, you do the homework before the game.”

Sandy stated that teamwork was a valuable skill to take away from athletics. “[With] so many different types of people [in the workforce]…you don’t get to choose who you work with. You don’t get to choose who is on your team either. But in your normal life you get to choose your friends, and you do get to choose who you surround yourself with. So I think the fact of being on a team and having to work with people you didn’t necessarily want to be around will help me in my job.”

Ben discussed a phrase, often used by coaches, that he transferred to his future in business. “I think just being on time and having the discipline, beyond other things because if you are not on time for football, it’s not pretty. In the business world it’s kind of the same thing. Be early. You know at my junior college, the coaches had a saying, ‘If you are early, you’re on time; if you’re on time, you’re late; and if you’re late, don’t bother showing up.’ So that’s just something modeled for me outside of football that in general practice could be beneficial for future reference.”

There were a number of other transferable skills identified by participants that student-athletes could apply to their future careers.

Social benefits. Another area of benefit cited by participants was having social connections and relationships with teammates that go beyond traditional friendships. Especially in team sports, where student-athletes spend much of their time with their teammates (e.g., traveling to competitions and working together), a strong bond can be formed within the team.

Annie stated that the friendships made as a part of being on a team were deep and everlasting. "This [sport] is giving you friends that are actually going to be your friends through and through. You did all of this crazy stuff together; it just forms this really deep bond. Maybe we aren't going to talk every day, but you see them and you just pick up where you left off. It's a real friendship, so I think that helps too."

Jacob also shared Annie's sentiment relating to the value of friendships made in sport. "Just being able to hang out with all of your teammates and everything. The vast majority of the time, [you] make friendships that will last for a long time, is probably the best."

Lacey connected the social aspects and culture of athletics to her anticipated future career in journalism. "For me I just think knowing other athletes, because I want to be involved in the athletic world. There's only a few that I will actually end up talking about [as a sportscaster], for example, but I think it helps because then if I interview them later in life, I know about their sport from getting to know them, from being around them a lot. I know all their background; like there's a crap-ton of background things that you don't even realize. When I came in as a freshman, not knowing like the recruiting process, what goes on behind the scenes, like all these things you just don't even realize [happen in athletics]. So being a part of it, I think, is a huge advantage."

Financial assistance. A small number of participants commented that being involved in collegiate athletics also entails some financial assistance, typically pertaining to scholarships and other services normally not available to other students.

Annie shared that one motivation for her to keep athletics as a priority was the financial assistance she receives as a student-athlete. “But it comes back to the thing of telling yourself that what you are doing [athletics] is more than going somewhere for a week, like this is helping paying for your school, this is helping you with these marketable qualities later down the road.”

Other benefits. Beyond transferable skills, social benefits, and financial assistance, participants also listed additional benefits. These varied, but the most popular responses were: fun, provides personal growth, athletics as a “healthy distraction,” being a student-athlete builds character, and the opportunity to be a role model to others.

Joseph remarked that his athletics experience provided numerous opportunities for personal growth. “It’s all worth it. It’s worth the weightlifting at 5 in the morning. It’s worth the four-mile runs. It might not be at that certain point in time. It might not be all that great in the now, but [you] look at in the future, what’s it going to do for you. It’s going to build things about yourself; it’s going to help you become a certain type of person - the person that you are going to look for. So, just those simple things.”

Zach talked about how much he enjoyed running both as a student-athlete and now post-sport. “So it’s been my first time running *not* for school, and I really enjoy it. It’s a beautiful transition, because I’m growing more, there are other responsibilities in my life, but I’m still able to exercise. I’m not as fast as I could have been, but I’m still just as sharp running-wise as I have ever been.”

Annie shared that she believed her involvement in athletics kept her busy but also kept her out of trouble. “Sometimes I think that maybe if I hadn’t done sports I might not do so well in college just because I would fill my time with getting wasted every night or something else. I know I would fill my time with stupid things, being on Facebook too much, or whatever. So I [would] pretty much spend the time [I would be] at practice doing something that’s not productive, and then maybe your grades are worse, but sports has helped with that.”

Overall, participants agreed that their participation in collegiate athletics offered significant benefits, including those that were transferable to future occupations, creating lasting relationships and social skills, providing a college degree, and an overall benefit to their psychological and physical well-being.

The Role and Meaning of Being a Student-Athlete

During their interviews, participants were asked, “What does it mean to be a student-athlete to you?” and “What does being in athletics give to you?” Responses to these questions were varied, but common among them was that being a student-athlete provided them with an athletic lifestyle and helped them stay in shape, and provided “flow” experiences (often referred to as “being in the zone”). Also noted were that the collegiate athletics experience prepared them for possible professional athletic careers and provided them with intrinsic motivation. Beyond these responses, participants commonly shared the belief that “I don’t want to be normal” or “normal life is boring.” The participants also indicated that they wanted to challenge themselves with the task of competing in Division I athletics and being a full-time student.

Craig stated that his athletics experience in college was mostly to help him reach his NFL aspirations. “Football has what is going to help me to get to the NFL. That’s kind of all in one. We had this summer; I’ve had workouts at 6:30, 10:00 and 2:00. And because I’ve got classes all

day, my workouts have been 6:30 in the morning, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Wednesdays are a day off, and Fridays are team workouts at 5 o'clock in the morning, which is nuts. I am happy this week is optional. I have still been going in the morning, because I don't have any time during the afternoon. I have classes until 3:00 and then Monday [and] Wednesday I've got tutoring at 4:00, which is why I workout in the morning still. [It] gets it done, gets me going on my day. So I've been doing that, and then once camp starts, I think we're going from 3:00 in the morning until 10:00-11:00 at night, going to sleep and then doing the same thing. That's working out, meetings, and practice, and more meetings, so I think that's going to help get me into shape and get me into the NFL."

Flow, a concept made famous by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990), is a mental state of operation in which a person is fully immersed in an activity, feeling complete focus, involvement, and success in the process of the activity. Flow is also a common experience for athletes (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), as some participants shared. Jamie discussed her flow experiences as a means of providing enjoyment out of her athletics experiences. "It's fleeting. It doesn't happen very often. There are some long runs where you are like 'Kill me now. Why am I running 12 miles?' But then there are other times when you are just like, 'Oh my gosh, this is great!' and I am just pushing myself, like I am pounding the pace [of the run] and I am flying."

Zach shared that he was an athlete simply because he enjoyed the activity. "But I didn't do it [sports] for that, I did it because I liked it. I like running, and that's all there is to it. So I didn't finish a race thinking 'Now I can throw this line on there [my athletic wins]'--that's not it."

Certainly the role of the athletics experience was different across the participants, but commonly cited reasons involved personal and long-term benefits.

Identity, Role Engulfment, and Role Imbalance in Student-Athletes

A central focus of this study was the examination of how the two highly demanding roles of student and athlete affect vocational identity development. This section examines those effects further, looking specifically at reports of role engulfment, role imbalance, the effects of being a student-athlete on identity, and the role of childhood histories in athletics in developing identity.

Role engulfment in student-athletes. Role engulfment occurs when a single role for an individual serves as the sole basis or foundation of her/his identity. Within the present study, participants shared feelings or experiences that were suggestive of role engulfment—a feeling of being overly involved in their sport, of being unsure how to spend their free time outside of sport and academics, or of experiencing feelings of social isolation from the rest of the student body.

Jamie shared that at times she was scared of having free time. "What do you do when you have an afternoon free? I don't understand this. And of course now I still don't, which is something I am fine with. But it terrified me, more so now than in high school, because in high school I guess I just thought I would have fun [during free time]. But then I was like, 'I don't know what to do with free time. I don't know what free time is really.'"

When asked what advice he would give to future student-athletes, Jacob talked about the importance of finding friends outside the world of athletics. "I know that football, it's a great one [culture] to be a part of, and it can open up for routes in your social life--making friends. But don't just isolate yourself to the football team, socially. I think it's good to make friends outside of football. I was fortunate enough to have friends who came from my hometown who came here--one of my other roommates is [my] friend. I think it is important to, as far as socially, have

good friends within the football team and outside of the football team. Try to actually get involved with something--clubs outside of football, whatever you can-- [and] always go to class. That's the best way to do it. Don't isolate yourself. I think that is the biggest advice I could give to someone."

Gina expressed frustrations at getting too involved in her sport. "You want to do so good at this sport that like, I know like for some people, or even me sometimes, you [get] so caught up in that sport. It's a part of your life and then I think people just get shocked [w]hen they are done. And then it's like, 'Okay, this isn't a part of my life anymore, now what do I do?' Because I feel like even now, I still feel like, 'What am I going to do?'" She elaborated further regarding an interaction with an athletics advisor, "And I was like 'I don't know', and he [said] 'Well, what do you like to do?' and I [said] 'That's the thing, I don't really like doing anything except playing my sport.' That was like, 'So how do I get a job when I don't like doing anything but that?'"

Participants also discussed experiences that promoted a sense of role engulfment, such as the heavy schedule of a student-athlete, athletic training academies as young children, and struggling with thoughts of records and championships as an athlete being forgotten after they leave or graduate college.

Student-athlete identity effects on personal identity and growth. Throughout interviews, two themes from participants were expressed: the first was that many student-athletes perceived both themselves and their peers as different from non-student-athletes, and sometimes even above the average student. The second reflected participants' loss of individuality at times while being a student-athlete. Participants noted that while they are individuals, they are also a part of team, a sport, and a representative of their university.

When asked what being a student-athlete meant to her, Annie shared that she simply wanted to go beyond the traditional student experience. “I feel like it’s [the student-athlete experience] more than your traditional experience, as like, a human being. I‘ve already done more today than most people are going to do this whole week. I’ve already lifted for an hour and a half; I have another two and half hour practice this afternoon. I have a three-hour practice tomorrow and Saturday. We had a 5k [erg] test yesterday, and like when you get done with those, you literally fall off, and you just want to cry. You can’t even stand up; you hit yourself. And so I feel like being able to [make] time for all of that [after] we commit over 20 hours a week, which is more than a part-time job, and then I’m taking 22 hours of school this semester, so I am already hitting 45-50 hours gone from my week. Then you talk about like sleeping and eating. So by the end of the day, you [have] maybe 10 hours [per week of] to do what you really would want to do, like maybe something fun.”

Gina shared about the downsides of sharing identity with the university and athletics. “Like, this is University XXX. It’s like you have this weight from your coaches, the weight of the name ’University XXX‘ on your back. They always tell you you’re not you, you’re University XXX; so like I’m not like Gina, I’m University XXX, and me doing whatever represents University XXX, and you want to look good. It’s just like weight on your shoulders. And sometimes you do feel judged by other people. Just like just during your regular season, they are judging you as an athlete. I feel like that is just a lot of weight on your shoulders, just going out there. At certain meets they [coaches] will be like ‘Remember what’s across your chest; it’s University XXX; it’s not about you.’ But I mean it is about you.”

Participants shared their views about both the positive and negative parts of being so affiliated with their sport, athletics, and their university. But, it was clear that many of the

student-athletes believed they were different from their non-student-athlete peers, referring specifically to their lifestyle.

Student versus athlete: Role imbalance in student-athletes. Within virtually every interview was the participant's sense of imbalance between the role of "student" and the role of "athlete." Many participants commented on the struggles to keep everything together, and others shared the feeling that the two roles tend to work against one another, making the task of balancing them difficult.

Annie commented on her dilemma of choosing between sports or academics. "I feel like there's an internal struggle sometimes for dedicating time to this sport that you've chosen, that helps you go to school, that helps you pay for all or a percentage [of your tuition], so that you can better yourself in your future. But then it also kind of is at battle with itself."

Sandy reported feeling that athletics and academics were mutually exclusive worlds. "I said I always felt like the two things [roles] were in conflict. It was like, here are the 20 things I am supposed to do for basketball, because you never really practice enough and you never really work on things enough; you never shoot enough. Then here [are] the million things I was supposed to do for school, and here's my 24 hours to do them. So it was like every single day I felt like I made a choice-- I am going to work on schoolwork or I am going to work on basketball. And I never really got to do as much as when I wanted to be there, and so I always felt like career-wise, that basketball was an obstacle, and basketball-wise that school was an obstacle."

Jamie reported having trouble letting go of athletics afterwards. "I am not defined by running, but it has been a part of my life for such a long time. I don't know what it would be like

[to stop running]. A part of me is like I don't want to know. I still run. I still work out 20 thousand times a week. That's probably why it terrifies me because it's all I have ever known."

From these interviews it appears that one of the biggest challenges and accomplishments of being a student-athlete is managing the two roles successfully.

Finding a Path

How Student-Athletes Choose Careers

This section describes some of the more prevalent themes regarding how student-athletes choose their career paths. For some students, the characteristics of the job, rather than the actual content of the job itself, were more important. Other participants talked about the influence of other variables in their lives that affected how they chose their career path. Another group of participants described a hedonic approach–choosing a career that they thought they would enjoy.

Job characteristics. For some participants, it seemed clear that job characteristics (e.g., traveling, salary, work environment, etc.) were a deciding factor in choosing a career path for themselves. In fact, traveling, salary, and other various job characteristics were overall more important than some of the participant's actual interests in choosing an occupation.

Eli, a senior, shared that he would like to have a job with travel and stability, and more importantly, a job that would support his future wife as she pursued her graduate studies. "I definitely like the traveling, I like to be outdoors. But basically [I'm looking for a job with] steady pay and decent time off, just because I am getting married next summer. My fiancé needs to go through grad school; she wants to be a speech-pathologist. And so she needs to go and get her master's at least before she can practice. So, paying off grad school would be the number one priority right now. [Laughs] Finding something that interests me comes second."

Joseph commented that he was chatting with a friend about his career path and thought about what he might enjoy. After doing some research, the salary "sealed the deal" for Joseph. "And he [my friend] was telling me about this long route he was going to take, and he's eventually going to become a[n] engineer. And I guess it was my junior year of high school, and I was thinking about what I wanted to do and what not. I love math and did some searching around, and I thought, 'Hey this [engineering] might be kind of fun.' And then I found out how much money they made, and I was like,' I want to be a[n] engineer.'"

Although job characteristics were cited as important to some participants, other participants gave other reasons and influences that helped them make career decisions, as described in the following sections.

Influence of others. The influence of others on career choice is an important factor to consider, and in this study that influence was apparent. Although the role of parents in participants' career choices will be discussed in a later section, the influence of others (friends, relatives, family friends), modeling, and cultural influences were prominent for approximately half of the group. Some participants stated that discussing possible career paths with others was very helpful to them.

Some student-athletes shared that their careers needed to fit with their values of having a family. Jamie envisioned herself staying at home and raising her future children. "First and foremost, I would just like to be able to have a family. And if I am able to not work, that would be great. My mom didn't work; she was at home with us. In my mind, that would be my ultimate goal. The fact that I wouldn't be able to do my real job until age 27 was like, 'Hey, what happens if you have a family by then?' I would think I wouldn't even want to work full-time. Like I know there is options for part-time and stuff like that, so I was [thinking], 'I don't think I want to put

all of this time, money, and effort for something that I'm not going to complete all the way through.' And so then I started thinking, 'What are my other options?'"

When asked about where he sees himself in the future, Ben, a junior, expressed similar values regarding family as a male participant. "Hopefully, a little bit more settled, maybe owning my own company, or a partnership or something like that—where I can have a family and be a little more settled and not travel so much."

The majority of the cultural theme and modeling theme were in reference to the environment the participants grew up in, and sports were a major part of their culture. Joseph, who grew up in the southern part of the United States, talked about sports as a major part of the Southern culture and how this affected him. "I could have played either track, football or baseball. But for someone who just chose baseball [because it's] big in my hometown, [and] nobody else in our town was as good at baseball. Everyone kinda talked about me, so I kinda felt like I was led to play baseball."

Lacey talked about the importance of using others who knew her well as a type of sounding board to bounce off of potential career ideas. "I tell someone [about my career idea] and maybe their reaction was a little bit different for certain things, and then someone would be [say], 'You would be really good at this,' 'You'd be really good at that.' So when people started saying that it was [a good fit], I started believing them. You know, 'I really would be good at that.' Versus, I tell somebody all of a sudden I want to go to med school or make some really weird [career decision], people would [say], 'That really doesn't sound like you, like stuck in a laboratory all day, doing things like that; it just doesn't sound like you'. I think it was more of just getting feedback from [talking] to people, and they would [say], 'Oh, you would be good at

this, like this does sound exactly like you." Versus something that is out of the blue, which is going to be fun for some people but that wasn't for me."

Jacob shared that he enjoyed a particular experience so much that he wanted to make a career out of it. "I guess the main reason that I did get into teaching is because I started off in 9th grade coaching my younger brother's basketball teams. I just really enjoyed [it], working with kids and teaching them something and seeing them actually understanding and seeing them get it. I wanted to do that after I decided to not go the business and golf professional route. That was always my second option, and I knew I always wanted to coach. And I thought, 'Well, I want to coach. Teaching would be the way to go'. And teaching seems fun, so that's kinda how I got there."

Cultural upbringing and values, and social support can play a significant role in the development of vocational identity in student-athletes. The experiences that student-athletes have in different areas of interest can be important in developing a sense of self-knowledge for vocational identity development. The final section on influences will examine what was coined by one of the independent readers for this study as "the hedonic approach."

Doing what you like – "The hedonic approach." This final section on influences examines the "the hedonic approach," where many participants described their approach to career decision-making as focusing on finding a career or field that they would enjoy or one that they were passionate about. Half of the participants implied using this form of decision-making– simply wanting to find and choose a career path that they believed they would enjoy.

Annie discussed her natural talents and explained why she thought it important for her to use them every day. "I feel like if you are doing something that you feel you have the talent for, then you are not going to get sick of your job. I'm going to want to get up and go to work in the

mornings, and I am going to be good at what I do because I like what I do. So, it [my career decision-making process] kinda went from there."

When asked about why he did so much exploration for his career path, Joseph indicated that he wanted to be sure that he was not just "settling" for a job that he felt okay about. "You don't want to be someone [who is so] set [on their career path] that you kinda miss something you might enjoy or might like a little better than you're doing now. I wanted to do that, look around, make sure I'm going to enjoy this. I think there's a job and work. And if you enjoy where you are at, you won't work a day in your life. But if you're doing it for the wrong reasons, you will dread going 9 to 5 every day. I [think about it] like that. "

The hedonic approach, or doing what you like, understandably has become a more emphasized approach to career decision-making in most career centers. However, student-athletes can have numerous obstacles and barriers to finding that career path they are truly passionate about.

Factors that impact the decision to "go pro." Among the vocational choices for Division I student-athletes is whether or not to pursue a career as a professional athlete. During their interviews, participants were asked about any professional aspirations they might have and about the decisions they made regarding whether or not to choose a career as a professional athlete. The vast majority of participants admitted that although they at one time wanted to go pro, they realized after entering college that that this probably was not a realistic aspiration, or even a financially sound one.

When asked if professional athletics was still a career option for her, Annie stated that it was not likely but that she would certainly take up the opportunity if it were available to her. "I feel like you could be 52 and you still have that competitive spirit. If [you] could do [any]

geriatrics professional [sport], you would do it because you want to; it never goes away. So if anything were ever to come up for a possibility to do it [professional athletics], I would jump on it 100%. No question."

Craig talked about how a career as a professional athlete became more realistic to him after working more with his high school coach. "Football started becoming my life and my coach helped get me on the right track with lifting right, eating right… At that point he was like, 'You can go big places with your body, like you've got the size, college and professional level,' and like he helped reinforce that [idea] and put it into my head that the NFL is not [just] a dream for you because you can attain it." In Craig's story, his coach played an important part in his vocational choices, and the effects of coaching staff more generally will be examined more in an upcoming section.

Gina reported that a career as a professional athlete in her sport was not a likely option, and that most athletes do not make enough money to earn a decent living. "I know we have assistant volunteer coaches, and they are trying to go professional. For them, they could spend two or three years not making any money. That's a big risk to take, to go out there and say 'I'm going to do this and *maybe* I'll get a sponsor, maybe I won't.' It's a big risk to take."

Sandy reflected on how her feelings changed from high school to college in regard to a career in the WNBA, once she understood that the level of competition in Division I was beyond her expectations. "But probably starting freshman or sophomore year of high school, I really toyed with the idea that I could play in the WNBA. Basketball was a huge focus for me, and I had a lot of commitment and dedication towards it. I thought [I could do it], but once again I realized that talent played a bigger factor than I thought."

Joseph shared that after he had a better understanding of the business side of sports, it was not worth the amount of time and effort to make it as a professional athlete. “When I was younger, I considered being a professional player. But now, if I got drafted, I’d have some fun, [but] I wouldn’t stay in it very long. [That’s] because there’s a reality to it all, that some day you are still going to have to provide for yourself. And from seeing certain individuals go into the draft that I am close with and talking to them about the minor league system, it’s like it’s almost not worth it. I think I would get more enjoyment out of getting drafted, signing the piece of paper with the headline of the team, and then framing it and putting it behind my desk, than I would actually going into the system and struggling for 4 to 5 years, making a $100 a month. You’re not getting anything out of it. You only live once, and if you try to chase those dreams for so long, you’re going to waste your life away trying to fill certain dreams and aspirations. I think the earlier you come to terms with yourself, the better off you’re going to be in the long run.”

The majority of participants had professional athletics aspirations at one point or another, but their reasons to no longer consider sports as a viable career varied widely. Depending on the sport, success of college athletics career, and watching others before them make attempts to go professional, participants had a variety of reasons they considered in their decision.

Activities and Forms of Occupational Engagement in Student-Athletes

Individual engagement. Individual occupational engagement is an important part of fostering vocational identity development. For the purposes of this study, individual occupational engagement was defined in terms of vocationally-related activities that took place off-campus, that were voluntary and that were usually activities that required an internal thought and reflection process regarding the activities in which one was taking part. Participants discussed

forms of individual occupational engagement in their interviews and also had the opportunity to indicate significant vocational activities on their demographics worksheet (See Appendix C).

Networking. Networking was among the most frequently used mechanisms for occupational engagement mentioned by the participants; it was mentioned by almost every participant as a relevant part of their vocational identity development. "Networking" in vocational psychology, is referred to as the process of introducing oneself to individuals who may be involved in a related career field of interest, and making this person a part of one's circle of contacts potentially to the mutual benefit both individuals in the relationship. The majority of participants expressed their awareness of the importance of networking with others for finding a career after graduation, and some participants stated that networking was an additional opportunity for them *because* they were student-athletes.

Participants often discussed having an advantage as a student-athlete when networking. They commented that as a result of their involvement in athletics, they typically had additional contacts with whom to network. This was because of being involved in athletics, and because they shared with many of the contacts outside of collegiate athletics a common hobby (sports) that they could talk about. One student-athlete's "resources" included a parent of a teammate who was not only a contact, but also a type of mentor. "One of the girls on the team, her father used to work in that industry, and he is a big fan of us. He's really a nice guy, and I definitely consider him one of my resources. I am able to lean on him for advice, basically direction to who his contacts are, [and] what he would think would be a good idea [for my career]." Another student-athlete, Sandy, discussed an instance when she believed her experiences as a student-athlete made a great "ice-breaker" for introducing herself to a potential employer. "One example I have, last summer I was in my internship and one of the head people in the department for the

entire North American region came to the office to talk to a group of 60 of us. It was kind of a 'meet and greet." We had appetizers and all kinds of things. So he gets done introducing and welcoming us, and thanking us for doing the internship and wishing us well. He puts his microphone down, and he kind of walks away and everyone just freezes because we are supposed to go interact and meet with these people and partners who bill four figures an hour, and nobody wants to make the first move. Well, I had been told before [hand that] this guy likes to go lift weights and that he really likes college basketball. Well, that's all really I needed. So next thing I know I saw him walk by, and I was going to go throw away my plate of food and walked back and said, 'So I hear you like weight lifting?' From that moment on we had a great conversation, but I had that icebreaker that 'Oh I play basketball'. That's all it took. It's such an easy thing, especially because [in] my career, which is primarily male-dominated in the upper level management positions. What do I have in common with a 45-year-old man from New York? Well nothing probably except sports if I am lucky. So I can talk to him about that, and that has helped me so much." Other student-athletes shared that they either had a conversation-starter or a common interest with a potential contact to begin the networking process, or that they had a contact who had been helpful to them in finding a career path through their participation in athletics.

Some student-athletes, especially those who were looking to enter more competitive fields, acknowledged the importance of networking and the challenges they needed to overcome to find and get connected with the right people. "If I want to do sports broadcasting, there's a lot of obstacles. And connections, I would say is probably the biggest one. I mean they always say nowadays 'It's not what you know, it's who you know.'" Given the frequency with which participants discussed networking, it seems clear that these student-athletes were aware of the

importance of networking as a part of developing their future career paths. Even a participant who had just arrived at the university a month before the interview understood the importance of networking. "[It's important to] get internships and start marketing yourself as soon as possible. And then start getting those connections and networking, so that when you do get out there, once you're done playing football, whatever level, if you need to go to journalism, you can start with knowing this one person. He might be able to hook you up with somebody else, if he knows a couple of people that might be able to help you out. Just getting you a few articles here and there might help you spring into whatever you want to do. So that's another good thing [about] networking as well."

Part-time jobs, assistantships, and internships. As discussed in Chapter II, student-athletes are no strangers to busy schedules. However, as career counseling professionals are aware, internships and work experiences are becoming more and more important as keys to opening the door to one's career after college graduation. Student-athletes also recognize the importance of these experiences. Participants noted the use of a part-time job or an internship experience as a way to get a career in a specific field. "[My academic department] requires you have an internship to graduate, so I'll basically be volunteering at the free health clinic in [town]. So that could also pad my résumé, I guess you could say, for a more healthcare-related career."

Another student-athlete discussed her part-time job as "selfish" as it is reinforced knowledge she needed for her future graduate career. "[This professor] needed a lot of grading help, so they hire a graduate student and an undergrad to be the TA in some cases, and the grader. So to get that [position] is big; it's a big trust thing, especially in undergrad. I just took this course the semester before, to be the grader for it. Once I figured out that I really learn the material if I have to grade it and teach it. It's ridiculous. So, it's kind of selfish too because now I

am mastering engineering skills because I've had to teach it to other people. I've also done that in a lot of classes, helping my classmates and stuff."

Another student mentioned her internship experience as important because she did *not* enjoy it. As discussed in Chapter II, not only do engagement activities help individuals discover what they like to do, but also help individuals discover what they do not like to do. "Like with the internship I did with the professor, that was a really good opportunity that I think if I didn't do that I don't know if I would be doing pharmacy right now, because who knows if I would have actually seen what I was getting into and stuff."

Leadership roles. Being a leader as a student-athlete is common, as many student-athletes grow up playing sports, functioning as a part of a team, and learning through observation what makes a good leader. In this regard, a number of the student-athletes interviewed also expressed competitiveness and an ambition to be the best in whatever field they decided to pursue. This was reflected in statements such as, "I've always wanted to be on the top," and "When I was younger, I wanted to be the first woman president; I also wanted to be a lawyer." One participant commented that in her play activities as a child, she typically played a "leader role." "And you know something, I have a kinda leadership role in a way, [in a] profession[al] sense, to take my beanie babies out and have like town hall meetings and stuff like that. When I was the mayor. I wanted to be a teacher and not so much [to] dictate [to others], but just to help people and put knowledge into other people."

Another student-athlete indicated liking to be a "trail-blazer," by doing things that either had never been done before or being told by others what she likely would not be able to do because of her heavy time commitments to athletics. "Um, part of it [being a student-athlete] was doing something that no one else in engineering was doing. That was because [I was the] first

student-athlete that I knew of in my department. There were a few after that, so it was kind of like, I have bigger things going on in life than appears. It was a pride thing."

Another student-athlete discussed how leadership is transferred from younger student-athletes to older ones, and how the effects of being a leader translated to experiences outside of athletics. "[I thought], 'Well, I have to do good in these classes, and I want to do good in my sport because I am getting older now and I'm a leader.' It makes you want to do good in every aspect of your life. And I feel like if you have that leadership mentality and really want to take everything head on coming in, there's no limit to what you would do in four years. That's a long time."

Being a leader can be an important part of being a student-athlete, both on and off the field. And as evident from these experiences, student-athletes can transfer their leadership to other areas. For some, leadership seems to be an innate part of their personality.

Researching occupations. A portion of individual engagement involves seeking out and researching basic information regarding potential occupations. The Department of Labor provides an extensive database of information regarding job tasks, education, training, salaries, and more--aspects of these jobs that are important to consider when pursuing a new career. Career counselors and career exploration course instructors generally are well versed in these resources and work to disseminate them to students who are looking to choose a career. Any form of occupational engagement, however, could be considered "research," and for the purposes of this section, research will include the search for occupational information in books, online, or from representatives at a career fair.

Few of the participants discussed these aspects of engagement during their interviews, and most who did reported researching occupations simply as a way to reassure themselves that

they were choosing the right career path. However, as professionals in any career field know, what is written about their position is not likely to reflect what they do each day. One student-athlete talked about her experience of feeling a match with a career field as an actuary after researching online and then talking about it more with representatives at a career fair. “We had a career fair for athletes here, and I show up and I [put] accounting and math on my nametag. The very first table I walk up to they were like, ‘Oh, accounting and math!’ I don’t even remember the company, and they were like, ‘What do you want to do with that?’ And I said, ‘I want to be an actuary.’ And they go. ‘Really?’ ‘Yeah.’ ‘Have you ever met one?’ ‘No.’ ‘Well, I think you are going to find you have too much personality to be an actuary’. And I was furious. But it kind of got the wheels turning that maybe I should look into this a little more, because it’s really an unknown area to me. So I went to the business school’s career services [to find more information].” In the end, after an informational interview set up by her school, this participant decided to not pursuing a career as an actuary.

Planned happenstance. Planned happenstance (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999) is the theory that holds that individuals find career opportunities by putting themselves in situations such that the chance of finding those opportunities is significantly increased (see Chapter II). In most of the cases reflecting planned happenstance, it was mentioned in relation to the importance of networking, and the participants shared instances where “luck” helped them find their occupation or a job after graduation.

On participant provided an example of planned happenstance and how it played a major role in her finding a job after graduation. “My freshman year I went to the business school career fair, [and I] did not know what I was doing. I showed up wearing some sort of random outfit, I mean, I thought I was dressed up, in my idea dressed up. I looked like I was more going to a high

school choir concert than you know, a business fair. Actually, the partner that I approached at [a firm], which is my employer now, said to me 'What are you doing here?' I was 17 and he's [asking] 'Are you looking for an internship?' And I [said] 'No, not really, I don't know why I am here.' He's the one that helped me get to New York. He told me later that he was just so amazed that some freshman in college showed up [at the career fair]. [I] didn't really know why they were there, but they were there. I did a lot of events with a lot of different firms so I would see the same group of people from the four accounting firms probably five, six times a year over the course of four years. It's a decent amount of interaction, so I got to know people. I got to know them without them realizing they got to know about me. So when it was time for me to say I want to go to New York, they were more than happy to refer me. Versus somebody walking in and saying 'Hi, this is what I look like on a piece of paper and refer me to New York.' So I credit that course of interaction over the years to why I am going to New York."

Self-discovery, self-knowledge, and self-reflection. Throughout the interviews, many of the participants shared experiences of either (a) discovering something about themselves through occupational engagement that they didn't know previously (e.g., "I thought I would major in Accounting, and after I took a few courses, I realized I don't like business"), (b) acknowledging things they already knew about themselves (usually likes or dislikes for certain interest areas) that they used in making decisions about potential careers paths (e.g., "I've never been good at chemistry, so I knew I couldn't major in this."), or (c) taking the time after an occupational engagement experience to reflect on whether they enjoyed the experience or not, and what specific things they did or did not like about the experience (e.g., "The time I spent volunteering at the daycare made me realize that I really like working with kids."). As discussed both in Erikson's role identity versus role confusion stage, and in the new ideas of emerging adulthood,

college is a time in life to be actively doing these things: discovering more of who you are, and what you want.

As might be expected, many of the student-athletes who were upper-classman were able to talk more about the changes that occurred since they began college. Jacob, a senior, discussed how "trial and error" with college majors was an important part of building his own sense of self-knowledge so that he could find the career path that was right for him. "I didn't think they [initial career plans] were unrealistic. I wouldn't say that I couldn't do it, but those are really tough career fields that would be very competitive [and] hard to break into. I mean even business is pretty hard. But I feel like I know myself now, that I know like that kinda stuff is not interesting to me. I was a psychology major when I first came, and that was just a bad idea. So [now] I know." Most of the older college students and graduate students recalled a similar process of self-exploration when they entered college and endured a period of "trial and error".

The importance of self-reflection was also mentioned, even in situations where participants were forced to do so. Many Division I universities provide either a life skills course or career planning course for student-athletes, or sometimes both. In many of the interviews, participants commented on the value of these courses, even though they were courses they wouldn't have chosen on their own. Lacey found that sharing her reflection out loud to be helpful in finding potential career paths. "[Even though I got an internship], and although that would be a great internship, I was like, That's actually not what I want to do.' And they [asked] 'What DO you want to do?' I think it [had] a lot [to do] with my goals - like things that I want to do…I was always taught to think about them ahead [of time], and actually say it. Once I said it, then it came out and when I started saying it, [I] actually started pursuing these and actually thought about it. So I guess it [my motivation] was pretty high. I didn't say anything at first, but

it was in the back of my mind and started creeping out. 'Yeah, this actually is what I want to do.' Once I wrote it down for some assignment or something like that, and then it actually started coming into it now and people want to know that."

As mentioned in Chapter II, the importance of reflecting on one's identity is an essential part of an effective career-decision making process.

Other individual engagement activities. In addition to the instances mentioned above, participants mentioned other instances that provided occupational engagement outside of their academic institution. Some noteworthy activities included: volunteering, job shadowing, and community service experience.

Levels of satisfaction with occupational engagement and career exploration. During their interviews, participants were asked about their satisfaction with their career exploration and about their involvement in their own career development. Five of the participants said they were satisfied and four said they felt they could have been more active. (Some freshman and graduate-level participants could not really answer this question given the short amount of time they had been a college student-athlete, or that as graduate students, they were past the point of current career engagement.)

Gina voiced her view that in addition to her busy schedule, it was hard to be motivated to make time for career exploration. "I think it's [my level of career exploration] okay. I probably should be doing more, but you know. [Laughs] I don't know. In an ideal world, I would probably be researching better, probably looking into stuff a little bit more, probably talking to some more people. But I just mean there are time constraints, and sometimes I just don't feel like doing it."

Annie shared a similar view, stating that her involvement in athletics often constrained her résumé and experiences, leaving little time for experiences outside of athletics. "Sometimes

whenever you have to fill-out a scholarship thing, [and you] list your previous involvement. Definitely in high school [I had] student counsel, honor society, I was on a drug-free [club], like just all of this stuff it was fantastic. Then when you get to college, you fill it out, and I'm on student athletic advisory committee, and I'm on the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, stuff like that. It all seems like you're very centered and focused on your sport, which you are. But I really do want to be as successful as possible in my professional life. I know that I could definitely be doing better. There are too many options of programs out there to not have a better involvement in."

In contrast, Jacob said that he was happy with his level of involvement in career exploration, remarking that he had done a significant amount of career planning. "I guess I'm pretty happy with it. I think coming in as a walk-on I knew I was at the bottom of the totem pole and I was going to have to dedicate more than necessarily other people were. So I spent a little bit more of my time and efforts to prepare for football and making sure I got adequate sleep, adequate rest and everything. I didn't necessarily spend as much time [on academics]. I tried keeping my grades good and I was able to do that, but as far as preparing myself for a job or a career, there was a few avenues where I was able to make connections…"

Jamie expressed her comfort with her level of involvement in her career development. "[I feel] Great. I mean I am right where I want to be. I got what I wanted; I can't complain. I had two great internship experiences, I had two offers for fulltime employment, and I was happy with that. I got my number one. I can't complain; so yeah that's right where I wanted to be."

Institutional engagement. Institutional engagement is a significant part of the university experience. Students have the opportunity not only to participate in their classes, but also to get involved with other activities going on at their university. As used here, institutional engagement

refers to institutionally-based occupational activities that were either facilitated by the university or directly a part of the university in some fashion. In this section, the experiences of participants in which institutional engagement played a significant role in their vocational development are discussed.

Extracurricular activities. Participants routinely mentioned extracurricular activities as a means of occupational engagement furthering their career exploration. In spite of their busy schedule, many of the student-athletes discussed their experiences in student organizations, clubs, and other activities that helped them connect with other students, as well as their potential career paths.

Jacob discussed the role of extracurricular activities as a venue for becoming a part of other social circles with non-student-athletes. "[Student-athletes should] try to get involved with as many clubs as possible. I know that football is one. It's a great one to be a part of and it can open up for routes in your social life, making friends. But don't just isolate yourself to the football team, socially. I think it's good to make friends outside of football. I was fortunate enough to have friends who came from my hometown who came here; one of my other roommates is a friend. I think it is important to, as far as socially, have good friends within the football team and outside of the football team--try to actually get involved with something, a club outside of football, whatever you can, um, always go to class."

Leslie, a graduate student in pharmacy, emphasized another reason a student would decide to get involved with an extracurricular activity—for further vocational development opportunities. "There's a bunch of clubs in pharmacy school, like student health in pharmacy, community pharmacy club, association of student pharmacists, that [are] important to be

involved in because they are professional organizations that in the future can help us network and stuff."

Although other participants discussed the presence of student organizations, many stated that they have not been as involved with them as they would like to be. This is discussed in a subsequent section on obstacles and barriers to occupational engagement.

Career development classes and related class activities. Many Division I schools offer classes related to career development. These often include activities involving career exploration, choosing a major, and activities that support occupational engagement. These classes intend to be interactive and "hands-on" in order to allow students opportunities to engage and reflect on their vocational interests and psychological development as they move toward adulthood. Other classes for student-athletes commonly taught at Division I universities are "life skills" courses. Advocated by the NCAA with the CHAMPS (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success) program, the purpose of these courses is to promote academic skills, personal development (emotional well-being, personal growth, and decision-making skills), service to the community, and career development. Student-athletes may participate in one or more courses like this during their time at their university.

Seven participants mentioned the importance of these types of classes in the development of their vocational identities. Gina highlighted specifically why she thought her career development class helped her find the right major. "I think also the [career development] classes are pretty helpful because, you get to like go through all of the majors and everything. I liked it. I thought it was helpful because like you had to actually research so you would think out loud and research what you like best and be like 'Oh my god I would hate that.' [It helped you] realize what you really like or don't like."

Coursework and electives. One of the easiest forms of occupational engagement is to take a variety of coursework to better help determine one's true interests. Courses often have a specific portion of the curriculum or a set of activities that connect the subject field with the associated occupations within the field. During interviews, a number of the participants talked about certain class activities or coursework that they found helpful to their vocational identity development. Three participants mentioned coursework-related activities or the coursework itself as an important part of finding their career path.

Jamie mentioned a senior capstone class activity that involved writing a "personal strategy" to use following completion of the class. "I took this class in management that we all have to take, and my teacher made us write a personal strategy. I was sitting there and I had thought about it, and she was talking to me about this, since I was struggling with it. I couldn't see myself in public accounting, to be a partner; I just don't see that. I was like talking to her about exactly what I needed to do because this is a business class. I just can't say, 'I really just want to be a mom.' And so as she's talking to me, she's realizing that you could possibly have a [personal] business. And so she starts talking to me about [this] foundation in [a nearby city] and how they help entrepreneurs. The weird part is I have never had the entrepreneurial spirit at all. [She] just starts talking to me and planting these seeds. I start researching it and it [becomes my] personal strategy. I wrote about starting my own business and how I can do the accounting thing. And when I have a family, open up this business, so I can create my schedule and be with my kids, still bring them in."

Joseph, a senior in engineering, shared that it was important for him to be interested in the coursework and for there to be a fit between his skills and the challenge the coursework provided. "If it's not interesting, I would get bored really quickly. Like I am just going to sit

there and watch. Like okay, let's get this class over with; I will fall asleep. So all of the engineering makes you think. You do the chemistry side of engineering, but you also do the math. So I kind of do fill both requirements [for my interests]. We'll see, but it's an interesting topic for myself. I started on the top of the ladder. If I get there and it's way too hard, I'll go down to something else. And I will just work my way down until I see a fit. But as of now, I'm a junior/senior in college; I'm enjoying it." As will be presented later, that this sense of challenge is been an important part of choosing a vocation as a student-athlete.

Informational interviews. Informational interviews are a common approach to occupational engagement, and they are often a part of career development or life skills classes. An informational interview requires the student to connect with a professional in the field (usually facilitated through someone the student knows, or an agency such as a career center) and to interview that person about her/his position and what kind of steps it would take to attain a similar position or get into the field. This builds an opportunity for real-world knowledge about a career of interest and also gets the student networking with professionals for other opportunities in the future. Half of participants mentioned this activity as a relevant part of their vocational identity development.

Craig, a freshman, talked about an informational interview as a part of his life skills class for new student-athletes. "I met with [athletics staff member] yesterday, and talked to him [about his career], and he said if I ever had any questions about that to come to him. In my life skills class we had to interview someone like within this [athletics] building that has to do with athletics that would have to deal with something along with our major topics. [When] I talked with him yesterday; I really enjoyed talking about how he got started and why he does it. It's kind of the same reason that I wanted to do it. He said if I ever have any questions or want to

know anything about journalism or writing or anything like that, I can go talk to him. I am sure I am going to take advantage of that."

Lacey, a senior, found informational interviewing to be helpful since it also helped to eliminate certain career paths. "Although I did think about law school, still sometimes think about it, [but] it's 4 years of school that I don't want to do. Especially with lawyers, you're making money, [but] that's not the case anymore. After talking it through with current lawyers and judges, I just thought that's really not for me."

Leadership roles. Many student-athletes are familiar with holding leadership positions or roles on or off the field. A team cannot function without leadership, and numerous times during their interview, participants expressed how the application of leadership helped in the development of their vocational identity. Six participants mentioned leadership roles that they had held that contributed to their career development.

Additional institutional engagement. Beyond these five areas of institutional engagement, participants also talked about other sources they used that were based within their university or high school. Some noteworthy instances were: career assessment, volunteering as a part of athletics, and class activities that encouraged career exploration.

Resources that Promote Vocational Identity Development in Student-Athletes

Athletics department-based resources. Depending on the size of the university and its funding, an athletics department can provide a wealth of resources to its student-athletes. At the Division I Level, the athletics departments often provide an entire staff focused on keeping student-athletes successful academically and vocationally. This was the case for the participants and the university used in this study.

Zach spoke positively about the athletics department's support staff and the help they provide in assuring student-athletes' success. "Yeah, there's also people who want to make sure that you're passing your classes, which is encouraging. It shows there's a lot of support here. I mean this [athletics] building in and of itself shows that there's like a really big demand for students to do well, outside of practice."

Jacob commented that having the athletics support staff members makes it possible to keep a sense of balance between the athletic and academic roles. "I knew that athletics requires a lot of time and commitment. I remember in high school, on game days, I didn't want to learn anything. I just wanted to be ready for the football game. Which in college, I guess you don't have to deal with because game day is on Saturday, so you don't have classes or anything like that. But with all of the support staff that they have, and everything for us, I think it's [possible] where you can equally balance them [both roles] and not have to prioritize one over the other."

Tutoring is another resource about which student-athletes spoke. Lacey discussed the importance of having tutoring, especially during the first year of college, in order to better adapt to the demands of being a student-athlete. "My first semester was a struggle for me, the whole first semester of college itself. Then adjust[ing] to being in a collegiate level sport—that was hard. At first you need to get used to it, so it really helps when they have tutoring here. For example, maybe they only have one class that you need tutoring in, [so] you probably only meet once in a while. But it helps to have that set block of an hour or two hours, then I am forced to do my homework. And that's always what I needed to get."

Having transferred from a junior college, Ben spoke about the differences between student-athletes who do and do not receive assistance like tutoring. "The funding at a junior college is very limited, so a lot of the responsibility would be placed on your shoulders. There's

no tutoring. Coaches kind of make you turn in a grade report, but a lot of kids know [how to] falsify it. It's kind of a dog-eat world there. There's not a 'checks and balances system'. It's 'do your own thing'."

Gina elaborated on tutoring as especially important for student-athletes who have competitions during the week. "Definitely the tutoring is helpful. Especially when you go out of town and things, and you need to be missing a lot of class."

Finally, several student-athletes mentioned the advantages of having a specific career counselor in athletics to assist them with career counseling and other assistance. Ben shared that having an athletics career counselor helped him approach the workforce using his strengths as a student-athlete. "Having [an athletics career counselor] helped me get the verbiage down, because sometimes it's harder to say "I'm an athlete," because you don't want that stereotype. But at the same time, you want the qualities we talked about to show through--that you are a person of character, hard work, and all of that. She's definitely helping me to get that all fine-tuned so it looks all good and pretty [on my résumé]."

Numerous resources were cited that will be cross-referenced in the next section on institutionally-based resources, but additional noteworthy resources included the athletics department's counseling and sport psychologist, and online resources provided by the athletics department such as a career database for student-athletes. Many participants stated that they believe their university was able to provide helpful resources to them because of the higher funding at the Division I level.

Institutionally based resources. A number of student-athletes spoke of institutionally-based resources to assist with vocational identity development. Although the number referencing these resources was not as large as that referencing athletics department-based resources, many

still reported benefits from these resources. Services offered by various university career centers, including athletics, were among the most cited. These included mock interviews, career fairs, and résumé help services. Additionally, participants discussed the university career center, classmates, and the business career center as helpful institutional resources.

Gina found the university career center was a very helpful but underutilized resource—and one that was generally unknown to most students. “The career center is helpful, I just don’t think many people know about it, or what it does. When I went there, it was really, really helpful. Like [there’s] tons of books and [information on] what can I do with this major. It just has lists of job options, and things that you can do under this major. [It also] tells you what classes you need to take for this or whatever.”

Sandy shared that the business school’s career services center had been helpful as well, especially since its level of communication was very frequent with its students. “Well, definitely the undergraduate career services center at the business school. They are great about posting things, and they have an online job search [where] you put a profile on there and firms can find you. Like I said, they are good about publicizing [events] to get people to go, to get people interested.”

Joseph commented that fellow classmates have been a helpful resource. “Th[is] guy [in my class] is smarter than me, and I’m not afraid to admit that. Because of that I am able to turn towards him and get some advice [on problems] that I might not understand. He can help me out and lead me [in the right direction].” As Jacob stated in a previous section, when student-athletes do not isolate themselves within athletics, they are able to build resourceful relationships with classmates and friends outside of the athletics world.

Combining athletics department-based resources and institutionally-based resources for vocational identity development, student-athletes receive multiple career-related benefits. But what were their experiences with these resources, and what keeps them returning to use those resources again?

Positive and negative experiences. Although the number of resources available to Division I student-athletes can be considerable, the student-athletes' experience of those resources is a determining factor in whether they will use them. Although most student-athletes stated that they thought the resources were "helpful," some student-athletes shared not-so-helpful experiences.

Ben commented that a major advantage of having athletics department-based resources was that they were understanding of their busy schedules and that the service was often open during evening hours. "Especially with the [limited time schedule], for it [career resources] to be all in one place, it's more convenient because most students can go to the business school but not after hours. The business school isn't open after practice, [so if] we have other classes we can go to practice [having athletics resources] make it easier for our time schedules."

However, Annie reported feeling a sense of "hand-holding" from athletics support staff at times, and she worried that she might not learn important information on how to do things for herself outside of athletics. "Sometimes it can almost turn more into like,' I'm not going to say I don't like it because that makes your life easier, but it turns into like a spoon-fed kinda thing. [They say] 'Oh you need help with this; here is what you need to do'. It's not like people are doing your homework for you or anything like that. But they [say], 'Well you can go and talk to this person,' and then you go and talk to that person. And they're [say], 'Oh yeah, that's not that big of a deal; I'll go take care of that for you,' because that's their job within this [department].

But I think that whenever [these things] go to the school, you don't have that kind of [help from athletics staff]."

In general, most participants reported positive experiences with the resources they encountered--either in the athletics department or at their university.

Suggestions from student-athletes on improving opportunities. All participants were asked if there would be an easier way to get involved with vocationally-based resources on campus. Most participants were unsure of how to do so, however, some did offer some suggestions that they felt could encourage student-athlete involvement in their career development. Two participants in particular, Ben and Annie, gave the most suggestions among all of the other participants.

Ben suggested having a bulletin board for student-athletes with announcements as a helpful form of communication. "I think just putting up some kind of notifications around here. Sometimes they're on the TV, but you don't always see the TV. If there was like a bulletin board. They do a pretty good job with sending out emails, but not a lot of athletes check their email more than once or twice a month. So, sometimes you don't get them until it's past. But I think just like a bulletin board or your counselor sending out a reminders [would be helpful]." Ben also thought that having staff with availability later in the day and all in one area ("one stop shop") was best in athletics, and he thought this also would be helpful for other campus resources.

Annie thought that a peer-mentoring program would be especially helpful support for younger athletes. "I also think that if there was maybe just even like in your team or if there was some kind of like, group support thing. I feel like that could be something that's definitely helpful. Maybe have older people [student-athletes] kind of say like, "This is what I wish I would

have had, so I am going to pass this on to you." Like, if this is something you want, then take it, and if not, pass it to your neighbor. I definitely think that that could really boost athletics as a whole, instead of just like a sport-by-sport kind of thing." Additionally, Annie commented that she would like to have more knowledgeable athletic advisors. (She regretted that she was unaware of certain coursework she could have taken later in her college career.)

Although most participants did not have suggestions for improving resources, this question may have been better addressed in using a focus group format to better encourage participants to reflect ideas offered by one another.

Developmental Issues with Student-Athletes for Creating Vocational Identity

Another theme that came up in a majority of participant interviews was a series of developmental issues among student-athletes in regard to vocational identity development. While previous research has supported this notion from the perspective of "career maturity," the developmental factors at play here are representative of issues beyond career maturity. From the analysis, four themes were observed that contribute to this developmental delay: (a) beliefs that support foreclosure and delay of vocational identity development, (b) the need for earlier career development interventions, (c) the progression of professional athletic career aspirations, and (d) unawareness of university resources, policies, etc., that prevent or hinder career development.

Beliefs that support foreclosure and delay of vocational identity development. The interviews with the student-athletes reveal certain types of developmental issues in regard to vocational identity development. During interviews, participants described the beginning of their college career as a time when athletics tended to take the priority over academics. But within a few years, they discovered the importance of academics and of being involved on campus—

activities that are important for establishing a résumé, after having let go of professional athletics aspirations after realizing it is not a realistic path.

Carolyn shared how her attitude toward her vocational identity changed over her college career. “I had a different attitude when I was a freshman and sophomore. But as I got older, it changed. When I was a freshman and a sophomore, it was more swimming was everything. Go to practice, [and] in between practices take a nap so that [you’re ready] for the second practice. I would be ready to go. And then when I had homework, I did it; but it was like 9:30. I’d be like okay, I’m going to bed; I got to wake up and go to practice. I finished everything, but I didn’t put in as much time as I probably could have, because swimming was the most important thing.”

Casey spent a lot of time tutoring student-athletes during her graduate career. She commented that she had observed many student-athletes who failed to see the relationship between the student and athlete roles. “I just don’t get them [student-athletes]. That’s the funny part. And it’s [career resources] there. You’re on athletics grounds anyway, and I wish it was more accessible for people to think, ‘Oh, yeah I will need to be looking for a job in six months when I graduate.’ I think just the mindset is what’s missing. Not the resources. It’s forming a student-athlete’s mindset saying, “Okay, you aren’t going to be a collegiate-athlete forever; you have been working on this thing called a degree, whether you like it or not.’ Was it just to be eligible [to play sports]? I don’t know, in some cases it <u>is</u> just to be eligible. But there’s that mindset of things aren’t going to be given to me for the rest of my life. I don’t know how to make that click into somebody’s head, but at least that’s what is missing.”

Lacey explained the frustration she felt when trying to recruit younger student-athletes to participate in outside leadership activities. “I’m on our student athletic advisory committee. I thought that would be like super helpful [for my résumé]. You get involved; you do community

service; you get to do all of these activities, like planned things. But [for] some people, I try to get a team to get involved [in these activities], and they don't know what it is, or they don't understand what the benefit of it is. They are just like, 'Why would I want to meet with somebody for an hour a week? Why would you want to do that when I can go eat dinner?'" This mindset of putting occupational engagement (and consequently, vocational identity development) on the back burner during freshman and sophomore years was a common report from participants who were upperclassman or graduate students.

Tammy reflected on thoughts and experiences that made it easy for her to push career development to the back burner. "You don't really know what [you want for a career]. I mean some people know what they want to do, and some people have no clue. The career fair probably helped a little bit, just to give them some ideas. But I think in high school you realize that college is in so many years and you have so many 'prereques' to take before you get to your major classes anyways."

Earlier career development interventions needed. With some of the issues mentioned previously regarding developmental delay, a number of the participants advocated for career development interventions to be offered as early as possible during their college career. Most of their comments were very similar, generally implying that vocational and academic support is essential during the first few years in college for student-athletes.

Carolyn's comment summarizes of this concern. "I guess a lot of people starting off in their first two years [of college], like me--a future in pharmacy or exercise science wasn't really in my mind; it was just athletics. So, I didn't take advantage of all the things that I could have early on. Then my junior and senior year, I was like, 'Oh, why didn't I do this earlier? This is

awesome.' So maybe just showing that to younger freshman and sophomores, because it sneaks up on you fast."

Joseph echoed similar sentiments. "I started in a engineering major; I feel engineering; I came here as a engineering major. And a lot of people don't have schools declared until like their junior or senior year because they tinkered around so long. They're like, 'Hell, it's time to figure something out.' So maybe [getting] some early-on help freshman and sophomore year [would be helpful]."

A significant number of the participants identified that career-based intervention was needed earlier in their college careers, or that they wished they would have done more themselves in terms of occupational engagement.

The progression of professional athletic career aspirations. All participants were asked the question, "Was 'going pro' in athletics ever an option for you?" The majority stated that at one point, generally in the beginning of their college career, it seemed a realistic possibility for them. But over time, most participants began to realize that trying to make it as a professional athlete was not a good idea--each for his or her own reasons. Out of the 14 participants, only two stated they were still seriously planning on going professional in some capacity as an athlete.

Ben, a football player, stated that when he was younger "going into professional athletics seemed realistic." But later he was educated about the probability of making it professionally in the NFL. "When I was younger, it was [realistic]. Then, as you get older, it gets to be something that would be nice and something you work towards. But if you don't get it, [you] have your back-up plan here, your degree, and a future career--just having that solid foundation. [Since] the percentage of guys that make it to the league is so small, and then the percentage of actually

staying in the league past three years, which is when they get their pension, is a fraction of the number of guys that make it. Definitely it was [a possibility for me], but when you come to the realization and get more realistic about what your body can do [a career as a professional athlete is less likely]. I'd definitely want to, but I don't think I would want to take some of the hits those guys take."

Lacey recalled thinking it would be easy to make it professionally, but reality hit in adulthood. "When you're younger you're naïve. I'm watching it in my brother too right now. He wants to play basketball [professionally]. But you just don't realize how limited and how hard it is for people to get there. I think that was always my goal, was to be at the top of whatever I was going to be or whatever I was doing"

Jacob, like others, also thought he would be able to have a career in professional athletics, until his own body failed to catch up to where he wanted it to be. "When I was in middle school, I thought I could maybe play professional basketball, just because I was so much taller than everyone else and I was excelling in that. I just thought I would keep growing and be 6'8" or 6'9." But that didn't happen. So I finally had to come down to reality, as far as that goes."

In sum, a pattern that appeared in the data was of a desire and belief that it is possible to make it as a professional athlete—a belief that lasts up until about one's junior or senior year in college. Student-athletes then realized that the competition is fierce, and that their talent and passion must arise above all the rest to make it as a professional athlete.

Unawareness of university resources, policies, etc., that prevent or hinder vocational identity development. Another barrier to vocational identity development was a general lack of awareness of various university resources that might assist with vocational development. Along with the developmental aspects reported in the previous section, the participants often reported

simply not knowing certain career resources existed until later in their college career. As a result, they frequently shared the view that student-athletes need to take initiative with respect to their vocational development and better educate themselves about the resources available to them.

Lacey, although knowing what she wanted to pursue vocationally, reported having trouble determining how to turn that dream career into reality. "The one thing I am running [into] right now is, I don't understand how I get there [prospective career path]. There's only so much you can apply for without [experience]… But it's all who you know, like who [do I know who can] take my résumé [and] submit it and put it on someone's desk. Or who's going to watch me at some point and say 'Hey maybe we can use this girl in something,' versus 'Just pick out the names [from the pile of résumés that] you recognize or schools you recognize even.' I think that is the biggest challenge as of now--how do I actually get there, how do I get noticed, and how do I find the right people to get connected with? That's what my obstacle is as of now."

Sandy stated that student-athletes often see their time in college as wasted, since they didn't have a lot of time to do things outside of athletics. But she stated that this can be an advantage if student-athletes know how to present it. "I think there are so many things that are examples of former student-athletes who have used [their experiences during interviews], I have grown from being a student-athlete and use that as a launching pad. But I have friends who are my age that have decent grades and they will be applying for jobs and say 'Oh well I'm not going to get it', 'Why not?', 'I mean I have a decent grades but I have no work experience. I haven't done anything.' 'You haven't done anything? You know you just spent the last four years of your life, day in and day out with a 24 hour a day job.' So it's like 'you haven't done anything?' they don't realize that that is something they can use [to obtain a career]."

When Joseph was asked what could be done to make involvement with campus resources easier for student-athletes, he responded, “It kinda falls back on the person. If they’re not having any drive to better themselves, then there is really nothing you can do.”

Perceived Barriers to Ideal Careers

This section summarized the participants’ perceptions of barriers to a student-athlete’s ideal career path. During interviews, participants talked about barriers to their post-sport careers from several standpoints, including what may be a part of their psychological process as a barrier. From the responses of the 14 participants, three specific areas were apparent: career-specific perceived barriers, institutional-specific perceived barriers, and beliefs held by participants that work against vocational identity development.

Career-specific barriers. Three participants mentioned career-specific barriers, each of whom was headed toward competitive career fields. Their concerns were reflective of the current economic environment, which at the time of the interviews was very unstable for new college graduates. Overall, the three participants expressed concerns about the competitiveness of their career field, breaking into their field, and that their career field is ever-changing.

Craig discussed the main obstacle in his career path as standing out in a crowd of competition in the journalism field. “The one obstacle I might see for journalism is that there’s so many people out there writing that it might be hard to get in and get recognized at first. Then with that fact too, people are starting to go to the internet more for journalism. That might be another problem where everyone is competing, to write for whatever company or whatever paper it is online.”

Lacey, also a journalism major, had planned on becoming the first “legitimate” female sports broadcaster on ESPN, and was sad that ESPN anchor Erin Andrews was the first to secure

that role. “What makes you stand out from the next person especially with sports…in sports [there’s] a lot of guys. There’s some girl sports broadcasters, which makes me mad in a weird way, because I was like, ‘Wait a second, that was my shoe-in.’ I was a girl and they need to make this quota so they aren’t discriminating against me. So that’s what my goal was, [to] ride in on that. But now there’s more girls. But it’s still, myself included, [there’s a stigma about] a girl talking about something sports-related. I don’t think she has that much knowledge on it. I’m sitting there like, ‘Oh she doesn’t have it,’ which is the worst view because that’s what I want to be doing.” Lacey wanted to push into a male-dominated career that typically did not accept women up until recently. She saw this as another career-related barrier.

Institutional-specific barriers. Participants did not frequently mention institutional barriers, although there were comments made by participants in previous sections that could have also fallen under this heading. Two main concerns presented by participants were the increase in class difficulty, and avoiding the common distractions of college life.

Carolyn reported that the rise in difficulty in her classes caused her to rethink her plans to go into professional athletics. “I think that [during] freshman and sophomore year, I was like ‘Oh, I still have like 4 more years, it’s such a long time [before having to make a decision about a career path].’ But by the end of sophomore year, I think it just hit me that I only have two years before I’m actually done with swimming and in the real world. And this was before I was swimming [after college] too. Also at that point my classes got a little harder. So [I] had to study more to get by.” As course level difficulty increases, it requires that students be more involved with their academic role, which can be a difficult sacrifice as a student-athlete, especially as they may be moving up on the roster for their team.

Distractions can be a hard thing for many college students to avoid, and with the busy schedule of a student-athlete, time management is a very important skill. Jacob talked about the importance of using free time as a chance to study during his college experience and as a means of getting through college successfully. "Just finding the time, little bits and pieces of time, a random moment when you [could be] spinning out watching TV or surfing the web or talking with roommates instead, I actually spent doing academics. I think that was probably one of the best things that I did."

Although this is not the complete list of institutionally-perceived barriers, those referenced above were related to the success of student-athletes in their pursuit of their college degrees.

Beliefs that work against vocational identity development. One theme that came up repeatedly in the interviews was a series of varying beliefs that may discourage exploration of career options that interest them, and discourage vocational identity development in general. Some participants were unsure of career options for specific majors and would abandon the idea if they couldn't come up with any ideas. Other participants were still unclear about their career path, finding ways to continue the delay of decision-making.

Annie thought anthropology would be interesting to her, but avoided it because she didn't know what kind of job she could get with that major. "Yeah, there's been different classes and stuff that I have taken, which I have liked what I have learned. This would have been an interesting profession to go into. It's also like, 'What would I do if I did this though?' I thought [that way] with anthropology, I went into that class and I really enjoyed it. But if I did this, what would I do? I don't know."

One participant criticized his fellow student-athletes for not having a job-specific major. "There's a couple [of my teammates] are going to graduate a general studies major, and what are you going to do with a general studies major? They don't know where they are going to go with that. So I think if you had a little more involvement [in finding a career path, it would be beneficial]–not so much push people into certain directions, but help them figure out what they want to be it would be beneficial."

Tammy talked throughout her interview about the idea that student-athletes are less likely to ask for help. "I don't know, I think it's just the 'athlete state of mind.' For some people, [they are] really independent. Not quiet, but kept to yourself and only asks for help when they really, really need it. And for some things that's good, and for other things it's bad."

Gina, a junior, was unclear about her future career path and saw graduate school as an extension of college to continue figuring out what she would like to do. "Well, when I was younger, I used to have crazy [ideas]--I want to be a lawyer, I want to be a doctor, and they changed every day. But I knew I could be whatever because my parents were successful. And so I thought that I could do something great. But now I am like 'a doctor? That's too much'. But currently I don't know what I really want to do. I'm trying to figure it out. Hopefully go to grad school and I can figure something out."

Influences on Vocational Identity

Across the interviews, it was clear that influences from other individuals have some role in a student-athlete's vocational identity development. During pilot studies, it was noticed that the role of influence was a major theme that was still addressed but not specifically asked about. This resulted in the addition of several interview questions to the protocol—questions about the

role parents, coaches and professors played in the participants' vocational identity development and in the balancing of the student and athlete roles.

Parental and family influence. Parents play a significant role in their child's development. During interviews, if it had not been mentioned yet, participants were asked about the role their parents played in their development--not just as a student but also as an athlete. A majority of participants shared that their parents were a strong source of support for them and also a source of guidance when they were feeling unsure or lost in the adult world.

Annie recalled a time when her mother pushed her to think about translating her favorite hobby into a career. "My mom had a pretty big influence [on my career path]. Like there are different things that I wanted to do, like photography. I like taking pictures. I like photography, so I consider that as something I might want to do. I have so many hobbies and things I like to do, that they're all like a consideration as a career. You could spend forever naming off all the things that you like to do, or thought about doing. But then it comes down to [it], she was just really good at being honest with her kids, and [asked me], 'Okay, well, photography, like I'm not saying you're not talented at that, because you take good pictures. But like, how are you going to make your career out of that?' [It] just kind of [made] you logically sit and think, how would I do that? And what I am going to do if I really go for that?"

Ben remarked that his parents' career paths had a strong influence on his ultimate career path. "My dad was always concerned with the financial matters of the family so it was always in the back of my mind. When I was younger my mom actually worked in a bank. So I spent a lot of time being around people at the bank. Probably where it all started."

Casey was largely responsible for her own destiny in contrast to some of the other participants. But she stated that regardless, her parents were still supportive of her career

aspirations. “My parents just kind of pushed me along that path, saying there’s no reason from trying to keep you from doing that since like I’m not trying to be a rock star, or something. And, it’s just kind of in my head that I set a goal.”

Joseph shared that his parents were supportive of him making his own decision about his career, whether “going pro” or not. “They always told me, ‘Do what you want to do.’ Dad was never like ‘I want to see my son play professional baseball, so you have to play professional baseball.’ They were always behind me to catch me if I fell, but they we’re never in front of me. They let me walk my own path; and if I stumbled, they were there to catch me.”

Carolyn shared that her mother had been a strong support for her completing graduate school while continuing to be active in athletics. “She’s just always been [there]. When I am really down about how hard of a week I’ve had, or how hard a test was, she’s like, ‘It’s okay, you can do it. Like you only have two and half more years,’ which sounds like forever, but [muffled laughter]. [She’s] helping me get through tough test weeks, stuff like that.”

Jacob shared that his father had played a major role in getting the opportunity to be a student-athlete. “My dad was in contact with [the university] during that period a whole lot. He sent a tape to them, and he constantly just tried calling them and contacting them. He was eventually the one who got an email from one of the coaches and got a phone call that said I could come and walk-on. So, he was very influential there.”

Jamie shared that her father, like Jacob’s, also played an important role in getting her into athletics. His role included training her during summers and off-seasons. “I just remember coach was at the finish line, [and] my dad was at the 200 mark. My distance coach wasn’t there and coach was cheering for me. My dad, he’s got the watch; he’s a racer like me; and he’s sitting there like ‘You are a machine! You are a machine!’ because I am running exactly [how I need to

be]. My splits are like clockwork, and there is only one other girl in the race, because everybody dropped out because of the weather."

Although this was by no means a random sample of participants, it was clear from this group of participants that many of their parents supported them both academically and athletically.

Effects of coaching behavior and athletic politics. Another significant influence on the development of vocational identity for student-athletes was the leader in their athletic role--the coach and/or coaching staff. The participants reported varying experiences of their coaches--some good, some bad.

Although there were positive and negative experiences reported across the participants, fewer than half of the participants stated at some point that their coach cared about their team's academics, whereas the other participants gave specific instances where their coaches made it difficult for them to have a balance between athletics and academics. Other comments were reflective of a negative environment created by coaches, typically dealing with favoritism or unfairness on the team.

Joseph shared that his coach had high expectations of players, and he commented on their impact when new freshmen join the team. "Coach strives for academic excellence in the classroom. He doesn't take baseball over school. If you have tutoring, if you have study hall hours, if you have a test review, you leave practice. If you are late to practice because of school, so be it. If we're practicing midday and you have class, you go to class. You don't miss class. He harps on team GPA-- our team GPA was like a staggering 2.6 this past semester and he blew the roof off the clubhouse because generally it's a 2.8, 2.9. We had some freshmen that came in,

[and] didn't know those time management skills, and just got focused on baseball, and the new college life, and our team GPA took a hit for it. He flipped, so he is huge on academics."

Lacey reported that she felt her coach was often giving her team mixed messages about priorities as a student-athlete. "[It's frustrating, because] two seconds later she [coach] is telling us that we are STUDENT-athletes. So it's definitely confusing because it's like she wants to stress this. But then overall it comes down to us competing in our sport. And I mean that is what she is supposed to worry about. So I understand, but I feel like in the long run right now, it still always comes down to competing in your sport, like that [gets the] priorit[y]."

When asked about the number of people to whom she has to stay accountable, Gina shared that it can be overwhelming. She indicated that she is more apt to avoid punishment for her grades than work toward a reward that teams may have. "You go to your counselor, [and] it sucks, because they have access to your grades anyways. They are just looking through and if they see something, then they tell your coach, and then it's kind of like, you get these repercussions. Like, 'Do you need extra this? Or do you want to have extra practice or something for you not being able to?' and you're like 'Ugh.' I mean I have never had that happen to me too much, but some people it's like, I would hate to have them on my back all the time."

Suggestions from participants. During interviews, one of the participants, Lacey, mentioned things about her team or coaches that she would like to see changed, in order to better promote academics, occupational engagement, and ultimately, a balance between her student and athlete roles. Her suggestions may be generalized to other collegiate athletics teams.

Lacey commented that coaches could be more involved with the resources that the athletics department provides, in order to better advise student-athletes when they are in need. "I know it's not their job, but I think coaches really need to get more involved with that kind of

stuff. Every once in a while my coach will say something [about resources for student-athletes] but it's like random and weird things that I don't necessarily think are the most important. But they have been getting better about that, I have noticed. They have been telling the team [about available resources], but a lot of times, the girls don't listen to anything unless they're a coach. It's like because their coach says it, you have to do it."

Lacey also commented on the amount of power her coach held over her team, and how it could ultimately benefit student-athletes in a better way. "It's like what they [coaches] say is [what] you have to do, because otherwise, are we going to run? Is she going to yell at us? She holds the power, especially a girl's scholarship, [it] shows the line of power."

Effects of Professors, Faculty, and the Academic Institution on Student-Athletes. Professors, faculty, students, and the university a student-athlete attends create their academic experience and potentially how a student-athlete feels about academics. During interviews, participants responded to questions relating to their academic experiences, and shared their stories and perceptions of their university outside of athletics.

Multiple times during the interviews, participants shared good and bad stories of their professors, and their role in their vocational identity development. Seven participants shared instances in which professors had either been a role model, mentor, or great source of information on their field. Three participants shared instances of faculty discrimination due to their status as a student-athlete.

Jacob shared a personal relationship he had developed with the assistant dean of his school. Working as a liaison for Jacob in difficult situations with other professors, this person was being a mentor for him. "A guy by the name of Dr. XXXXX is an assistant dean in the school. He played football here, same situation as me; he was a walk-on; he's been a dean. When

he was going to college, they said it would be really hard [to be a student-athlete]. Actually, they told him he wouldn't be able to get an education and play football because of the scheduling conflicts. But he fought his way through it, and he was able to do it. I have the same situation, going into my sophomore year here. He's helped me out a ton, and [has] just been a real mentor to me throughout my four or five years here."

Sandy talked about her experiences with professors who stereotyped student-athletes. "I don't want to say 'prejudice,' but [I have noticed some] stereotyping by professors. You definitely find out quickly which professors were supportive of you having to miss [class] for games, and which professors [were] just not [agreeable to missing class for games] as a valid excuse, regardless of what you did to make up for it. I would probably have to say that was the most unhelpful thing, as far as trying to balance everything." She shared more about how a professor's negative comments to a student-athlete can create a distance between athletics and academics. "It [a professor's attitude] definitely affects it [your feelings about academics]. If you are taking a specific class with a professor you don't like or doesn't like you, you probably aren't going to enjoy that subject, at least in my own personal experience. You don't want to go to that class, you don't care about it, and you have a lot of negative emotion towards it. So it's definitely going to steer somewhere else. Whereas that you might have been really good at [it] or you would have really enjoyed [it] under different circumstances. But I would definitely say I have had more positive experiences than negative ones."

Joseph discussed how he visited with professors frequently to build networking relationships for future opportunities. "Obviously professors know people. So if you take the time to go talk to them, shoot the bull with them, outside of 'Hey, how you do this equation?' but [asking] 'Hey, how has your week been?'--something like that, it will help you out in the long

run. A good friend of mine is actually a professor here at the school, [and] when I go to his office, we don't talk about school. We talk about the basketball game, drinking beer, doing stuff like that. I think those things have helped me be able to prepare to when I do get in the job field. But outside of that, um you know, being in engineering and being in [sports], you have to, you know, be real crucial, and real adamant about making time for everything."

Labeling/stigma from the university environment. In addition to having negative experiences with professors, participants also comment on instances when they felt significant levels of stigma, stereotyping, and labeling from the university environment-- professors and other students. Nine participants discussed experiences of labeling and stigma, two participants stated that they did not like to identify as a "student-athlete," three participants reported they felt regular students romanticize the student-athlete experience, and two participants stated they are physically identifiable (via their athletic clothing).

Sandy reported that her student peers were unaware of what is required of student-athletes. She added that student-athletes have to work harder to be where they would be as a regular student. "I think that some of the negative perceptions that regular students have about student-athletes are if you are an athlete you're stupid, or if you are an athlete you are lazy and you don't care about school. I feel like a lot of student-athletes can get everything done, and so they just focus on their sport and they're like, 'Well, forget about this [academic work]. I can't care anymore, because I can't do everything.' I think there are other student-athletes who do just as much as a regular student would, but have this extra constraint on their time. So they end up performing below the regular student, still the same amount of effort, but their time is just further divided. Which isn't to say that every other student's time isn't demanding either; there are kids who work 4 to 5 jobs, volunteer until they pass out, and do all sorts of things. But just

generalizations, I think there is a student-athlete that is as successful or more successful than a regular student because they have put in above and beyond to do everything all at once."

When asked about his experience with his interview as a participant in this research study, Ben stated that he appreciated this research to help people better understand the student-athlete experience. "It's nice to verbalize things that most people don't think about on a daily basis. I think a lot of people get the perception that athletes are babied, [because] we get these scholarships that are very helpful. But at the same time we work for them, and I don't think people realize the time constraints and everything."

Joseph reported that he felt student-athletes are easily identifiable on campus and so he doesn't like to wear the clothes provided to him. "I don't like wearing all the gear, because you know you can stand out there and go [pointing], 'That's an athlete, that's an athlete,' because [of] all the gear we get."

Zach shared that he had trouble being seen as a student in the athletic setting and as athlete in the academic setting. "When I was in graduate school and running, it seemed like a lot of people in the department were like, 'Oh, you're an athlete,' so they viewed me as 'the athlete.' And when I was in practice, they were like, 'Oh you're the graduate student,' sort of thing."

Gina stated that she felt stigmatized by her professors. "I think that, yeah, sometimes you get teachers who assume you are dumb. I don't know why people assume that just because you are an athlete that you're not going to be able to be good at something. Like I'm not dumb. I feel like I came out of high school with good grades and I was doing well. Like, I'm not, I'm not just going to skate by; I want to get good grades just like everybody else. And some of them will work with you; some of them don't like you because you're an athlete."

Influence of professors on vocational identity development. Participants were prompted to discuss how their experiences, good or bad, had affected how they felt about academics and their potential career field.

Lacey expressed caution about professors with whom she was unfamiliar and how to express her academic needs as a student-athlete. "You have to [be cautious]. If you don't know [how] they're [new professors] going to react, I'm very hesitant [to talk with them]. Should I warn him [I will be gone due to a competition], [and if so,] how far in advance? Should I tell them I need to take the test separate? I'm not going to be here and I missed a review day, or you missed some lecture, and they're not online, and they [professors] don't seem to care. So it's like, 'Well, how am I going to get that?' Sometimes you just don't know any people in your class [from whom to get help] or [at least] to the level where you get notes. It's easy to distance yourself from academics."

Sandy stated that due to a smaller number of professors in her program, it made it much easier for professors to get to know her as a person rather than as "just student-athlete." "Actually in my program there are only a few professors, so you have [multiple courses] with a lot of them. They get to know you, and what your dreams and aspirations are, and can really cater to that. You can tell that they really care."

Carolyn, like Lacey, discussed her experiences with professors and their feelings toward student-athletes and their flexibility with student-athlete schedules. "[Professors are] definitely at both spectrums. A lot of teachers in [the] pharmacy school are super-lenient, and are willing to let us take the tests anytime, [even] when we come back [from competitions]. Actually we had a teacher last semester that let us take a test on our own, on our computer. She just emailed us the test. She was like, 'Oh yeah, I trust you guys," which was really cool. But most teachers just

either send the test to our academic advisor for us to take on our own, or have us take it when we get back. But there's also those professors that are like, 'If you miss class, you're not going to get the points for being here; you can' t retake your quiz.' I've never been in a situation where they haven't let me retake a test, but just for quizzes and attendance points."

The majority of participants seemed to suggest that open communication with professors was often a key to working together, but that is was not always a solution.

Summary of Results

Participants shared a variety of experiences from their beginnings as a student-athlete in grade school, to a high school student-athlete, to a collegiate student-athlete. Most participants began playing sports at a very young age, and had embraced sports as an important part of who they are. Participants reported having some significant difficulty making the transition from high school to Division I collegiate athletics, in addition to the increased difficulty of college academic courses and the psychological adjustment to college life. Student-athletes revealed having multiple personality traits in common and attitudes that were reflective of the athletic lifestyle and that support vocational identity development, including high determination, independence, openness to experiences, and positivity and optimism. Participants noted many of the costs of being a Division I student-athlete that affect their vocational identity development, including lack of time, high amounts of pressure and mental stress, and athletic and academic politics. However, participants also noted benefits that helped their vocational identity development--including learning transferable skills, strong social relationships, and financial assistance. Finally, participants discussed the difficulties of leading a life with two strong and conflicting, yet intertwined roles of "student" and "athlete".

The second cluster of themes reflected the process of finding a vocational path for student-athletes (i.e. the vocational identity development process). In looking at patterns for choosing a career path, student-athletes reported that job characteristics (hours, work environment, pay, etc.), the influence of others, and choosing a job that would provide enjoyment were significant. Participants also discussed their reasons for considering whether or not to "go pro" as an athlete, citing that most of the time, a career as a professional athlete was neither practical nor realistic. Participants discussed various forms of occupational engagement to assist the development of vocational identity, including those done on and off campus. Additionally, participants shared their experiences with athletic department and university-wide resources. During interviews, themes related to developmental issues that could hinder vocational identity development became more apparent. These included beliefs that tend to support identity foreclosure and the delay of vocational identity development, delay of career interventions, the progression of career aspirations as a professional athlete, and a general unawareness of university resources and policies. Perceived barriers to career aspirations could also affect the choice of a career path, which might be career-specific (e.g., a competitive career field), institutional-specific (increased difficulty of classes and distractions of college life), and beliefs that work against vocational identity development, such as the belief that specific job-related majors are better, and difficulty asking for help. Finally, participants shared some of the influences on their career path. These included parents and family members, coaches, professors, and classmates. Although parents typically held the strongest influence on vocational identity development, coaches and professors also played a significant role.

Overall, these 14 participants provided a significant amount of information on their experiences and perceptions on their vocational identity development.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to study and understand process of vocational identity development of a sample of NCAA Division I student-athletes. Although the focal question of this study was: "How does the process of career development progress for a typical NCAA Division I student-athlete in terms of developing a vocational identity?" a number of additional research questions were posed to help provide guidance and structure to the study:

1. What kinds of resources do they feel are available to them, and how do they choose or not choose to use them? More specifically, what resources are student-athletes taking advantage of for their vocational development provided by the athletic department, the university or another source?
2. How have their experiences over the years brought change to how they feel about their future career path?
3. What kinds of obstacles keep student athletes from being in their optimal path for career exploration?
4. What influences do student-athletes perceive as affecting the development of their vocational identity?
5. How do student-athletes perceive their career development in accordance to their athletic identity? What transferable skills do they perceive from their experiences in athletics?

The study was justified in part by calls by psychologists to better understand vocational issues experienced by student-athletes (Brown & Hartley, 1998; Hinkle 1994; Martens & Cox, 2000). It was hoped that research on this unique group of individuals might help student-athletes at the high school and collegiate levels better transition into the workforce after sport. Qualitative

research methods based on grounded theory were used in order to gain a sense of the process-oriented experience of the participants in this study.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Resources Used by Student-Athletes

Over the course of the study, participants listed a variety of resources that they used for vocational development. For this study, they were divided into athletic department resources and institutionally based resources.

Athletic department resources consisted mainly of athletic department support staff--the academic counselors with whom student-athletes could meet on a weekly, monthly, once a semester, or even an annual basis, depending on their needs. Tutoring services provided by the athletic department were a highly valued resource by participants, but not every participant used these services. Career events run by the athletics department, and the athletics department career counselor, were also among the most commonly mentioned resources. Participants noted the particular value of having career development resources that were specifically tailored to them. Although student-athletes can work with any career counselor at their university, many felt more confident having a staff person that knows how to document their athletics experiences on résumés and use those experiences in answering interview questions in ways that can impress potential employers. A number of the participants commented that it made it easier to get involved with these resources when they were all in one place. Although generally these student-athletes have a choice of the services they might use, several mentioned that they were required to use the services provided by the athletics department, such as meeting with athletics support staff, during their first years in college. It may be that this explains why athletics department resources were more frequently cited in this study than other institutionally available resources.

Although services like these may not be available to every collegiate student-athlete (Division I or not), career development opportunities that are specifically designed for student-athletes appear to be viewed as especially helpful and attractive to any student-athlete.

Although institutionally-based resources were shown to be helpful to several participants, connecting to the resources was sometimes difficult. In this regard, a number of the participants said the university career center was helpful but that they were unaware of its existence up to a certain point. It seems likely that older student-athletes may have known about the career center and the services it can provide to students. Many of the institutional resources listed by participants were very specific to their major, again reflecting a tailoring of the resources to specific student needs. For example, participants in a business field or engineering field reported using only the business school career services or the school of engineering career center. This leaves questions about how students who did not have career resources and staff for their specific major were able to meet their needs (e.g., did they perceive having less of an opportunity for occupational engagement and services to connect them to potential employers?).

Overall, participants in the current study were pleased with their experiences doing mock interviews, attending career fairs, getting help with their résumés, and through individual career counseling. Whether those activities took place through the athletics department, the university career center, or individual school/college career services, is probably irrelevant. The key would seem to be connecting student-athletes to these resources to help them develop a sense of vocational identity and build confidence about their abilities and skills off the playing field.

Overall Inferences of Findings:

- Student-athletes primarily used athletics department-based resources for vocational development, as these resources are more tailored for their needs and availability as student-athletes.
- Student-athletes in specific majors, such as business or engineering that provide their own career services center, relied on these services to provide a tailored experience for their career services.
- Institutionally-based resources posed accessibility challenges for student-athletes due to their locations on campus, the student's lack of awareness of their services, and their limited hours of operation limited what student-athletes can take advantage of due to their busy schedule.

Research Question 2: The Career Development Process for Student-Athletes

Findings from the interviews showed the career development processes of individual student-athletes to be unique. The timeline for the end goal of choosing a career, however, seemed to follow a common pattern, although the time spent in these phases varied.

As a freshman, most participants reported entering college with aspirations for a career as a professional athlete, at least to some degree. As a result, student-athletes delayed any career exploration, even exploration of a career as a professional athlete, since many believed they had a long time to make a decision on a major, or ultimately a career path. Obviously there are always exceptions to this rule, as some participants were able to choose a major and a career path early in their college career. However, these individuals understood the importance of having a "back-up plan" in case a career in professional athletics did not work out for them.

Next, participants reported having to make a choice on a major by the end of their sophomore year due to NCAA and university policy. Whether or not student-athletes stay with

their original major is affected by the number of credits they have completed toward their major and NCAA regulations for maintaining eligibility in athletics.

By late sophomore year or early junior year, these student-athletes began realizing that a career as a professional athlete may not be realistic. A majority of participants stated that at one time they were considering a career as a professional or elite athlete. This aspiration seemed to peak during freshman or sophomore year. But as time and their college careers progressed, reality set in that a professional athletics career is might not be a realistic or practical choice. Student-athletes also had the opportunity to watch older teammates attempt to succeed as a professional athlete, with mostly limited success. Participants no longer wanting to pursue a career in athletics cited various reasons for not doing so, but what was clear for them was that the costs of pursuing those dreams were not worth the potential benefits.

Having realized that a career as a professional athlete is likely no longer a viable career option, student-athletes may now scramble to find a career path for multiple reasons. First, they are upset with themselves for not being active in career exploration earlier in their college career. Second, they are upset about not having had much time or opportunity to reflect on who they are as a young adult. Third, they may also experience a sense of grief and loss around letting go of sports and career aspirations as an elite athlete. For many, this has been a dream of theirs since they were young children, and as a result they have put all of their energy into developing themselves for the world of professional athletics. As many studies have shown (Ballie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997; Killya-Jones, 2005; Parker, 1994), letting go of sport can be a very difficult thing. Finally, these student-athletes are now two years behind their non-student-athlete peers, which means they have less opportunity to spend exploring careers, conducting informational interviews,

completing internships, etc. As a result, these student-athletes began talking to athletics staff, professors, and other campus resources to help them begin their career search and build vocational identity.

In examining the specific career paths of participants, there did not appear to be many similarities, as each individual had a unique story that led to choosing a particular career, and participants varied in terms of their own development to their career path. However, out of the 14 participants, nine expressed a specific career or occupation toward which they were aiming, and two gave a specific field in which they would like to work. This left three participants who were still undecided about their career choice. Notably, the time they had spent in college had little to do with their undecidedness – these participants were classified as a freshman, junior, and 5th year senior. From the individuals who had decided on a career, three were pursuing sport-related careers–sports broadcasting, coaching, and as a professional athlete. Many participants who had chosen a career path reported being occupationally engaged early in their lives, prior to coming to college, and continued to do so during their college years.

In choosing a career, many of the participants cited the influences of their culture and various social circles. Participants often relied on talking with others (friends, family, coaches, classmates, or teammates) as a form of reflection on their potential career paths. Having social outlets to discuss career aspirations seemed to support identity development among those participants who had it available to them. Cultural factors related to either specific industries in geographic regions (such as the oil industry in Texas, for example), family or societal values, or modeling experiences that participants identified with vocationally. Other participant responses reflected a value of choosing a career that one enjoyed, or from which one would get fulfillment.

Additionally, student-athletes' perceptions of their career path changed over the years, especially if they had minimal occupational engagement experiences prior to college or had thoughts about going professional during or prior to college. Although it was not an uncommon scenario, several of the participants noted that a problem can occur with the deadline for declaring a major (which was by the end of sophomore year for this participant sample), as there are risks in changing a major after a certain point (i.e., not being eligible for athletics participation and potentially losing an athletics scholarship). Nevertheless, some participants maintained the same or close to what their original career path was upon entering college. For some, it was because it was right for them; for others, it may have been too late to begin an entirely new major due to NCAA violations.

Around their junior and senior year, participants reported continuing their career exploration if they had not found a suitable career goal yet, and engaging in activities that support occupational engagement as time allowed. As will be illustrated in the next section, athletics posed a significant barrier to occupational engagement, in addition to increasingly difficult class work, and more responsibilities in their sport.

Overall Inferences of Findings:

- Most student-athletes consider a professional athletics career at one point, however, after the first few years of college, the percentage of those still considering going pro declines significantly for varying reasons.
- Vocational delay can set in during the first few years of college, postponing any career exploration or occupational engagement activities to assist in choosing a major or career path.

- This vocational delay tends to last approximately two years, following the realization that a career as a professional athlete is not feasible. Student-athletes then begin using the resources around them (athletics staff, professors) to begin finding a career path.
- Those participants that were more occupationally engaged prior to college were more likely to stick with their original choice of major, and possibly their career goals.
- Social and cultural factors can significantly positively influence a student-athlete's vocational and academic choices. The more social circles a student-athlete is involved in, the more diverse the identity of the student-athlete, and the more opportunity for a student-athlete to reflect on their identity.

Research Question 3: Obstacles and Barriers to Vocational Identity Development

This question proved to be one of the most useful in helping to understand the interconnections between role balance, identity formation, and ultimately vocational identity development. Prior to the interviews, one of the obstacles to vocational identity that the researcher had hypothesized would come up was lack of time, but there were others that the researcher was not anticipating and that ultimately helped create a theory to better explain some of the findings of the study.

A majority of participants stated that athletics had been a significant barrier that kept them from being more occupationally engaged. Participants said they simply did not have the time they would like to participate in activities outside of academics and athletics, such as field experiences, extracurricular activities, or internships. Some participants stated that athletics tended to take priority over academics, especially for some for whom athletics funded their education. There was also a sense from participants that if they participate in other activities outside of athletics, teammates and coaches would not see them as committed to their sport.

Other participants reported that they wanted to participate in career-oriented activities, but with their limited schedule, they preferred to sleep or relax.

A number of participants reported experiencing high levels of stress and pressure in their sport with competition being at the Division I level. When student-athletes are under high levels of pressure, they require more self-care activities, such as sleep, instead of activities higher up on Maslow's hierarchy (1943), related to esteem and self-actualization. Some participants expressed concerns over losing their spot on the team (and a scholarship) if they did not perform well enough, as well as concerns over the stress of having to be accountable to multiple parties for their academic grades. A significant concern arises if an athlete is at risk of losing his or her scholarship, necessitating that they to shift their focus on athletics over academics. As a consequence, they potentially put their academic career at risk as well. Furthermore, an important part of maintaining athletic eligibility is to keep an adequate GPA. Clearly, the two roles are interconnected to one another, so an imbalance between roles can cause serious consequences.

Certain beliefs held by student-athletes seem to work against their vocational identity development. One of these in particular was the belief that the major one chooses must equate with one's career plans, that is, "If I get a bachelor's degree in economics, I am going to be an economist." Although this may be true in some technical fields, career counselors generally report that what most employers are looking for is someone with a college degree, regardless of the major. Nevertheless, many students believe that the choice of a major is a commitment to that field after college. As a consequence, students can become too specialized and lack the awareness and development of transferable skills and adaptability needed for the modern workforce.

One of the significant findings in this study, what could best be described as a "developmental delay," was noted in the comments of a number of the participants in regard to the earlier part of their college careers. Participants reported that as freshman or sophomores, they focused more on their sport, feeling that their time in college was sufficiently long to allow them to put off focusing on finding a career. From these findings, a theory was formulated in attempt to better understand the complexity of the vocational development process for student-athletes, and to connect other findings from this study.

The concept of "Vocational Action vs. Vocational Delay Crisis" derives from Erikson's (Erikson, 1963) developmental crises and posits that all college students, including student-athletes, can encounter a developmental crisis in finding a suitable academic major and career path. This occurs when a student believes upon beginning college that graduation is a long way away, and that he or she has plenty of time to find a major or career path. As a result, he or she will focus their attention on other new activities as a part of the new independence of being an adult and a college student (such as sports, partying, social relationships) rather than on occupational engagement and vocational planning.

This concept follows recent theory in human life-span development that postulates with the advent of attending college after completing high school as a common societal expectation (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006; Settersten & Ray, 2010). In addition, the theory of "emerging adulthood" has been posed to be inserted as an additional developmental stage between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2006). As a consequence, and has been observed in other studies (Settersten & Ray, 2010), vocational development is delayed at a time when students should be occupationally engaged. Of course not all students will encounter this delay in college, as each individual's development is unique. In the present study, students that had grown up in

circumstances that encouraged critical thinking and reflection about their own interests and their future, or that encouraged independence (either emotionally, financially, or cognitively), were more likely to be developmentally ready to engage occupationally and academically either before or at the beginning of college.

Coinciding with this concept, a number of the participants stated that they thought more career exploration and career-based interventions should happen during the freshman year, either voluntary or involuntary, in order to discourage this delay from happening.

Although some factors that impacted the reason to "go pro" have already been discussed, it bears reiterating that the findings suggest that student-athlete vocation identity development tends to follow a developmental path. This theme also tends to coincide with the differences participants observed between high school and college. Some student-athletes in Division I level sports have been important players on their high school teams where there may not have been as much competition to be "the best." For that reason, they had high levels of confidence about their athletic abilities. This situation puts student-athletes in a position to believe there would be a good possibility that they could succeed as a professional athlete. Additionally, in order to be recruited for a Division I school, they likely needed to have been one of the best players on their team. However, when they begin in college, student-athletes typically start over again at the bottom of the team roster and have to work hard to earn a spot on the team as a starter. During this period, student-athletes come to find one or more of the following: (a) Division I competition is much more difficult than they had expected, (b) succeeding as a professional athlete is not highly probable or an easy path, (c) it is hard to be a stand out when all of your teammates are the best of the best too, (d) sports in college is the equivalent of a full-time job in

college (rather than like a hobby in high school) and that this can take the fun out of playing a sport, and (e) the pressures of high performance at the Division I level can be highly stressful.

Several participants observed that early in college they lacked the awareness of the career-based resources that could have helped them develop a sense of vocational identity. This can be linked to the developmental delay. As a part of believing they have plenty of time to choose a major and career, these student-athletes may feel they do not have to start paying attention to career-related resources until they approach graduation, and doing so fosters a general inattentiveness to available career resources. Many of the participants in the study remarked that earlier career interventions would be (and would have been) helpful, specifically during freshman or sophomore year. But one can only wonder, based in part on other findings in this study, whether any of these student-athletes actually would have taken advantage of those resources, activities, and time to reflect on their interests and talents. As Casey stated, "I think just the mindset is what's missing--not the resources. It's forming a student-athlete's mindset, saying, 'Okay, you aren't going to be a collegiate-athlete forever; you have been working on this thing called a degree, whether you like it or not. Was it just to be eligible?' I don't know, in some cases it is just to be eligible. But there's that mindset of things aren't going to be given to me for the rest of my life. I don't know how to make that click into somebody's head, but at least that's what is missing." The results of this study suggest that it is this mindset change that determines whether students will engage in career-related activities or not.

Another theme was that of role engulfment-- the idea that a particular role can become the entire basis or foundation for an individual's identity. Several participants reported experiences suggestive of role engulfment, including an uncertainty about how to spend free time, their high athletic identity, and their feelings of social isolation beyond athletics.

Some participants indicated an imbalance between their student and athlete roles, while others identified the roles as completely separate. The effects of role imbalance and role engulfment have been examined in previous studies (Adler & Adler, 1987; Brown, et al., 2000; Miller & Kerr, 2003) and their potential disastrous effects for adult identity development were noted. If a student-athlete begins to lean towards the athlete role over the student role (or any other role, for that matter), there is the potential to distance oneself from academics and other social circles beyond their teammates. As a consequence of significant role imbalance, Role engulfment may result. Furthermore, when they can no longer participate in their sport, whether it is collegiate or professional, serious consequences, including the possibility of clinical depression and/or suicide, can result.

Role imbalance was also reflected in the effect of being a student-athlete on the student-athletes' overall identity. Some participants reported their sport feeling more like a job and of losing a sense of individual identity as a result of being a representative of their university. Although the majority of participants reported this as beneficial and character building, some participants felt pressure and a loss of identity as a result of participation in athletics.

Many of the barriers and obstacles to career development for student-athletes in this study were also noted in Martens and Lee's (1998) article on promoting life-career development in student-athletes. Among those obstacles were: lack of time, lack of structure/guidance, high athletic identity, early life commitment to sport, and the relative inaccessibility of the career center for student-athletes. To combat these barriers, Martens and Lee suggested integrating athletic identity at all stages of the career development decision-making process, promoting independence, education about all career options available to students, and early (freshman year) career intervention programming for student-athletes. They suggested these as important to

understanding and fostering a healthy career development process in student-athletes. The findings from the present study also support these suggestions and conclusions.

Overall Inferences of Findings:

- Athletics participation can pose a significant barrier to occupational engagement. Athletics participation takes up considerable time that otherwise might be dedicated to activities that promote identity formation in non-student-athletes.
- Because it funds the education of many student-athletes, athletics often poses a dilemma over a balance in the priorities between athletics and academics.
- Athletics participation may preclude student-athletes from certain majors or classes, but most accept this as a consequence of being a student-athlete.
- Many student-athletes reported high levels of stress and pressure resulting from their busy lifestyle. When the time was available, most participants reported wanting to sleep or engage in relaxing activities as opposed to participating in occupational engagement or personal development activities.
- A pattern suggesting an Eriksonian-like developmental crisis (Vocational Action vs. Vocational Delay) was observed in which students at the beginning of their college careers decided either to begin engaging in vocational activities in freshman year or to wait until later in college to do so. It was observed that student-athletes who engaged in "vocational action" were more likely to be encouraged as children to think critically and/or to be independent emotionally, financially, or cognitively.
- The transition from high school athletics to NCAA Division I athletics could be difficult, and this was often times unexpected by student-athletes. This transition brought the

realities of professional athletics to those student-athletes who were/are considering going pro.

- Role imbalance led to social isolation by limiting friendships and support to those that occurred in athletics alone. This in turn led to role engulfment (basing one's identity solely on athletics). For a number of these student-athletes, it resulted in identity and vocational foreclosure, with potential consequences later in life.

Research Question 4: Influences on Vocational Identity Development in Student-Athletes

The interviews revealed three particular influences on the student-athletes' vocational identity development: parents and family (upbringing), coaches and coaching staff (the athletic environment), and professors, faculty, and students (the academic environment).

Parental influence was an especially strong factor in positive vocational development for student-athletes. It occurred in multiple forms: (a) parents provided unconditional support while attempting to choose an academic and vocational path, (b) parents offered guidance when a participant stated they needed to think more critically about their vocational choice, (c) parents advocated for their children to make their own decisions regarding a potential career path, (d) parents supported their child's involvement in athletics from a young age, and (e) parents also served as a significant role model for their child.

Without some of these components, a student-athlete may fall victim to the vocational delay crisis described earlier. This may be especially true for students whose parents who do not provide them with guidance and support or do not encourage autonomous decision-making. These components provide a basic foundation for a child to make good decisions, but also to build in them a sense of personal regard and responsibility for themselves. Although this finding certainly was not the rule in this study and more research would be needed to support this idea,

what can be said is that parents played a significant role in these student-athletes' vocational development. Participants who came from the type of upbringing with the components listed above seemed to have a clearer sense about their career path, and typically had chosen a career path after considerable thought and research.

Another area that was examined in this study was the influence of coaches on vocational identity development of student-athletes. Participants reported positive experiences that affirmed that coaches are as invested in their player's "student" role as their "athlete" role. At the same time, there were participants who shared negative experiences with their coaches on their academic and vocational goals.

Most participants ultimately recognized that coaches need their team to win in order to keep their job. As a result, coaches may start inner-team competitions, display favoritism or treating players unequally, and send mixed messages to student-athletes about what their priorities should be. These sorts of experiences were a change from high school to college, one for which many participants were unprepared. Athletics politics was also cited as a source of stress in regard to their athlete role.

Of particular note was the pattern of responses indicating how favorably student-athletes, particularly younger ones, regarded statements and suggestions made by coaches. A couple of participants noted this and recommended that coaches have more of incentive to encourage academic success and well-roundedness in addition to athletic success.

Finally, there was the influence of the academic environment—the role that professors and students played in student-athletes' vocational identity development. Seven participants shared instances where professors played a significant role in their academic success. Others stated that the university environment was supportive of student-athletes or that they had positive

relationships with professors--including close relationships with professors--that provided them with mentorship, valuable information, and support.

But there were also several participants who described experiences of discrimination or a lack of support from professors or their university. Similar findings were reported in Engstrom, Sedlacek, and McEwen's (1995) study of faculty attitudes regarding male revenue and non-revenue student-athletes. They reported faculty had negative attitudes about student-athletes' academic competence, and student-athletes receiving special services and recognition, regardless of their sport. As one might expect, these experiences caused these student-athletes significant anxiety, and they reported there was little they could do to help their situation beyond open communication with their professors.

This discrimination, stereotyping, or labeling can potentially have a significant impact on vocational identity development in student-athletes. Some participants expressed the concern that negative experiences might cause student-athletes to avoid a specific academic field or career path due to a bad experience with a professor, or to give up on academics all together. Although the latter is quite drastic and likely to be extremely rare, even the risk of eliminating potential career paths simply due to discriminatory experiences is a type of early foreclosure that can be detrimental to vocational development.

Participants also commented on their relationships with fellow students who are not athletes at their universities. They often reported feelings of resentment and frustration toward those students and the attitude of those students that student-athletes get free clothing and apparel, academic support, and financial assistance simply to participate in playing a sport for their university. This sometimes romantic and misunderstood perception on behalf of non-student-athletes can cause a significant amount of distance between student-athletes and non-

student-athletes at times, further isolating student-athletes and leading them to socialize within their own culture. Although socializing with teammates and other student-athletes is helpful for social support and team dynamic (something many of the participants shared), having non-student-athlete friends encourages them to develop an identity and other interest areas beyond sports, and can also provide academic support.

One thing was clear, participants want to be seen both as a student AND an athlete. As previous research has indicated (Engstrom, et.al., 1995; Kimball, 2007; Killeya-Jones, 2005; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), this type of stereotyping and stigma can have serious consequences on the balance between academics and athletics for student-athletes.

Overall Inferences of Findings:

- Parental influence and support for academics and athletics is important to vocational identity development, particularly when parents support good and autonomous decision-making throughout their child's life.
- There were reports of both positive and negative experiences with coaches in regard to supporting the student and the athlete roles. Coaches play a significant role in a student-athlete's daily life, and setting an example of academics as a priority for their athletes can push student-athletes toward vocational identity development.
- The academic environment (students and professors) can be a source of support or stress for student-athletes, and can turn student-athletes toward or away from their academic role depending on their experiences and perceptions of the academic environment.

Research Question 5: Benefits of Participation in Athletics for Student-Athletes

The final question of this study looked at the benefits of being a student-athlete during college. When asked about transferable skills, the vast majority of participants were able to name

several skills that they believed to be not only useful to their careers as athletes, but also to their potential new careers after sport. These skills included "time management," "work ethic," "self-discipline," "team work," and "goal setting."

Beyond these transferable skills, participants also reported social benefits, financial benefits (assistance), and other advantages that provided an overall benefit for student-athletes. Some participants reported their athletics experience with their teammates as something more than a typical friendship. Because teams spend so much time together, especially during the season, in practice, traveling, in competition, and sometimes in classes, teammates often form tight bonds with one another. In this regard, several participants shared that their initial involvement in sport provided them with a medium for improving social skills and for building relationships with others. These additional friendships in turn provide another form of social support for student-athletes. It was clear, however, that team dynamics and individuals were different, and that this did not always happen.

Financial assistance was also reported as one of the benefits to being a student-athlete. The cost of attending college at a Division I institution can be expensive, and a few participants commented that they or other student-athletes they knew would not be able to afford college without an athletic scholarship. Although not all student-athletes receive a full scholarship, most do receive some form of financial assistance to help pay the cost of books, meals, class fees, or other essentials. While most student-athletes did not need the scholarship to attend a Division I college, in this study there was a small percentage that did.

Overall, the benefits of participation in athletics varied widely, but with the most common benefits relating to personal growth, contributing to their environment in a positive way, and being a positive influence in their lives. Involvement in athletics forces student-athletes

to grow as individuals, while at the same time being pushed intellectually in the classroom. Some student-athletes saw athletics as a way to keep themselves on track to becoming the persons they want to become, keeping themselves working towards goals, building and improving on transferable skills, and keeping their priorities clear. The majority of participants in this study reported multiple benefits of participation in athletics.

Related to the benefits of being a student-athlete, participants discussed how they saw athletics fitting into their life – what meaning it provided for them, especially if they were not looking to become a professional athlete. For some, collegiate athletics provided preparation for a career as a professional or elite athlete. Others strongly identified themselves as an athlete, not just for their university, but also in life--continuing in athletics after college as a form of recreation. Others found their athletics participation as a way to push themselves to do more than they ever imagined, and enjoy the experience of doing so. For the majority of participants, athletics had been a part of their life for as long as they could remember, and it had always been there to teach them about life and how to use athletics to push themselves physically and mentally.

Inferences of Findings:

- Student-athletes gained a large set of valuable transferable skills in athletics, and they were well aware of these skills. A majority of the student-athletes believed their participation in athletics would be a benefit to their future career after sport.
- Student-athletes received social, financial and other benefits as a result of participating in sports.
- The reason for participating in athletics in college could be for preparation for a career in professional athletics, but for the student-athletes who did not plan on entering

professional sports, being an athlete was largely a form of personal growth and lifestyle choice, and something they would continue after they graduated from college.

General Implications of Findings

Conflict between NCAA and University Regulations on Vocational Choice

A major conflict that was noted by student-athletes was regarding both the regulations of the university to choose a major by a specific timeline, and the NCAA's regulations for student-athletes to choose a major by a specific timeline as well. Most universities generally have a timeframe by which students have to declare a major. For participants in this study, students had to declare their major by the end of their sophomore year as required by their university, as well as by the NCAA. As declaring a major too early in a college career could possibly be detrimental (i.e. identity foreclosure), student-athletes would likely benefit from more time before declaring a major and having no repercussions for changing majors later, if needed.

During this study there was one student-athlete who could not change his major later in his college career because NCAA regulations require that student-athletes have a certain percentage of credits completed towards their major. More time flexibility in choosing a major could be beneficial to student-athletes (and students in general), as these regulations and policies may promote maladaptive beliefs regarding career choice (e.g., "Why don't I know what I want to do by now?" or "Once I choose a career path, I cannot change it.") in addition to choosing a major or potential career path prematurely and risking identity foreclosure.

Conflict Between Athletic Performance and Funding, and Consequences on Academics

From reports of participants in this study, there is a ongoing concern to present to themselves to coaches as fully dedicated to their sport and performing to the best of their ability so as to avoid risking their scholarship or financial benefits. And as mentioned by participants, if

student-athletes are not maintaining appropriate grades, they also risk their eligibility and may face academic dismissal. According to the NCAA Eligibility Center (2009), most athletic scholarships in Divisions I and II are initially given for one year, but can be can be renewed, reduced, increased, or canceled from year to year for almost any reason. If a scholarship is a necessity for the student-athlete in order to attend school, not only is there pressure to perform on the field, but also in the classroom. Together, these cause the student-athlete increasingly higher levels of stress and pressure to stay on top of their responsibilities. This in turn challenges many student-athletes with respect to where to keep their focus (athletics or academics), since an equal balance is difficult to achieve. In most cases, student-athletes in this study (and in other others [e.g., Brown & Hartley, 1998; Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996; NCAA, 2006]) have shown a slightly stronger allegiance to their athletic identity. Furthermore, this creates issues related role imbalance and its effect on vocational identity development.

Involuntary Occupational Engagement

Among the suggestions offered by participants in this study was that student-athletes be exposed to more forms of occupational engagement earlier in their development. Whether this occurs for student-athletes during their initial years of college, is involuntary or forced, occupational engagement can provide needed guidance to students, regardless of their stage of career readiness. Additionally, opportunities for student-athletes to broaden social circles outside of athletics might also help them to build support and identity in other roles.

Role of Faculty and Professors in Vocational Identity Development

As this study showed, the influence of faculty and professors can be substantial, especially in cases where instructors are positive role models for students. There were also cases

described where instructors were less than sympathetic toward student-athletes, and this can create a frustrating and detrimental dynamic for student-athletes. It was surprising to find that there was no information provided to new teaching faculty regarding student-athletes in the classroom at the university in this study. Because the athletics department is often a separate entity from the rest of the university, communication between athletics and university faculty members may be less than ideal. It seems reasonable to speculate that more open communication and education about student-athletes between both sides would benefit the student-athlete experience of academics and might enhance the support they receive with the academic environment.

Vocational Developmental Delay

Theoretically, the developmental crisis described earlier (vocational action vs. vocational delay) is reflective of contemporary changes in adult development (i.e., societal expectations of college attendance after high school), and the addition of "emerging adulthood" as a new developmental period within adulthood. A majority of participants in this study reported feeling that early in their college career occupational engagement was a low priority to them (if it were even in their awareness) because they saw themselves as having a long time before they had to choose a major. Upon realization of the contrary, many of the participants shared that occupational engagement and career development activities should happen early in their college career. However, some of these participants also reported that getting younger student-athletes to participate or engage in outside activities not mandated by their coaches was difficult. They suggested that support and encouragement from coaches and athletics staff for student-athletes to be involved in activities that support their vocational identity development could be helpful. In this regard, Mortimer and his colleagues (2002) found similar results in their qualitative study

with the general student population, finding that there was both a delay in occupational engagement, and participants found themselves "waiting" for a career decision to happen. The researchers concluded that occupational engagement needs to start happening before college in order to make a good occupational decision in college.

To prevent vocational delay, one idea posed by a participant was to have a peer-mentoring program within athletics. It was thought that such a program might foster "vocational reality testing," with younger student-athletes and encourage vocational identity development.

General Limitations of the Study

No study is without limitations and shortcomings, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to address these limitations in order to allow the reader to critically examine the findings and conclusions of the study, and to also inform future researchers regarding flaws in design, methodology, or data analysis, so they may be able to avoid these problems in their studies.

Opportunity sampling was used for this study based on a mass email flyer sent to all student-athletes. Participants had to be checking email regularly in order to decide to participate in this study, and then begin an email conversation with the researcher about setting up an interview. A student-athlete who checks email regularly may bias the sample, as many participants noted that it is common for student-athletes to not check email more than once a month. In addition, the student had to decide to participate in a study regarding career development, which may also suggest that this group of participants may be above average in the vocational identity development process, and this may bias what they say about their own experiences. The process of vocational identity development was only from the perspective of 14

self-selected student-athletes, and this certainly can limit the generalizability of this study to the larger population of student-athletes.

A number of the participants were graduate students who had already completed their eligibility, thus requiring them to think retroactively about their experiences. Previous memories, thoughts, and feelings, are always susceptible to distortion. However, qualitative research is often dependent upon recollections of the past or processes that occurred previously, leaving the bias of retrospection as an unavoidable limitation. In contrast, a few participants in the sample were freshmen, who were not able to discuss resources they had used during their college career since they had been on campus for less than a semester. This limited the detail and length of answers from freshman participants, but interview questions were modified as appropriate. Additionally, participants were not representative from all of the university's sport programs, and those who were not included may have been able to provide additional perspectives based on their sport and training. However, previous studies have demonstrated that there tends to be few differences in career development among sports (Martens & Cox, 2000).

Maxwell (2005) describes two specific validity threats to qualitative research: researcher bias and reactivity. Researcher bias refers to the selection of data that fit with the researcher's existing theory or preconceptions and the selection of data that "stand out" to the researcher. Although the researcher attempted to conduct this research with little bias, some bias was inevitable. In preparation for this study, the researcher familiarized herself with relevant literature in the area of student-athletes and vocational development. Furthermore, her previous knowledge of vocational theory and research experiences were also likely to have been a source of influence. As a result, both her theoretical conceptualizations and perceptions regarding the results of previous studies in this area of research may have produced some bias towards the

design of the study, data collection, and data analysis. Furthermore, her impressions and preconceived notions of student-athletes, athletic departments, and the NCAA may have influenced these areas as well.

To help increase validity during the data analysis process, implementation of multiple coders for each interview transcript during the data analysis process, giving them little information about what the study was actually about, and also to use members of the dissertation committee as a reflecting board for the interview protocol were two important aspects in assuring balance of the biases of the researcher. During the building of themes and categories after the coding process was complete, the initial research questions were used as a guideline for creating some categories, but other categories and themes were created based on the commonality of the existing codes.

Although rich data were previously mentioned as a potential benefit to the study, such data can also prove to be a problem for validity purposes. As Maxwell (2005) described, rich data can make it difficult for the interviewers or researchers to restrict their observations so that they only see what supports their prejudices and expectations. In a sea of data, it can be easy for researchers to pick and highlight pieces of data to support their own hypotheses. This is certainly a concern within this study, and the researcher attempted to balance this possible validity issue by having multiple readers review and code transcripts. However, the researcher ultimately devised categories of themes and decided how the data would be presented in this dissertation. While some attempt was made to counter-balance the selection of relevant data, there is still a potential risk for this selective data bias within any qualitative study, including this one.

Reactivity, another source of threat to the validity of the study, is the researcher's influence on the setting or the individuals being studied (Maxwell, 2005). Although this may be

more relevant to studies using observation as a source of data, the potential influence on participants by the researcher would likely derive from the researcher's choice of follow-up questions to ask of participants, or the researcher's reactions to participants' answers to the interview questions. In most interviews, the researcher asked questions off the protocol, and continued with follow-up probes to insure the question was answered. This was not seen as a major threat to the validity of this study, since there were no significant or unusual instances of reactivity. But it may still potentially be a factor.

In addition, participants in this study were not given the opportunity after the coding and analysis of their interviews to do respondent validation, also known as "member checks." Such validation typically involves having participants verify the researcher's interpretations of their responses after the data have been initially analyzed. Although the researcher was not able to do this process after the interviews, throughout their interviews themselves the researcher approximated respondent validation by using summarization, paraphrasing, and interpretation skills that psychotherapists typically use with their clients in order to verify her understanding of their responses. Regardless, it was noted by Maxwell (2005) that participants' feedback on their responses is no more valid than their initial interview responses, but can be used as additional data for the study.

Data collection for this study was conducted using qualitative interviewing, which contrasted with a majority of other similar studies that used quantitative survey methods. Although the methodology and depth of findings were different (an approach that had been encouraged by a number of other researchers (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1987; Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000), many of the overall findings matched with previous studies, (e.g., the NCAA 2006 and 2010 GOALS studies), conferring some additional validity to this study.

Maxwell (2005) referred to both internal and external generalizability as relevant to qualitative studies. Internal generalizability is the generalizability of a conclusion *within* the setting of group studied (in this case, NCAA Division I athletics), while external generalizability refers to its generalizability *beyond* that setting or group (in this case, non-D1 collegiate student-athletes, and non-student-athletes).

The internal generalizability of the present findings likely to be quite high as there were a large number of commonalities among the various participants' data. One important factor that was found in this study as to why D1 student-athletes have such a difficult time developing vocational identity was their intensely busy daily schedule. Instead of engaging in other activities that might contribute to vocational identity development during free time, participants reported that they preferred activities that were stress relieving, fun, or restorative (i.e., sleep). Additionally, a majority of participants shared that at one time they believed it was likely they would attain a career as a professional athlete. Since a majority of professional athletes come from D1 schools, these findings may generalize to student-athletes in other D1 schools.

However, applying these findings to the general collegiate student-athlete population may be more difficult. Since D1 athletics programs usually bring in a significant amount of funding, this also means that they have more resources available to recruit the best potential student-athletes and to insure continued success for their current student-athletes. As shared by several participants, there are some big differences between D1 and non-D1 schools in terms of the services they can offer their student-athletes. However, supplying support to student-athletes at multiple levels and areas of the university can clearly benefit any student-athlete, regardless of the university.

But there may be other differences among populations of student-athletes that may make it difficult to generalize findings, including the influence of the time and place of this study. While interviews were being conducted, the economy of the United States was struggling significantly, leaving job openings and job security to be uncertain for upcoming graduates. This background could have influenced participants' responses, choices, and processes for vocational identity development. Additionally, this study was conducted at a large, Midwestern university, which may have affected participant responses by limiting geographic and cultural diversity. It should be noted that of all the participants in this study, only two were not Caucasian. The results of this study might have been different if the sample were representative of other races and ethnicities. It is also possible that findings might be different if it were conducted at smaller universities or at universities located in other regions of the country.

In examining the vocational action versus vocational delay developmental crisis mentioned earlier, this likely could be applied to any college student, not just student-athletes. As observed by Mortimer and his colleagues (2002), college students also tend to delay or postpone their own vocational development in general, hoping that "clarity will happen" (p. 461), just as was shown with student-athletes. If sports are not a priority over academic and vocational development, one of the many other new freedoms of adulthood can easily be substituted, such as partying or social relationships. Student-athletes, however, may be more susceptible to this developmental delay since athletics is a required additional focus in college.

Future Directions

Developmental Delay in Vocational Identity Development

Over the course of examining the results of this study, a concept was devised ("Vocational Action versus Vocational Delay Crisis") to better explain some of the patterns

observed during interviews with participants. As with any theory, it is important to test the theory in order to validate it. As stated previously, this theory does not apply strictly to the student-athlete population, and could be tested with any group of college students. Future work could examine this developmental crisis, and potentially further inform university services on programming for students.

Effects in Populations with Similar Identity Issues

Just as student-athletes need to learn how to work as a team, have good communication with teammates, and devote a serious part of their identity to their sport, veterans also spent serious amounts of time away from family and friends, devoting themselves to their training, and often are hopeful for a lifetime career in the military, for example. However, just as student-athletes will some day leave their sport, voluntary or not, this is often the case with the military, with some soldiers being discharged for a variety of reasons out of their control. Similar research examining vocational identity development could be conducted with populations such as military veterans, or even retirees in general, that could help foster a better understanding the effects of retirement (or leaving sport) on identity. Research looking at vocational identity development in similar types of populations that require serious devotion of one's identity from an early age may also help inform these populations as a whole, and provide a better conceptualization on their development.

Overall Conclusions

After collecting and analyzing data from NCAA Division I student-athletes, the researcher concluded the following eight factors (in no particular order) have shown consistent relevance for vocational identity development with the participants in this study:

1. Occupational engagement prior to college

Student-athletes who had opportunities for occupational engagement prior to college -- in grade school, middle school, or high school -- were able to spend more time reflecting on themselves, their identity, and how to connect their interests and identity to a potential career path. In turn, this tends to encourage vocational identity development in student-athletes.

2. Parents that encourage good decision-making and independence

Student-athletes that have parents who not only support them unconditionally, but also encourage them to make good decisions, which further develops their sense of independence (emotionally, physically, and cognitively), tended to have stronger senses of personal identity, greater levels of intrinsic motivation, and strong vocational goals.

3. Personality characteristics that encourage occupational engagement

Student-athletes may be characterized by a number of personality characteristics that appeared indirectly connected to occupational engagement, including determination, positivity, independence, achievement-orientation (e.g., being able to "see the big picture") and having respect for athletes. These personality characteristics, that began being shaped from the time most of the student-athletes begin playing sports in grade school, can also be harnessed to encourage occupational engagement and vocational identity development. McKay, Kerr, Hansen and Krieshok (2008) also found some support for this idea in their study of gifted students. These personality characteristics have also been described in Planned Happenstance theory (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999).

4. Variety of social groups that support other identity roles

Student-athletes that have multiple social groups are more likely to have a more complex identity by increasing the amount of roles they have. Not only do multiple social groups support a wider foundation for identity, but they also can provide sources of support, especially relating to academics.

5. A non-discriminatory, supportive academic environment

When student-athletes have professors and students that do not label or stereotype them, it is easier for student-athletes to be engaged in their academic surroundings. Taking it one step further, when professors support student-athletes (e.g., having flexibility with student-athletes schedules and providing equal opportunities for them when needed), it can help balance the consistent role conflicts between "student" and "athlete" by having a positive academic role model to discuss potential career ideas with, and who has connections to employers in the outside world.

6. Support and understanding from coaches regarding academics

Coaches and coaching staff also can encourage occupational engagement. When coaches make academics a priority for their student-athletes, encourage career exploration and use of career resources, and send a consistent message to them about the importance of both of these areas, student-athletes can feel more comfortable and certain about making academics and occupational engagement a priority.

7. Tailored career resources and services

Many student-athletes reported having access to unique career services that teach student-athletes how to demonstrate the skills they have developed as student-athletes in interviews and

résumés. In addition, tailored career services are likely to be more accessible to the demanding schedule of a student-athlete, providing later operating hours and in closer proximity to the athletics department.

8. Understanding of NCAA and University regulations early in college career

Although most collegiate student-athletes are likely educated about the policies and regulations of both the NCAA and their university regarding academic requirements, there may be an underestimation of importance of these for the student-athlete, and this is likely related to the developmental delay crisis mentioned previously--a delay that limits the foresight in planning for the degree requirements necessary to maintain both athletic and academic eligibility.

Although not all of previous factors are required for the student-athlete's vocational identity development (and some are factors over which there is little control over), the more of these factors that participants had, the more likely they were to have a positive and successful experience in finding a suitable career path.

Common among most of these factors was support from individuals in the different areas of their lives: family support, social support from friends and teammates, support from coaches, support from professors, support from athletics staff, and support from university resources. Because student-athletes have less time and more to do than a typical college student, it is important that they have multiple levels of support to survive and succeed in college and in life. When student-athletes are able to harness these resources appropriately, they can make more informed career decisions. The most critical part of all this support is that all sources can work together to ultimately prepare student-athletes for life after sport.

While writing this dissertation, a recent editorial piece was posted on CNN.com (2011, September 8), by Lamar Campbell, a former NFL cornerback for the Detroit Lions and student-athlete at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In that editorial, Campbell reflected on the very issues at the heart of this study: whether a student-athlete pursues a career as a professional athlete or not, finding a career that provides fulfillment and purpose after sport is a requirement for overall well being. This dissertation will conclude with an excerpt from the article (reprinted with permission; see Appendix E),

> "What you learn when you play football is every day is built upon a regimented structure. Imagine if every day of your adult life, everything was planned out for you to the second or for that matter imagine if your job review were every week? This is the life that I had come to know as a 17-year-old kid playing in the majestic Camp Randall stadium in front of 90,000 fans screaming your name, some even wearing your jersey.
>
> You were a warrior, a gladiator. It's your calling; it is what you were meant to do your entire life: being institutionalized by football. This was my life for 11 years--from college to the NFL. This is all that I knew, and needless to say, with new levels came new devils. With the exception of a select few, the end of your football career always comes much faster than any of us planned. Any player knows that they have to retire; the story only differs when you ask them how they think they will retire.
>
> The visions of a 15-year career filled with Pro Bowls, Super Bowls, and endorsements all snuffed out overnight for most of us. Whether it's due to an

injury or just being cut from the team, these are not thoughts that you consider. One day that phone call comes and it's all over.

This is a life-altering transition, and it presents a conundrum. It's like working your way to president of a successful company, then being demoted to the stock room. While others have climbed the corporate ladder over the years and solidified themselves in their respective industries, the average player has missed that critical business training needed to rise up that corporate ladder that awaits many of us when retirement comes.

This can be a staggering experience if you are not ready to leave football and walk into another opportunity. You are tossed out of a world that adored and catered to your every whim and into a world that does not care about you. There's no interest in what you did; the focus is on where you are now.

These are the feelings of many retired players. Ask one what he misses the most and his answer will not be money, it will not be the fame, the endorsements or women. It will be the locker room. You miss the friendships, the road trips, the big wins, and the camaraderie–what I like to call the "locker room culture." This is an atmosphere that becomes your entire way of life. So what comes next?

For every player who leverages his playing career into a successful second career, there are numerous players you never hear about again. Those most affected by this transition are what some would consider marginal players, those making the league minimum, not the multimillion-dollars-a-year contracts (and even some of these are not safe from the pitfalls of transition).

Under the new 10-year collective bargaining agreement, the minimum salary for an NFL player in 2011 who has been in the league between five and ten years ranges from $600,000 to $910,000. Once you are out of the league, consider that most players are paying out an enormous amount of money: from financial advisors, to health insurance and needless to say to countless family members and friends.

As professional athletes, we are hard-wired for success on the field. What we must do is constantly remind ourselves is that we still possess qualities that can also help us succeed in our second careers, as well: the drive to succeed, a steadfast work ethic, the willingness to adjust and adapt, being a team player and, most importantly, the ability to overcome adversity.

If we fail to identify who we are without football, if we're not ready to apply that passion elsewhere, then that sliding glass door of opportunity does not open as fast as one might expect. Former players need to take the time to emerge from that mental cocoon and prepare to attack that new passion with the same ferocity of running down your first kickoff. It's a new game, a new game plan, a new arena and an opportunity for the first kickoff of your new life after the game."

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me briefly about your career as an athlete.
2. Thinking back to childhood, then high school, and up to now, what did you aspire to be when you "grew up?"
    a. Have your career plans changed since entering college? If so, what's changed?
3. In what sort of career do you hope to see yourself in 5 years? In 10 years?
4. Was going professional in athletics ever an option for you?
    a. Do teammates or other student-athletes discuss this with you?
5. What steps or activities are you engaged in currently that you expect could help you realize or achieve that career?
6. Who do you look to for support regarding your academic career?
7. What athletic department, campus, or other resources have you used in your career exploration?
    a. In what way(s) has each been helpful? Unhelpful?
    b. What would make involvement with these resources easier?
8. How do you feel about your personal level of involvement in your career exploration?
9. What role have your parents played in your career exploration?
10. What role have your parents played in your development as an athlete?
11. Are there obstacles you face in terms of developing your future career?
12. How does your role as a student-athlete contribute to or influence your career exploration?
13. How do you balance your role as a student and your role as an athlete? What are strategies you use to support this balance?
14. Tell me about your personal qualities or characteristics that have been enhanced by your involvement in sport and your experiences as a student-athlete.
    a. How do you believe these qualities and skills might translate into a future career after sport? [Modified form of the question: What do you think employers see when they see your experiences as a student-athlete on your résumé?]
15. What advice would you give to an incoming freshman student athlete on how to make the most of their time in college?
16. Is there anything I missed that you feel is important?

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus (HSCL). Approval expires one year from 7/19/2010. HSCL #18829

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Exploration of the Factors Related to the Development of Vocational Identity in Collegiate Student-Athletes

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Psychology & Research in Education at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with the University of Kansas Athletics Department, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the different variables that prevent or promote vocational development in student-athletes as a unique population.

PROCEDURES

First, you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire. Then, you will be interviewed, ranging from one to one and a half hours in length. Interviews will be recorded then transcribed. Your audio recording will be destroyed within nine months of completing your interview. Your survey data and transcriptions need to be kept for seven years in a locked cabinet accessible only to the primary researcher (i.e. Candice Ackerman), at which time I will shred these data. Interviews will take place at Wagnon Student Athlete Center and will center upon your experiences as a student-athlete.

RISKS

There are no risks associated with this study, however, some of the questions asked may create tension or anxiety. Should this become an issue, please contact Megan Harrity, Ph.D., Counseling & Sport Psychologist for KU Athletics, Kelly Watson Muther, Director of Scholarship and Career Services for KU Athletics, or the University Career Center as appropriate.

BENEFITS

There may be some benefits to participating in this study. Studies that are similar to this one have reported subjects having benefit to discussing their past and career goals, as a way to further process and clarify that information for the researcher and themselves. There is also indirect benefit to the university and the athletics department, who may consider using this information when developing student-athlete success programs and other opportunities for future student-athletes.

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Unfortunately, participants cannot be compensated for participating in this study due to NCAA regulations.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any way with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. The researcher will use a study number or a pseudonym instead of your name. The researcher will not share information about you unless required by law or unless you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas, University of Kansas Athletics Department, or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Candice Ackerman, 1122 W. Campus Road, Joseph R. Pearson Hall, Room 621, Lawrence, KS 66045.

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, or email mdenning@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

_____ _____

Type/Print Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

Candice Ackerman, M.S.
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Code:_____

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire:

Age:_____ Gender (circle): Male Female

Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply):

_____ Caucasian/European American _____ Asian American/Pacific Islander

_____ Hispanic _____ Native American

_____ Black/African American _____ Other: _____

Sport you play at the collegiate level:_____

High School GPA (if known):_____ Current GPA (if known):_____

ACT Score (if known):_____

Number of college credits completed (approximate): _____

Year in School: _____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior _____ Graduate Student

_____ Senior _____ Completed Degree (Graduated)

_____ Other _____(please specify)

Year began at university:_____

Year expected to graduate:_____

College major:_____

Do you receive an athletic scholarship (i.e. partial, full, books, etc.)? _____Yes _____ No

As best you can, please answer the following questions regarding <u>your family.</u>

How many siblings do you have? _____

What is your mother's (or female guardian's) highest level of education?

_____Some high school _____Bachelor's Degree

_____High School Diploma or GED _____Master's Degree

_____Some College _____Doctoral Degree/Professional Degree

_____Two-year/Associate's Degree _____N/A

What is your mother's (female guardian's) current occupation?

_____

What is your father's (or male guardian's) highest level of education?

_____Some high school _____Bachelor's Degree

_____High School Diploma or GED _____Master's Degree

_____Some College _____Doctoral Degree/Professional Degree

_____Two-year/Associate's Degree _____N/A

What is your father's (male guardian's) current occupation?

_____

What, if any, career related events, courses, or activities have you participated in during your career at KU? (check as applicable)

_____LA&S 292 (Life Skills Course)

_____PRE 101 (Orientation Seminar)

_____PRE 210 (Career and Life Planning)

_____Completed an internship _____ For credit?

_____New Student-Athlete Orientation

_____Career/Major Fair

_____Individual Career Counseling Session at the University Career Center

_____Individual Career Counseling Session at Athletics Department

_____Group Career Coaching Session at Athletics Department

_____"Career Athletes" Programming Session

_____Explored "Career Athletes" website

_____Explored University Career Center Website

_____Mock Interviews (Athletics) _____Mock Interviews (Career Center)

_____"Networking "Event

_____University-wide programs put on by the University Career Center

_____Other service offered by the University Career Center (résumé review, job search, etc.)

_____ "Other": _____

Appendix D: Email Invitation for Participation

Dear Student:

I am writing you to ask you for your help by participating in a study that will help researchers, career services, and athletic departments better understand the career development of Division I Student-Athletes.

How student athletes plan their life after sport is a topic that has received little research attention and deserves more awareness after how much they give to their universities. By participating in this study, you will be helping to fill some major holes in the research about student-athletes that we hope will help future student-athletes.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. It will consist of a one-time, in-person interview, lasting from one to two hours. Interviews will take place in Wagnon Student Athlete Center. Your responses will remain confidential; only the researcher will have access to your comments. Identification codes and pseudonyms, rather than actual names also will be used to assure your anonymity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study. Your participation is valuable and will contribute to student-athlete research. If you wish to participate, please email cackerman@ku.edu to set up an interview, or if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Candice Ackerman, MS
Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology
University of Kansas

This study has been approved by the University of Kansas Institutional Review Board for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus at: (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, or email mdenning@ku.edu.

Appendix E: Reprint Permission from CNN

Email dated February 5th, 2012, from vcm@cnn.com

Hi Candice,
Thank you for contacting us with your question. As long as you properly credit CNN and the reporter in your works cited, and attribute quotes, you should be clear to quote this material in your dissertation. However, if you would like to reach out to CNN ImageSource, which handles licensing and copyright inquiries, you may do so at 866-462-4350 or cnnimagesource.com.

Sincerely,
Natalie
CNN Viewer Communications Management
Follow us on Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/TeamCNN
*CNN does not endorse external websites, but occasionally provides links to them as a courtesy to our viewers

Appendix F: Codebook

Code	Total Freq.	Max
Able to verbalize how skills/characteristics can be applicable to other domains	1	1
Academia	1	1
Academic competition	1	1
Academic emphasis from sports authority figure	1	1
Academic engagement	1	1
Academic friends	8	4
Academic identity development	3	1
Academic politics	2	2
Academic praise	1	1
Academic support needed especially during first year	4	2
Academics as a priority	11	6
Academics equal priority with athletics	4	2
Academics separate from athletics department	1	1
Academics should be a bigger priority for all	2	2
Accepting athletic abilities for what they are	8	5
Accepts career path	1	1
Accessible info about majors	1	1
Accountability	1	1
Achieve for the university/program	1	1
Achieved goal	1	1
Acknowledging there is a choice of taking both roles	2	1
Adaptability	4	2
Adapting to graduate school	1	1
Addiction to sport	1	1
All teammates are treated equally on the team by coach	1	1

Altruism	1	1
Alumni/fan connection	1	1
Animal-themed careers	2	1
Anticipates conflict between personal and professional aspirations	1	1
Applied for academic scholarship	1	1
Applying for jobs takes time	1	1
Applying to Graduate School	1	1
Appreciative of not being treated differently	1	1
Arriving summer before freshman year is helpful	1	1
Artistic career path	1	1
Aspirations for college athletics career	1	1
Athletes as a symbol of the university	2	2
Athletes look for best athletics programs not academics	1	1
Athletes pick major too early	1	1
Athletes vary developmentally	1	1
Athletic childhood	2	1
Athletic culture	1	1
Athletic dept resources helpful	1	1
Athletic experience can be an advantage	6	2
Athletic lifestyle for life	3	1
Athletic politics	2	1
Athletic support staff not knowledgeable about major	1	1
Athletics a barrier to leadership roles in career field	1	1
Athletics a barrier to occupational engagement	17	4
Athletics barrier to social life	3	2
Athletics becomes a financial/political issue in college	1	1
Athletics can be a healthy distraction	5	2
Athletics career counselor	10	2

Athletics cost social relationships	1	1
Athletics counselor send out reminders	1	1
Athletics counselors provide organization	1	1
Athletics department career events	11	2
Athletics experience as an icebreaker	2	2
Athletics fostered engagement	1	1
Athletics gives a sense of accomplishment	1	1
Athletics helps skill development	1	1
Athletics is an emotional investment	1	1
Athletics is flexible with academic schedules	1	1
Athletics is overall beneficial	2	1
Athletics keeps me in shape	2	1
Athletics participation is a bonus activity with education	2	1
Athletics staff as parental figures	3	2
Athletics staff assist with career planning	1	1
Athletics staff encourages career exploration	4	2
Athletics support athletics-related career exploration	2	1
Athletics support staff	33	6
Athletics support staff encourages non-autonomous thinking	2	2
Athletics takes priority	14	3
Attributes development of talents to parents dedication and active involvement	1	1
Avoiding distractions	1	1
Avoiding foreclosure	1	1
Avoiding punishment versus seeking rewards	4	3
Aware of careers in athletics that do not pertain to performance	2	2
Aware of cultural differences in environment	1	1
Aware of current and past interests	1	1
Aware of differences in culture and SES among states	1	1

Aware of multiple resources	1	1
Aware of the toll athletic pressures have on mental health	1	1
Awareness of multiple perspectives/empathy	1	1
Awareness of resources is the real barrier	1	1
Barriers to occupational engagement	2	1
Based decision of major from previous experience	2	1
Became more independent with time	1	1
Began playing sports at a young age	1	1
Being a college athlete is hard but worth it	1	1
Being a leader on the team	1	1
Being a part of a team	1	1
Being a part of athletics culture	4	2
Being a role model	3	2
Being a student-athlete builds character	3	2
Being a student-athlete toughens you	1	1
Being able to reflect on mistakes constructively	1	1
Being an athlete runs in family	1	1
Being around others who strive for success	1	1
Being engaged in the field	1	1
Being in athletics builds maturity	1	1
Being prepared	3	1
Being proactive in job search	1	1
Belief in career assessments	1	1
Belief that things are handed to me because I am a student-athlete	1	1
Believes girls are more intelligent	1	1
Believes in the academic reputation of the university	1	1
Belonging	3	3
Bigger universities have more resources for student-athletes	3	1

Breaking into the field	3	1
Bringing all student-athletes together	1	1
Brings practical knowledge about the field to their profession	1	1
Building a family/cohort in athletics	1	1
Building relationship with Coaches	1	1
Bulletin board for student-athletes would help awareness of resources	3	3
Business School Career Center	6	4
Busy schedule	3	1
Busy schedule during business hours	1	1
Busy schedule prevents occupational engagement	4	1
Campus resources had longer hours would help student-athletes	2	2
Can take risks	1	1
Cannot be honest with coach due to favoritism	1	1
Career aspirations changed frequently	1	1
Career aspirations changed in college	1	1
Career aspirations from youth prevent going pro thoughts	1	1
Career Assessment	3	2
Career assessment encouraged exploration	1	1
Career choice is physically demanding	1	1
Career database for athletes	1	1
Career decision based on what major was available-- not first choice	1	1
Career development class/class activity	13	5
Career development freshman year	5	3
Career development opportunities brought to attention	2	2
Career events are too business-focused	1	1
Career exploration emphasized in upper classes	1	1
Career exploration in high school	3	2
Career Fair	12	2

Career field is changing	1	1
Career field is demanding	2	2
Career path influenced by learning experience	4	2
Career path is combination of interests	1	1
Career speaker	2	1
Challenging	1	1
Changed career aspirations since college did not have program	1	1
Changing major risks eligibility	1	1
Choosing a university	1	1
Chose career partly based on things enjoyed as a child	1	1
Chose career path based on talent/skill	1	1
Chose career path later in college	1	1
Chose college based on athletics	1	1
Chose college for overall experience	2	2
Chose college most likely to make the team	1	1
Chose field for job security	1	1
Chose job field for flexibility	1	1
Chose primary sport	2	1
Chose sport most likely to get college scholarship in	1	1
Chose sport with most ability	1	1
Chose sport with most experience	3	2
Class activity helped career exploration	2	1
Class Schedule conflicts	1	1
Classes increase in difficulty	1	1
Classes that rely on participation in daily activities	1	1
Close friendships on the team	2	1
Coach and team part of personal growth	1	1
Coach as a part of success and failures	1	1

Coach cares about athlete self-care	1	1
Coach encouraged by skills	2	1
Coach encourages good decision making	1	1
Coach gives realistic expectations	1	1
Coach has high expectations	2	1
Coach suggested training camp to increase skill	1	1
Coach supporting career exploration	3	2
Coach supports going pro	1	1
Coach unsupportive of academics	1	1
Coach was flexible	2	1
Coachable	4	2
Coaches are non-empathetic to academic role	1	1
Coaches care about grades/academics	12	4
Coaches care about performance	1	1
Coaches display favoritism	2	2
Coaches do not push or pull academic agenda	1	1
Coaches for support	1	1
Coaches have a lot of power that could be used differently	2	2
Coaches need to be more involved	3	3
Coaches only like you to play one sport	2	2
Coaches provide balance/perspective	1	1
Coaches sending mixed messages about priorities	3	2
Coaches should view athletes more well-roundedly	1	1
Coaches ultimately care more about performance in sport	2	1
Coaches were okay with outside activities	1	1
Coaching for career	1	1
Coaching staff important factor in choosing college	1	1
College as a growth experience	1	1

College fairs	3	1
College major choice based on sports experience	1	1
College sport aspirations too high	1	1
Collegiate athletics determines if you are truly passionate about the sport	1	1
Collegiate athletics prepares for professional athletics	3	2
Collegiate players in contact with professional players	2	2
Collegiate sport is a job	1	1
Comfort/security	2	2
Coming from small town helps networking skills	1	1
Commitment	5	3
Communication	4	2
Communication with professors	2	2
Communications-related job	2	2
Community service experience	2	1
Company sporting event	2	2
Comparison to non-athlete peers	1	1
Competition level increases with age	1	1
Competition within team	1	1
Competitions help increase grades	1	1
Competitive	11	3
Competitive career field	3	2
Competitive field	3	1
Concentration/Focus	5	1
Concerned about lack of ability	1	1
Concerned about what others think of grades/performance	1	1
Confidence	2	1
Confidence in academics	1	1
Connectedness	2	2

Conscious about strengths/weaknesses and interests	1	1
Consequences different for more talented athletes	1	1
Consequences of lack of time for both roles	1	1
Consequences of missing class due to sport	1	1
Considered law school	2	2
Considered many schools	1	1
Considered other sports	1	1
Considering club sports	1	1
Contacts suggested major/career	1	1
Could have been worse	1	1
Could have taken the easier path	1	1
Courage	1	1
Coursework and electives	8	5
Creativity	1	1
Critical thinking	3	2
Cross-training	2	1
Cultural capital/modeling	10	4
Culturally-bound occupation	2	2
Culture shock/change	1	1
Currently in career exploration	4	2
Currently looking for job	1	1
Deadlines decrease boredom with work	1	1
Dealing with adversity	1	1
Decided on major later in college	1	1
Dedication	8	3
Definitive career goals	1	1
Demanding coursework/major	1	1
Denying athletic talent	3	2

Dependability	2	1
Dependent on job availability	1	1
Desire to “go pro” never leaves	1	1
Developmental change since college	4	1
Developmental delay in career development	9	3
Developmentally moved on from career choice	2	1
Did well in sport in high school	1	1
Didn't enjoy classes related to career aspiration	1	1
Didn't need as much support academically	1	1
Difficult when class schedules clash	1	1
Difficulty adjusting to college level curriculum	1	1
Difficulty adjusting to new adult freedoms	1	1
Difficulty letting go of opportunities	1	1
Difficulty of being a student and athlete at the same time	3	3
Difficulty of putting academics first	1	1
Dilemma of moving back home	1	1
Disappointed with level of occupational engagement	7	2
Discrimination from faculty	5	3
Discusses athletic experience in interviews	1	1
Discussing athletics experiences and skills in job interviews	1	1
Discussing possible career paths with others	4	2
Distancing from academics in times of hardship from professors	1	1
Divorce caused stress	2	1
Do what you like--hedonic approach	13	4
Does not feel connection between athletics and career	3	3
Does not see obstacles	1	1
Does not care about what others think	1	1
Does not like to identify as a student-athlete	4	3

Does not quit	2	1
Does not let others set limits on him/her	1	1
Does not want to be the typical athlete	1	1
Doing more than the minimum	1	1
Does not foreclose early on major/occupation	1	1
Does not like to be told who they are/what they can do	12	5
Downplay athletics	1	1
Driven	8	2
Earlier career development needed	3	1
Early foreclosure	4	1
Early interest in sports	1	1
Easy to get disillusioned with going pro	2	1
Eating regularly	1	1
Economy as a barrier	3	2
Educated parents	1	1
Effects of stress on performance in sport	1	1
Effects of support	1	1
Effort	1	1
Egos in sport	2	2
Electives turn into a minor	1	1
Email not a good form of communication	1	1
Emotional stress	2	1
Employers prefer athletes due to skills gained	3	1
Encouraged by friend to enter sport	3	1
Encouragement	2	2
Encouragement of community in athletics dept	2	1
Engagement changed mind about original career path	1	1
Engages in novel activities	1	1

Engineering Career Center	3	2
Enjoy college	1	1
Enjoying life after sport	1	1
Enjoyment equals self-efficacy increase	1	1
Enjoys academics/learning	1	1
Enjoys adrenaline rush	1	1
Enjoys aggression in sport	1	1
Enjoys challenge	5	2
Enjoys learning	2	2
Enjoys media	1	1
Enjoys outdoors--Realistic code	1	1
Enjoys recognition for talent and success	1	1
Enjoys seeing what they are capable of in sport	1	1
Enjoys team sports	1	1
Enjoys travel	1	1
Entrepreneurship	6	4
Every athlete wants to succeed	2	1
Everyone secretly wants to go pro	1	1
Excelled in school	1	1
Excitement for Scholarship	1	1
Experience is important	2	2
Experience required for major/career	2	1
Experimented with other majors	2	2
Expressive through writing	1	1
Extracurricular Activities	15	3
Factors beyond control affects going pro	1	1
Family as motivation	2	2
Family bonding	3	3

Family bonds with coaching staff	1	1
Family careers related	4	2
Family issues	2	2
Family member as a role model	5	3
Family members passionate about sports	2	1
Family Support	6	4
Family support in athletics	2	1
Family support of career aspirations	2	1
Family values on career choice	4	2
Favoritism by professors	1	1
Favoritism supports self-doubt	1	1
Fear of becoming complacent	1	1
Fear of being caught involved in an extra-curricular	2	2
Feedback on talents from others	2	2
Feeling good about team contributions	1	1
Feels a connection to coaching staff	1	1
Feels behind in contrast to peers	1	1
Feels coach unjustly makes some athletes work harder	1	1
Feels college athletics sometimes has a bad reputation	1	1
Feels judged by other students	1	1
Feels mistreated by teachers at times	1	1
Feels opportunities are plentiful	1	1
Feels pressure to succeed	2	2
Feels treated unequally because of talents	1	1
Feels unaware of all resources available	1	1
Felt secure occupationally	1	1
Felt unprepared	1	1
Felt wasn't on par with other non-student-athletes	2	2

Field-specific occupations	1	1
Finances a concern first	4	2
Financial Aid	1	1
Financial Benefits	2	1
Financial benefits help family	2	1
Financial constraints	2	2
Financial security helps children pursue interests	2	1
Financial support from family member	2	2
Finding academic motivation	1	1
Finding ways to reduce course load	1	1
First doing career counseling but helpful	1	1
First recognizing doing well in sport	1	1
First semester is a learning experience	1	1
First two years focused on athletics not academics	2	2
First year of college is the hardest to adjust to	1	1
Flow experience	3	2
Following through	3	2
Forced to engage in other interests	2	1
Forced tours may be helpful	1	1
Former student-athletes as a support	1	1
Found career path through Gen Ed requirements	2	1
Found career that utilizes talents	1	1
Found potential in other sports	1	1
Free clothes are for everyday workouts	1	1
Free resources helpful to student	3	2
Freshman year was tough	1	1
Friends engaged occupationally	3	1
Friends in sport	1	1

Friendships	8	3
Full-time position	7	3
Fun	9	4
Gender differences in Student-Athletes	1	1
Getting knowledge/experience before making decisions	4	1
Gifted education	1	1
Girls consider going pro only when young	1	1
Girls understand they're less likely to "go pro"	1	1
Giving back to the team	1	1
Giving constructive criticism	1	1
Goal setting	11	4
Goal-oriented/achievement-oriented	9	2
Goal-setting skills	2	1
God/religion/spirituality	7	5
Going Pro	16	3
Going pro depends on opportunity	2	1
Going pro depends on personality	1	1
Going pro depends on the strength of your team	1	1
Going pro is different for girls	1	1
Going pro is not a good financial decision	9	2
Going pro is not common in my sport	3	2
Going pro is not realistic	11	4
Going pro is not worth the effort	4	4
Going pro is risky	5	5
Going pro on the side	1	1
Good balance between roles	1	1
Good relationship with parent	1	1
Got more playing time as time went on	1	1

Grade competitions unfair	1	1
Grades essential to eligibility	2	1
Graduate school	2	2
Graduate student lifestyle not supportive for athlete role	1	1
Gratitude	4	1
Great athletic performances can override bad grades	1	1
Grew up in a farming community	1	1
Guidance on transition to adult living	1	1
Guilt	1	1
Guys more likely to go pro than girls	6	6
Had to work hard to keep up	1	1
Handling personal finances	1	1
Hard work/records are forgotten	2	2
Has multiple plans	3	2
Has will but no agency	2	2
Have seen little success for others going pro	1	1
Having a liaison between academics and athletics	1	1
Having company meet-and-greets	1	1
Having enthusiasm for career events	2	2
Having more knowledgeable athletics staff	1	1
Health care administration	1	1
Helpful to have understanding professors	1	1
Helping others	3	1
High achievements in high school	1	1
High achiever	2	1
High aspirations	6	2
High athletic identity	4	3
High CDSE	2	2

High Levels of Competition	2	1
High pressure	7	5
High school athletics was easier	7	2
High school career exploration interventions	1	1
High school coaches suggested lower levels of competition	1	1
High School not challenging	2	1
High school provides more rewards	1	1
High status high difficulty careers	1	1
Higher competition = more money = more resources	2	2
Hobbies and interests turning into career	1	1
Hobby	3	3
Honest effort	1	1
Human resources	1	1
Humor is helpful for stress management	1	1
I do what I am good at	2	2
I have plenty of time to decide on a major/career plans	7	2
I'm above average	2	2
I'm different	10	5
I'm not talented I just work hard	1	1
Identified with faculty member	1	1
Identity development	6	2
If other student-athletes can do it so can I attitude	2	2
If you enjoy what you are doing its not work	1	1
Image of pro athlete career is better than the reality	1	1
Immature priorities make it difficult to engage occupationally	1	1
Impact of childhood/hometown	1	1
Importance of asking for parental permission	2	1
Importance of getting degree/finishing	3	2

Importance of not being seen as having a big ego	1	1
Importance of presence in practice for team sports	1	1
Importance of recruiting	1	1
Importance of socialization within sport	1	1
Importance of having an escape from school/sport demands	2	2
In bigger high schools athletes can be more focused on sport	1	1
Increase social life	1	1
Independence provides more focus	1	1
Independent	12	8
Independent decision-making	2	1
Independent from the team	2	2
Individual career counseling	5	2
Individual discussion more helpful than class/group discussions	1	1
Individual sport provides more flexibility	4	3
Individual sports offer more feedback on performance	1	1
Individuality is gone	2	2
Informational Interview	11	3
Initiative	3	3
Initiative in developing career is hardest step	1	1
Injuries led to red-shirt time in college	1	1
Injuries provided a good transition away from sport	1	1
Injury	5	2
Injury made me engage occupationally	1	1
Injury made me try other sports	2	2
Injury provided realistic mindset about going pro	2	2
Injury sidelined recruitment to big name schools/scholarship choices	1	1
Inner-team competition	1	1
Inner-team competition encourages self-doubt	1	1

Inner-team competition is difficult	3	2
Insatiable	5	3
Inspired and encouraged by personal relationship with professor	1	1
Institutional barriers make things more difficult than should be	2	2
Institutional Support for Student-Athletes	1	1
Interaction with profession in the field	2	2
Interested in career after interacting with professional	3	1
Interested in pursuing other opportunities	1	1
Interests over skills	1	1
International student-athletes more likely to go pro	1	1
Internship	16	4
Internship required for graduation	1	1
Interview provided clarity and motivation	3	1
Interviewing for positions	1	1
Intrinsic motivation	2	1
Introducing themselves to professors	1	1
Intuitive decision-making	1	1
Invested a lot of time in sport as child	1	1
Investing professional earnings	1	1
Involved in athletics post-career	4	2
Involved/Engaged in department activities	1	1
Is aware of the specific of their sport	1	1
Is aware of time constraints	1	1
Is involved	1	1
Isn't concerned about job security	1	1
Job characteristics more important than interests	2	2
Job connections through parent	2	1
Job experience as career exploration	1	1

Job experience provides practical knowledge which augments coursework	1	1
Job possibility through friend	1	1
Job search a learning process	5	2
Job search was more difficult than expected	1	1
Job Shadowing	3	3
Keep big picture in mind	3	1
Keeping identities separate	1	1
Keeping role balance is important	1	1
Keeps in touch with others about careers interested in	1	1
Knew career path earlier on	1	1
Knew early on which college wanted to attend	1	1
Knowing the field	1	1
Knowing your own limits	2	2
Knowledgeable about how to get job	3	3
Knowledge about career field	1	1
Knowledge about research/resources available	4	3
Labeling/Stigma	17	3
Lack of academic ability equals lack of ability as employee	1	1
Lack of accountability	1	1
Lack of career services for career path	4	3
Lack of diversity in friendships	1	1
Lack of experience	4	3
Lack of feedback	1	1
Lack of funding a barrier to social life	1	1
Lack of guidance	1	1
Lack of knowledge on dressing professionally	1	1
Lack of occupational engagement	1	1
Lack of parental financial support as motivation	1	1

Lack of play time effects thoughts of going pro	3	1
Lack of preparation for college	2	2
Lack of privacy about grades	2	2
Lack of resources	1	1
Lack of self-efficacy	2	1
Lack of self-knowledge	6	3
Lack of sleep	5	4
Lack of support for both roles	1	1
Lack of time for both roles	1	1
Leadership role	14	3
Leadership workshop	3	3
Learned the sport	3	1
Learning etiquette	3	1
Learning life skills	3	2
Learning networking skills	1	1
Learning through experience	3	2
Learning to work under pressure	1	1
Less popular sports depend on who is interested	1	1
Less pressure in high school	1	1
Letting go of opportunities	3	2
Level of talent higher at Division I level	3	2
Library as a resource	1	1
Life is scheduled around sport	2	2
Liked the university	2	2
Likely unknown resource	1	1
Likes feedback	4	3
Likes individual attention	1	1
Likes teaching/coaching	2	2

Listening skills	1	1
Listens to advice of others	2	1
Little cultural differences between home and college	1	1
Little occupational engagement during first years in college	1	1
Little time to relax as a student-athlete	1	1
Location of school limits career exploration and resources	1	1
Long history with sports involvement	1	1
Looking for career outside of athletics	1	1
Lost potential	2	1
Lots of discussion rumor myth among peer athletes about going pro	1	1
Love/Hate relationship with athletics	1	1
Loyalty	2	2
Luck	1	1
Made varsity as freshman	2	1
Major = Job in that major	4	1
Makes own decisions	1	1
Making memories	1	1
Making student-athletes more aware of resources earlier	3	2
Making up practice sucks	1	1
Male-dominated career field	1	1
Many athletes would not go to college without scholarships	1	1
Many student-athletes are above-average students	3	1
Marketable quality	1	1
Maximizing behavior/thoughts	3	1
Meeting with academic advisor frequently early on	1	1
Mental exhaustion	2	2
Mental toughness	1	1
Mentality different between men and women SAs	1	1

Mentorship	5	3
Military career	1	1
Mindset/Attitude determines success	7	4
Misinformed	3	3
Mock interviews	13	3
Modesty	10	8
More career development resources available now	1	1
More career guidance from athletics	2	1
More inner-team competition means more stress and dedication	1	1
More opportunity in professional athletics for men	1	1
Most student-athletes quit sport after college	1	1
Motivated by teammates	1	1
Motivated to establish career to assist parents	1	1
Motivated/challenged by people who try to discourage him/her	1	1
Motivates others to train for Olympics	1	1
Motivation	7	3
Moving away to train for sport	1	1
Multiple people to be accountable to	1	1
Naive about collegiate sports experience	2	1
Naive about going pro	2	2
Naive about sports abilities	1	1
Natural strengths	9	3
Need more education on how to attend career fairs	1	1
Need to develop both roles	1	1
Need to stand out	1	1
Needs reward for hard work	1	1
Needs to be the good child	2	2
Networking	45	7

Networking skills gained from athletics participation	2	1
Never satisfied	1	1
Never thought to go pro	1	1
No financial incentive/No Scholarship	1	1
No planning past college	3	2
No pressure from parents	1	1
No regrets	1	1
No role conflict	1	1
No time to plan	1	1
No young pro athlete career aspirations	1	1
Non-D1 Schools have less resources for athletes	3	3
Non-empathetic professors may steer student-athletes away from certain career paths	1	1
Non-starters are more realistic in aspirations	1	1
Non-starters may have more challenge balancing roles	2	2
Non-student-athletes romanticize athletics experience	3	1
Normal life is boring	1	1
Not a risk-taker	1	1
Not all student-athletes use email/check it enough	1	1
Not enough skill/experience to go pro	1	1
Not enough time for both roles	1	1
Not every student can be an athlete successfully	1	1
Not foreclosed	1	1
Not getting playing time	3	1
Nothing is fun compared to sport	2	2
Nutritional needs/Diet	1	1
Obstacles as ways to push yourself	4	4
Occupational Engagement	10	3
Occupational engagement important for Career Decision-Making	1	1

Off-season important for career exploration and development	2	2
Offer incentives for attendance at career events	1	1
Offer multiple opportunities to attend career events	1	1
One-stop shop more convenient for student-athletes	3	2
Online resources	5	2
Only focused on one sport growing up	1	1
Open for suggestions about future/not foreclosed	1	1
Open to non-athletic careers	1	1
Openness	21	4
Organization	6	2
Original career plan changed	1	1
Original goal of sports was to be noticed and win adoration	1	1
Others establish goals for student-athlete	1	1
Others see talent	9	3
Outside activities/engagement show lack of dedication/commitment/focus to team	1	1
Outside pressures from coaching staff	1	1
Overcoming adversity	2	2
Overcoming physically limiting condition as motivation for athletics	1	1
Overextended	1	1
Overwhelmed	1	1
Parent a former student-athlete	2	1
Parent as coach	6	4
Parent as role model	6	3
Parent assists with child's finances	1	1
Parent encourages critical thinking	1	1
Parent engages in child’s interest	4	1
Parent helped set goals and stay committed	1	1
Parent identifies child's strengths	1	1

Parent inspired work ethic	2	2
Parent provides emotional support	3	2
Parent sacrifices for child	1	1
Parent social status is undesirable	2	2
Parent uninvolved	1	1
Parental belief in child's athletic abilities	1	1
Parental guidance	13	5
Parental guidance important to career aspirations	1	1
Parental influence on chosen sport	1	1
Parental pressure	1	1
Parental support	18	4
Parental support for athletic activity	9	3
Parental work ethic example	2	2
Parents do not understand what it’s like to be a student-athlete	1	1
Parents encourage good decision-making	5	2
Parents encourage to shoot for the stars	2	2
Parents support autonomous decision-making	10	4
Parents support contributed to the development of talent in sport	1	1
Parents support of self-discovery	3	2
Parents were supportive but not directive in decisions	1	1
Part-time job/assistantship	18	5
Passion	1	1
Patience	4	3
Peer mentorship	2	2
People who go pro are more talented than me	1	1
Perception of abilities unrealistic	1	1
Performance-related career aspirations	1	1
Perseverance	2	2

Persistence	9	4
Personal experience guided career aspirations	3	3
Personal Growth	6	2
Perspective	3	1
Physical body works well in specific sport	1	1
Physically bigger than others	1	1
Physiology affected sports participation	10	5
Physiology limited career aspirations	1	1
Planned happenstance	13	4
Planning during first three years of college gave break during senior year	1	1
Planning skills	9	4
Planning/Organized Personality	5	3
Played numerous sports	16	4
Played sports at a young age	9	1
Playing one sport = more team compatibility	1	1
Positive relationships with professors	1	1
Positivity/optimism	8	3
Pressure is overwhelming	1	1
Pressure of playing at the Division I Level	1	1
Prestige	2	1
Pride	3	1
Pride in self and family name	1	1
Prioritizing	12	4
Professional athletics aspirations fade with time	1	1
Professional athletics is about revenue	1	1
Professional sports for kids	1	1
Professor was empathetic towards athletics	3	2
Professors as mentors/role models/sources of info	16	4

Provide networking opportunities	1	1
Pursued college recruitment on own	1	1
Pursuing multiple career paths	1	1
Pushing self to physical limit	1	1
Questioning leads to further research	1	1
Race as a part of identity	3	2
Rational decision-making	1	1
Realistic about abilities	1	1
Realistic about future in athletics	1	1
Realistic about talents	2	1
Realistic expectations of going pro	1	1
Realized wouldn't enjoy career as pro athlete	1	1
Recognized value of training	1	1
Recognizes boundary setting as a strength	1	1
Recognizes Plan B is important	9	3
Recognizes resources available to athletes	2	1
Recognizes there are ups and downs to all careers	1	1
Recruiting process	2	1
Recruitment is about fit with the team/sport	1	1
Recruitment time for colleges is short	1	1
Refers to team success when discussing career	1	1
Regret of not taking college credit in high school	1	1
Relationships with professors	1	1
Relevant interest	1	1
Reminders on values and goals	1	1
Representing more than just themselves	2	1
Representing school/program	3	2
Requires initiative	1	1

Researching how to engage occupationally	1	1
Researching occupations	6	4
Resources are very accessible	1	1
Resources helpful	12	4
Resources keep student-athletes eligible	2	1
Respect for athletes	2	1
Respect/admiration for professor	1	1
Responsibility	8	3
Responsibility to the team	2	2
Resume help	12	2
Returning to school	2	1
Revenue sports are more likely to go pro	1	1
Rewards for doing well academically	2	2
Risk losing spot if don't perform	2	1
Role engulfment in sport	3	2
Role models	3	1
Romanticism of being in sports	1	1
S/A role as benefit	1	1
S-A's are not always in control of their prep for test taking	1	1
Sacrifice	1	1
Sacrifice of professional athletic trajectory	1	1
Sacrificed playing time	1	1
Salary important aspect to choosing career	2	1
Same career aspirations since high school	2	2
Same career aspirations since kindergarten	1	1
Satisfied with collegiate athletics career	7	2
Satisfied with level of involvement	6	2
Saw others are less fortunate	1	1

Saw some SAs that couldn't handle both roles	2	1
Scheduling conflicts	4	2
Scholarship athletes more likely to go pro	1	1
Sciences courses are difficult for student-athletes	1	1
Sees correlation between success in class and success in work	1	1
Sees difficulty of some career fields	1	1
Sees graduate school as a safety net	2	2
Sees length of career as a choice	1	1
Sees long term benefits	1	1
Sees need	1	1
Self-care	3	2
Self-comparisons to other athletes	2	2
Self-compassion	2	1
Self-confidence	4	2
Self-confidence imbalance in roles hurts academics	1	1
Self-discipline	16	5
Self-Discovery	7	3
Self-Doubt	1	1
Self-efficacy	5	3
Self-fulfilling prophecy	1	1
Self-knowledge	16	4
Self-motivated	2	2
Self-reflection	9	6
Self-reliant	1	1
Semi-professional	1	1
Sense of personal responsibility	1	1
Separate roles as student and athlete	4	2
Sets high/challenging goals	1	1

Several career plan transitions	1	1
Should have engaged occupationally earlier	1	1
Siblings are athletes	5	2
Siblings not as successful	1	1
Single focus on sport is not helpful	1	1
Skills that can transfer to career	1	1
Sleep is a priority	3	1
Slow transition from sport made easier to break from athlete role	1	1
Small town sports for entertainment	1	1
Social intelligence	6	2
Social skills	3	2
Socioeconomic class issues	2	2
Some assume they will go pro	1	1
Some athletes have to work harder than others	1	1
Some athletes need to be pushed/held accountable	1	1
Some benefits of going pro	1	1
Some professors are more helpful than others	1	1
Some sports have a partying part of its culture	1	1
Some student-athletes don't see the big picture/lack foresight	2	2
Some student-athletes don't take career development seriously	1	1
Some student-athletes successful in demanding majors	1	1
Sought suggestions from others for new major	1	1
Sport as a social activity	7	2
Sport as a Social Bond	1	1
Sport as an obstacle to pleasing professors	1	1
Sport as/similar to a job	3	1
Sport exists at College to balance revenue sports	1	1
Sport exists because of Title 9	1	1

Sport for fun	2	1
Sport is hard	1	1
Sport is MORE than a job	1	1
Sport is no longer fun/innocent	2	2
Sport is not high revenue	1	1
Sport is now for fun	3	1
Sport not as fun in college	1	1
Sport participation as advantage in career field	5	2
Sport psychologist	6	3
Sports as a bond between family members	2	1
Sports as an elective in school	1	1
Sports over Performing Arts	1	1
Sports participation major part of culture	1	1
Sports-related career aspirations	19	6
Sportsmanship	2	1
Spouse career aspirations important factor	1	1
Started college early	1	1
Started sport in middle school	2	1
Starters believe more likely to go pro	2	1
Staying in touch with contacts	1	1
Steep learning curve for student-athlete lifestyle	4	4
Stress	5	3
Stress-relief	3	3
Struggles with thought of being forgotten	1	1
Stuck in undesired major due to NCAA regulations	2	2
Stud/Prof interaction moderates ability interest and enjoyment	1	1
Student athletes get great academic support	1	1
Student role must be a priority in order to be an athlete	1	1

Student-Athlete Domain Balance	10	3
Student-Athlete Identity Crisis	10	4
Student-Athlete Identity Imbalance	8	2
Student-athlete support group	1	1
Student-athletes are physically identifiable	2	1
Student-athletes aren't likely to ask for help	3	3
Student-athletes can be isolated	3	1
Student-athletes care a lot about what coaches say	3	3
Student-athletes don't know their experience is advantageous	2	2
Student-athletes live in the present	4	1
Student-athletes need more self-discipline at smaller schools	1	1
Student-athletes need to take responsibility for initiative	8	2
Student-athletes should use resources available	1	1
Student/Professor interaction	1	1
Students need role models	1	1
Study Abroad as a strength of the university	1	1
Study Abroad experience	3	3
Success defined by grades AND skills acquired	1	1
Success in balance of roles depends on personality	2	1
Successful parents	1	1
Support	8	4
Support for goals	1	1
Support staff available	1	1
Supported by professional in the field	1	1
Supportive structural group for personal development	1	1
Surprised by talents	1	1
Switched to sport with more playing time	1	1
Take advantage of every available opportunity	5	1

Take advantage of free degree	1	1
Taking appropriate classes	1	1
Taking care of self first	1	1
Talent	2	2
Talented people go pro	2	2
Talks to coaches/others about future and career	1	1
Talks to friends about their experiences	1	1
Teacher games as a child	2	2
Teaching	2	1
Teaching/Working with Kids	4	2
Team cares about doing well academically	1	1
Team effort/teamwork	15	3
Teammates	4	1
Teammates are just as passionate if not more	2	1
Teammates started playing sport earlier than me	5	3
Teams within the team	1	1
The two roles work against one another	5	2
Thinking about long-term consequences	1	1
Thinking about the future	2	2
Thinks about the future	2	2
Thinks others can benefit from this resource	1	1
Thought about own interests in relation to career	1	1
Time commitment to athletics can be overwhelming at times	1	1
Time management	35	7
Too busy to be involved with family	1	1
Too busy to engage occupationally	12	3
Too generalized in sports to go pro	1	1
Took college courses in high school	1	1

Took college credits in high school	1	1
Traditional child career aspirations	3	1
Traditional masculine identity	1	1
Trail-blazing	1	1
Training academies deprive students of full identity	1	1
Training academies deprive students of normal experiences	1	1
Training for Olympics helps the student and the program	1	1
Training to go pro	1	1
Training to go pro after eligibility	1	1
Transfer athletics experiences to workplace	6	2
Transferring knowledge from one career field to another	1	1
Transition from sport on identity	4	2
Transition was difficult	2	1
Traveled for sports as a kid	3	1
Traveling desirable in career	3	2
Trust	1	1
Trying to think realistically about moving away	1	1
Tutoring	13	3
Tutoring advances their own learning	1	1
Tutoring provides time-management training	2	2
TV influence on career aspirations	1	1
Two roles tethered by eligibility	1	1
Unaware of high competition at D1 levels during high school	1	1
Unaware of resources available until later in college	1	1
Uncertain of who to talk to about career stuff	2	1
Unclear about obstacles in sport	1	1
Unconditional Support	7	3
Understands importance of communicating with professors	1	1

Understands importance of marketing strengths and skills	1	1
Understands importance of networking	3	1
Understands low probability of going pro	3	1
Unethical motivational strategy?	1	1
Unfair accountability	1	1
Unfairness	2	1
Universities coordinate with one another to help SAs	1	1
University Career Center	10	3
University cares about student success	1	1
University lacks diversity	1	1
University makes money off of athletes	1	1
Unrealistic goals	1	1
Unsupportive faculty	1	1
Unsure	3	3
Unsure about future after college	5	2
Unsure about life after athletics	2	1
Unsure of how to spend free time	4	2
Unsure of path to get to desired career	3	3
Upper-middle class background	1	1
Upperclassman more likely to use resources	1	1
Upset athletics interferes with academics	5	3
Use discretion	1	1
Used resources in times of struggle	1	1
Used to being the best	7	2
Uses negative comments as fuel to prove them wrong	1	1
Uses sport for self-improvement	1	1
Using athletics to network	1	1
Values this resource	1	1

Volunteering	5	2
Volunteering related to athletics	2	1
Walk-on	4	2
Walk-ons have to work harder	9	5
Want to please parents	2	1
Wanted more direction	1	1
Wanted more knowledge about majors/programs available	3	3
Wanted to prove self to the team	1	1
Wants a challenging path	3	1
Wants a degree and career and excel in sport	1	1
Wants career with stability	1	1
Wants Honesty	2	2
Wants parental approval	1	1
Wants professors with real-world experience	1	1
Wants success in career	5	3
Wants to be a star player	1	1
Wants to be treated fairly	1	1
Wants to find herself but struggles with time commitments	1	1
Wants to return to native area	1	1
Wants work experience	1	1
Was hand held early on	1	1
Went to a junior college prior to D1 level	1	1
Will go pro if talent is enough	1	1
Willing to ask questions	1	1
Willing to be vulnerable	1	1
Willing to set high goals and try	1	1
Wished could have been more focused	1	1
Wished would have played a different sport	1	1

Wished would have taken advantage of resource	1	1
Work as a challenge	1	1
Work Ethic	18	3
Work experience	1	1
Work is fun	2	2
Work takes priority	1	1
Working for a non-profit/helping organization	1	1
Working full-time while in school	1	1
Workouts/practice for stress relief	3	2
Worried about missing opportunities	1	1
Would like freedoms of being a normal student sometimes	4	2
Would like to watch TV	1	1
Would not choose certain schools due to own academic capabilities	1	1
Writing Center	1	1
Young career aspirations	1	1
Young professional sports career aspirations	9	3
Young student-athletes cannot see benefits of being involved	1	1