STUDENT-ATHLETE OR ATHLETE-STUDENT

by

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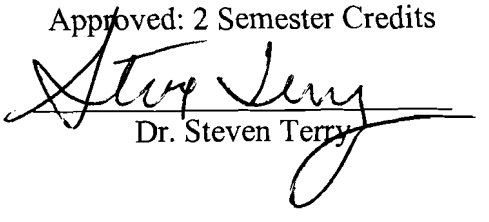

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the academic success of NCAA Division III Collegiate Student-Athletes. The research was conducted utilizing two groups, those that completed their college athletic eligibility and those individuals that chose not to fulfill their athletic status. The study focused on high school ACT scores, high school class rank, college grade point average, gender college grade point average, college graduation rate, and high school ACT score of each gender. Analysis in the form of a t-test was conducted with the variables of high school ACT, college grade point average, college gender-based grade point average, and gender-based ACT score. The chi square test was calculated for the high school class rank and college graduation rate. The male athletes accounted for 61 participants while female athletes in this study were comprised of 53 participants. All NCAA affiliated teams were researched. They include the

following sports: football, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's track and field, women's gymnastics, women's tennis, and women's soccer. Overall there were nineteen dual sport athletes. Student athletes who completed their athletic eligibility displayed a positive affect on their grade point average and college graduation rate, versus those that relinquished their athletic status. Calculations of high school ACT score and high school class rank had no significant related association with college academic success. Focusing on gender college grade point average and high school ACT scores resulted in no indication of college academic success. Research at this particular institution shows that fulfilling college athletics will lead to a higher college grade point average, resulting in a positive graduation rate.

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Chapter I: Introduction

"Athletics in American colleges and universities form a part of those diversions of college life generally termed either outside activities, in the sense that they lie beyond the academic requirements of the institution, or student activities, as representing one means whereby students may exercise their abilities and predilections apart from the strictly educational or academic routine" (Savage, 1929, p. 10).

Student-Athlete

The term student-athlete refers to an individual that is a full-time student and participates in athletics. For the purpose of this thesis, student-athlete refers to the non-athletic scholarship collegiate athlete. Most of these individuals are highly recruited resulting in different expectations when compared to other students. The realization for incoming freshmen to be able to balance education and participate in athletics at the college level takes complete dedication. Participation in athletics has been linked with reports of growth in the individual's personality and leadership skills and with their overall satisfaction with the college experience (Ryan, 1989). These skills are qualities that could carry over to an individual's everyday life.

According to Lapchick, Sperber, Telander, and Thelin, (as cited in Pascarella, Truckenmiller, Nora, Terenzini, Edison and Hagedorn, 1999) "The attractiveness of a university is often focused on how well the athletic teams perform. There can be little doubt that intercollegiate athletics is one of the significant filters through which the public looks at American postsecondary education" (p. 1).

Researchers have argued that athletics teaches self-discipline, teamwork, cooperation, hard work, self-confidence, pride in accomplishment, competitive spirit, and how to cope with failure. These characteristics could all be incorporated into one's educational field and create an

overall solid individual. Cantor and Prentice (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) "claim that athletics provide students with a social identity, with clarity about themselves and their place at the university, and membership in a valued social group" (p. 211). A distinct bond can be formed by athletes facing the same difficulties and achievements. In addition, being surrounded by individuals who may have been in the same predicaments may help them socially. These common traits will make the overall college experience less stressful knowing that other athletes have experienced similar hardships and yet succeeded.

On the other hand, some view college athletics to be a down fall for universities. The athletes' attention may be drawn away from academics, as well as social aspects of the college experience (Parham, 1993). The time and energy needed to fulfill one of these roles may hinder the other role. According to Blann, Bredemeir & Shields, Kennedy & Dimick, Sowa & Gressard, and Stone & Strange (as cited in Pascarella et al.,1999) "evidence suggests that intercollegiate athletic participation may be negatively associated with such outcomes as involvement and satisfaction with the overall college experience, career maturity, clarity in educational and occupational plans, and principled moral judgment" (p. 1).

Student-Athlete Stereotypes

There is a plethora of stereotypes that come with being a student-athlete. They range from being classified as a "dumb jock" to majoring in "easier degrees" as opposed to their peers. Contrary to this belief, Rehberg & Schafer, Spreitzer & Pugh, Hanks & Eckland, and Otto & Alwin (as cited in Soltz, 1986) "a number of studies have reported that athletes not only attain higher grade point averages than other students, but that their educational aspirations, self-concepts, and other effective characteristics are enhanced by participation" (p. 20).

Some researchers claim that athletes may take less challenging classes during their competitive season and leave the more difficult classes for the off-season. This may have been true in the past, but in today's athletic world there is really no off-season. Competitive athletes work just as hard, if not harder, in the off-season in preparing for the upcoming season. Furthermore, the occurrences of dual sport athletes are becoming more and more frequent. Is it possible for athletes to realize that time is at a premium and there is a strong need to use their time efficiently throughout the entire school year? In addition, athletes can easily become ineligible during the off-season with a poor academic performance. This forces them to understand the need to succeed in the classroom year-round.

Some believe that raising the academic standards will increase a student-athlete's grade point average. If the standards for eligibility were increased, then the athlete would be forced to spend more time focusing on academics. Some educators feel that the athletes would rise to meet the higher expectations, while others believe higher standards may force those students who thrive from athletics away from school completely. According to Eidsmore, Klingbeil, and Schafer & Armer (as cited in Foltz, 1992) "Researchers found that the more athletes participated in sports, the better their G.P.A. compared with non-athletes" (p. 15). In addition, Astin, Ryan, and Pascarella & Smart (as cited in Pascarella et al.,1999) "report evidence indicating that athletic participation is linked with satisfaction with the overall college experience and may also increase motivation to complete one's degree, persistence in college and actual bachelor's degree completion" (p. 2). This leaves the question, why should athletes be required to do better than those who are not involved in sports?

Student-Athlete Academic Achievement

Many researchers have created some solid reasons for a correlation between athletics and

achievement in the classroom. Spady (as cited in Ballantine, 1981) "reasoned there is a link between mental and physical ability or that better students are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities of which sports is one of these activities" (p. 1). One reason behind this statement may be the realization that in order to participate, athletes need to maintain an academic standard. Also, it is not uncommon for an outstanding student to be a phenomenal athlete.

Additional information from Rehberg (as cited in Ballentine, 1981) stated that there are five intervening factors between athletic participation and academic achievement:

> 1) association with highly achievable peers; 2) transfer of achievement value from sport to classroom environment; 3) an increased self-esteem which creates a higher level of aspiration in other domains; 4) pressure applied internally and externally to present a consistent image in all areas as a successful individual; and 5) more scholastic and career guidance from a significant adult. (p. 2)

The opportunity to attend a university and receive a degree that is meaningful to the working world should be the focus of all college educators. A study by Otto and Alwin (as cited in Ballantine, 1981) discusses "extended previous research and found that participation in athletics also had a positive effect on occupational aspirations and income" (p. 3). Involvement in athletics may lead to a college scholarship creating the realization of obtaining a college education. Also, many of today's business people realize the dedication and character it takes to participate in athletics at the college level, which in turn should carry over to one's future occupation. Those learning attitudes and behavioral patterns associated with athletics are considered of great importance in many occupational fields. When it comes down

to it, not only will students benefit from the athletic experience, but those characteristics will be extremely valuable in the job market.

On the contrary, the time consumed in athletics and the fact that it is a physical activity may cause some athlete's to drift from academics. According to Ballentine (1981) "College athletes may have more problems fulfilling graduation requirements because of the amount of time sports participation requires" (p. 3). An additional argument is that parents get too involved in the athletic aspect of their child's college experience, resulting in minimal emphasis in the area of academics. Furthermore, the popularity that a sport receives may discourage those scholar students' from contributing full effort in the classroom. Consequently, academics may take a back seat to athletics due to the demand of time, energy, and concentration associated with the extracurricular activity.

Academic Support Programs

College student-athletes might encounter more obstacles than their non-athlete peers do as they work towards academic achievement. According to the American Institutes for Research (as cited in Covington, Simons and Van Rheenen, 1999):

> Student-athletes are required to devote upwards of 25 hours per week towards athletics when their sport is in season, miss numerous classes for university-sanctioned athletic competitions, and deal with fatigue and injuries as a result of their athletic participation. These factors detract from the realistic likelihood of academic success, which in turn affects their academic motivation to succeed. (p. 151)

These athletic requirements create the need for academic support programs that may focus on mandated study halls or tutor service to those athletes who desire it. The demands of athletic participation could detract from the student's ability to manage their study skills

effectively. Comprehensive programs centered on the academic potential of student-athletes could create a relationship between sports participation and academic or career goals.

The Student-Athlete Academic Support Program (SAASP) is one program that focuses its efforts on the non-athletic-scholarship-granting NCAA Division III institutions. SAASP prepares athletes for their career, provides knowledge of various study skills, works toward a respectable grade point average so that athlete has the opportunity to further their education, and develops the perception of being a student-scholar rather than just an athlete. According to Smith and Herman (1996):

> Currently, five specific program components are in place. They include (1) the work of team AC's (academic coordinators), (2) a linkage with the college's career-planning office, (3) a thrice-weekly mandated study-time for all first semester SA's (student-athletes) and all other SA's whose GPA is below a 2.30, (4) a series of study-skills workshops for SA's, and (5) tutoring opportunities made available during times and in places that are convenient for student-athletes. (p. 4)

The founders of this program believe that these components are essential in producing an educated student-athlete. Overall, attempts to improve the academic success of college athletes should focus on the academic support groups of campus.

Gender

The popularity of women's athletics is a direct comparison to the male athletic programs and the factors they encounter. Some studies have shown that female athletes are academically superior to male athletes in reference to college grade point averages. One of the main factors could be the rare opportunities women have when it comes to obtaining a career in athletics. Historically, women have not considered professional athletics as a viable career option

following college. Only recently, with the organization of female professional teams, such as, the women's national basketball association (WNBA) and women's professional soccer, has the idea of women making a career out of athletics become a reality.

In the past, a woman would have chosen the role of leader in activities rather than being a member of an athletic team. According to McDonald & Parke (as cited in Hanson and Krause,1998) "Boys are encouraged to be outgoing, aggressive, independent, and analytic, while girls are encouraged to be passive, dependent, and nurturant" (p. 94). This generalization led many young women to steer away from athletic participation. Some of the main factors that contributed to the greater involvement of women in athletics were the women's movement, women's increased participation in all areas of social life, and Title IX. The popularity of women's sports is such that today's women represent over 34 percent of college athletes (Hanson & Kraus, 1998). According to Sabo (as cited in Hanson & Kraus, 1998) "Women who are athletes have been found to be more achievement oriented, independent, self-confident, and inner controlled than those who are not" (p. 96).

Statement of the Problem

This study was created to determine the academic status of college students, one group being those who chose to fulfill their athletic eligibility and the other group that chose not to pursue college athletics. The research was performed to determine if athletics influenced college graduation rates and grade point averages.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this causal comparative study was to compare the academic success of current college student athletes with those who decided not to complete their eligibility in athletics. The variables utilized for the research were: ACT scores obtained in high school, the

student-athlete's high school senior class rank, college grade point average, college gender-based grade point average, college graduation rate, and gender-based ACT scores.

The subjects in this study consisted of the 1995 incoming freshman class at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The study dealt with just first year students, who were participating in one of the NCAA affiliated athletic teams at that University. All NCAA affiliated teams were researched. These teams included: football, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's track and field, women's gymnastics, women's tennis, and women's soccer. These subjects were determined by reviewing the mandated Wisconsin State University Conference eligibility certificate for entering freshman available in the University of Wisconsin-Stout athletic department. The qualifications resulted in 114 student-athletes.

The researcher documented information throughout the semesters until the spring semester of 2000 was complete. This time frame was utilized to differentiate between individuals who fulfilled their athletic eligibility and those who chose not. This information was available by using the Wisconsin State University Conference season of competition record, Wisconsin State University Conference official eligibility certificate, and the Student-Athlete Affirmation of Eligibility-Division III form.

The variables of graduation and grade point average were obtained via the University of Wisconsin-Stout Registrar's Department. This allowed the researcher to study the grade point average and graduation rate of those who fulfilled their athletic eligibility versus those who chose not to.

The Wisconsin State University Conference eligibility certificate for entering freshman provided the variables of ACT score and upper half rank of an individual's senior high school class.

The gender of the student-athlete and the affect it had in college academics was studied. The variable measuring ACT score between genders was available on the Wisconsin State University Conference eligibility certificate for entering freshman. Furthermore, the variable of overall college grade point average for both males and females was recorded by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Registrar's Department.

Assumptions of the Study

H1
Student-Athletes have a significantly higher ACT score than those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no difference in ACT scores between student-athletes and those that chose not complete their athletic eligibility.

H1
A high school student-athlete, being in the upper half of their high school senior class, is significant to the individual completing their collegiate athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no correlation with completing athletic eligibility and being in the upper half of their respective high school senior class.

H1
Student-Athletes have a higher collegiate grade point average than those who decided not to complete their athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no difference in grade point average pertaining to college student-athletes and those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility.

H1
Female college student-athletes have a higher cumulative grade point average than their counterparts, male college student-athletes.
H0
There is no difference in cumulative grade point average between female college student-athletes and male college student-athletes.

H1
Student-Athletes completing their athletic eligibility have a higher graduation rate than those who decided not to fulfill their athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no difference in graduation rates between student-athletes and those who chose not to fulfill their athletic eligibility.

H1
Female college student-athletes have a higher ACT score than male college student-athletes.
H0
There is no difference in ACT scores in reference to male and female college student-athletes.

Limitations of the Study

Those students' who chose not to fulfill their academic status at the University of Wisconsin-Stout will affect this research. Additionally, certain high schools did not provide information pertaining to the student-athlete's status in the top half of their senior class or an ACT score.

Methodology

In chapter three, methodology will discuss the subjects used for the research, the instrument applied, the procedure used for research, and the limitations that may have impeded the research process.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

According to Lapchick, Sperber, Telander, and Thelin (as cited in Pascarella et al., 1999) "There can be little doubt that intercollegiate athletics is one of the significant filters through which the public looks at American postsecondary education" (p. 1). This leads to many future college student-athletes being heavily recruited by college coaches. In addition, Mixon, Toma and Cross (as cited in Pascarella et al., 1999) stated, "The public's image of an institution as well as its attractiveness to prospective students are often influenced by the performance of its athletic teams" (p. 1). Very few individuals desire the experience of failure, but rather desire personal accomplishments and success. In general, student-athletes in today's universities share many of the same concerns. However, differences may exist between the levels of athletics. According to Greendorfer & Kleiber (as cited in Chartrand & Lent, 1987) "men and women may differ in their reasons for athletic participation" (p. 164). In addition, Blann (as cited in Chartrand & Lent, 1987) states, "Division I and Division III in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) may differ in their level of education maturity, and career plans" (p. 164).

According to Bredemeier & Shields (1984) "Sport is a unique context sometimes characterized as a 'world within a world'" (p. 7). For example, the typical concerns and moral restraints, such as inflicting pain to an opponent, are temporarily set aside. In addition, intercollegiate athletics can be looked at from two different perspectives. It creates opportunities for individuals, but it also allows for abuse of the educational system (Chartrand and Lent, 1987). Likewise, Taylor (1995) states, "On one hand, the student-athlete may experience the glory and privileges of involvement in a popular and highly visible activity in our society. On the other hand, the student-athlete has to deal with the stigma of the 'dumb jock' image" (p. 449).

An individual's development occurs in the classroom, as well as during extracurricular activities (Taylor, 1995). By providing a setting for teamwork, motivated goal seeking, and fair play, athletics builds character. Commitment to such an activity is a key characteristic for student-athletes. According to Kiesler and Sakumura (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) Commitment can be defined as "the pledging or binding of the individual to behavioral acts" (p. 164). Therefore, commitment to an athletic role involves investment of physical and emotional energy.

The researcher clearly understood that some problems might exist in using college grade point averages as one hypothesis in order to indicate learning and cognitive development. Pascarella and Terunzini (as cited in Pascarella et al., 1999) stated:

> the reliability and validity of grades are threatened by a substantial number of confounding influences. These include the academic selectivity of the institution attended, the student's major field of study, individual course-grading patterns, and even professorial personality and teaching style. (p. 3)

However, the researcher believes that participation in college athletics will create positive characteristics towards the academic career of student-athletes.

Student-Athlete Characteristics

According to Cowley (1999):

> The forces and motives which lead undergraduates to participate in athletics are considered to be: (1) an individual's inheritance of athletic characteristics, (2) the requirements of physical education, (3) the enjoyment of athletics, (4) college opinion which serves as a pressure to urge capable athletes into continuous competition, often to the neglect of their studies and against their personal desires, (5) the advantages athletic

> participation has in opening vocational opportunities, and (6) the payment for participation in intercollegiate athletics. (p. 497)

The major emphasis student-athletes deal with is commitment of time and energy. While a sport is in season, student-athletes generally spend between 20 and 30 hours per week, attending meetings and practices, playing games at home and on the road, and weight training. According to Ogilvie & Howe (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) "The demands of playing, training, and traveling generally compete with adequate career preparation, rendering many student-athletes ill-prepared for career and life choices outside the sports milieu" (p. 53).

McBride and Reed (1998) state:

> As noted in the Sage example, all decisions are made for the athlete, then there is little stimulus to want to know how things work or even value learning for its own sake. Similarly, there is little need to be open-minded after years of being socialized into an environment that demands repetition and redundancy in practice regimens. It is made clear to the athlete that there is only one "right way" and that is the coach's way. (p. 443)

College athletes accept this regimen and do not usually consider alternate points of view and may not even be particularly tolerant of divergent views. Results of this lifestyle may carry over to the athlete's thinking process in matters not connected with the athletic environment. However, Otto and Alwin (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) "argued that extracurricular activities, like sports, give students the opportunity to learn and practice the attitudes, skills, and values that are important for future status success" (p. 95).

Pascarella, Smart, and Ryan (as cited in Taylor, 1995) "have reported the following positive effects from participating in college sports: increases in social involvement in college,

interpersonal and leadership skills, or satisfaction with college and motivation to complete one's degree" (p. 444). In addition, Thompson (1986) believes, athletics assist with education by providing: experience with teamwork, control, self-respect, accountability, and organizational skills. Finally, according to Hale (as cited in Thompson, 1986) "athletics provide the potential to prepare people to fit into larger economic, social, and political roles. Personal and moral character, coping strategies, risk taking and achievement behavior are all readily developed in the sport context" (p. 16).

According to Pascarella et al. (1995) "although athletic participation in college may often function to facilitate the social mobility of individuals from relatively low socioeconomic backgrounds, both Dubois and Howard found little to indicate that various objective indexes of career success are significantly correlated with collegiate athletic participation" (p. 369). Furthermore, Blann, Bredemeier & Shields, Kennedy & Dimick, Sowa & Gressard, Stone & Strange, (as cited in Pascarella et al., 1999) state, "intercollegiate athletic participation may be negatively associated with such outcomes as involvement and satisfaction with the overall college experience, career maturity, clarity in educational and occupational plans, and principled moral judgment" (p. 1).

There are three essential qualities of student-athletes: self-discipline, competitiveness, and having a positive sense of themselves ("Predicting athletic performance", 1992). Self-discipline is the inner motivation, the built-in taskmaster, which drives someone to do what has to be done to succeed. This inner drive causes an athlete to get to practice early, stay in top condition during the off-season, and devote extra hours to areas that need improvement, and do all this because the athlete wants to, not because a coach makes them. The second essential quality, competitiveness, involves more than a want, but a desire. An athlete that has a very high

level of competitive drive is likely to become an overachiever in many aspects of life. Self-esteem focuses on how an athlete deals with failure and whether they succeed through failure. If an individual has positive self-esteem, they will view failures as nothing more than an inevitable part of the game. These three qualities of athletics may be instrumental towards the development of character in the whole person.

Student-athletes face strong time and energy pressures from their athletic participation. This may put athletics in conflict with academics by enhancing athletic commitment while diminishing academic commitment. Lageman (as cited in Foltz, 1992) wrote the following comments,

> the term student-athlete describes an individual whose education is combined with intercollegiate athletic participation. The sequence of the words, however, may not accurately reflect the respective emphasis placed on each area in the student-athletes life. At various university environments, athletics is the focal point and academics are a secondary priority. Often this emphasis is forced upon student-athletes by overzealous coaches, administrators, and supporters. This can be documented by numerous violations involving the altering of academic transcripts and the issuing of unearned credits. (p. 10)

One study focused on the principle of involvement. Kuh (1995) believes that students benefit by applying more time and energy to their studies. From his principal involvement study, five propositions arose. Kuh (1995) states,

> (1) Involvement is the expenditure of psychological and physical energy in some kind of activity, (2) Different students invest varying amounts of energy in different activities, (3) Involvement has quantitative and qualitative features, (4) The benefits derived from involvement are a function of the quality and quantity of effort students expend, and (5)

> The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is related to the extent to which it encourages students to take initiative and become actively engaged in the activity. (p. 125)

For instance, those who benefit the most intellectually seem to benefit more in the personal development domain as well. Student-athletes function on schedules with limited flexibility by attending classes in the mornings and early afternoons, participating in sports related activities during the late afternoons and early evening, and devoting evenings to study. According to Astin (as cited in Ryan, 1989) "athletic participation has also been associated with student satisfaction in four areas: the institution's academic reputation, intellectual environment, student friendships, and the institutional administration" (p. 123).

Student-athletes usually spend more time on campus than their peers do. Therefore, many athletes have personality ties to the university more so than their non-athletic peers, whom usually work off-campus. Also, the direct interaction that student-athletes have with support services and administrators could offer greater satisfaction with their overall college experience. Schuman found that the skills of managing time have a direct correlation to a student's grade point average (Hood, Craig and Ferguson, 1992).

Athletics create bonds between participants and establish new individual and group identities for athletes (Hanson & Kraus, 1998). Hanks and Eckland (as cited in Hanson & Kraus, 1998) also stated, "Involvement in sports connects students to other students who plan to attend college and to coaches and faculty who pay special attention to athletics" (p. 95). However, other researchers believe in many universities, athletes are not well integrated into campus life, forming a subculture with separate characteristics and values (Parham, 1993).

Involvement in many aspects of campus life, such as athletics, typically leads to a high satisfaction in the overall college experience. According to Richards & Aries & (1999) "athletics at small institutions are kept in harmony with the educational purposes of the institution and where student-athletes are more representative of the student body as a whole" (p. 212). Self-control associated with athletic participation may have a positive carryover of life skills once the intercollegiate athletic career is finished.

Another asset of being a student-athlete is dealing with transition. Schlossberg (as cited in Pearson and Petitpas, 1990) defined transition in the following manner: "A transition can be said to occur if an event or nonevent results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world requiring a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (p. 7). Some of the more unique transitions experienced by athletes rarely deal with playing status, but rather dealing with physical injury, or ending active participation.

According to Danish, Rotella, Elkin & Lewis-Griffith (as cited in Pearson & Petitpas, 1990) "Reactions to athletic injury include: (a) grief reactions (b) identity loss (c) separation and loneliness (d) fear and anxiety and (e) loss of confidence and performance decrements" (p. 8). In addition, Botterill, Oglivie & Howe, and Werthner & Orlick (as cited in Pearson & Petitpas, 1990) claim "others have reported that a high percentage of athletes experience considerable personal disruption upon termination of their competitive sport careers. Many of these athletes are ill prepared to handle life without sports" (p. 8). On the contrary, some researchers conceive the physical and personal development that athletics creates far outweigh the negatives when it comes to future careers. Involvement in athletics increases athletic ability, personality and self-esteem (Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000).

Stereotypes

The extent to which college student-athletes perceive a sense of control over their lives and can express confidence in their ability to accomplish career decision-making tasks may be critical to their educational planning and future career interests. According to Rotter (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) "Locus of control refers to the extent to which people believe themselves to be in control of the reinforcement sources in their lives" (p. 54). In addition, Blustein and Taylor (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) indicated, "Research findings have suggested that college students with an internal locus of control possess attitudes and skills indicative of a higher career maturity level as compared to students who possess an external locus of control" (p. 54).

Taylor (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) went on to state, "individuals perceiving an internal locus of control are more likely to exhibit personal responsibility for vocational decision-making activities as compared to externals who may believe that vocational planning is influenced by chance factors" (p. 54). However, a study by Brown & Hartley (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) "investigated 114 college student-athletes and found no significant relationship between athletic identity and five career development variables: planning, exploration, decision making, world-of-work information, and knowledge preferred occupational group" (p. 54). A reason for this theory may be the strong identity to athletics, making it less likely to explore other career, educational, and lifestyle options.

Numerous studies have focused on the aspects that create a solid college experience. Athletics has been connected in some cases to a unique experience. According to Astin, Ryan, Pascarella and Smart (as cited in Pascarella et al., 1999) different concepts from the Cooperative

Institutional Research Program reported evidence indicating that athletic participation can be associated with fulfillment with the college experience as a whole and may also provide inspiration to graduate and persevere in the classroom. Likewise, Ryan (as cited in Hood, Craig & Ferguson, 1992) states, "Participation in intercollegiate athletics (without differentiating among the different sports) has been found to be positively related to a satisfaction with the college experience and to self-ratings on leadership" (p. 447). Such traits that can carry over into occupational fields may affect a company's perception of the individual's athletic and professional accomplishments. Research by Ballentine (1981) found that involvement in collegiate athletics had a positive correlation with career objectives.

Most scholars who study the impact of college on students agree that what happens outside of the classroom can contribute to their overall college experience. According to Rehberg and Schafer, Spreitzer and Pugh, Hanks and Eckland and Otto and Alwin (as cited in Soltz, 1986) "a number of studies have reported that athletes not only attain a higher GPAs than other students, but that their educational aspirations, self-concepts, and other effective characteristics are enhanced by participation" (p. 20). According to Kuh (1995) athletes may achieve gains in such areas as "social competence, autonomy, confidence, self-awareness, and appreciation for human diversity" (p. 124).

Conversely, some findings have reported that participation in intercollegiate athletics can be damaging on a developmental level for some student-athletes. Brown & Bohac (1997) describe the student-athletes development as "restricted" in areas other than athletics. According to Remer, Tongate and Watson (as cited in Pearson & Petitpas, 1990) an athletic system that promotes conformity and requires a continuous commitment by athletes can impede their growth and they may be "blocked from normal development by being segregated, even if they do not

realize it" (p. 8). In contrast, Lapchick (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) argued that with this commitment to sports, athletes learn "self-discipline, teamwork, cooperation, hard work, self-confidence, pride in accomplishment, competitive spirit, and how to deal with failure" (p. 211).

Nevertheless, Brown, Glastetter-Fender, and Shelton (2000) deemed too much focus on college athletics takes away from a young adolescent experiencing their own aspirations and downfalls. On the contrary, Erickson (as cited in Brown, Glastetter-Fender & Shelton, 2000) "noted from a developmental perspective that sport participation facilitates acquisition of skills and industry and further helps determine a personal identity around athletics" (p. 54). Likewise, according to Ryan (1989), "athletic activity may provide a positive balance between physical and mental exertion, which may prove to be better for the overall health and attitude of the student" (p. 127).

The athletic setting does provide alternative experiences to individuals that not only replace normal college experiences, but add necessary aspects in student development. Cantor and Prentice (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) claim "athletics provides students with a social identity, clarity about themselves and their place at the university, and membership in a valid social group" (p. 211). Ryan (1989) focused on the discipline and time management skills acquired through athletics, as well as pressures of competition, generating a unique experience adding to the personal growth of the individuals.

Marks (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) stated, "time and energy is abundant, expandable, and available for several roles" (p. 211). In general, Richards & Aries (1999) realized several athletes at the Division III setting "were able to overcome the difficulties posed by being a student-athlete and make time for multiple commitments" (p. 216). However, Cantor and Prentice (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) reported that, "athletes tended to socialize with

teammates and not to attend as many on-and-off campus events" (p. 211). This may be a direct correlation of the common goals committed athletes have with teammates.

Some scholars believe athletics is too absorbing, creating the label for student-athletes as not having the capacity to be successful students. Jones (1998) states, "stereotypes exist that assume student-athletes are inferior students" (p. 9). In addition to Jones (1998) stereotype, "is the belief that athletics contributes to the academic inferiority of the student-athletes" (p. 9). Prentice (as cited in Richards & Aries, 1999) found athletes "to rate themselves lower on academic attributes (smart, studious, grade-conscious, intellectual, academically focused) than non-athletes" (p. 212). Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, (1999) made this explanation, "the common belief among faculty and students that student-athletes are really just athletes and not serious students" (p. 159). Cox (as cited in Foltz, 1992) stated, "the nation has classified and stereotyped the individuals not as student-athletes, but as 'dumb jocks'" (p. 2). Furthermore, Cox (as cited in Foltz, 1992) went on to find "a widespread sentiment among many that athletics do not belong in the academic setting" (p. 2).

In spite of these stereotypes, Roper and Snow (as cited in Ballantine, 1981) found that athletics: "(1) attracted good students and (2) attracted financial contributions both private and public, which enabled programs of academic excellence and athletics" (p. 2). Furthermore, Richards & Aries (1999) study consisted of academic performance, campus involvement, and growth at a Division III university revealed that athletes:

> (a) make more than double the time commitment to extracurricular activities than non-athletes, (b) graduate with grade point averages that do not differ from non-athletes, (c) are as involved in most aspects of campus life as non-athletes, and (d) experience levels of growth and satisfaction comparable to non-athletes. (p. 215)

Gender

In the past, the issue of gender was a heated discussion in the athletic world. McDonald and Parke (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) found, "women were encouraged to be passive, dependent, and nurturant, while men were encouraged to be outgoing, aggressive, independent, and analytic" (p. 94). Blinde (1989) initiated "some female athletes have experienced greater difficulties in meeting the simultaneous demands of student and athlete roles" (p. 36).

Many of the terms used by current female athletic organizations are those very terms that have traditionally been associated with the sport structure and experience in men's intercollegiate athletics. Carpenter and Acosta (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) acknowledged, "women are coached by men, train and compete in facilities controlled by men, and operate in an institution that has rules and norms that support traditional male values involving performance, competition, and winning" (p. 94). This could be a new and unique form of socialization as it relates to athletic participation.

However, matters, such as, the Women's Movement, Title IX, and the increase in female participation in all areas of social life have led to an increase in intercollegiate female athletics. Sabo (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) declared, "participation in athletics most likely has an androgynizing, rather than a masculinizing effect on women" (p. 97). Therefore Sabo (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) confirmed, "the outcome of participation in athletics may be different for men and women, since sports is a continuation of the previous socialization and friendship networks of boys, but diverges from the traditional socialization and friendship networks of many girls" (p. 97). Athletics may create different interactions for young women in the areas of socialization.

Lever (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) reported, "women whom enter athletics encounter networks that are larger, less intimate, and based on achievement" (p. 96). Moreover, Hanson and Kraus (1998) realized female athletes were to be extra motivated, focused, and self disciplined than those who did not participate in athletics. Blinde (1989) came to this conclusion, athletics is often viewed as a stepping-stone "by which the female athlete of today can realize her potential and achieve a sense of self-actualization" (p. 36).

Hall, Bredemeier, and Shields (as cited in Bredemeier & Shields, 1984) acknowledged, "that female athletes scored higher than their counterparts in measures of general maturity" (p. 9). Hall (as cited in Bredemeier & Shields, 1984) stated "female athletes scored higher in a sport measure of moral reasoning" (p. 9). Hanson (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) confirmed, "the characteristics that a sport engenders in young women: self-confidence, motivation to achieve, independence, and androgyny" (p. 97).

Hanson and Kraus (1998) stated, "that young women who compete well in one domain may develop skills, networks, and attitudes that help them in other areas" (p. 93). Brown (1989) emphasized, "female athletes are more likely to believe that college sports provides order and consistency in their life and that non-sport skills which they developed while participating in athletics are useful for other aspects of college life" (p. 36). American Institutes for Research, Purdy, Eitzen & Hufnagel, Simons, and Van Rheenen & Covington (as cited in Covington, Simons & Van Rheenan, 1999) viewed the academic area, "where studies have consistently shown that female student-athletes are superior to male student-athletes...in college GPA's" (p. 151).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement may be an added motivation when discussing one's athletic desires and goals. Dr. Savage, staff member of the Carnegie Foundation (as cited in Cowley, 1999), made this association,

> On the one hand, we have youths well endowed physically and mentally who should out distance their fellows in the race of life; on the other, we find evidence that the best places in this race have been won by these men, whose tastes and training have led them into intercollegiate athletics. The indicated conclusion is that the American system of intercollegiate athletics is to blame for this situation rather than the body of youth that is subjected to its workings. (p. 498)

Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen (1999) acknowledged, "athletic success requires an individual to work-hard, be self-disciplined, exhibit perseverance and determination, be able to concentrate, and stay focused" (p. 151). Lower academic performance is a direct correlation with the following: complete commitment to athletics, minimal inner motivation, less confidence in the classroom, and additional personal excuses. A factor in this low academic standard is that athletic participation is physically strenuous leading to fatigue during studying time.

Adler and Adler, Simons et al (as cited in Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, 1999) express their opinion that, "student-athletes often decide in favor of athletics when dealing with conflicts between the demands of athletics and academics" (p. 158). Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen (1999) believed, "the student athlete may tend to blame the commitment to athletics for their academic failures rather than their own lack of academic effort" (p. 159).

The fear of failure and the commitment to athletics plays an important role in the academic motivation of student-athletes. Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, (1999) acknowledged, "most student-athletes are highly motivated to succeed in the athletic domain, having been

selected to participate in intercollegiate athletics because of their proven ability and desire to succeed" (p. 151). Conversely, Snyder (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) "observed that athletes are often pressured to keep their grades up to maintain their eligibility to engage in athletics" (p. 95).

The continuance of this educational drive and accomplishments becomes more difficult due to the institutional demands of their particular sport. Student-athletes are required to devote significant hours per week when their sport is in season, frequently miss classes for university-sanctioned athletic competitions, and encounter fatigue and injuries as a result of their athletic participation. The American Institutes for Research (as cited in Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, 1999) confirmed, "these factors detract from the realistic likelihood of academic success, which in turn affects their academic motivation to succeed" (p. 151).

Rehberg (as cited in Ballantine, 1981) theorized that there are five intervening factors between athletic participation and academic achievement:

> (1) association with highly achievement peers, (2) transfer of achievement value from sport to classroom environment, (3) an increased self-esteem which creates a higher level of aspiration in other domains, (4) pressure applied internally and externally to present a consistent image in all areas as a successful individual, and (5) more scholastic and career guidance from a significant adult. (p. 2)

Hanks and Eckland (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) declared, "young people who were involved in sports in high school will be looked on favorably when they enter higher education and occupational roles; they will be seen as having important skills and being 'well rounded'" (p. 95). Hanks and Eckland, Otto and Alwin, (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) stated, "feeling of recognition and accomplishment may give young individuals self-confidence and a feeling

that compels them to achieve success in other areas, such as academics" (p. 95). The unique opportunity for creating a plan to enhance academic potential reinforces the unquestionable benefits of participating in team sports.

Academic Support Programs

Smith and Herman (1996) speculated,

> Student-athletes in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institutions encounter several obstacles to their academic achievement (e.g., required physical training; demands placed upon them by their coaches, their institutions, and the NCAA; time requirements for training, travel, and games) that their non-athlete peers typically do not confront. (p. 2)

Lanning, Remer, Tongate, and Watson (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) reported, "such issues may lead to time management and study skills problems, limited peer relationships, lack of career and social development opportunities, and restricted self-concept or basis for self-worth" (p. 164).

Complex issues student-athlete's may encounter are inconsistency with responsibility in academics and athletics and agony in creating a life after athletics with new goals. Sack and Thiel (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) stated, "Role conflict occurs when the demands of one role are incompatible with the requirements of another" (p. 164). In addition, Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufnagel (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) acknowledged, "difficulty in meeting the demands of multiple roles may create particular problems for those less prepared for the academic rigor of college life" (p. 164). Besides academic stress, Ogilvie, Sowa, and Gressard (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) envisioned, "retirement from intercollegiate athletics may

precipitate difficulties, especially when preparation and skills in other life areas are lacking and have not been optimally developed" (p. 164). Such apprehension among academic administrators and counselors has led Danish and Hale (as cited in Chartrand and Lent, 1987) to "recommend that this role be expanded to include facilitating and development of the athlete as a person" (p. 164).

The educational and career guidance may come from different assets of an institution. O'Shei (1996) documented, "statistics tend to show that when academic difficulties are nipped early, the student benefits" (p. 26). Coaches need to implement the value of attending class and the desire to earn a college degree, since athletic programs are only successful when athletes are eligible. Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, (1999) asserted, "coaches need to see their student-athletes academic performance as part of their overall responsibility...better understanding of the academic demands on their athletes" (p. 161). Case in point, Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, (1999) offered, "more interaction with the faculty through forums, lectures, and other activities would encourage student-athletes to view themselves as more a part of the academic community" (p. 161). This concept can be enhanced by the individual's coach if they are more concerned in the academic situation.

Pascarella, Terenzini, and Hibel (as cited in Woodside, Wong, and Wiest, 1999) illustrated, "that student-faculty interactions had a significant influence on students' academic performance as measured by students' SAT scores and freshman year cumulative GPA" (p. 731). Additionally, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Hibel (as cited in Woodside, Wong, and Wiest, 1999) found, "students who interacted more frequently with faculty, performed academically better than what was predicted from their pre-enrollment characteristics (i.e., SAT scores)" (p. 731). Moreover, Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood, and Bavry (as cited in Woodside,

Wong, and Wiest, 1999) documented, "that students who frequently interacted with faculty expressed greater satisfaction with their total college experience in comparison to students who interact at a lesser level" (p. 730).

Jones (1998) implemented two programs that joined together the faculty into the athlete's life: "Academia Coach Program and Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night" (p. 11). Jones (1998) basis of Academia Coach Program is to invite faculty to serve as academia coaches for a specific contest. In partaking, the faculty member attends at least one practice prior to the competition so that they have a thorough perspective of the time that student-athletes contribute. In addition, viewing the practice facilitates to the faculty that instruction occurs in areas outside the classroom.

Jones (1998) similar program that "integrates the faculty into the athlete-way-of-life is Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night" (p. 11). Student-athletes will invite their specific faculty member to an athletic contest, which will include being introduced and being part of the team bench during the contest. In agreement, Covington, Simons & Van Rheenen, (1999) added, "educators need to play a more prominent role in the lives of student-athletes to help them see that they can succeed academically as well as athletically" (p. 161).

An additional program Smith and Herman (1996) constructed, due to academic stereotypes, was the "Student-Athlete Academic Support Program (SAASP)" (p. 3). Smith and Herman's (1996) standard in their program was "that all of the institution's SA's (student-athletes) graduate prepared" (p. 3). Within this training Smith and Herman (1996) included,

> a high level of career maturity (i.e., knowing what careers are available, knowing about the academic prerequisites for careers of interest, having spent time with someone who currently is in a career of interest), a grade point average sufficiently high for competitive

> admission to graduate schools, competence at various study skills (e.g., note-taking, essay-test taking, time management, organization skills), and seeing one's self as being primarily a student-scholar rather than primarily an athlete. (p. 3)

This program makes every effort to reach its objective by employing, whenever possible, existing on-campus student-support services.

Smith and Herman (1996) SAASP focuses on five specific components,

> (1) the work of team academic counselors, (2) a linkage with the college's career-planning office, (3) a thrice-weekly mandated study time for all first semester student-athletes and all other student-athletes whose grade point average is below a 2.30, (4) series of study-skill workshops for student-athletes, and (5) tutoring opportunities made available during times and in places that are convenient for student-athletes. (p. 3)

Thompson (1986) believed, "a comprehensive program to enhance the academic potential of student-athletes could fuse a relationship between sports participation and academic or career goals" (p. 16). Ideally, Riffee and Alexander (as cited in Brown and Bohac, 1997) deemed, "career strategies and interventions should involve a broadening of self-awareness relative to talents, values, abilities, and interests, as well as exposure to successful role models" (p. 671).

As these young men and women invest enormous amounts of time and energy in intercollegiate athletics, they will need assistance, and perhaps most important, permission to focus on their career and academic planning (Brown & Bohac, 1997). Student-athletes must be helped, by educators and helping professionals, to recognize that many of the skills learned through sport training and competition can be transferred to the classroom and other non-athletic

pursuits (Brown & Bohac, 1997). Administrators, educators, and counseling professionals must assume a role in providing opportunities for student-athletes to create such balance.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

This study was created to determine the academic status of college students, one group being those who chose to fulfill their athletic eligibility and those that chose not to pursue college athletics. The research was performed to determine if athletics influenced college graduation rates and grade point averages.

Subjects

Subjects for the research included the incoming student-athletes enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout during the 1995 fall semester. They were selected from the eligibility list designed by the Wisconsin State University Conference, affiliated with the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The number of participants was 114, participating on the following athletic teams: men's football, men's and women's basketball, women's softball, men's baseball, women's gymnastics, women's soccer, women's volleyball, men's and women's track and field, women's tennis, and men's and women's cross country.

All 114 incoming student-athletes were chosen to represent the subjects in this archival data study. The male subjects consisted of 5 basketball athletes, 21 indoor track athletes, 9 cross country athletes, 11 baseball athletes, and 27 football athletes. The female subjects consisted of 15 basketball athletes, 2 gymnastics athletes, 10 track athletes, 9 softball athletes, 2 tennis athletes, 12 volleyball athletes, 4 soccer athletes, and 7 cross country athletes. Overall, there were 19 subjects who were dual sport athletes.

The city of Menomonie is located in the western part of Wisconsin. Menomonie is approximately 70 miles from the metropolitan of Minneapolis. Its population is approximately 14,000 residents with an enrollment around 7,500 students at the university. Menomonie is a farming community with business opportunities available.

Instrument

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a causal comparative between college grade point averages, high school ACT scores, high school senior ranking and involvement in collegiate athletics.

The variables measured in this study were cumulative college grade point average, ACT score, and percentage of those in the top half of an individual's high school senior class.

Appendix A contains a copy of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference eligibility form used as a basis in this archival data study.

Procedure

An overall list was gathered from the 1995 Wisconsin State University Conference eligibility certificates for incoming student-athlete freshman. The particular form was obtained through the athletic department at University of Wisconsin-Stout. Another group was formed based on those participants that chose not to complete their athletic eligibility. This group was formed by checking the Wisconsin State University Conference Season of Competition form yearly. It should be noted, the Wisconsin State University Conference Season of Competition from was renamed, the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Season of Competition form when the athletic conference officially changed its name. A comparison between the student-athletes and those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility was done based on grade point averages of both groups. These grade point averages were obtained through the permission of the University of Wisconsin Stout's Registrar's Department. The use of social security numbers versus names was used in order to obtain confidentiality throughout this study. The next variable was for those individuals who were in the top half of their senior high school class. This information was collected through the use of the Wisconsin State University

Conference eligibility certificate for entering freshman. In addition, a comparison was researched pertaining to ACT scores and completing their athletic eligibility for all subjects. This score was found, also, on the Wisconsin State University Conference eligibility certificate for entering freshman.

Limitations

The sampling error was that the 1995 incoming freshman student-athlete class did not sufficiently represent the student-athletes' prior to or after this year. Some athletic teams acquired smaller participants compared to those of larger athletic participation. Also, some instructors may have had a negative attitude towards athletics while other instructors may have been pro-athletic creating a difference in the difficulty of a course. Furthermore, all subjects were tallied from a mid-size university with basically the same geographical background.

Results of this research will be applicable to other Division III institutions of the same population. Also, this study may be meaningful to future student-athletes considering participating at the collegiate level.

CHAPTER IV: Results

The purpose of this causal comparative study was to compare the academic success of current college student athletes with those who decided not to complete their eligibility in athletics. The variables utilized for the research were: ACT scores obtained in high school, the student-athlete's high school senior class rank, college grade point average, college gender-based grade point average, college graduation rate, and gender-based ACT scores.

Rate of Response

The number of participants that participated in this study was 114 incoming student-athletes at University of Wisconsin-Stout in the year of 1995.

Scoring Method

The dependent variables used in this study were ACT scores and college GPA's. The ACT scores and class rank were obtained through the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference official eligibility form. The GPA's in college were based on a 4.0 grading scale.

The independent variables consisted of student-athletes and those individuals who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility. Also, the gender-type was an independent variable.

Descriptive Statistic

The number of participants totaled 114 student-athletes. The male athletes accounted for 61 participants. Female athletes in this study were comprised of 53 individuals. In addition, there were 19 dual sport athletes.

Data Analysis

The following hypotheses were evaluated:

An inferential statistic was used to examine the difference among the variables ACT scores and the status of each student.

H1
Student-Athletes have a significantly higher ACT score than those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility.

H0
There is no difference in ACT scores between student-athletes and those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility.

Table 1 reports mean and standard deviations for ACT scores of student-athletes and those who chose not to fulfill their collegiate athletic eligibility.

Table 1

High School ACT Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Student-Athletes	19.84	3.544
Student-Athletes not fulfilling Athletic eligibility	20.37	3.181

Note. The status of each student and the high school ACT score were examined by a T test analysis. There was no significant difference between ACT scores (T test = -.713; df = 110; $p < .05$).

An inferential statistic was used to examine the difference among the variables high school senior class rank and the status of each student.

H1
A high school student-athlete, being in the upper half of their high school senior class, is significant in the individual completing their collegiate athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no correlation with completing athletic eligibility and being in the upper half of high school senior class.

Table 2 reports class rank in high school with completing collegiate athletic eligibility.

Table 2

High School Class Rank and Collegiate Athletic Eligibility

Upper Half of High School	Yes	No
Subject did complete Athletic eligibility	20	5
Subject did not complete Athletic eligibility	56	29

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.803	1	.179

Note. The status of each student and high school senior class rank were examined by the chi square analysis. An individuals high school class rank is not significant with completing collegiate athletic eligibility (4, N = 110) = #, P = .179.

An inferential statistic was used to examine the difference between college GPA's and fulfilling athletic eligibility.

H1
Student-Athletes have a higher collegiate grade point average than those who decided not to complete their athletic eligibility.
H0
There is no difference in grade point average pertaining to college student-athletes and those who chose not to complete their athletic eligibility.

Table 3 reports mean and standard deviations for collegiate grade point averages of student-athletes and those who chose not to fulfill their athletic eligibility.

Table 3

Athletic Eligibility and College Grade Point Average

College Grade Point Average	Mean	Standard Deviation
Subject did complete Athletic eligibility	3.1533	.32290
Subject did not complete Athletic eligibility	2.7884	.71566

Note. The status of each student and college GPA was examined by the T test analysis. Student-Athletes had a significant higher GPA than those who did not complete their athletic eligibility (T test = 3.656; df = 93; p = .001)

An inferential statistic was used to examine the difference among gender of student-athletes and GPA.

H1

Female college student-athletes have a higher cumulative grade point average than their counterparts, male college student-athletes.

H0

There is no difference in cumulative grade point average between female college student-athletes and male college student-athletes.

Table 4 reports the mean and standard deviations for college grade point averages of male and female student-athletes.

Table 4

College GPA of Male and Female Student-Athletes

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male Student-Athletes	3.0719	.28371
Female Student-Athletes	3.2231	.34790

Note. Gender and grade point average of college student-athletes were examined by a T test analysis. There was no significant difference between gender and GPA (T test = -1.201; df = 24; $p < .241$).

An inferential statistic was used to examine the difference between athletic eligibility and graduation rate.

H1

Student-Athletes completing their athletic eligibility have a higher graduation rate than those who decided not to fulfill their athletic eligibility.

H0

There is no difference in graduation rates between student-athletes and those who decided not to fulfill their athletic eligibility.

Table 5 reports college graduation rate between those subjects who fulfilled their athletic eligibility and those subjects who chose not to.

Table 5

College Graduation Rate

College Graduate	Yes	No
Subject did complete Athletic eligibility	22	4
Subject did not complete Athletic eligibility	35	53

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.143	1	.000

Note. Status of athletic eligibility and graduation rate were examined by a chi square analysis. Completing athletic eligibility was significant with subjects graduating from college, chi square $(4, N = 114) = \#, p < .001$.

An inferential statistic was used to examine the type of gender of college student-athletes and ACT score.

H1
Female college student-athletes have a higher ACT score than male college student-athletes.
H0
There is no difference in ACT scores in reference to the gender of college student-athletes.

Table 6 reports the mean and standard deviations of ACT scores based on gender of college student-athletes.

Table 6

ACT Scores and Student-Athletes Gender

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male Student-Athletes	20.73	4.101
Female Student-Athletes	19.14	3.009

Note. The gender of each student-athlete and ACT score were examined by the T test analysis. Gender is not significant when compared to ACT scores (T test = 1.115; df = 23; $p < .276$).

CHAPTER V: Discussion

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine a difference in academic status of those who fulfilled their athletic eligibility and those who chose not to. In addition, the issue of gender in college athletics was assessed based on academic success.

Results of this research concluded that college athletes obtain a higher college grade point average than those who decided not to fulfill their eligibility in athletics. Kraack (as cited in Taylor, 1995) found, "development of the total person cannot occur solely in the classroom, so the co-curricular and extra curricular activities are provided to create the whole-person development" (p. 444). Another argument by Otto and Alwin (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) proved that "extracurricular activities like sports give students the opportunity to learn and practice the attitudes, skill, and values that are important for future status success" (p. 95).

Besides a difference in grade point average, collegiate athletes' graduation rates were exceedingly better than those non student-athletes. Pascarella, Smart (1991), and Ryan (1989) reported the following positive effects from participating in college sports, boost in public participation, social and management skills, fulfillment with school and drive to finish one's schooling.

The concept of gender in athletics has taken a drastic change positively for females. In the past, McDonald and Parke (as cited in Hanson and Kraus, 1998) recognized, "females were considered to be passive, dependent, and nuturant, while men were encouraged to be outgoing, aggressive, independent, and analytic" (p. 94). Sabo (as cited in Hanson and Krause, 1998) came to the realization that "women who are athletes have been found to be more achievement

oriented, independent, self-confident, and inner controlled than those who are not participating" (p. 96).

The fear of failure and opportunity to participate may be reasons for parity with ACT scores and high school class rank. The realization of student-athletes and non student-athletes having likeness in these two variables was evident in this research. Hanks, Eckland, Otto, and Alwin (as cited in Hanson and Krause, 1998) stated "the feeling of recognition and accomplishment may give young people self-confidence and a feeling of recognition that compels them to achieve success in other areas, such as academics" (p. 95).

Limitations

The sampling error was that the 1995 incoming freshman student-athlete class did not sufficiently represent the student-athletes' prior to or after this year. Some athletic teams acquired smaller participants compared to those teams requiring larger athletic participation. Also, certain instructors may have a pre-conceived negative view towards athletics while other instructors may have a pro-athletic bias, thus creating a difference in the grading of students in their respective courses. All subjects were tallied from a mid-size university with very similar geographical backgrounds.

The predisposition that an individual may have towards failure is another area of concern. Some may have veered from athletics on the mere thought of failing or abandoned the academic setting due to failure in athletics. A concept that is difficult to determine, yet, creates many interesting sub plots.

Conclusions

The outcome of this particular study definitely does not cover the entire collegiate athletic association. This research does provide encouragement to future student-athletes that

fulfilling athletic eligibility will contribute to one's academic status in college. For instance, the skill of time management and the availability of academic support programs will encourage a higher graduation rate. The mindset of achieving academically in order to perform athletically should lead to an individual maintaining an above average grade point. Addressing the issue of gender in sports, female competition is becoming exceedingly popular, has similar rules, and the majority of coaches are male. Dealing with acceptance to college, high school class rank and national tests, had no significance to college academic success. Involvement of coaches and faculty is extremely important in the academic status of college student-athletes. The benefits of being a student-athlete include stress placed on academics and importance placed on teaching social skills.

Recommendations

When reviewing the data in this study, the following recommendations were made apparent for future research. One concern is recording the success rate student-athletes have in today's work world. Are the skills they learned during their college experience applicable to their everyday life? Another study may focus on the academic averages for those universities that provide athletic scholarships. Future research may aim to successfully evaluate the importance of a college entrance test based on individual high schools.

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Spring 2006 Student Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 9:00					
9:00 – 10:00		Amy (9:30)		Amy (9:30)	
10:00 – 11:00	Amy	Amy		Amy	
11:00 – 12:00	Amy			Naveed (11:45) Amy	Naveed (11:45)
12:00 – 1:00	Naveed (12:30)			Naveed Amy	Naveed
1:00 – 2:00	Naveed			Naveed Amy (1:15)	Naveed
2:00 – 3:00	Naveed Amy (2:30)		Amy (2:30)	Naveed	Naveed
3:00 – 4:00	Naveed Amy (3:30)		Amy (3:30)	Naveed	Naveed
4:00 – 5:00	Naveed (4:30)			Naveed (4:30)	Naveed (4:30)

Liuba