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Differences in the Opinions and Attitudes of Student Athletes Relative to Expenditures for  
Intercollegiate Athletic Support Services (Social, Athletic, and Academic)

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Patricia Hieronimus Dillman

August 2008

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Dr. Eric Glover, Chair

Dr. Jim Lampley

Dr. Elizabeth Ralston

Dr. Pam Scott

Keywords: NCAA, Support Services, Student Athlete

## ABSTRACT

### Differences in the Opinions and Attitudes of Student Athletes Relative to Expenditures for Intercollegiate Athletic Support Services (Social, Athletic, and Academic)

by

Patricia Hieronimus Dillman

Athletic programs within Division I-A universities and colleges have maintained a unique relationship with both the NCAA and their governing academic institutions. Resources in support of academic, social, and athletic services for student athletes vary across the country for Division-I collegiate athletes. The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at numerous Division-I athletic programs. Student athletes have not been assessed through a questionnaire concerning their own perceptions and opinions of the specific services (athletic, academic, and social) provided to them at their designated university. Is there a relationship between the attitudes and opinions of student athletes on academic, athletic, and social services and the amount of money spent per student athlete at their Division-I institutions?

Four Division-I universities were viewed, individually, according to the athletic academic budget designated for each scholarship student athlete. As a result of the findings, the following summary and conclusions were drawn regarding student athletes' attitudes and opinions toward athletic academic services provided at their designated university. The researcher concluded that overall gaps between expectations and experiences do exist at all target universities. There is a realistic value in identifying expectation-experience gaps at individual universities as a means for internal evaluation and potential improvement for services provided to student athletes.

Identification of areas in need of change or improvement would be the first step toward creating a more holistic environment for the student athletes at each targeted university.

## DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my family (of both blood and choice) to whom I am most appreciative.

Ashley Hieronimus (mini-me): What special gifts you possess. Cody Hieronimus (little one): I hope you recognize what the world has to offer you outside of your comfort zone. James Hieronimus (Dad): You always wanted the best for me even when you did not want that for yourself. Keith Cole (Roy): You have enhanced our family in ways we could never have imagined. I am truly blessed to have such a wonderful brother-in-law.

To my family of choice who I could not love more if you were blood related: Doug Gwosdz, Lisa Noble Wood, and all the friends whom I have met within my home country and abroad that represent my early stages (Lee Helms, Stephanie Sessions, and Jolie Sikes-Smith); undergraduate years (Tara Mermis, Kelli Plemmons, Brooke Spence, and Courtney Nix); and the growth process along the way (Christy Lunceford, Virginia Walker, Christine Scheets, and Kristin Price). To all of my Mom's side of the family who have always created a nurturing environment for me and to the members of my Dad's family who I have recently reconnected with: Make all of your dreams come true.

Both my sister Jana Cole and my mother Linda Ramsey instilled in me as a young adult an unmatched determination that emphasized never allowing anyone to limit my endeavors. This philosophy has served as an impetus to my defiance of accepting conventional ways of thinking about life and the limits posed to a small town girl in rural East Texas. These two individuals are unique and are the primary source of the essence of who I am. My sister, my best friend, your defiance of stereotypes has had a profound impact on my life and I am most appreciative of your influence and sacrifices.

And finally, my husband Jeff Dillman who sacrificed the most to see this dream fulfilled and whose stable and enchanting force helped guide me through this project while celebrating our first year of marriage. You are my Baaaa! May we never forget how happy we were even amidst the emotional and financial struggles we embarked upon to make this a reality. It is the essence of who we are!

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I would also like to thank the individuals who believed in me as an adolescent and instilled in me, “Where you come from does not determine who you will be.” Mr. Streck, my high school extemporaneous speaking coach and history teacher, who took time to develop educational skills that would provide the groundwork for this work; Mike Applegate, life-long father figure, who has been a supportive light through many moves and various stages of life; John and Janis Underwood who provided the groundwork to jumpstart my collegiate career; and Matt McClaid who believed in my abilities and knew this dream would be a reality when I could not see through the fog.

To the critics from my hometown, whose harsh statements were based on my childhood financial circumstances, your piercing words to me as an adolescent have never left me. You were incorrect in your assessment of my capabilities to change my circumstance. Often when I wanted to abandon this project your words served as an impetus to continue and eventually finish! I only hope to contribute back to the educational field on breaking generational poverty and resilience. Finally, I would like to thank all of my secondary school teachers who voted me “Most Likely to Succeed.” Knowing that you believed beyond circumstances instilled confidence to pursue the unattainable. I will forever continue in the pursuit of success: spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Who are collegiate student athletes and do they believe they receive adequate support for their unique needs? Does the amount of funds allocated for student athletes in the athletic academic support service budget really enhance their experiences as university students? These questions are pertinent in determining the future direction of athletic support services provided to student athletes along with the budgets allocated for these services. Lately, a great deal of attention has been cast on college athletics, namely the lack of advocacy on behalf of student athletes, poor academic achievement of student athletes, and financial obligations of universities with large college athletic programs (Lipsyte, 2002).

College athletics is thriving as an industry based on the revenue from sports such as football and men's basketball. In a year with unfathomable historic upsets in football, such as Appalachian State University upsetting the #5 Bowl Championship Series (BCS) ranked University of Michigan, questions of athletic budgets and their impact on student athlete experiences, along with team records, are on the minds of many onlookers. Zillgitt (2007) wrote that, according to Darren Rovell, the loss was such an upset, in part, because of the financial differences between the schools. If Appalachian State had sold out the remaining 2007 football season with a capacity of 16,650 seats per game, they would have taken in roughly \$2.1 million from ticket sales. The University of Michigan, in its first home game against Appalachian State University, pulled in \$5 million alone in ticket sales and that was after cutting a check to Appalachian State for \$400,000 (Zillgitt). However, those numbers do not portray the entire discrepancy.

The 2005-2006 budgets reported to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) as part of the equity in athletics revealed startling differences. That year, the University of Michigan and Appalachian State had the same number of players (116), but Michigan spent

nearly three times as much on each player (\$20,180.00 vs. \$7,715.00) (Zillgitt, 2007). The 2007 Appalachian State University versus the University of Michigan athletic upset, coined as “the day that David took down Goliath,” has given ground for the commission to reevaluate the process used for ranking teams. It has also caused administrators and fans to question whether the large athletic budgets at Division-I colleges and universities do make a difference in athletes' performance both on and off the field.

With any system or organization, changes arise when an upset like this one occurs. There have been many collegiate athletic upsets or concerns through the years that have played a part in the evolution of the athletic system as it is known today.

### *The Governing Body*

In an effort to respond to the public concerns for a lack of ethics in college athletics, the governing body of college athletics, the NCAA, has set rules and regulations for conferences and schools that reside under its umbrella (Frank, 2003). The NCAA, to not only improve the image of college athletics but to also increase graduation rates at participating Division-I athletic programs, has instituted academic reforms. Some conferences and universities have begun assessing the level of support services provided to their collegiate student athletes in an effort to address possible deficiencies in support services provided (Wolverton, 1999). Research has been conducted to assess university administrators' views of athletic programs, general student body concerns, and faculty perceptions about preferential treatment to student athletes. However, the student athletes' views concerning athletic support services (academic, athletic and social) designed to meet their unique needs have not been addressed.

### *Related Research*

Pope (1997) designed a survey to measure the perceptions and attitudes of athletic directors and senior student affairs officers about academic support for Division-I A football colleges from 1995 to 1996. Simmons, Van Rheenen, and Covington (1999) investigated the

motivation for success of student athletes. Kornspan and Etzel (2001) studied the link between demographics and psychological variables in 2-year college student athletes. Keim and Strickland (2003) specifically looked at support services for 2-year college student athletes. Richards and Aries (1999) compared student athlete academic performance and campus involvement. This information, although beneficial, did not reflect the holistic opinions of student athletes toward collegiate support services provided to them. Many former student athletes have pointed to rewarding experiences on the fields and courts during their collegiate years. However, they also said, because of athletic obligations, they missed experiences that are considered an integral element of college life for the regular student (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Miller & Fennell, 2006).

Unfortunately, many member institutions have limited information on evaluating their athletic support centers and the services they provide to student athletes. With the changes NCAA has administered over the years, what are the current opinions and attitudes of student athletes regarding the services provided to them at their universities?

### *Statement of the Problem*

The athletic academic services budget better represents support services to student athletes than does the overall athletic budget. The athletic academic services budget encompasses academic services such as the life skills department, tutorial sessions, mentoring, academic advising, and learning enhancement services. The life skills department is under the umbrella of academic services and provides career enhancement, outreach to the community, and personal guidance. Resources in support of academic, social, and athletic services for student athletes vary across the country for Division-I collegiate athletes. For the purpose of this study, four Division-I universities were viewed individually according to the athletic academic budget designated for each scholarship student athlete.

University #1 has 300 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.2 million. This is equivalent to \$4,000 per student athlete. University #2

has 403 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.3 million. This is equivalent to \$3,226 per student athlete. University #3 has 325 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$250,000. This is equivalent to \$714 per student athlete. University #4 has 220 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$100,000. This is equivalent to \$455 per student athlete.

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at numerous Division-I athletic programs. Student athletes have not been assessed through a questionnaire concerning their own perceptions and opinions of the specific services (athletic, academic, and social) provided to them at their designated university. Is there a relationship between the attitudes and opinions of student athletes on academic, athletic, and social services as well as the amount of money spent per student athlete at their Division-I institution?

### *Significance of the Study*

Exigent issues concerning services provided to student athletes involve NCAA violations, overspending on athletic recruitment, and equal opportunities for female athletic programs. Athletic academic budgets that address academic reform mandates and answer the demand from NCAA for increased standards of graduation rates have been increasing within the athletic departments at universities (NCAA, 2007c). There is no question that larger budgets would be beneficial for student athletes but are more funds providing better support services? The research surrounding support services for student athletes has consistently used the term "holistic," which, according to Etzel, Ferrante, and Pinkney (1996), refers to a complete or total person, not independent parts. This study focused on whether the "whole" student athlete is receiving appropriate support services from his or her own perspective and whether there is a relationship between quantity (revenue) and quality (high opinion rates of services) by student athletes. The study supported the student athletes by allowing them to have their thoughts voiced to athletic

administrators. Athletic department officials under the athletic division at each university might gain enhanced knowledge in relation to student athletes' opinions about services provided to them. The study might convey whether equitable treatment is occurring within and between sports at each designated university. Athletic departments provide services to student athletes; as consumers, the student athletes should have the opportunity to share their opinions of the service provided.

### *Statement of Researcher's Perspective*

Although this evaluation used a population of student athletes from four universities, the population was representative of student athletes representing men's basketball, men's baseball, women's basketball, men's tennis, and women's tennis in NCAA Division-I universities in the United States. The population of student athletes represented teams from three revenue producing sports: men's basketball, men's baseball, and women's basketball, along with two nonrevenue producing sports: men's and women's tennis. Moreover, the geographic and racial demographics of the population represented student athletes from multiple ethnicities, all areas of the United States, and numerous countries.

The researcher has had over 7 years work experience in the field with three of the institutions involved in the study. The researcher served as a Learning Specialist for student athletes at the three universities and oversaw the academic progress of all student athletes who were academically underprepared or had disability documentation. The researcher has strong feelings about the lack of academic preparedness of some student athletes entering postsecondary institutions and the amount of resources spent on support services. The topics and questions posed were based on personal experience along with the reading and research I have done.

### *Research Questions*

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) at the target universities?
2. Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) among the target universities?
3. Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) between males and females based on academic, athletic, and social dimensions?
4. Is there a relationship between overall satisfaction scores (academic, athletic, and social life) of student athletes among target universities (measured by per student expenditures?)

### *Scope of the Study*

The study was designed to identify trends of attitudes and opinions of student athletes. By noting the differences and similarities in the trends, specific recommendations might be made to assist institutions in the delivery of services to student athletes. The researcher conducted a quantitative study by administering surveys to student athletes from four Division-I schools with varying athletic academic services budgets according to per-student athlete expenditures. The population of student athletes in this study represented three revenue-generating sports (men's basketball, men's baseball, and women's basketball) and two nonrevenue-generating sports (men's and women's tennis). The specific teams were chosen to represent diverse aspects of student athletes: financial discrepancies, ethnicity, and internationality. Participants ranged from freshmen scholarship student athletes to senior scholarship athletes who were actively on the team roster for their designated sport.

### *Definitions of Terms*

For this study, some explicit terms were used and are defined as stated:

1. *Academic reform*: The goal of the NCAA reform initiatives is to encourage improved academic performance and progress toward graduation for all Division-I student athletes ("NCAA Steps up Academic Reform," 2004).
2. *Athletic program*: The athletic teams and support personnel who make up the athletic department representing the institution such as Oregon State University Athletics.
3. *Athletic scholarship*: Undergraduate scholarship student athletes at Division-I schools receive either a partial or a full athletic scholarship. The scholarships are partially funded through the NCAA membership revenue distribution (NCAA, 2007b).
4. *Athletic team*: A particular sport within an institution's athletic program, i.e. Oregon State Men's Baseball.
5. *Bowl Championship Series (BCS) Conference*: one of the following six NCAA Division I-A Conferences: Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big East, Big Ten, Big Twelve, Pacific-Ten (Pac Ten), Southeastern Conference (SEC).
6. *NCAA Division-I*: Member university has to support no fewer than seven sports for women and seven for men (or eight for women and six for men) with two team sports for each gender (NCAA, 2007b).
7. *Revenue sport*: One of the four sports (football, men's basketball, women's basketball, and baseball) that is most widely considered the revenue generating sport for intercollegiate athletic departments.

### *Overview of the Study*

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, an overview of the governing body and related research, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, a statement of the researcher's perspective, and the definitions

of terms used in the study. Chapter 2 presents the review of related literature. Chapter 3 includes information concerning the methodology of the study, the instrument used, and the research design. Chapter 4 provides the presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter 5 presents a summary of findings and conclusions as well as recommendations and implications for professional practice.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Higher education in the United States has shared a long-standing tumultuous relationship with athletics. The level of importance placed on athletics has been a source of debate in the academic world for over a century. The academic and athletic worlds have their opinions on this matter. Seldom are the voices of the student athletes, who represent each respective university in competition week-in and week-out, heard in regard to services provided to them. In order to comprehend fully the complexity of a collegiate athlete's life, the scope of the services and systems that encompass his or her life needs to be explored.

This chapter presents a review of literature related to: (a) the history of prominent American sports, (b) the structure of the American university, (c) the origin of athletics in university systems, (d) the student athlete, (e) the history of athletic services, and (f) the history of academic support services for athletes attending universities.

This chapter also includes a description of the evolution of academic reform through the NCAA in the university's athletic domain, the efforts of the Knight Commission in an initial stance for reform, and a description of events that have lead to higher monitoring of the academic progress of student athletes by the NCAA member institution. This historical literature review gives a holistic picture of the framework creating and surrounding the student athlete.

#### *History of Prominent American Sports*

The history and initial growth of sports in America dates back to the revolutionary period. According to McComb (2004), the modernization theory states that the growth of organized sports resulted from the scientific and industrial revolutions along with the expansion of free enterprise in the Western European nations. The extension into the United States occurred during this time with wealthy modern states that emphasized rationality, standardization, uniformity, order, material

progress, bureaucratic government, and corporate control. The resulting increase in leisure and wealth for people under these circumstances made it possible for commercialization along with the professional development of spectator sports as pastimes (Crego, 2003; McComb). The progression of each sport to be included in college competition has transformed the way university life is seen.

The participants surveyed and represented in this study represented the following sports: men's basketball, men's baseball, women's basketball, men's tennis, and women's tennis. A brief history of each sport might serve to explain better the unique dynamics that encompass a team and how it has become immersed in the collegiate scene.

### *Basketball*

Basketball has been truly an American sport from its inception and was created to be played indoors during the winter months. According to McComb (2004), Luther Gulick, who directed physical education for the International Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Springfield, Massachusetts, along with James Naismith created the game in 1891. The game took on a new level of competition when a janitor found two peach baskets and nailed them at either end of a court and Naismith, an instructor at Springfield University, required opposing teams to pass around a soccer ball while trying to throw it in the opposing team's basket. The pace of the game was dreadfully slow because of the time it took to retrieve the ball out of the basket; therefore, a hole was cut in the bottom of the peach basket and the game's speed increased radically. Female athletes played the game from its origin. The game was named basketball in 1921. The sport spread quickly across the nation and the world. Because of its rapid international growth, it has been called the "fastest growing game ever" (Frank, 2003, p. 87). In 1927, the Harlem Globetrotters' unmatched skills and popularity boosted the reputation of the sport (Frank).

To this day, basketball has been, perhaps, the most popular team sport in the world played by both men and women of all ages in over 200 countries (Crego, 2003). By 1949, the National Basketball Association (NBA) was supported by large crowds and patrons with considerable

wealth. There have been times that college basketball has overshadowed the NBA, especially, during the NCAA tournament deemed "March Madness." The media and events that surround the tournament, along with its magnitude, have brought controversy about college basketball being a "big business" (Frank, 2003, p. 88). Each spring, the frenzy of March Madness has climbed to a celebration for both men's and women's basketball at the Final Four competition. The Division-I men's basketball championship has been the National Collegiate Athletic Association's most attended event and has the most viewers from television (Crowley, 2006).

### *Tennis*

Tennis is a game of recent origin. Although tennis' influence dates back to the 8th century with a European influence by the Moors, it is recorded that the first Europeans to play tennis were the Christian Monks who were studying the religious rites of the Moors (Cliff Richards Tennis Foundation, 2007). Today tennis is both recreational and one of the most lucrative sports (Crego, 2003). The game, named "LaSoule," in which players hit a ball back and forth with their hands using a stick, was played rampantly across Europe in monasteries. By the 13th century, the public was playing the game. Over the next 2 centuries, the royalty in France started enjoying a version of the game that was named "tennis" at the time but looked different than the lawn tennis played today (Cliff Richards Tennis Foundation; McComb, 2004).

In 1877, official recognition came to the sport when the prestigious England Croquet Club changed its name to the England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. This club sponsored the first tennis event that would eventually become Wimbledon. May Sutton, in 1905, was named the first international tennis player from the United States (McComb, 2004). Throughout the 20th century, citizens in the United States continued to participate in European tennis. In 1938, the Intercollegiate Tennis Championships were conducted for the first time under the auspices of the NCAA (Crowley, 2006). In the 1960s, Arthur Ashe became the first American to dominate the sport by winning the US title. The 1980s marked the period when the yellow ball replaced the

traditional white one in an effort to aid television viewers (Dunning, Malcom, & Waddington, 2004).

### *Baseball*

Most historians have stated that even though the exact origin date of baseball is unknown, the sport was derived from the game of rounders. The game became popular in the United States around the beginning of the 19th century when rounders was called “base” or “baseball” (Frank, 2003). According to Frank, Alexander Cartwright of New York invented the modern baseball field in 1845 and went on to formalize the modern rules of the game. The first recorded baseball event occurred in 1846 between the Knickerbocker Baseball Club of New York City and the New York Baseball Club. In 1858, the National Association of Baseball players was organized. The league’s first year of operation was supported by charging fans admission on an occasional basis.

After the Civil War, the league expanded quickly to over 100 teams. Although the league was supposed to be comprised of amateurs, some players were secretly paid, given jobs by sponsors, or paid a salary to play. In 1869, professional teams began appearing and, in 1871, the National Association became the first professional baseball league (Frank, 2003).

Understanding the origin of the sports (in which the student athletes involved in the survey participate) is significant, but equally, as important is understanding the other dynamic that constructs the collegiate student athlete--the endeavor of higher education.

### *Institutions of Higher Education*

Understanding college athletics is impossible without a comprehensive look at the structure of the American university and the challenges posed by athletics to the system. Institutions of higher education in the United States have been shaped and influenced by an assortment of historical forces. The New England Puritans brought about a shift of the higher learning from its ancient stand in the old world to the new land of America (Brubacher & Rudy, 2007). Because

English-Americans wanted to preserve the culture of the old world civilizations of their ancestors, higher education was deemed necessary (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

A truly unique system of higher education has developed out of the interaction of these two essential elements and, most importantly, out of the growth of democracy in every area of American life (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The history of higher education relates to more than original charters, curriculum, administration, and degree standards. It must also take into account the student as an individual and his or her unique characteristics and extracurricular activities (Brubacher & Rudy). Institutions of higher education, along with the surrounding communities, have roles to fill for the current student body, faculty, and staff.

American universities have been defined as effective entities driven to provide a formal, higher education to students (Scott, 2006). Reputation and integrity have been institutional attributes that allow colleges and universities to convey information about the outstanding services to future students (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2002). Universities have promoted a structure of inquiry-based modernization in which actions are taken to improve education (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt, & Terra, 2000). In addition to the formal education found in traditional academic departments, higher education has been expected to fulfill a "broader role in the maturation of students" (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 8). Universities have long been viewed as places where learning experiences occur in and out of the classroom. According to Feldner (2006), the undergraduate education is designed to be a period of challenge and innovation, inquisitiveness, and intellectual enhancement that combines personal experiences with formal coursework. Scott broadly defined the purpose of higher education as a combination of the ideals of teaching, research, and service to others. Based on Scott's definition, university administrators have been able to justify a place for athletics in the system.

### *Origin of Athletics in University Systems*

The thought that organized, competitive athletics could be used at the school level to enhance the educational development of young adults originated with a group of English school

masters in the early 1800s (Gerdy, 2000). Intercollegiate sports competition was not introduced into postsecondary education until the 19th century (Zimbalist, 1999). For nearly 150 years, athletics has been an iconic mainstay in American university systems. At their origin, competitive athletics were viewed as an extracurricular activity that supported the growing social roles of higher education (Duderstadt, 2000; Etzkowitz et al., 2000; Scott, 2006). University presidents viewed athletic events as a diversion from destructive and unacceptable student behavior (Adelman, 1986; Duderstadt; Lucas & Smith, 1978).

The first collegiate athletic event can be dated back to 1852. The popular sports activity was rowing (crew) and a boat racing competition was held between Harvard and Yale (Frank, 2003; Watt & Moore, 2001). Over the next 30 years, the popularity of intercollegiate athletics amongst both students and spectators grew rapidly with the beginning of baseball, soccer, and football at the university level (Adelman, 1986). By the late 1880s, football had surpassed the popularity of rowing as a spectator event and the media coverage, along with sponsorship, proved athletics to be a crowd pleasing and lucrative business (Crowley, 2006; Siegel, 2004; Watt & Moore).

Despite the increased attention shared by the universities, there was a growing body of opposition within higher education towards the increasing presence of intercollegiate athletics in the educational model (Cowley, 1935). Intercollegiate athletics in American colleges and on university campuses has been a source of controversy since its inception (Savage, Bently, McGovern, & Smiley, 1929; Thelin, 1996). By the late 19th century, it was clear that the ideal of college sports portraying the athlete as a mere amateur, and competition in athletics as a part of the educational process contrasted sharply with the reality of intercollegiate athletics (Duderstadt, 2000; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Siegel, 2004; Zimbalist, 1999). Because serious injuries were occurring in the sport of football, President Roosevelt requested that university presidents clean up the problems regarding this sport. He threatened that he would step in and ban the sport if drastic changes were not made (Finn, 2001; Figler & Whitaker, 1995; Sperber, 2000; Thelin). Out of this

controversy, a study was pursued to figure out a way to "keep the peace" between the two systems (Savage et al.).

### *Carnegie Foundation Report*

The *Journal of Higher Education* reprinted an article entitled *Athletics in American Colleges* by Cowley (1935) that was originally published in 1930. The article was a summarized report by Howard Savage, a staff member of the Carnegie Foundation, which funded the landmark study (Savage et al., 1929). The report has been termed one of the most comprehensive analyses of intercollegiate athletics, examining many issues related to the effects of athletics on academics (Siegel, 2004). The central question posed in this report was "whether an institution in the social order whose primary purpose is the development of the intellectual life can, at the same time, serve as an agency to promote business, industry, journalism, and organized athletics on an extensive commercial basis?" (Cowley, p. 495). Cowley more focally addressed the question, "Can it [the university] concentrate its attention on securing teams that win, without impairing the sincerity and vigor of its intellectual purpose?" (p. 495). The reforms suggested by the Carnegie report were intended to reinforce the relationship between students, athletics, and higher education.

College sports have increasingly gained fan support since the 1930s. Therefore, university athletic programs have experienced large financial successes credited to media coverage of major college sports events. The universities enjoy the benefits drawn by television coverage during collegiate athletic events that can increase enrollment and enhance the overall image. The alumni of the universities highly support the athletic programs through ticket sales and donations. Sadly, in the last 30 years, an inordinate amount of attention has been cast upon intercollegiate athletics through abuses of the rules, lack of academic success of some student athletes, financial scandals, gender inequity, and a general mistrust of the system. The 1970s marked a decade of legal changes concerning gender equity.

## *Title IX*

A major effort to enhance the rights of women occurred in 1972 when a dramatic expansion in women's sports began. This was the year congress enacted *Title IX*, a federal law that mandated gender equity in all educational institutions receiving federal support, including their sports programs (Fried, 2007). The Federal Office of Civil Rights decided that institutions of higher education must provide equal sports opportunities for women and men, spend an equal amount on both, and provide equitable facilities and scholarship funding (Finn, 2001). This law went into effect in 1975, and attitudes began to shift as *Title IX* created an intense demand for female student athlete participation at the collegiate level (McComb, 2004). According to Suggs (2005), the 1979 interpretation along with other court rulings provided colleges and universities with three options:

1. institutions must have similar participation and enrollment rates for men and women;
2. they must have a history and strategy of expanding opportunities for women; or
3. they must have proof that women are completely satisfied with the sports programs being offered (p. 12).

The 1996 clarification said that Option 1 was a "safe harbor"; if a college has the same percentage of women in sports programs as there are women in the undergraduate student body, it falls within standards (Suggs).

By the end of the century, the number of females participating in high school sports had increased 10-fold and the number of women in college athletics had increased 5-fold (McComb, 2004). Today, both men and women's sports appear to have had a positive impact on enrollment for the university. Researchers have pointed out that athletics might actually enhance the overall mission of the university by attracting high-achieving students to campus. Success on the playing field or court creates publicity that raises the profile of the university (McCormick & Tinsley, 1987; Mixon, 1995; Tucker, 2004). In order to keep scandals out of the collegiate system and legitimize the efforts of the athletic programs at universities, well-constructed systems devised by the NCAA have been put in place (NCAA, 2007b).

### *National Collegiate Athletic Association*

The combination of athletics and academics has gained legitimization through eligibility rules that have provided the standards that connect commercial athletics to higher education (Heck & Takahashi, 2006; Helman, 1989). These rules did not originate overnight. The NCAA was born in 1905 out of President Theodore Roosevelt's demand for college football reform; the association was created out of the need to do away with the violence in football at a time when commercialism had already spun out of control (Watt & Moore, 2001; Watterson, 2000; Zimbalist, 1999). In 1905, the presidents of 13 universities met in New York to discuss the possibilities of reforming or eliminating football. Subsequently, 62 institutions founded the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States on December 28, 1905. Among the group's first findings was the fact that athletic scholarships amounted to payments to amateur intercollegiate athletes (Feuerher, 2007). In 1910, the group launched itself as the NCAA. According to Sigel (2004), "The creation of the NCAA was a significant event in the evolution of intercollegiate athletics since it not only reformed football, but centralized sport governance and clearly established institutional, as opposed to student, control over athletic competition" (¶ 10). By 1919, over 400,000 students in 170 colleges and universities were part of the NCAA (Wilson, 2005). Even with the numbers of collegiate supporters, it took nearly 50 years for the NCAA to claim a significant enforcement position (Crowley, 2006).

The NCAA has three main divisions based on the size of the athletic program and the level of competition: Division I, with 321 member-schools and 142,409 participants; Division II, with 297 schools and 77,404 participants; and Division III, with 423 member-schools and 133,611 participants (NCAA, 2007b). Throughout the years, NCAA has toyed with eligibility requirements, longevity of playing season, distribution of revenue, and rules for collegiate players; however, the problems have continued to mount (Zimbalist, 1999). Issues involving integrity, both on the field and in the classroom, have brought on the evaluation of a panel to evaluate the NCAA and its relationship with institutions.

### *The Knight Commission*

The Knight Commission's goal has been to help all Division-I collegiate programs mirror the academic focus of Ivy League institutions. Throughout the years, many of the recommendations made by the Knight Commission have been placed into NCAA regulations (Matthewsn & Ofobike, 2006). The Knight Foundation Committee (1991) expressed particular concerns surrounding the admission and graduate status for athletes. In more than half of the Division-I institutions, players representing basketball and football were not achieving minimal university requirements for entrance and were accepted into the university under the premise of "special admits" at a rate 10 times higher than was allowed for the rest of the university freshmen class (Knight Foundation Committee). The panel charged that college sports no longer emphasized teamwork, cooperation, and determination but, instead, promoted a level of commercialism (Finn, 2001). This information supported critics of intercollegiate athletics who depicted it as a corrupt system (Etzel et al., 1996). As reported by Feuerherd (2007), Myles Brand, the NCAA president, was perceived by many to have "crossed the line" in 2006 by embracing the commercial aspects of university athletic competition. The critics argued that the system permitted universities to use the athletic talents of student athletes for 4 years and then discard them. The NCAA responded to the Knight Commission by reassessing standards for the academic achievement of student athletes. A dilemma that confounded academic support staff was the required academic standards as set forth by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

### *Athlete Collegiate Entrance Standards*

Brand, President of NCAA, set forth an incentives-disincentives plan in 2004 designed to bolster graduation rates by holding individual colleges and universities responsible for the academic performance of student athletes (NCAA, 2007b). If a basketball program did not graduate at a certain level compared to the other students at the institution, then they would be warned, and if that did not work, scholarships were taken away. The NCAA wanted to hold the teams, the athletic department, and the school accountable for academic performance of the

student athletes. Presently, the NCAA has a sliding scale for initial university entrance (NCAA, 2007b). According to Harris (1998), for example, if a student graduates with a grade point average of 2.5 in a 14-core course, he or she must score a minimum of 820 on the SAT or 68 sum score on the ACT. If the hopeful attains a grade point average of 2.0, he or she must attain at least 1010 on the SAT or 86 sum score on the ACT. The lower the GPA, the higher the result the student must accrue on the respective exams.

### *Academic Progress Report*

A decade after the initial report, the Knight Commission met again to reevaluate intercollegiate athletics and the progress made. The evaluation revealed that the overall condition of big-time athletics had deteriorated (Crowley, 2006). The report confirmed that each institution of higher education must rise and "reassert the primacy of the educational mission of the academy" (Crowley, p. 11). The most effective measure of academic success for student athletes has been the graduation rate. The NCAA's Division-I board of directors consists of presidents and chancellors from 18 schools and has the final say on penalties for athletic programs that lag behind in the classroom ("NCAA Steps up Academic Reform," 2004).

In an effort to silence the critics, the NCAA Division-I board of directors passed a plan in 2005 that college sports teams must stay on track to graduate at least 50% of their players. Student athletes must maintain a satisfactory Academic Progress Rate (APR), or they will risk losing up to 10% of available scholarships (Brown, 2005; NCAA, 2007b). The APR calculation measures eligibility and retention of student athletes. The minimum standard is .925, equivalent to 92.5% of the student athletes progressing toward a degree in a timely manner. Teams scoring less than 900 cannot replace scholarships if an academically ineligible collegiate athlete leaves the school (NCAA, 2007c). Starting in 2006, warning letters were sent to schools whose teams had fared poorly. In 2007-2008, scholarship losses started occurring and in 2008-2009, penalties could include exclusion from postseason play (NCAA, 2007c). According to Myles Brand, NCAA

president, the APR standards have caused institutions of higher education to enhance their efforts to ensure that student athletes not only succeed in the classroom but also graduate.

Finally, it is a general view that NCAA should require colleges and universities to provide 5-year scholarships that cannot be taken away for reasons unrelated to academic progress. This stance would demonstrate the school's commitment to the student athletes' future, not only on the field or court, but more so in the game of life (Feuerherd, 2007). This would make the rationale behind America's college and university sports system more realistic. Students on sports scholarships play for their tuition and fees and receive an education they might not otherwise be able to get. Student athletes lacking the skills to perform at the next level should come away from college with a degree (Give Me an "E," 1989). Efforts by the NCAA leadership and college administration have been well-intentioned; however, further progress is necessary. Leadership representing different departments at the collegiate level must band together to restore credibility to the collegiate learning experience of student athletes (Miller & Fennell, 2006).

### *Student Athletes*

University life is supposed to represent a milestone where adolescents move toward adulthood. College students face the tasks of forming new relationships, setting important career and life goals, balancing academic and social obligations, along with adjusting to the freedom and independence one receives when living away from home.

College student athletes are seen as "unofficial" nontraditional students on campuses nationwide (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Valentine & Taub, 1999). Many student athletes appear to have a complex transition from high school to college (Hinkle, 1994). For many minority and international student athletes, the transition into the university setting has represented a serious cultural transition that could be isolating and difficult (Benson, 2000; DeFrancesco & Gropper, 1996; Hawkins, 1999; Lewis, 1996; Spivey, 1983). The student athlete has the added concerns of greater time constraints, along with physical and psychological issues that are associated with intercollegiate sports (Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996; Kirk & Kirk, 1993; Peltier,

Laden, & Matranga, 1999). Most collegiate athletic programs require time and travel commitments that make class attendance sporadic, at best, for student athletes (Feuerher, 2007, Stuart, 1985). The overall goal of college is to have experiences that lead toward developing personal competence as an adult (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Some have contended that faculty members have negative stereotypes and judgmental views concerning student athletes that are based on the student's status as an athlete (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991). The psychological development of student athletes has been impacted, positively and negatively, by collegiate athletic competition (Lewis, 1991).

### *Research Concerning Student Athletes*

The earliest documents found to evaluate the relationship between athletic academic success and athletic participation dates back to 1889 by Harvard University president Charles Elliott (Zimbalist, 1999). He discovered that over a 2-year period, freshmen football players had nearly quadrupled the number of failing grades to passing grades. Because of this large discrepancy, the president made recommendations not allowing freshmen to compete athletically. It took 14 years before Harvard adhered to the recommendation and established a rule that prohibited freshman from taking part in intercollegiate sports. Several other universities followed, including the Big Ten universities (Zimbalist). Over the next 60 years, this topic ensued in a powerful debate and controversy about athletic aid and eligibility for freshmen. The NCAA has made modifications to the eligibility rules for 20 years. The end result was a single requirement for students to have a 2.0 grade point average from high school to enter college (Zimbalist).

The systematic study of student athletes did not become a prevalent research topic until the 1960s (Henschen & Fry, 1984; Ferrante, Etzel, & Pinkney, 1991; Kirk & Kirk, 1993). The experience student athletes receive at colleges and universities today is not comparable to any extracurricular activities on a collegiate campus. It has been determined from researchers such as Richards and Aries (1999) and Bowen and Levin (2003) that student athletes competing at the collegiate level spend at least 20 hours per week practicing for competition. In terms of hours

spent practicing, the closest extracurricular activities at the collegiate level include the performing arts (orchestra, theater, and singing groups) and media (student newspaper, radio) which require an average of fewer than 10 hours a week

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), the work of Nevitt Sanford and Eric Erickson were the only theories available that addressed the development of college students. The majority of the intercollegiate athletic research at that time revolved around the "revenue generating sports" of football and basketball. Football and basketball receive the most media coverage of all the collegiate athletic sports. Ruscella (1993) wrote:

The quality of college athletes' education is at stake in a contest being played on many American campuses. The playing field of academia has pitted an educational team with a competitive mission. Often identified as having potential at an early age, they (athletes) spend their youth trying, with decreasing success, to participate on both the academic and athletic teams. (p. 232)

According to a survey by Knapp, Rasmussen, and Barnhart (2001) asking college students about their perceptions of intercollegiate athletes, rightly or wrongly, student athletes were not perceived in a positive light. A majority of the sample saw them as receiving special treatment. This judgment could pose a deep concern, not only to student athletes, but also to college and athletic administrators. Research indicates that student athletes appear to have a slower or different rate of social development than does the general university population (Etzel et al., 1996).

### *Holistic Model*

Student athletes are a unique group within the university who face the dilemma of trying to compete in two sectors: school and competitive sports. The three areas of challenge for the student athlete are personal development, athletics, and academic enhancement. There is sufficient evidence to support a holistic developmental model for student athlete support services (Clark & Parette, 2002; Greene & Denson, 1993). This approach incorporates the philosophy of treating the student athlete as an individual rather than addressing growth in compartmentalized areas of life. A holistic approach attends to social, academic, and athletic development. Not using this model with student athletes would be a disservice to their growth as individuals

(Greene & Denson). The mental and emotional strain placed on these student athletes requires them to have support services to help bridge their social, academic, and athletic needs (Ferrante et al., 1991). Decision-making and problem-solving skills are additional areas in which student athletes often require additional help (Chu, 1989; Hinkle, 1993). Thompson (1986) stated that student athletes face personal, academic, and career needs quite different than those of the general student population. According to Cukras (2006), four study processes are selected as essential for academic success at the collegiate level: organizing, monitoring, employing a study plan, and encoding.

### *Interpersonal Skills*

It is not surprising that large numbers of athletes spend much time among themselves, living, studying, eating, and socializing. The bonds form easily after spending extended amounts of time practicing, traveling, and competing together. It is a natural process to bond easily with individuals who have similar daily schedules (Bowen & Levin, 2003). The unique life circumstances student athletes experience requires special services to assist them in responding appropriately and becoming well-adjusted, thriving adults (Etzel et al., 1996). Covell and Barr (2001) described the pressures surrounding collegiate sports at the highest level:

To host an NCAA Division-I athletic program, therefore, a school must provide winning teams comprised of athletes who are also students, for the entertainment of those associated with the school and its constituents—students, faculty, community members, alumni, fans—to develop prominence at the national level and to strive for financial success. (p. 417)

A major contributor in bridging gaps in the student athlete's life has been the athletic academic support service department.

### *Academic Support for Student Athletes*

The combination of athletics and academics can be a mixture of oil and water when referring to most Division-I programs. According to Coleman and Barker (1993), support services for student athletes play a large role in their athletic, academic, and social success. The

redefinition of intercollegiate athletics includes strong academic and personal support for student athletes (Clark & Parette, 2002). The NCAA, along with each institution's judicial affairs department, has served as balancers in the mix (NCAA, 1995). Prior to 1972, fewer than 40% of colleges and universities had established any kind of academic support or counseling program for student athletes (NCAA, 1995). There were two major historical events that accounted for the development of academic support (academic advisors) for student athletes. The first series of events happened during the student movement of the late 1960s into the early 1970s. This movement included the Black liberation movement and the counterculture revolution that began to address the issues revolving around intercollegiate athletics. More than 100 institutions experienced an aggressive style of confrontation between student athletes and their designated athletic department (Underwood, 1984).

#### *Events from Mid-1970s to Mid-1980s*

The second series of events was in 1973 when the 2.0 grade-point average was established for entrance into universities. The rule stated that students admitted into universities to compete as athletes must have only have a 2.0 high school G.P.A. to be enrolled. This particular rule increased the number of academically low-performing high school student athletes who could meet standards for college and university admissions. The chain of events increased the demand for educational and professional staff members to maintain eligibility for student athletes at the collegiate level. During that time, athletic directors did not see the necessity to place funds into academic support programs when their initial goals were to build "mammoth" stadiums (Underwood, 1984). Brennan (1979) conducted a study involving more than 200 universities and found that 22% of the institutions, at that time, had assistant coaches serving as the primary source of academic advisors for student athletes.

In the early 1980s, the demands for coaches to win and for student athletes to remain eligible created the necessity for athletic directors to allocate funds for academic support programs for student athletes. Students needed not only to remain eligible but also to leave the university

with a positive collegiate experience and a baccalaureate degree. An academic support program that was well designed and assisted student athletes with counseling concerns, career decisions, and enhanced personal success was the answer to the needed element between athletics and academics (Underwood, 1984). The academic centers have a goal to assist the student athlete in taking the variables accumulated by participating in athletics such as time management, teamwork, organization, and pride in one's ability and transfer those attributes to the academic realm (Lapchick, 2006; Thompson, 1986).

#### *Academic Enhancements--The Late 1980s*

In the late 1980s, significant funding was designated for academic support for student athletes. This excess funding came after numerous lawsuits, including Kevin Ross' in 1988, against Creighton University for denying him access to the university's academic services when the athletic staff knew he was functionally illiterate. This lawsuit served as forced motivation for athletic departments to change (Fullinwider, 1999; Lapchick, 2006). The NCAA had a necessity to act quickly to alleviate any further negative publicity. The NCAA provided academic funds to member institutions to enhance educational services to student athletes. The verbal concerns from Representative Collins (1994) about when is too little, too late, rippled through Congressional hearings. During the hearings before the subcommittee on commerce, consumer protection, and competitiveness of the committee on energy and commerce, Representative Collins stated:

Nearly every observer of collegiate sport has found a system that is rapidly getting out of control. What began as a high-spirited complement to college academics has now become an increasingly dominating force at universities. College sports have become big business...The victims of this transformation are inevitably the student athletes...Do college athletics provide an avenue for many poor children to get a decent education at a good university or do college athletics mainly exploit the athlete? Yet how much of the millions of dollars in the revenues for the NCAA basketball tournaments is used for this purpose? And what about the tutoring budgets? What is the commitment of schools to aiding the student athlete after his eligibility has ended? How are schools dealing with cultural problems of minority students described so well by Mr. Lapchick in his testimony? (p. 12)

The heavy criticism stated by Representative Collins (1994), along with others, made it a necessity for NCAA to address the academic needs of student athletes. *Bylaw, 16.3* was adopted by the NCAA in 1991. The law mandated all Division-I member institutions to make basic tutoring and academic services available to all recruited student athletes (NCAA, 1995).

### *Life Skills—1990s to Present*

The push for enhancing services for student athletes extended into the 1990s with the addition of a life development model designed to teach life skills through sports for student athletes introduced by Danish, Peptitpas, and Hale (1993). "Life Skills" is a program in conjunction with academic support that uses the student athlete's athletic knowledge to build a better personal base. The CHAMPS-Life Skills Program was developed to meet the unique needs of student athletes. Student athletes have a difficult time accessing activities and programs on campus. The NCAA took the expansion a step further in 1998 when it mandated that any institution that was certified by its governing body would be required to provide a Life Skills program (NCAA, 1998). Career development, academic support, along with life skills services has been critical to the overall development of the student athlete (Coleman & Barker, 1993). Watson (2006) found that the development of athlete enhancement programs such as CHAMPS-Life Skills and their growing acceptance on college campuses has helped diminish the stigma attached to counseling services.

Institutions of higher education have to be committed to not only the athletic and academic growth of the student athlete but also to their individual improvement. The intensified focus on student athletes and their overall needs during the past 10 years might be changing their attitude toward services. One aspect of the CHAMPS-Life Skills program that enables student athletes to have their voice heard is the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). The committee was mandatory for all collegiate universities that are sponsored by NCAA and devised of all student-athletes and one support staff supervisor. The committee was another initiative NCAA put in place for student athletes to have a voice in administrative decisions. The meeting is always attended by

an administrator (NCAA, 1998). Identifying the barriers that are still present for student athletes has been a major step in continuing to provide better support services (Watson, 2006).

### *Identifying Academic Concerns for Future Success*

Higher standards, however, will not necessarily create a change in the academic performance and attitudes of student athletes (Thompson, 1986). Amey and Long (1998) also indicated that the institution played a role in students' success. For example, in institutions where students fared well, mandated reading assessment and reading placement for students as well as the successful completion of a reading course prior to continued enrollment has been established. Because of these mandates, universities have a means of quickly identifying students with lower GPAs and intervening to avoid delays in using the resources available within the college setting. The institution also required obligatory contact with an advisor for all students with low GPAs. Overall, early intervention by an advisor and successful completion of development courses has contributed to the persistence and the educational goal attainment in the underprepared college students has been deemed successful.

Still, there is current research stating that student athletes (in general) take easier courses, are graded less severely, and perform worse in their classes than do their peers. This is despite extra services such as private tutoring and advising being available only to student athletes (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Matheson, 2007; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Sperber, 2000). Contrary to the in-class performance, researchers have proven that athletes graduate at higher rates than the overall student body (NCAA, 2006; Rishe, 2003). Rishe also noted that the academic athletic divide only affected male student athletes. The graduation rate for female student athletes attending Division-I colleges is 69%; this is well above the 62% graduation rate for their non-athlete peers. The necessity to hear the concerns about support services from the student athletes themselves is stronger today than any previous moment in history because the pressure for performance continues to grow both in the classroom and on their designated field of athletic performance.

### *Summary*

The life of a collegiate student athlete is far from compartmentalized. One can conclude from the literature review that it is difficult to look at one specific area that affects the life of a student athlete without examining another area. The system surrounding the student athlete is complex and, without knowledgeable support staff in all areas, the student athlete might suffer the consequences of misguidance during registration, career services, or injury because of faulty equipment. These topics are rarely discussed behind closed doors, much less in an open forum. The student athlete's voice is important to hear so that internal adjustments to services can be made for the benefit of the entire system.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at numerous Division-I athletic programs.

The researcher conducted a quantitative study via a survey titled "Expectations and Experiences of Student Athletes" (see Appendix A) with student athletes and used the academic athletic support staff office at each university for data collection. Four Division-I universities were viewed individually according to the athletic academic budget designated for each scholarship student athlete. This strategy was used to determine if attitudes and opinions of student athletes differ within and between financial categories of universities.

#### *Population*

The population of student athletes represented teams from three revenue-producing sports: men's basketball, men's baseball, and women's basketball along with two nonrevenue-producing sports: men's and women's tennis. Participants ranged from freshmen student athletes to senior student athletes who were actively on the team roster for their designated sport.

University #1 had 300 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.2 million. This is equivalent to \$4,000 per student athlete. University #2 had 403 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.3 million. This is equivalent to \$3,226 per student athlete. University #3 had 325 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$250,000. This is equivalent to \$714 per student athlete. University #4 had 220 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$100,000. This is equivalent to \$455 per student athlete. An overall athletic academic budget analysis using the total number of athletic

scholarships was used to derive the per student athlete expenditure. Only five collegiate athletic teams were surveyed per university. Understanding the different financial dynamics of the universities, the overall question remains: Do the attitudes and opinions of student athletes differ on academic, athletic, and social services between the categories and within the categories of their Division-I institutions?

### *Research Design*

The data collection tool used was a questionnaire titled "Expectations and Experiences of Student Athletes." A descriptive research design including inferential statistics was used. Descriptive research is used to acquire data concerning the status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The methods involved range from the survey that describes the status quo to the correlation study that investigates the relationship between variables (De Vaus, 2001; McMillan & Schumacher). Structured questions can be used to assess individuals' beliefs and attitudes. If the researcher wishes to generalize the responses from the individual to the population, it is important to have a representative sample (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

### *Survey Instrument*

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire, Expectations and Experiences of Student Athletes, made up of two scales, "Expectations" and "Experiences," each with 12 questions clustered into elements. The questionnaire, used by permission, was designed by Dr. Jim Lampley, a faculty member at East Tennessee State University, to obtain specific student athlete data from an institution (see Appendix D). The first section displayed the directions for completing the questionnaire followed by inquiry items about the student athletes' expectation of support services at "excellent" universities. The second section followed with inquiry items concerning each student athlete's actual experiences with support services at his or her current university. Responses to be generated from the "expectations" and "experiences" sections were based on a

Likert-like scale (1-Strongly Disagree; 2-3 Disagree; 4-5 Agree; 6- Strongly Agree). Section three contained demographic identifiers for gender, race, university class status, and team affiliation. Section four used a Likert scale as well to assess the overall satisfaction of student athletes in social, academic, and athletic realms. The fifth section had the student athletes allocate 100 points among the three components: social, athletic, and academic programs in accordance with importance (see Appendix A).

The most widely used example of a scale is the summated or Likert scale (Kumar, 2005; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). According to Babbie (2005), the Likert scale is a type of composite measure created by Rensis Likert in "an attempt to improve the levels of measurement in social research through the use of standardized response categories in survey questionnaires to determine the relative intensity of different items" (p. 174). The scale is based upon the assumption that every item on the survey has equal attitudinal value, significance, or weight in terms of reflecting an attitude toward the question asked (Kumar). It is important to understand that the Likert scale does not measure attitude; rather, "It does help to place different respondents in relation to each other in terms of the intensity of their attitude towards an issue: it shows the strength of one respondents view in relation to another" (Kumar, p. 146).

### *Data Collection*

The researcher sent a formal letter addressed to the director of academic services for student athletes at each of the Division-I universities participating in the study to explain the basis of the research (see Appendix B). Upon IRB and administrative approval, questionnaires (see Appendix A) were distributed to each athletic academic unit at each university. The five teams (men's basketball, men's baseball, women's basketball, men's tennis, and women's tennis) at each participating university completed the questionnaires. The academic centers returned completed forms within 2 weeks of obtaining them.

The researcher assured each institution and student athlete complete anonymity with his or her responses (see Appendix C). The data collection process occurred to gather results from the survey and to reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses.

### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question #1: Is there a significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) at the target universities?

Ho<sub>11</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on academic dimensions.

Ho<sub>12</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on athletic dimensions.

Ho<sub>13</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on social dimensions.

Research Question #2: Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) among the target universities?

Ho<sub>21</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on academic dimensions among the target universities.

Ho<sub>22</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) based on athletic dimensions among the target universities.

Ho<sub>23</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) based on social life dimensions among the target universities.

Research Question #3: Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) between males and females based on academic, athletic, and social dimensions?

Ho3<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on academic dimensions between male and female student athletes at target universities.

Ho3<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on athletic dimensions between male and female student athletes' attitudes and opinions at target universities.

Ho3<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on social life dimensions between male and female student athletes' attitudes and opinions at target universities.

Research Question #4: Is there a relationship between overall satisfaction scores (academic, athletic, and social life) of student athletes among target universities (measured by per student expenditures?).

Ho4<sub>1</sub>: There is no relationship between overall academic satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

Ho4<sub>2</sub>: There is no relationship between overall athletic satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

Ho4<sub>3</sub>: There is no relationship between overall social life satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

The null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

### *Data Analysis Method*

The research questions served as the resource for the analysis of data from the survey. The researcher used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run the analysis.

### *Hypotheses Testing*

The null hypotheses for research question #1 were tested using paired samples  $t$  tests. The null hypotheses for research question #2 was tested using a one-way ANOVA. The null hypotheses for research question #3 were tested using independent samples  $t$  tests. The null hypotheses for research question #4 were tested using a Pearson correlation.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at four Division-I athletic programs. The study supported the student athletes by allowing them to have their opinions expressed to athletic administrators. Athletic department officials, under the athletic division at each university, might gain better knowledge to enhance athletic services provided for all student athletes. The study might convey whether equitable treatment is occurring within and between sports at each designated university and if appropriate services are provided to student athletes both academically and socially. Athletic departments provide services to student athletes; this study presents student athletes' opinions, as consumers, regarding their service providers.

For the purpose of this study, four Division-I universities were viewed individually according to the athletic academic budget designated for each scholarship student athlete. University #1 had 300 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.2 million. This is equivalent to \$4,000 per student athlete. University #2 had 800 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$1.1 million. This is equivalent to \$1,375 per student athlete. University #3 had 325 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$250,000. This is equivalent to \$714 per student athlete. University #4 had 220 scholarship student athletes with an athletic academic services operating budget of \$100,000. This is equivalent to \$455 per student athlete.

The researcher asked student-athletes to compare their expectations for support services at their university with their actual experiences in order to identify possible gaps in support service quality at their designated university. The researcher gathered data from University #1, University #2, University #3, and University #4 in the 2008 spring semester over a period of 4 months. The accessible population were student-athletes enrolled in four Division-I university

(University #1, University #2, University #3, and University #4) as an undergraduate (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior) with some form of athletic scholarship aid.

One hundred ninety-seven questionnaires were returned from the designated student-athlete population. An exact measure of the return rate could not be calculated based on the distribution manner; however, an approximate overall return rate was 72%. The differences in return rates were more a reflection of the physical location of the researcher in proximity to each university than actual participation in the study. The researcher had designated distributors for University #1 and University #2. The return rate for University #1 was 53%. The initial return rate for University #2 was 30%; the researcher traveled to University #2 in an attempt to enhance the return rate and the rate increased to 45%. The researcher was able to go personally to University #3 and University #4 for survey distribution and collection. University #3 had a 100% return rate. University #4 had a 90% return rate.

Each research question had differing response numbers because of certain categories being left blank on individual questionnaires. If the questionnaire had a blank category for the respective research question, the individual questionnaire was not tallied.

### *Analysis of Research Questions*

#### *Research Question #1*

Is there a significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) at the target universities?

The null hypotheses associated with research question #1 are as follows:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on academic dimensions.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on athletic dimensions.

Ho<sub>13</sub>: There is no significant difference between student athletes' expectations scores and experiences scores at the target universities based on social dimensions.

A paired-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between student athletes' expectations and experiences based on academic dimensions. The test was significant,  $t(190) = 4.21, p < .01$ . Therefore, Ho<sub>11</sub> was rejected. Student athletes expectations ( $M = 20.86, SD = 2.63$ ) were greater than their actual experiences ( $M = 20.15, SD = 2.92$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .38 to 1.05. The  $\eta^2$  index was .30. Expectations for academic services were greater than actual experiences with academic services. Figure 1 shows the distributions for the two factors.

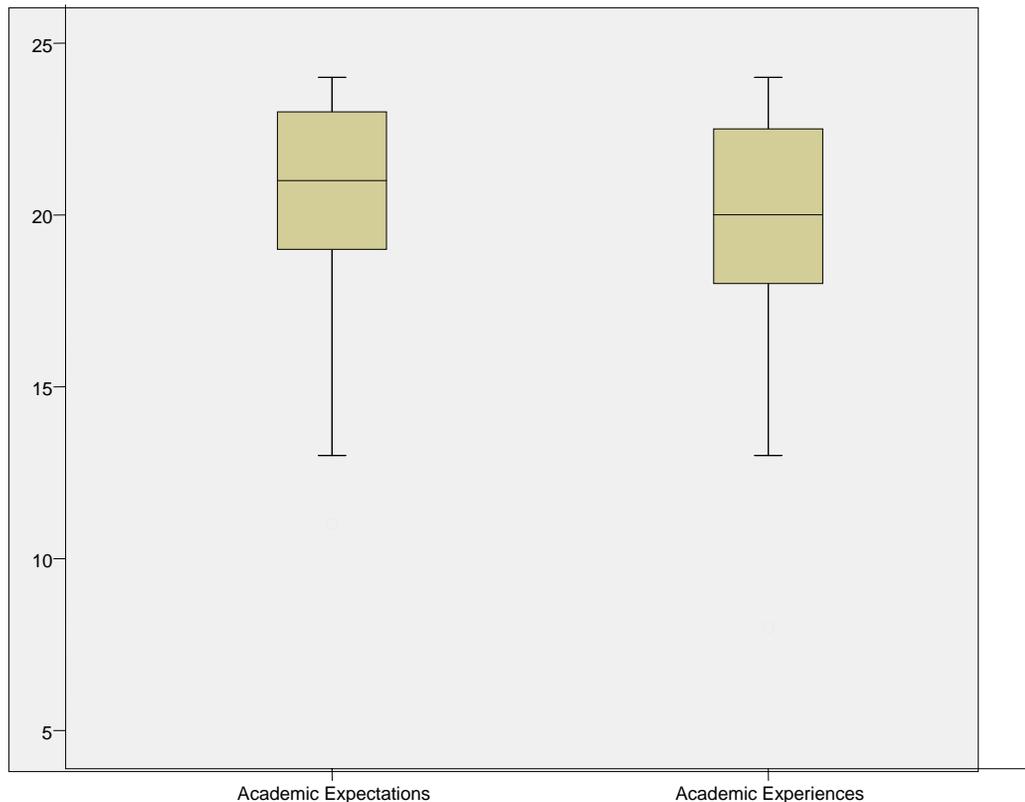
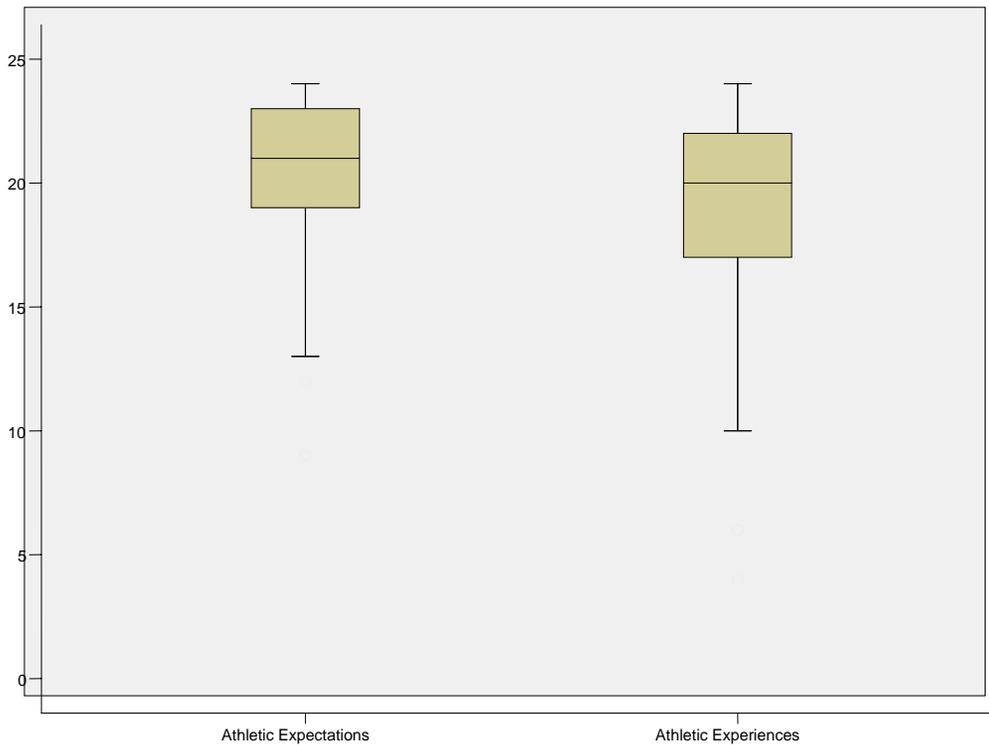


Figure 1. Distribution of Scores for Expectations and Experiences with Academic Service

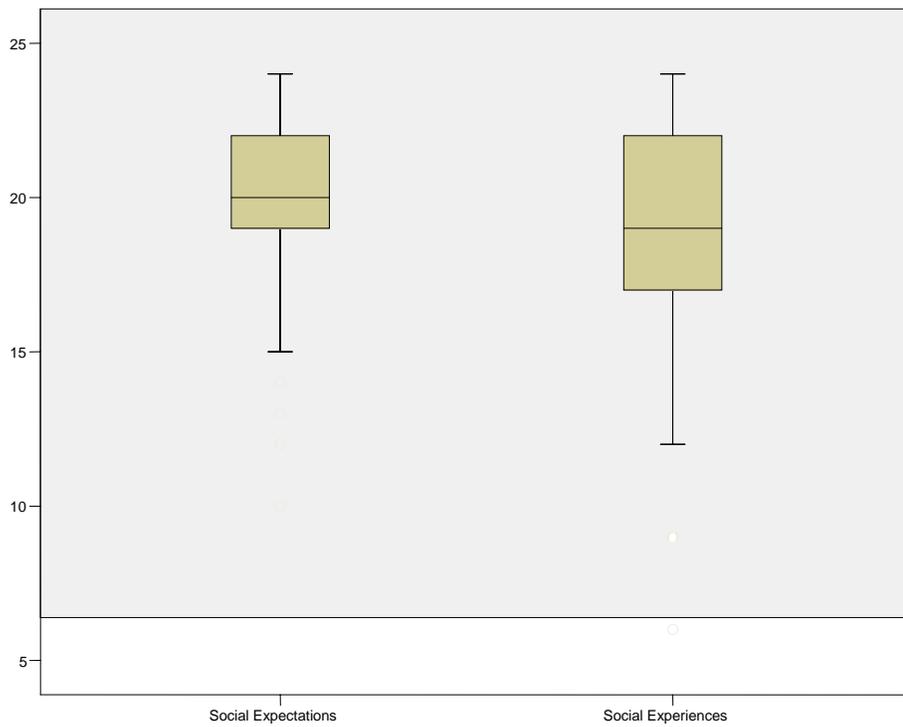
A paired-samples  $t$  test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between student athletes' expectations and experiences based on athletic dimensions. The test was significant,  $t(188) = 5.15, p < .01$ . Therefore,  $H_{01_2}$  was rejected. Student athletes' expectations ( $M = 20.74, SD = 3.02$ ) were greater than their actual experiences ( $M = 19.34, SD = 3.74$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .86 to 1.92. The  $\eta^2$  index was .37. Expectations for athletic services were greater than their actual experiences with athletic services. Figure 2 shows the distributions for the two factors.



*Figure 2.* Distribution of Scores for Expectations and Experiences with Athletic Services

A paired-samples  $t$  test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between student athletes' expectations and experiences based on social dimensions. The test was significant,  $t(191) = 4.80, p < .01$ . Therefore,  $H_{01_3}$  was rejected. Student athletes'

expectations ( $M = 20.20$ ,  $SD = 2.74$ ) were greater than their actual experiences ( $M = 19.10$ ,  $SD = 3.40$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .64 to 1.54. The  $\eta^2$  index was .35. Expectations for social life services were greater than actual experiences with social life services. Figure 3 shows the distributions for the two factors.



*Figure 3.* Distribution of Scores for Expectations and Experiences with Social Services

*Research Question #2:*

Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) for each of the three dimensions (academic, athletic, and social) among the target universities?

The null hypotheses associated with research question #2 are as follows:

Ho2<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on academic dimensions among the target universities.

Ho2<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) based on athletic dimensions among the target universities.

Ho2<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) based on social life dimensions among the target universities.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between academic experiences and expectations of student athletes among target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was academic dimensions gap scores. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(3, 187) = 2.22, p = .09$ . Therefore, Ho2<sub>1</sub> was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was .03. The results indicate that the gap between student athletes' academic expectations and academic experiences was not significantly different among the four target universities.

A one-way (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between athletic experiences and expectations of student athletes among target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was athletic dimensions gap scores. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(3, 34.50) = 2.56, p = .06$ . Therefore, Ho2<sub>2</sub> was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was .06. The results indicate that the gap between student athletes' athletic expectations and experiences was not significantly different among the target universities.

A one-way (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between social experiences and expectations of student athletes among target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was social dimensions gap scores. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(3, 23.01) = 2.35, p = .07$ . Therefore, Ho2<sub>3</sub> was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was .04.

The results indicate that the gap between student athletes' social life experiences and expectations was not significantly differently among the target universities.

### *Research Question #3*

Is there a significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic academic services) between males and females based on academic, athletic, and social dimensions?

The null hypotheses associated with research question #3 are as follows:

Ho3<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on academic dimensions between male and female student athletes at target universities.

Ho3<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on athletic dimensions between male and female student athletes' attitudes and opinions at target universities.

Ho3<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean gap scores (experiences minus expectations scores for athletic-academic services) based on social life dimensions between male and female student athletes' attitude and opinions at target universities.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in academic experiences versus academic expectations according to gender. Academic dimension scores was the test variable and the grouping variable was gender. The test was not significant,  $t(189) = 2.01, p = .19$ . Therefore, Ho3<sub>1</sub> was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was .15. There was no significant difference in the gap between academic expectations and experiences of females ( $M = -1.23, SD = 2.82$ ) and males ( $M = -.49, SD = 2.07$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the differences in means was -.012 to -1.46. Figure 4 shows the distribution for the two groups.

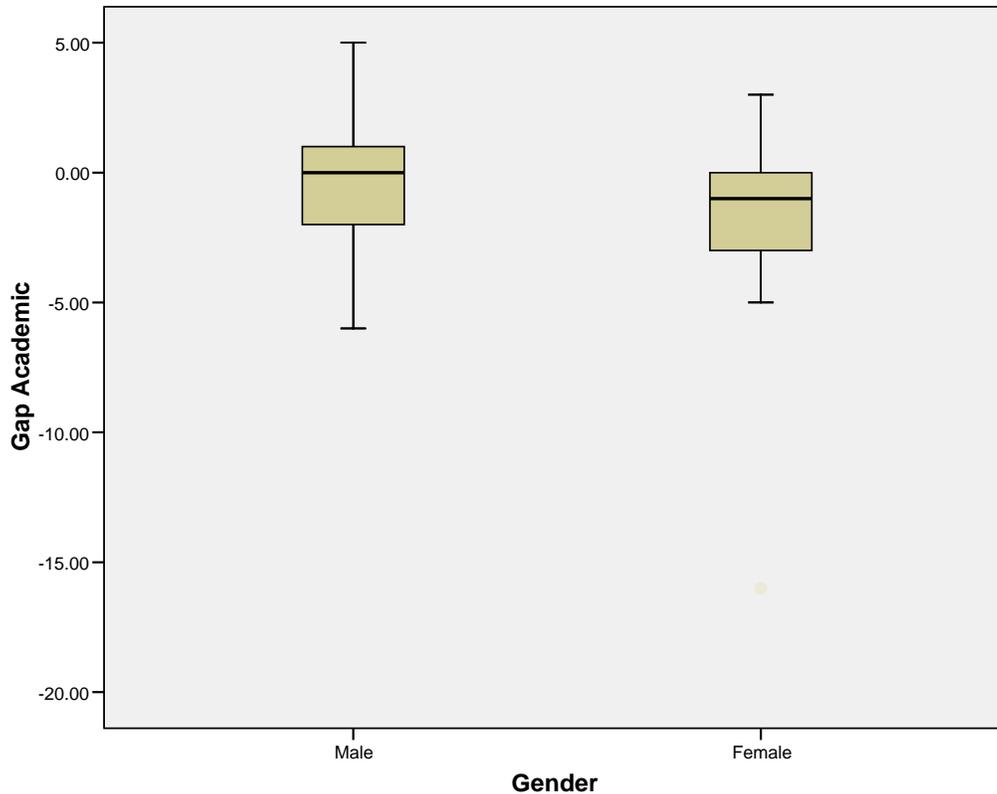


Figure 4. Distribution of Scores for Gender and Academic Gap Scores

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in athletic experiences versus athletic expectations according to gender. Athletic dimensions scores were the test variables and the grouping variable was gender. The test was significant,  $t(190) = 2.29, p = .03$ . Therefore,  $H_{03_2}$  was rejected. Females had a larger discrepancy between experiences and expectations with athletic services ( $M = -2.90, SD = 4.47$ ) than males did ( $M = -.74, SD = 3.13$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the differences in means was 1.03 to 3.27. The  $\eta^2$  index was .28, which indicated a large effect size. Males' athletic experiences were closer to their athletic expectations than were females' experiences.

Figure 5 shows the distribution for the two groups.



Figure 5. Distribution of Scores for Gender and Academic Gap Scores

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in social experiences versus social expectations of social life services according to gender. Dimensions of social life were the test variables and the grouping variable was gender. The test was significant,  $t(190) = 2.29, p = .02$ . Therefore,  $H_03_3$  was rejected. Females had a larger discrepancy between experiences and expectations with social life services ( $M = -1.88, SD = 3.13$ ) than did males ( $M = -.75, SD = 2.8$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the differences in means was .16 to 2.09. The  $\eta^2$  index was .17. Males' social life experiences were closer to their expectations than were females' experiences.

Figure 6 shows the distribution for the two groups.

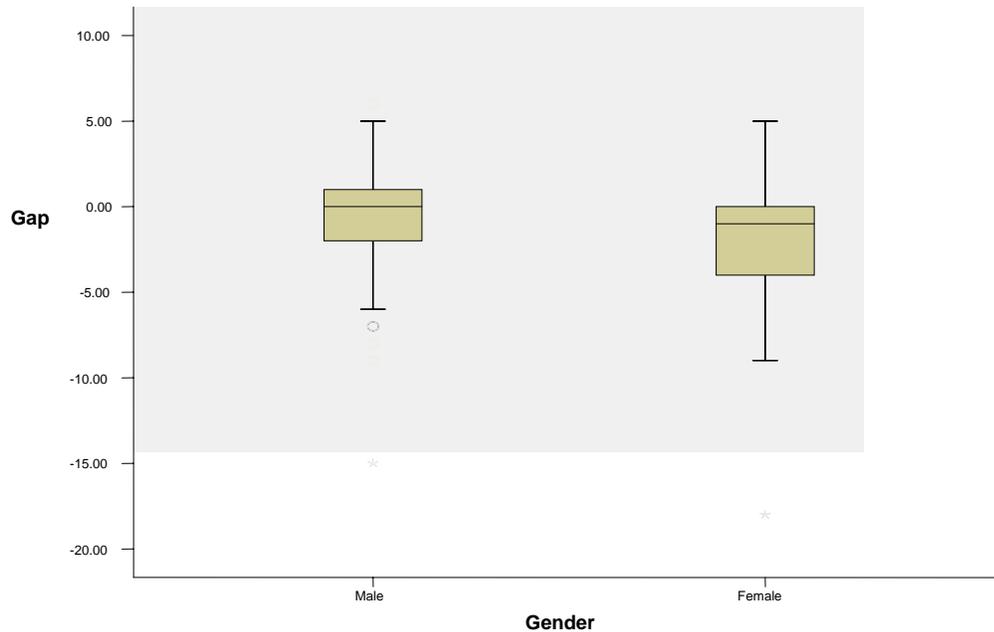


Figure 6. Distribution of Scores for Gender and Social Gap Scores

#### Research Question #4

Is there a relationship between overall satisfaction scores (academic, athletic, and social life) of student athletes among target universities (measured by per student expenditures?).

The null hypotheses associated with research question #4 are stated below:

Ho4<sub>1</sub>: There is no relationship between overall academic satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

Ho4<sub>2</sub>: There is no relationship between overall athletic satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

Ho4<sub>3</sub>: There is no relationship between overall social life satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student athlete expenditures).

The null hypotheses will be tested at the .05 level of significance.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the overall academic support services satisfaction score of student athletes among target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was the overall academic satisfaction of student-athletes at each university. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(3,197) = 1.84, p = .05$ . Therefore,  $H_0$  was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was .02. The results indicate that the student athletes' overall academic satisfaction was not significantly different across target universities. Figure 7 shows the distribution for the two factors. The means and standard deviations for the four universities are shown in Table 1.

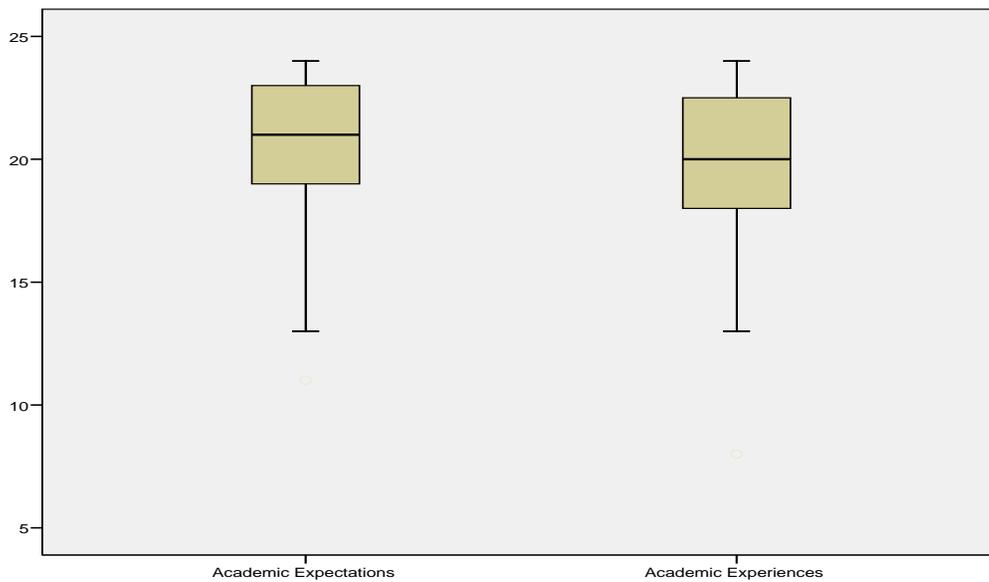


Figure 7. Distribution of Scores for Overall Academic Scores and Target Universities

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for Overall Academic Satisfaction*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
University #1	32	5.25	.95
University #2	27	4.74	.56
University #3	84	5.13	.79
University #4	55	4.84	1.12

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between overall athletic support services satisfaction score of student athletes and target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was the overall athletic satisfaction of student-athletes at each university. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3,197) = 3.89$ ,  $p = .01$ . Therefore,  $H_0$  was rejected. The  $\eta^2$  index was .06.

Because the overall  $F$  test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means of the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. There was significant difference in the means between the overall athletic satisfaction of University #1 ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) and University #3 ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) and between the overall athletic satisfaction of University #1 ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) and University #4 ( $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ). Students at University #1 had a greater overall satisfaction rate with athletic services than did students at University #3 or University #4. Figure 8 shows the distribution for the two factors. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the four universities are shown in Table 2.

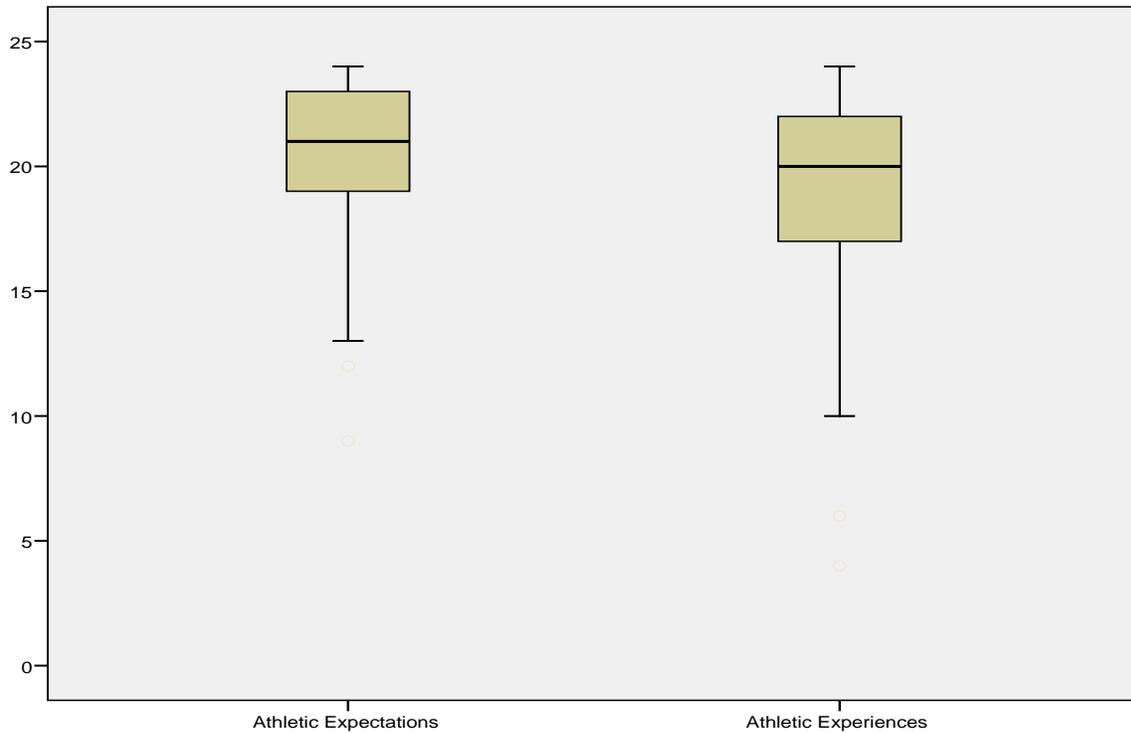


Figure 8. Distribution of Scores for Overall Athletic Scores and Target Universities

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between overall social life satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities. The factor variable was target universities. The dependent variable was the overall social life satisfaction of student-athletes at each university. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3,197) = 9.30, p < .01$ . Therefore,  $H_{043}$  was rejected. The  $\eta^2$  index was .13.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for Overall Athletic Satisfaction With 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	University #1	University 2	University #3
University #1	32	5.47	.72			
University #2	27	4.89	.85	.077 to 1.24 (.58)		
University #3	83	4.94	1.05	.01 to 1.05 (.53)	.61 to .51 (.05)	
University #4	55	4.75	1.02	.16 to 1.28 (.72)	.44 to .73 (.14)	.24 to .63 (.19)

Note: Differences in means in parenthesis

Because the overall *F* test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means of the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. There was significant difference in the means between the overall social life satisfaction of University #1 ( $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) and University #4 ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ), University #2 ( $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) and University #4 ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ), and between the overall academic satisfaction of University #3 ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = .98$ ) and University #4 ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ). Students at University #1, University #2, and University #3 had a greater overall satisfaction rate with social life services than did those at University #4. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the four universities are shown in Table 3. Figure 9 shows the distribution for the two factors.

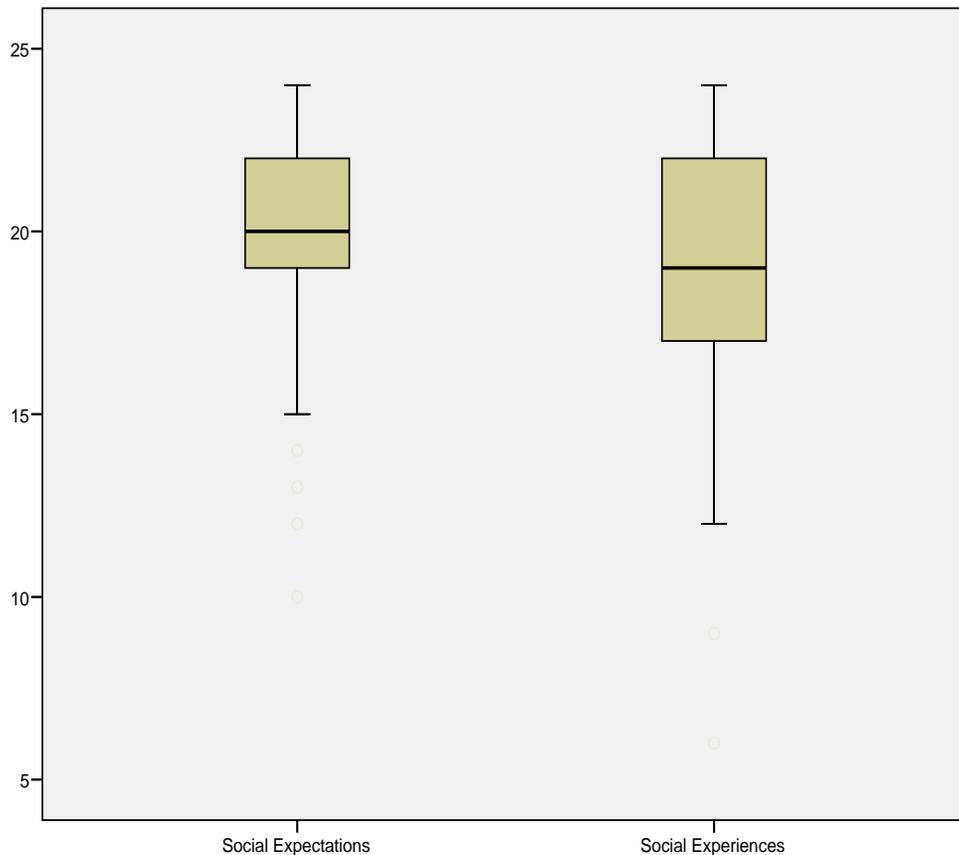
Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for Overall Social Satisfaction*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	University #1	University #2	University #3
University #1	32	5.22	.97			
University #2	27	4.96	1.02	1.07 to .56 (.26)		
University #3	84	4.90	.98	.96 to .33 (.32)	.75 to .63 (.06)	
University #4	54	4.00	1.65	1.91 to .52 (1.22)	1.70 to .23 (.96)	1.45 to .36 (.90)

Note: Differences in Means in parenthesis.

The null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.



*Figure 9.* Distribution of Scores for Overall Social Scores and Target Universities

### *Summary*

Analyses of the data revealed that overall student athletes' expectations were greater than their actual experiences with academic, athletic, and social services at their designated universities. A comparison of the experience scores to the expectation scores revealed a statistically significant difference with academic services, athletic services, and social life services. Upon further review, no statistical significance difference was found among gap scores at target universities for academic, athletic, and social services provided to the student athletes.

A statistically significant difference in gap scores based on gender was found for athletic and social life services provided to the student athletes. Females' expectations were greater than were their male counterparts' expectations.

When evaluating the relationship between overall satisfaction scores (academic, athletic, and social life) of student athletes among target universities (measured by per-student expenditures), no significant relationship was found with academic services. A significant difference was found with overall athletic satisfaction scores between University #1 and University #3 and between the overall academic satisfaction of University #1 and University #4. There was a greater athletic services satisfaction rate at University #1 than at Universities #3 and #4. A significant difference was also found between overall social life satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities. There was a significant difference in the means between the overall social life satisfaction of University #1 and University #4, University #2 and University #4, and between the overall social life satisfaction of University #3 and University #4. Students at University #1, University #2, and University #3 had a greater overall satisfaction rate with social life services than did those at University #4.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of findings from the study on student-athletes' perceptions of support services in higher education. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations are drawn from the literature review in Chapter 2 and the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4.

#### *Summary of Findings*

The overall goal of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at four Division-I athletic programs. The survey was divided into three dimensions of service that most affect the day-to-day lives of student athletes: academic, athletic, and social. There were four questions encompassing academic dimensions. Analysis of the data revealed that, overall, student athletes' expectations were greater than were their actual experiences with academic services at their designated universities. A comparison of the experience scores to the expectation scores revealed a statistically significant difference regarding academic services. Student athletes had greater expectations about academic services at their target universities than what they actually experienced. The difference between expectation and experience was not statistically significant for academic services among universities. The difference was also not significant based on gender for academic dimensions. Males and females had similar attitudes toward academic services provided to them. There was also no statistical significance found in overall satisfaction with academic services among target universities. The results showed that regardless of budget and gender, student athletes' attitudes and opinions pertaining to academic services were not

statistically different. The amount of money allocated for academic support poses significant discrepancies as shown by the overall per-student athlete expenditures, which ranged from \$4,000 (University #1) to \$455 (University #4). Because there was no significant difference in attitudes and opinions of student athletes concerning academic services provided to them, two differing conclusions can be drawn. The first conclusion is that the academic support staff serving the student athletes at University #3 and University #4 are providing exceptional services at those universities on a very small budget. The student athletes are satisfied with the individuals in place and the lack of resources does not hinder their educational pursuits. The opposing conclusion is that the administrators for the academic support staff for the student athletes at University #1 and University #2 are not using their staff and resources to maximum level possible because there is no significant difference according to per-student expenditures across the board. The academic staff at University #1 and University #2 is five times as large as the staff at University #3 and University #4 yet there is no distinguishable difference in attitudes toward services of the student athletes. Athletic directors and administrators at all universities need to take an internal look and either praise the academic staff for providing excellent services (University #3 and University #4) or reevaluate their structure, personnel, and spending patterns (University #1 and University #2).

The expectation questions on the survey used the term excellent universities whereas the experience questions related to the attended university. It should be noted that some of the surveyed student athlete population might have answered differently had the expected questions been limited to their own university.

For the athletic dimension, analysis of the data revealed that, overall, student athletes' expectations were greater than were their actual experiences with athletic services at their own universities. A comparison of the experience scores to the expectation scores revealed a

statistically significant difference in athletic services. Student athletes had greater expectations for athletic services at their target university than what they actually experienced. The difference between expectation and experience was not statistically significant for athletic services among universities. The difference was significant based on gender for athletic dimensions. Females compared to males had significantly greater expectations for athletic services versus their actual experiences at target universities. This research finding can be tied to the historical concerns of *Title IX* (1975) that addressed the equal opportunity among males and females to participate in the athletic realm of collegiate sports. This law went into effect in 1975, and attitudes began to shift as *Title IX* created an intense demand for female student athletes' participation at the collegiate level (McComb, 2004). From another view, this might also reflect differences in the expectations of males and females. The results of this survey showed that equal opportunity might not mean equal treatment according to gender within the athletic realm. A significant difference was found with overall athletic satisfaction scores between University #1 and University #3 and University #4. University #1 is an institution that has a strong tradition of winning at the highest level across all sports. The per-student athlete academic expenditure of \$4,000 reinforces that large sums of money are placed into student athletes' programming. University #3 and University #4 have a much lower per-student athlete academic expenditure at \$714 and \$455 respectively. Resources and quality of coaching could play a factor in the discrepancy between the universities.

For the social dimension, analysis of the data revealed that overall student athletes' expectations were greater than were their actual experiences with services at their designated universities. A comparison of the experience scores to the expectation scores revealed a statistically significant difference regarding social life services. Student athletes had greater expectations at their target university than what they actually experienced with social life services. The difference between expectation and experience was not statistically significant for social life services among universities. The difference was significant based on gender for social life dimensions. Females, compared to males, had significantly greater expectations for social life services versus their actual experiences at target universities. A significant difference was also

found between overall social life satisfaction scores of student athletes among target universities. Students at University #1, University #2, and University #3 had a greater overall satisfaction rate with social life services than did student athletes at University #4. The research results can be tied to the necessity of a Life Skills program at the target universities. University #1, University #2, and University #3 all have designated academic staff members whose main job focus is the enhancement of the Life Skills program. At University #4, the staff member serving as the head of the Life Skills Program has other job responsibilities that supersede the responsibilities of the Life Skills Program. There are significantly fewer Life Skills Program activities at University #4 than at University #1, University #2, or University #3. Because of the demands associated with being a student athlete, participation in athletics limits the amount of time to participate in university-based social events. All four universities in the study also have a separate department to serve exclusively the academic needs of student athletes. This further inhibits the ability of student athletes to spend time with college students who are not athletes. It should also be mentioned that University #4, unlike University #1, University #2, and University #3, is a “commuter” school with 81% of students commuting. Commuting often is associated with other barriers, such as working off campus and family obligations, that could hinder the social aspect of the university for the student athletes.

### *Conclusions*

As a result of the findings, the following summary and conclusions are drawn regarding student athletes’ attitudes and opinions toward athletic academic services provided at their university. The researcher concluded that overall gaps between expectations and experiences do exist at all target universities. There is a realistic value in indentifying expectation-experience gaps at individual universities as a means for internal evaluation and potential improvement for services provided to student athletes. Identification of areas in need of change or improvement would be the first step toward creating a more holistic environment for the student athletes at each target university. Universities with a desire to improve the services provided to student

athletes would do best by addressing the areas with the largest gaps in their system (i.e., athletic and social life services by gender). The system must also take into account the student as an individual and his or her unique characteristics and extracurricular activities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Part of the learning process at any university involves the interaction of students with professors and professional staff in the academic environment. Leaders representing different departments at the collegiate level must band together to restore credibility to the collegiate learning experience of student athletes (Miller & Fennell, 2006).

#### *Recommendations and Implications for Professional Practice*

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations. University #4 should increase its efforts to assess effectively its social life programs for student athletes. NCAA currently requires athletic departments to assess the student athletes' experiences via feedback at the end of their collegiate academic careers at the university. This process would be more effective and beneficial for the department in terms of feedback if it were done on a yearly basis.

An additional onsite study is recommended for each university involved in this project to explore further the discrepancies in the attitudes and opinions of females and males on both athletic and social life services. The addition of interviews to make this a mixed-methods model would enhance the study by including individual student athletes' voices about their experiences. To extend this research, the addition of NCAA Division II and III institutions could be added to the list of universities to be surveyed. A study that could break down dimensions into spending categories could provide more accurate variables.

Professionals providing services to student athletes need to stay abreast of all current issues and trends within their university and pertaining to NCAA rules and regulations. It is imperative for service providers to have introspective knowledge pertaining to the unique circumstances surrounding the life of a student athlete. A strong working relationship must be built between student-athlete services and university-wide support services. This kind of

partnership needs to be extended to faculty members and social service personnel serving student athletes in order to provide a well-rounded experience. A collaborative environment is essential for balancing all sides, academics, athletics, and social life that create the student athletes' collegiate world.

Additionally, each university might benefit from an indepth analysis of budgetary expenditures in the athletic department. Doing so could indicate how valuable each unit (academic, athletic, and social) is within the department.

Future research on evaluation of academic support services for student athletes should be conducted across a larger population within the United States. A study of this magnitude might provide insight into the differences of academic units within and between conferences in the United States. This support area is still relatively new and there is much knowledge to be shared. A future study might provide insight into differences in how academic support programs within the same conference and across conferences are evaluated. Further research is also needed to assess the relationship between athletic expenditures and graduation rates. Such a study might provide evidence that could be generalized to all student athlete support programs. Programs are failing if they are not graduating student athletes at an acceptable rate and the NCAA has recognized this and is holding units accountable. The ultimate goal of athletic academic support units should be to enhance the athletic and academic experience of student-athletes and provide the groundwork for a balanced future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Expectations and Experiences of Student Athletes

This survey is completely anonymous. Do not put your name on this form.

**Expectations**

This survey asks your opinions about the delivery of services to student athletes. Please indicate the extent to which you think **excellent universities should possess** the feature described by each statement. Rate each item from Strongly Agree (6) to Strongly Disagree (1) by circling your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
E1. Athletic academic advisors provide adequate guidance to ensure meeting program requirements at excellent universities	6	5	4	3	2	1
E2. Excellent universities provide adequate opportunities for interaction with social or special interest groups outside of athletics(clubs and religious groups)	6	5	4	3	2	1
E3. Excellent universities possess modern academic facilities and equipment (buildings, labs, classrooms)	6	5	4	3	2	1
E4. Coaches and athletic department staff show a sincere personal interest in athletes at excellent universities	6	5	4	3	2	1
E5. Coaches are knowledgeable and well-prepared in their sport at excellent universities	6	5	4	3	2	1
E6. At excellent universities, other athletes should be friendly, supportive, and welcoming to new student-athletes	6	5	4	3	2	1
E7. Excellent universities should be academically challenging and demanding	6	5	4	3	2	1
E8. Excellent universities possess modern athletic facilities and equipment (gyms, fields, locker rooms)	6	5	4	3	2	1
E9. Excellent colleges provide adequate on-campus social activities (lectures, concerts, plays, movies)	6	5	4	3	2	1
E10. Coaches are believable, trustworthy, and honest at excellent universities	6	5	4	3	2	1

E11 Excellent universities deliver on all financial aid as promised (grant-in-aid, scholarships, grants)	6	5	4	3	2	1
E12. Excellent universities are sufficiently diverse so as to provide opportunities to interact with others of one's ethnic or cultural background	6	5	4	3	2	1

Complete the other side of this survey (**Expectations**) first.

**Experiences**

Please indicate the extent to which you think [redacted] **possesses** the feature described by each statement. Rate each item from strongly agree to strongly disagree by circling your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
P1. Athletic academic advisors provide adequate guidance to ensure meeting program requirements at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
P2. [redacted] provides adequate opportunities for interaction with social or special interest groups outside(clubs & religious groups)	6	5	4	3	2	1
P3. [redacted] possesses modern academic facilities and equipment (buildings, labs, classrooms)	6	5	4	3	2	1
P4. Coaches and athletic department staff show a sincere personal interest in athletes at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
P5. Coaches are knowledgeable and well-prepared in their sport at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
P6. At [redacted], other athletes are friendly, supportive, and welcoming to new student-athletes	6	5	4	3	2	1
P7. [redacted] is academically challenging and demanding	6	5	4	3	2	1
P8. [redacted] possesses modern athletic facilities and equipment (gyms, fields, locker rooms)	6	5	4	3	2	1
P9. [redacted] provides adequate on-campus social activities (lectures, concerts, plays, movies)	6	5	4	3	2	1
P10. Coaches are believable, trustworthy, and honest at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
P11 [redacted] delivered on all financial aid as promised (grant-in-aid, scholarships, grants)	6	5	4	3	2	1
P12. [redacted] is sufficiently diverse so as to provide opportunities to interact with others of my ethnic or cultural background	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Demographics**

All information provided is confidential. Please **circle** the appropriate choice or fill in the blank

- D1. **Female**                      **Male**
- D2. **Black**    **Hispanic**        **White**    **International**    **Other** \_\_\_\_\_
- D3. **Freshman**        **Sophomore**        **Junior**        **Senior**        **Graduate Student**
- D4. **Football**    **Basketball**    **Soccer**    **Volleyball**    **Baseball**    **Track**    **Tennis**  
**Golf**    **Cross Country**    **Swimming**    **Softball**    **Wrestling**    **Cheerleading**  
**Other** \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Satisfaction**

---

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>		
O1. Overall, I am satisfied with the <u>academic</u> programs [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
O2. Overall, I am satisfied with the <u>athletic</u> programs at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
O3. Overall, I am satisfied with the <u>social life</u> at [redacted]	6	5	4	3	2	1
O4. I would recommend [redacted] to other student-athletes	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Importance - Point Allocation**

Listed below are three components of the collegiate life of student-athletes. We would like to know how important each of these components are to you when you evaluate the **quality** of [redacted]. Please allocate a total of 100 points among the three components, **according to how important each aspect is to you**. The more important a feature is to you, the more points you should allocate to it. Please ensure that the points you allocate to the three components add up to 100.

Social Life . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_points

Athletic Programs . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_points

Academic Programs . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_points

---

Total Points Allocated      100    points

Jeanne Hieronimus Dillman, Ed.S  
East Tennessee State University  
(828)406-2016

## APPENDIX B

### Letter to Academic Center Director

2/11/08

Academic Center Director:

I want to take the time to thank you for allowing me to distribute surveys at the Academic Center for Student-Athletes. I am in the process of writing my dissertation and have approval to conduct this study through the IRB office and the Athletic Department at your university.

The name of my study is 'Are There Differences in the Opinions and Attitudes of Student Athletes Concerning Intercollegiate Athletic Support Services (Social, Athletic, and Academic) In Regard To per Student Expenditures?' This dissertation addresses whether the "whole" student-athlete is receiving appropriate support services from his or her own perspective and whether there is a relationship between quantity (revenue) and quality (high opinion rates of services) by student athletes. The significance of this study is to hear the attitudes and opinions of student-athletes concerning academic, athletic, and social services provided to them at numerous Division-I athletic programs.

I will give a brief survey questionnaire to the student-athletes that will only take about 10 minutes to complete. The student-athletes will be asked their opinion on support services provided to them in three areas: academic, athletic and social. There are no known risks associated with taking the survey.

This process is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect the student-athletes names with their responses or with their designated university. They will not be asked to provide any identifying information about themselves such as name and date of birth. University officials and the Athletic Department will not have access to the raw data. If the student-athletes choose not to complete the survey, it will not affect them in any way. Participation in this study is voluntary. Student-athletes may refuse to participate. If you, as the director, have any research-related questions, you may contact me at (XXX) xxx-xxxx, or my committee chair, Dr. Eric Glover at (XXX)xxx-xxxx. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (XXX)xxx-xxxx if you have questions or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at (XXX)xxx-xxxx or (XXX)xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely

Jeanne Hieronimus Dillman

## APPENDIX C

### Letter Accompanying Survey

January 16, 2007

Dear Participant:

My name is Jeanne Hieronimus Dillman and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The name of my study is ‘Are There Differences in the Opinions and Attitudes of Student Athletes Concerning Intercollegiate Athletic Support Services (Social, Athletic, and Academic) In Regard To Athletic Academic Budgets?’

I would like to give a brief survey questionnaire to you and it should only take about 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked your opinion on support services provided to you in three areas: academic, athletic and social. There are no risks associated with taking the survey.

This process is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your name with your responses. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information about yourself such as name and date of birth.

If you choose not to complete the survey, it will not affect you in any way.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time by not returning survey.

If you have any research-related questions, you may contact me at (XXX)xxx-xxxx or my committee chair, Dr. Eric Glover at (XXX)xxx-xxxx. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (XXX)xxx-xxxx if you have questions or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at (XXX)xxx-xxxx or (XXX)xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely

Jeanne Hieronimus Dillman

## APPENDIX D

### Permission to Use Survey Instrument

January 3, 2008

Jeanne Dillman  
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University  
Box 70550  
Johnson City, TN 37614

Dear Jeanne:

I am in receipt of your request to use the *Expectations and Experiences of Student Athletes* instrument for your dissertation research.

You have my permission to use the survey, or an adaption of it, for your dissertation research entitled, "Intercollegiate Athletic Support Services," as long as it is properly cited.

Best wishes with your research.

*James H. Lampley*

Jim Lampley, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor/Research Specialist  
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
Clemmer College of Education  
East Tennessee State University  
(423) 439-7619

VITA

PATRICIA HIERONIMUS DILLMAN

Personal Data:      Date of Birth: September 22, 1975  
                          Place of Birth: Lufkin, Texas  
                          Marital Status: Married

Education:            Texas A&M University; College Station;  
                          B.S. Special Education  
                          1998  
  
                          University of Houston, Victoria;  
                          M.S. Education-Counseling  
                          2000  
  
                          Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA;  
                          Education Specialist, Ed.S  
                          2006  
  
                          East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
                          Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.;  
                          2008

Professional  
Experience:

Reading Teacher,  
Lake Olympia Middle School, Missouri City; TX ;  
1998-2000  
  
Middle School Counselor,  
Lake Olympia Middle School, Missouri City; TX ;  
2000-2001  
  
Senior Learning Specialist,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI;  
2001-2004  
  
Director of Directed Studies,  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA;  
2004-2007  
  
Doctoral Fellowship & Learning Consultant for Academic Services for  
Student Athletes,  
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN;  
2007-Present

Honors and  
Awards:

1998 Sallie Mae 1<sup>st</sup> Year Teacher of the Year for Fort Bend County, TX

Publications  
and Panel  
Discussions:

- Hieronimus, P. (2006). Keynote Speaker for SERVICE (Supporting Educational Resources Vital in College Environments). *Bridging the gap: The revolution in student-athlete services*. Baton Rouge, LA.
- Hieronimus, P. (2005). Panel Discussion. *Learning specialists': Models of service delivery*. National Association of Academic Advisors, Raleigh, NC.
- Hieronimus, P., & Gabriel, K. (2005). *Preparing at-risk student athletes for independence*. National Association of Academic Advisors National Conference, Pittsburg, PA.
- Hieronimus, P., & Timmer, J. (2004). *How learning specialists can take their programs to the next level and expand services to all student athletes*. National Association of Academic Advisors National Conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Hieronimus, P., & Goff, A. (2003). Implementing an effective mentor program. National Association of Academic Advisors National Conference, Reno, NV.