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THE ACADEMIC-ATHLETIC DIVIDE IN NCAA DIVISION II:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INTERCOLLEGIATE

ATHLETICS DIRECTORS' EXPERIENCES

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THE ACADEMIC-ATHLETIC DIVIDE IN NCAA DIVISION II:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETICS DIRECTORS' EXPERIENCES

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STUDIES

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DEDICATIONS

To the countless student-athletes, athletics administrators, coaches, staff, and fans that have created sheer excitement that enriches life all around you.

I dedicate this project as an offering to the biggest superstar to ever walk on the planet. I can say that I know him because He just happens to be my risen savior. Lord, I rarely know where you are taking me in this life, but I know where I will end up…and that is good enough for me.

brilliantly graduated high school at the age of 16, yet never ventured to college. Both of them instilled in me that education was a path worth treading and I became a first generation college graduate. I lost my dad along this path, but I know he would be proud that I have advanced the legacy of education Roger and Erma Williams set out to establish in our family. He would also demand that I attend commencement! You are both my everlasting heroes and I love you.

Nancy Jeter taught me sixth grade. Bob Jeter taught me to work with my mind instead of my back. I doubt that I can ever express just how much I love, admire and respect you both, but I sincerely hope you know how grateful I am that I grew up and married your daughter. My thank you will be in living color.

During this journey Jace grew up and Kale and Kate were born. Their dad being a student is all they have ever known. I hope my life has demonstrated to them that education never truly ends in life. Who knows what they will be when they grow up, but as long as they believe they can do it I promise to help them get there. I love you dearly.

My most sincere thank you goes to my beautiful wife Shelly. We have now spent more years together than we have apart. For all of those nights you handled kids, dinner, homework and everything else on a professional woman's plate without my help, I just have to publicly thank you. I love you, I love our life together, and it just keeps getting better.

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ABSTRACT

The Academic-Athletic Divide in NCAA Division II:

A Phenomenological Study of

Intercollegiate Athletics Directors' Experiences

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Intercollegiate athletics has promoted the capacity to develop
personal growth and development within participants for over a century but
at times is littered with scandal and abuse on campuses (Thelin, 1996).
Public exposure of documented problems through the years has resulted in a
reform movement and scholarly debate about how to curtail the
phenomenon of an academic-athletic divide on campuses. Literature
suggests that the roots of academic-athletic divide is complex but highlights
that the over-emphasis and dependency on money and winning within
athletics above preserving academic values holds much of the blame (Estler,
2005).

The heritage of oversight at the NCAA Division II (NCAA-II) level
is recognized as promoting an effective balance of academics and athletics
(Estler, 1997, 2005). The purpose of this study is to employ role theory in
exploring the role of athletic directors to better understand the academic-
athletic divide. The significance of this study is to identify strategies for
promoting balanced programs through understanding effective

administration. Once better understood, effective management strategies may be useful in the field of athletics administration to help avoid the academic-athletics divide in the future.

The population of the study included NCAA-II institutions holding membership in a single athletics conference. The sample consisted of athletic directors and data were collected utilizing document reviews and open-ended interviews which focused on the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors in their roles. The data underwent content analysis reviewing documents and conversational analysis reviewing interview transcripts for the emergence of several themes. First, intercollegiate athletics directors have more experience in athletics administration than in higher education administration. Second, the athletics department philosophies are supportive of the academic missions. Third, intercollegiate athletics directors report that their expectations are clearly communicated and that they experience few signs of an athletic-academic divide on their campuses. Finally, they identify presidents, student-athletes, and the campus community as key constituents and perceive that their expectations of these groups are compatible.

The conclusions of the study suggest that NCAA-II institutions do not experience as described in the literture an academic-athletic divide between NCAA intercollegiate athletics programs and their sponsoring institutions.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study grows from uneasiness as intercollegiate athletics programs appear to drift further away from the core academic mission of teaching, learning, and the generating new knowledge. The ideal fusion of intercollegiate athletics into the higher education arena appears to evade the general expectations of the academic community. Existing literature suggests intercollegiate athletic programs are distinctive components of both American culture and higher education, yet they are also unique sources of perennial problems tending to isolate intercollegiate athletics within the academy (Thelin, 1996). Seminal research literature documents myriad problems within intercollegiate athletics and includes cases in which institutional control over intercollegiate athletics has slipped away. Contrastingly, efforts to reform intercollegiate athletics remain challenging (Bailey & Littleton, 1991; Newman & Miller, 1994; Duderstadt, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001, 1991; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). Serious problems pose legitimate threats to the unique marriage between intercollegiate athletics and higher education and deserve scholarly attention (Thelin, 1996). Studies confirm that mission drifts exist at institutions sponsoring NCAA intercollegiate athletics, and this phenomenon is known as the academic-athletic divide (Estler, 2005).

Is it possible that the highly visible nature of intercollegiate athletics programs merely provide a keyhole through which society is actually viewing philosophical changes within the overall general mission of higher education? The ambiguous nature of the overall mission of higher education leads to conflicting perceptions concerning what actions should be reflected and whose interests should be served within the academic mission (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). The enduring ambiguity of higher education academic mission provides a safe haven for intercollegiate athletics and other auxiliary programs to be campus-based programs (Thelin, 1996). Nonetheless, intercollegiate athletics receives heavy criticism for being difficult to reconcile with the academic mission (Thelin, 1996). Kezar (2004) suggests the extravagant amount of public attention and exposure given to programs like intercollegiate athletics diverts public scrutiny away from the overall mission of higher education, as the mission drifts from a socially-driven mission toward an economically-driven mission.

Intercollegiate athletics is a highly visible component of the university. The success and failure of intercollegiate athletics programs surface as newsworthy events in American culture. The magnitude of problems arising from intercollegiate athletics programs impact campuses in different ways, but these problems typically reflect institutional responses to dwindling resources and increasing constituency expectations (Estler, 2005). Intercollegiate athletics may receive excessive blame for pummeling

academic values during a time when fewer resources and more constituency expectations elevate concerns for the ability of administrations to secure and preserve the core academic mission of higher education altogether (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). The history of scandal and abuse associated with intercollegiate athletics is extensive and at times tarnishes the reputation of intercollegiate athletics within the academy. However, the visibility of intercollegiate athletic programs could merely be exposing deeper, systemic problems within the higher education environment. This study explores for tensions that lead to an academic-athletic divide from the perspectives of intercollegiate athletics directors.

Chapter one is composed of the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose for the research, the research questions, the significance of the study, the implications of the study for practice and research, the limitations of the study, the operational definitions, and the assumptions recognized by the study.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Sports provide a common thread for American life, culture, and identity as athletic endeavors have long been promoted for their capacity to develop personal growth and character among participants (Frey, 1982). The integration of intercollegiate athletics programs into higher education stems collectively from historical influences, including the English origins of American higher education, the popularity of the liberal arts viewpoint in

American higher education, and the revival of the Olympic Games in American society (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). The academic community continues to debate the size, scope, and nature of the role for intercollegiate athletics on American campuses, as it has done since the first intercollegiate athletics event between Harvard and Yale crew students in 1852. Over 100 years of debate and inquiry have failed to produce a clear, definitive role for intercollegiate athletics programs within the mission of higher education. Perhaps collective influences perpetually shape and re-shape the role of intercollegiate athletics and prevent attaining a consensually defined role for these programs within the higher education mission.

The explosion of college sports into the upper echelon of American entertainment creates an environment conducive for placing conflicting and ambiguous expectations upon intercollegiate athletics programs. Critics assert that intercollegiate athletics programs have virtually abandoned core academic values as they relate to education and personal growth and now embrace commercialism, entertainment, and constituency-centered expectations as priorities (Newman & Miller, 1994; Covell & Barr, 2001; Estler, 2005). Higher prioritization of intercollegiate athletics without clearly defining its academic value to the institutional mission creates tension and conflict within the complex process of prioritizing programmatic goals at institutions (McKelvie, 1986). Despite long-standing problems, intercollegiate athletics program expansion continues

and holds a stronger presence than ever on American campuses (Thelin, 1996). Contradictory elements surround programs such as intercollegiate athletics, complicated further by thecompounded by considerations institutions give to the expectations of a large, vocal constituency base (Becker, Sparks, Choi, & Sell, 1986; Covell & Barr, 2001). The impact of constituent expectations upon the financial and moral costs and dividends of intercollegiate athletics programs is not well understood.

Intercollegiate athletics programs respond to multiple internal and external constituency groups in various ways. Examples of the external constituency base for intercollegiate athletics includes expectations and influences from governing bodies such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Congressional mandates such as Title IX, technological innovations such as televised sports, subtle political influences such as public debates regarding the Bowl Championship Series, and a variety of influences from American popular culture (Chu, Segrave & Becker, 1985, Estler, 2005). Constituency base influences are recognized due to the long-lasting impacts many of these have upon intercollegiate athletics through various externally imposed interventions. A retrospective view of the relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education reveals what appears to be appropriate interventions and measures by constituents such as the NCAA to regain control over intercollegiate athletics programs on campuses. But such interventions may unintentionally lay the foundation for an academic-athletic divide on

campuses because many interventions are implemented too late to be effective (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Reformers speculate as to whether intercollegiate athletics can ever reclaim its foundational strength or return to the fundamental mission reflecting the values of teaching, learning, and generating new knowledge (Newman & Miller, 1994; Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000, Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005). Some scholars question whether higher education in general is failing to support the basic academic mission of teaching, learning, and generating new knowledge (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003; Kezar, 2004). Regardless, intercollegiate athletics programs appear to remain an integral, yet problematic component of institutions. The history of the unique marriage between intercollegiate athletics and the academy remains turbulent, primarily because of episodic success and failure surrounding institutional control and academic integrity (Easter, 1997).

The NCAA guidelines for institutional control over intercollegiate athletics reflect the perspectives and practices of a high-cost, male-oriented, high-profile sport culture (Estler, 2005). Much of the media exposure and research literature concerning scandal and abuse rests within institutions sponsoring intercollegiate athletics programs at the highly competitive NCAA Division I level. However, such high expectations across NCAA Division I institutions may negatively impact smaller institutions. Recent literature reveals a growing academic-athletic divide among intercollegiate

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athletics programs at smaller institutions, as skewed priorities of big-time college sports increasingly infect all levels of competition (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Estler (2005) concludes that a trickle-down effect of intercollegiate athletics problems from larger to smaller schools results from 1) smaller school's imitation and emulation of larger institutions and 2) the application of oversight rules and regulations at smaller institutions which are designed to address the needs and concerns related to big-time football and basketball. Scholars suggest an escalating athletics arms race and commercialism behaviors are attributed largely to externally-based constituency expectations, perpetuating the academic-athletic divide at all levels of NCAA competition (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). Commercialism and the athletic arms race emerge from literature as critical factors largely responsible for plaguing problems related to intercollegiate athletics programs spiraling out from under administrative control on campuses (Estler, 2005).

Over the years, an athletic addiction has reshaped American perspectives regarding the role for sports in general and particularly for intercollegiate athletics (Gerdy, 2002). The primary focus of intercollegiate athletics reform is how to regain control over intercollegiate athletics when governmental funding is decreasing, higher education institutional costs are increasing, and the academy is generally becoming more constituency-

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oriented (Covell & Barr, 2001). The commercial appeal and entertainment demand for college sports creates profitable economic markets for institutions to license and sell university brands on virtually any feasible product or service. Purposefully using intercollegiate athletics programs as vehicles for promoting, marketing, branding, and enhancing institutional notoriety and reputation has become an accepted practice to generate funding (Bergman, 1991; Toma, 1998). However, perceptions regarding the return on investment intercollegiate athletics programs provide for their institutions often surfaces during inflammatory debates, especially when the debate shifts from the financial benefits of intercollegiate athletics to focus upon the threats entrepreneurialism poses to higher education mission (Estler, 2005).

Some institutions recklessly drive the vehicle of economic development provided by intercollegiate athletics programs and seek to expand its constituency base as opposed to protecting its educational heritage (Estler, 2005). With institutions generally combating financial shortages, it appears auxiliary programs like intercollegiate athletics are being expected to become increasingly self-sufficient. As a result, market-oriented administrators possessing the skills necessary for meeting entrepreneurial-aligned expectations have become preferred candidates for vacant intercollegiate athletics director positions (Richman, 1999; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001).

One key institutional administrator who works to achieve competitive and financial success while charged with retaining institutional control over the intercollegiate athletics program on behalf of the president is the intercollegiate athletics director (Duderstadt, 2000). Intercollegiate athletics directors once emerged as administrators from faculty and coaching experiences, providing academic values and perspectives to carry into their administrative roles (Williams & Miller, 1983; Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). However, hiring trends for intercollegiate athletics directors over the past decade suggest that the role expectations institutions have for intercollegiate athletics directors may be shifting more towards business-minded candidates capable of operating winning programs, generating substantial publicity and fundraising for institutions (Wolverton, 2007). Emphasis on revenue generation is increasing and many reformers concede that business-based management skills are appropriate for intercollegiate athletics administrators (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). Corporate minded professionals with business and marketing experience characterize intercollegiate athletics directors today, rather than traditional higher education administrators groomed from the academic culture (Estler, 2005). A diminished value of academic perspectives in the increasingly de-centralized decision-making role of the intercollegiate athletics director may jeopardize the academic mission (Estler, 2005).

Ineffective intercollegiate athletics administration threatens institutional control over intercollegiate athletics programs on campuses

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(Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). The basic role expectations of intercollegiate athletics directors traditionally include financial stewardship and preserving institutional reputation by safeguarding academic integrity. However, the notion of hiring intercollegiate athletics directors with inadequate professional preparation for the higher education work environment and no academic responsibilities indicates a dangerous evolution in the role of the intercollegiate athletics director (Kelderman, 2010). Critics argue that intercollegiate athletics directors are unprepared and possibly unconcerned about preserving collegial values within intercollegiate athletics programs, especially when academic values conflict with athletic values (Richman, 1999; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005).

The administrative role of the intercollegiate athletics director, as a liaison between academic and athletic values, is positioned to become immersed in constant bouts of strain and tension, particularly when constituency expectations emanate primarily from athletic values (Williams & Miller, 1983). This tension is characteristic of role strain theory, or difficulty in meeting incompatible and/or ambiguous role expectations (Goode, 1960; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964). Research suggests that role strain is a barrier to the effectiveness of higher education administrators in their roles (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999).

The existing literature suggests that the academic-athletic divide is a real phenomenon. Literature further suggests the evolving nature of the

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intercollegiate athletics director's role may perpetuate this phenomenon. Furthermore, clashes between academic and athletic values are likely due to incompatibility and/or ambiguity when conflicting expectations from multiple constituencies are placed upon intercollegiate athletics directors and the programs they oversee. Conflicts between academic and athletic values are most likely direct experiences for intercollegiate athletics directors and they may experience role strain when making decisions related to the intercollegiate athletics program on behalf of the institution. Literature suggests the problems associated with intercollegiate athletics extend to all NCAA Divisions and lead to an academic-athletic divide (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). But there is a void in the literature in applying role theory within the context of the intercollegiate athletics director's role.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem for exploration in this phenomenological study is the academic-athletic divide within NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs from the perspectives of intercollegiate athletics directors. Phenomenological designs explore research problems through the perspectives of individuals who may experience the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2003). The 100 year history of intercollegiate athletics reveals a complex web of issues contributing to the academic-athletic divide, but competition, money, and winning are roots of the phenomenon (Estler,

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2005). Intercollegiate athletics, like all campus programs, should be a reflection of the institution's constituency base and be driven by the institution's academic mission. However, the expectations of a demanding external constituency base may influence decision-making within intercollegiate athletics.

The pivotal figure charged with balancing the academic-athletic values on campuses, as well as the expectations of the entire intercollegiate athletics constituency base, is the intercollegiate athletics director. Tierney (1988) suggests insight into an organization's values, goals, and mission surfaces through the behaviors and decisions by individuals charged with meeting various expectations on behalf of the organization. Intercollegiate athletics directors, who are unable to meet incompatible and/or ambiguous expectations, may be ineffective at balancing academic and athletic values.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the academic-athletic divide among intercollegiate athletics directors' lived experiences at NCAA Division II institutions. This study will analyze data "by developing patterns and relationships of meaning" for constructing the "essence" of intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). Phenomenological methods used in this study include reflecting on the personal experiences of participants for greater understanding. The role strain theoretical framework provides a lens for examining participants'

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experiences. Creswell (2003) suggests theoretical perspectives guide qualitative researchers toward important issues for further examination and offers a pathway for explaining behaviors and attitudes.

Intercollegiate athletics reformers call for institutions to ensure control over intercollegiate athletics programs by refocusing on academic values and ethical behaviors within college athletic programs (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). However, existing literature has not examined the phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide at NCAA Division II institutions (Bowen & Levin, 2003). Furthermore, the attitudes and behaviors of intercollegiate athletics director, and how constituency expectations impact their role appear to be absent altogether in existing literature.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience their roles as

    a. administrators of intercollegiate athletics programs?

    b. university administrators?

2. How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletic directors experience the influence of key constituency groups upon the decisions they make as

    a. administrators of intercollegiate athletics programs?

    b. university administrators?

3. To what extent do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience conflict between their roles as intercollegiate athletics administrators and university administrators? To the extent these are seen as conflicts, how do intercollegiate athletics directors resolve these conflicts?

4. To what extent do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience academic-athletic divides in their roles?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For over a century now, intercollegiate athletics programs have instilled pride and notoriety on campuses across the country. The history of intercollegiate athletics is also riddled with prejudice, neglect, abuse, scandal and embarrassment on many campuses. Existing literature provides a robust base for exploring why intercollegiate athletics programs are often sources of tension within the academic community. This study will explore the phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide and add contextual understanding and insight to the growing body of research literature intended for improving the reputation and status of intercollegiate athletics programs on campuses.

The insight offered in this study will encourage a more clear examination of and definition for the role intercollegiate athletics has within academic missions. The compliance culture of NCAA bylaws and rules has not led to a universal reform or instilled systemic changes (Shulman &

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Bowen, 2001). A frustrated intercollegiate athletics reform community

suggests exploring individual college campuses for viable strategies in

implementing inter-institutional reform measures within athletic

conferences and the NCAA membership (Knight Foundation Commission,

2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). Therefore, this study will

analyze data collected from individual campuses for signs of an academic-

athletic divide to discover, portray, and understand the phenomenon within

the context of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs.

  The significance of this study will focus upon an under-represented

group of NCAA institutions in available research literature (Estler, 1997).

The resiliency and dexterity of the relationship between intercollegiate

athletics and academic values varies across institutions relative to their size,

available resources, values, and culture (Thelin, 1996). The NCAA

Division II institutional heritage characterizes a more balanced approach to

promoting and controlling intercollegiate athletics programs (Estler, 1997).

Yet there is a void in the existing literature confirming and explaining the

academic-athletic divide at the NCAA Division II level (Easter, 1997;

Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003). The heritage of

balancing academic and athletic values may create a false assumption that

the heritage of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics is secure.

  The significance of this study also rests with the paucity of research

on the administrative role of the intercollegiate athletics director. Goals for

this study include capturing, interpreting and portraying the essence of the

experiences of the intercollegiate athletics directors for the benefit of intercollegiate athletics administrators, institutions, and the athletic community at large. Exploring the research problem from the perspectives of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors holds the potential to reveal strategies for consideration in future research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Understanding how intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions experience and respond to tension and conflict brings the capacity to offer insight for practice and research. Existing literature reveals smaller programs imitate and emulate the actions and behaviors of larger programs, despite greater limitations in human and financial resources (Estler, 2005). Larger human and financial resources available to NCAA Division I programs afford the delegation of athletic administrative duties such as rules compliance, marketing and fundraising, gender equity, and event management to fully staffed departments, while intercollegiate athletics directors serve as figureheads (Duderstadt, 2000). Intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II programs, however, often may oversee the entire scope of their intercollegiate athletics programs alone or with limited support staff. The implications of this study may lead NCAA Division II institutions to recognize when incompatible and unrealistic expectations are being placed upon intercollegiate athletics directors.

Another implication for practice and research is the need to better understand the influences of an expanding constituency base in higher education and intercollegiate athletics. Hiring intercollegiate athletics directors who lack experience and education may result in decision-making in response to constituents' short term expectations, which result in long-term commitments of institutional resources (Estler, 2005). Intercollegiate athletics directors appear to be an ideal participant for discovering the impact constituency groups may have upon institutions via expectations placed upon intercollegiate athletics programs. Estler (2005) writes, "An understanding of the nature and role of external forces on institutional decision making allows new strategies for planning and prioritizing intercollegiate athletics" (p. 12).

Additional implications for practice and research are for the professional preparation of intercollegiate athletics directors. Intercollegiate athletics directors occupy a key role in preserving institutional control over intercollegiate athletics yet remain one of the most misunderstood administrative positions in higher education (Duderstadt, 2000). The academic discipline of athletics administration is relatively young and in need of scholarly research to help build upon existing theory and practice (Williams & Miller, 1993). Developing an appreciation for both academic and athletic values in future athletics administrators may be more critical than ever. These positions are increasingly becoming occupied by individuals who appear to have less education and less work experience

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from within the academic community. The impact of actions, behaviors, and decisions of intercollegiate athletics directors based upon constituents' expectations is important to understand in order to prepare future administrators.

The study also has implications for practice and research from a theoretical perspective. Role strain theory focuses on management roles within organizations and the difficulty individuals encounter when they must meet incompatible and/or ambiguous role expectations (Goode, 1960). The phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide implies conflict and ambiguity. As Estler (2005) suggests, academic and athletic values appear to be increasingly incompatible rather than complementary in nature. The expectations placed upon intercollegiate athletics programs and intercollegiate athletics directors also remain ambiguous due to the poorly defined role for intercollegiate athletics programs within academic missions, the changing dimensions of a growing constituency base, and the fact that academic missions are overall ambiguous in nature (Thelin, 1996; Covell & Barr, 2001; Estler, 2005).

The role strain theory framework has been applied to higher education administrative roles, but these studies are largely quantitative studies and lack contextual understanding (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Miles & Petty, 1975; Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999; Gmelch, 2003). The role theory framework has been applied to intercollegiate athletics directors, but these studies tend to focus on the

challenges encountered by intercollegiate athletics directors while balancing professional and personal life to avoid burnout (Morrison, 2004). Studies focusing on the multiple role expectations of administrative roles and providing deeper contextual understanding may encourage reflection upon the consequences of behaviors and decisions (O'Neil, 1994). If the characteristics of role strain emerge from the lived experiences articulated by intercollegiate athletics directors in this phenomenological study, the application of role theory across disciplines would be further legitimized by contributing to the existing body of role theory literature.

LIMITATIONS

This phenomenological study is limited by contextual bounds. Intercollegiate athletics programs may vary among institutions with regard to their structure and operation because of institutional differences. Intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions who are members of a single athletics conference will be interviewed and institutional documents will be reviewed. Interviews pose limitations to this study as Patton (2002) states: "Interview data limitations include possibly distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness" (p. 306). Document reviews pose limitations identified by Patton (2002) as some requested documents may be inaccessible or unavailable. One critical limitation is the interpretive nature of qualitative research as "the researcher filters data through a personal lens that is

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situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment" (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Finally, a small sample limits the generalizability of results to all NCAA Division II institutions as well (Creswell, 2003). Strategies for overcoming these limitations through the design of the study and strategies for ensuring trustworthiness of the findings will be employed.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Academic-Athletic Divide – A phenomenon recognized by the presence of interrelated complex behaviors and actions indicating the over-emphasis of athletic values and under-emphasis of academic values within intercollegiate athletics programs (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Academic Mission – An institution's unique philosophical mission, which centers on the ability of the institution to promote teaching, research, and service as the means to facilitate learning and the generation of new knowledge (Newman & Miller, 1994; Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Constituent(s) – A group of individuals (or a single individual) internally or externally related to the institution with an interest in the intercollegiate athletics program and/or the institution (Tsui, 1990; Covell & Barr, 2001; Wolfe & Putler, 2002; Estler, 2005)

Intercollegiate Athletics Director – The university administrator to whom the president delegates responsibility for the daily oversight and monitoring of the operations of the intercollegiate athletics program on campus. The intercollegiate athletics director occupies a key role in preserving institutional control over intercollegiate athletics and typically responds to constituents' expectations (Williams & Miller, 1983; Duderstadt, 2000; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005).

National Collegiate Athletics Association Division II (NCAA D-II) – A competitive level of the NCAA which permits modest athletic financial aid awards (athletic scholarships). NCAA Division II member institutions sponsor a minimum of four varsity intercollegiate sports teams and reflect gender equity guidelines. If football, men's basketball, or women's basketball is sponsored, at least 50% of these teams' opponents must also be NCAA Division I or Division II member institutions. Many NCAA Division II member institutions are medium-sized, regionally-based colleges and universities, whose heritage embodies a balanced philosophical approach between academic and athletic values (Jehlicka, 1997; Easter, 1997; Estler, 2005).

Role – A set of activities or potential behaviors to be performed by an individual within an organization. Predictable and dependable behavior outcomes are often influenced by role concepts including role sets, role expectations, role pressures, role conflicts, and role ambiguities (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964).

Role Strain – Difficulty in fulfilling conflicting and/or ambiguous role

expectations. The construct of role conflict describes the presence of two or

more incompatible role expectations simultaneously. The construct of role

ambiguity describes the absence of clearly communicated role expectations

(Goode, 1960; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964; Wolverton, Wolverton,

& Gmelch, 1999; Morrison, 2004)

ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that intercollegiate athletics programs are legitimate

campus-based programs in the context of higher education. It is also

assumed that intercollegiate athletics directors hold the primary

administrative role in administering athletic programs with legitimate

authority delegated from the president and function within the guidelines of

a job description as competent professionals. Finally, it is assumed that

participants will be truthful in their responses and will be capable of

providing meaningful insight to the best of their own personal knowledge

and experiences.

SUMMARY

Education pioneer John Dewey suggests that institutions tend to reflect

the society within which higher education is pursued and provided (Gayle,

Tewarie, & White, 2003). Defining how intercollegiate athletics programs

support the higher education mission has been a resonating challenge for the

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academic community for over a century. The educational and institutional

benefits from intercollegiate athletics programs hold great potential for

colleges and universities, but maintaining control over intercollegiate

athletics within the purview of campus administration continues to be

problematic.

Intercollegiate athletics has been heavily criticized for selling out the

university's academic mission for the potential financial windfalls of highly

marketable college sports. But the ambiguous mission of higher education

tolerates campus-based commercialism across many campus programs

(Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). Many institutions emphasize

fundraising, grants, research, and service contracts over the socially-driven

academic mission of teaching, learning, and generating new knowledge

(Kezar, 2004).

While the problems within intercollegiate athletics are of concern, the

magnitude of the threats these problems pose to academic missions may not

be as strong as they were once considered to be. Campus behaviors and

actions reveal constituency-centered, economics-driven academic missions,

regardless of whether or not this is explicitly stated. As Gayle, Tewarie,

and White (2003) write, "…although some may emphasize the discovery,

transmission, and application of knowledge in communities of scholars and

teachers as core university functions, others may focus on issues related to

economics, budgets and market responsiveness" (p. 6). The ambiguity of

the basic academic mission, which permits programs such as intercollegiate

athletics on campus, is now being examined by scholars for greater clarity
(Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003).

Higher education appears to be stranded at a philosophical crossroad
with regard to the future of intercollegiate athletics. The popular road
promoting commercialism in intercollegiate athletics appears to be marked
by financial growth and paved with unlimited financial potential for
institutions. The road toward re-emphasizing academic values appears to be
unmarked and unpaved, and it could potentially lead intercollegiate athletics
back to being just another under-funded campus program. Literature
suggests that NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics programs may not
be capable of turning back the clock to reverse the marketability of big-time
college sports (Estler, 2005). Exploring who and what influences the
actions, behaviors and decisions of intercollegiate athletics directors may
reveal the true nature and magnitude of academic-athletic divides at NCAA
Division II institutions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Higher education institutions are organized around interacting relationships reflecting differing constituency bases that are political, bureaucratic, collegial, and increasingly economical (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley 1977). According to Rantz (2002) and Gayle, Tewarie, and White (2003), universities' responsive actions to such a dynamic constituency base creates tension, raises questions about institutional identity, and reveals incremental mission drifts in higher education. Scholars argue higher education is forgoing its role as a social institution altogether and is more responsive to market-oriented values and fluctuations (Kezar, 2004; Rhodes, 2005). For the entire university, financial concerns may represent the greatest point of conflict in higher education administration because almost all universities straddle the threshold of a financial deficit (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). Education appropriations appear to be continuing to fall short of the rising annual costs of higher education and may be challenging institutions to become more self-sufficient in meeting the expectations of constituents, while also balancing budgets.

Despite the overall drift in higher education's general mission, intercollegiate athletics programs appear to create a unique dilemma for universities: the priority institutions place upon intercollegiate athletics programs. The sponsorship of costly intercollegiate athletics programs

without clear prioritization within institutions' academic missions tends to create tension on campuses (Kezar, 2004; Estler, 2005). However, the ability of an institution to clearly prioritize their intercollegiate athletics program within the academic missions has historically proven to be problematic. Thelin (1996) describes intercollegiate athletics within American higher education as the "peculiar institution" (p.1).

The storied history of intercollegiate athletics reveals that intercollegiate athletics has been viewed as both a savior and a demonic presence on campuses. As these auxiliary programs become more responsive to the external sports market, more constituency-oriented, and more financially independent, they also become more exposed to possible financial scandal and academic abuse (Estler, 2005). Over the years, the questioning of institutional identity has only intensified as the pressures to win and capitalize on the commercial appeal of intercollegiate athletics are rampant across campuses (Easter, 1997; Kezar, 2004; Estler, 2005). It appears that much of the pressure and expectations exerted upon intercollegiate athletics programs are from external constituents, including the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Economists typically view the NCAA as a joint marketing organization advancing the economic interests of member schools, while also claiming to promote amateurism and protecting academic values (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996). There are numerous internal and external constituents placing demands and expectations upon intercollegiate athletics programs, which are often

reflected in NCAA members' actions and behaviors (Estler, 2005).

Understanding how intercollegiate athletics directors weigh and balance

constituents' expectations is unclear (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996).

Diverse constituency influences may place intercollegiate athletics

directors in precarious roles facing enormous challenges. Responding to

multiple normative expectations within the university and multiple

competing constituency expectations outside of the university may subject

intercollegiate athletics directors to conflicting and ambiguous expectations,

or role strain. Role strain is not viewed negatively by default, but rather

constructively and the complexities of intercollegiate athletics directors'

experiences should be explored for greater understanding.

Critics argue that intercollegiate athletics brings unnecessary and

avoidable problems onto campuses. But intercollegiate athletics programs

provide a road map for the modern institution engaged in

entrepreneurialism to attain its goals. Section one of the literature review

describes the role strain theoretical framework. Section two covers

constituency-oriented higher education. Section three covers the history of

intercollegiate athletics in higher education, the problems associated with

intercollegiate athletics leading to the academic-athletic divide, the NCAA

Division II competitive level, and campus control over intercollegiate

athletics, including administrative roles.

SECTION ONE: ROLE STRAIN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Section one reviews role strain theory and the constructs of role

conflict and role ambiguity, which individually or collectively constitute

role strain. The current study proposes the role strain theoretical framework

to address the research problem in helping to explain problems occurring

within human interaction (Biddle, 1986).

Role strain theory originates from the seminal work of role theory

pioneers Goode (1960) and Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snoek (1964). The

application of role strain theory within the current study appears appropriate

since universities rely on the concept of designated roles across

administrative staff and faculty to accomplish institutional objectives.

According to Baldrige (1971), higher education administrators often find

themselves caught between conflicting and ambiguous role expectations to

be weighed between constituency groups. Administrative roles in general,

according to Greenberger and O'Neil (1994), are often occupied by

individuals straining to meet the differing expectations of multiple

constituency groups. Literature suggests intercollegiate athletics directors

often experience strains while attempting to balance academic and athletic

values in responding to constituents' expectations (Shulman & Bowen,

2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

A basic assumption behind role strain theory is that organizations

are managed by a series of interacting roles, whereby dissention, conflict,

and strain are common. Role strain theory attempts to provide

understanding of problems within human interactions and proposes that people behave in different ways depending on social identities and situations (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Biddle, 1986). Behaviors such as administrative decision-making, for example, are constructed over time by an individual's social, cultural, and historical background (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Tension experienced by intercollegiate athletics directors in trying to appease multiple constituents' expectations is characteristic of what Goode (1960) defines as role strain, or "difficulty in fulfilling role demands" (p. 483).

Role strain theory has been useful in exploring conflict in complex organizations (Baldridge, 1971), and administrative roles in universities including academic deans (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999), department chairs (Kremer-Hayon & Avi-Itzhak, 1986) and faculty (Lease, 1999; Boardman & Bozeman, 2007). Gayle, Tewarie, and White (2003) suggest that as universities continue to face unprecedented change, administrators may assume a variety of conflicting and ambiguous roles. Constituency groups' expectations generating conflict and ambiguity further compound the complex and highly visible role of the intercollegiate athletics director.

Role strain theory has gained attention among scholars as the theory continues to be scrutinized and applied across disciplines of study (Fineman & Payne, 1981; Pearce, 1981; Biddle, 1986; Shaubrock, Cotton, & Jennings, 1989; Marks & McDermid, 1996; Goodwin, 2001). Literature

identifies the role strain constructs of role conflict and role ambiguity in complex organizations (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; and Schaubroeck, Cotton, & Jennings, 1989) and will be further examined for keys within existing literature to help explain the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors.

Role Conflict

The theoretical construct of role conflict is the presence of two or more incompatible role expectations simultaneously, making compliance with one over the other a strain for a role occupant (Kahn, et al., 1964; Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Biddle, 1981; and Wolverton, Wolverton & Gmelch, 1999). Sub-categories of role conflict include 1) inter-role conflict, where incompatible role expectations from multiple role senders (constituents) is reconciled, 2) person-role conflict, where role obligations conflict with personal values and beliefs, and 3) inter-sender conflict, where too many legitimate role senders (constituents) overload the role occupant with multiple and sometimes conflicting role expectations that may not be reasonably fulfilled (Kahn, et al., 1964; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Various circumstances could lead to intercollegiate athletics directors experiencing role conflict, but research is lacking. Therefore, the current study will utilize existing role conflict research literature and search for threads of relevance to the research problem.

Research by Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) on the role of academic deans indicates that these individuals tend to find themselves in precarious positions due to the multiple role expectations they encounter. The sample included 1,370 deans from 120 colleges and universities who participated in the 1996 National Survey of Academic Deans in Higher Education (Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, & Hermanson, 1996). The data collection instruments employed were the Dean's Stress Inventory (Gmelch, et al., 1996), Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Questionnaire (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970), Dean's Task Inventory (Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999), Satisfaction with Dean's Role (Gmelch, et al., 1996), Dean's Leadership Inventory (Rosenbach & Sashkin, 1995) and the demographic variables. Factor analysis and simple regression reveals that role conflict and role ambiguity impact areas including job satisfaction, work-related stress, effectiveness and organizational commitment. The results of Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) identify role strain as an evident challenge in academic deans' quest to balance multiple, complex expectations placed upon them in the workplace.

Role strain research varies in its inclusion of organizational factors such as type and size contributing to role strain in the workplace. Relying again on Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999), the results reveal that deans at "teaching" institutions experience less role strain than counterparts at comprehensive research universities. The rationale behind their conclusion is role strain is more problematic at comprehensive universities

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because research universities "occupy an uneasy middle ground…[as] no longer purely teaching universities…[yet] not doctoral degree granting institutions, but may have aspirations to be such" (p. 98-99). While the role strain dilemma is described in terms of deans balancing the emphasis between teaching and research at different sizes and types of institutions, the dilemma may be comparative to the characterization of smaller intercollegiate athletics programs which imitate and emulate larger programs at the NCAA Division I level (Estler, 2005).

In summary, NCAA Division II programs, as regional athletic programs, could be viewed as occupying an uneasy middle ground between balancing aspirations which promote the institution through intercollegiate athletics and retaining the focus on intercollegiate athletics as an educational activity grounded in academic missions. For example, an NCAA Division II university could be tempted by the social and economic impact of highly popular and successful intercollegiate athletics programs, but may lack the human and financial resources to realistically capture a larger market. The temptation of diverting resources to intercollegiate athletics that could otherwise be used in academic areas has not been easily resisted. Many NCAA Division II universities average a $400,000 annual deficit that is supplemented by university funds (Estler, 2005). The current study argues that such deficit spending in a program that indirectly contributes to academic missions is a suitable research environment for

revealing the conflicting and ambiguous expectations being placed upon intercollegiate athletics directors.

Another consideration which may contribute to activities such as deficit spending within intercollegiate athletics is institutional philosophy. Jehlick (1997) suggests NCAA Division II universities typically prioritize and manage intercollegiate athletics programs through an educational philosophy of appropriately balancing academics and athletics. However, the NCAA report on Division II (2006) concludes "the reason for their designation as a Division II school [is] more often due to cost, location and resources rather than a philosophical match" (p. 6). In other words, NCAA Division II universities capable of increasing potential revenue and publicity through their intercollegiate athletics programs probably do so. Such behavior could help explain why there appears to be an academic-athletic divide across all levels of intercollegiate athletics competition, and not mainly at the NCAA Division I level as many scholars assume (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is the absence of clearly communicated role expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). The constructs of role ambiguity and role conflict appear somewhat conjoined in literature, which tends to eclipse the true influence of role ambiguity as a source of role strain. For example, the Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) study delineates between the

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two constructs of role conflict and role ambiguity, but the results of their

study fail to distinguish the impact role conflict and role ambiguity each

have independently. While the construct of role ambiguity is definitively

different, prior research appears to reveal challenges for studying role

ambiguity independently from role conflict. As a result, role strain research

commonly includes both role conflict and role ambiguity as the constructs

of role strain (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999).

Role ambiguity is explained by Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch

(1999) as the absence of both 1) clearly communicated role expectations,

and 2) role performance evaluations or feedback. Role occupants depend

on role expectations with clearly defined and clearly communicated

objectives, as well as adequate assessment of their performance to avoid

operating ill-equipped in unpredictable work environments (Kahn et al.,

1964; Miles, 1977; Fineman & Payne, 1981; Wolverton, Wolverton, &

Gmelch, 1999). Therefore, role ambiguity is tethered to effective

communication, a concern "closely linked to organizational effectiveness"

(Kahn, et al., 1964, p. 22). Complex organizations like universities that are

constantly changing and unable to clearly predict outcomes present

challenges to clearly communicated expectations (Pearce, 1981; Gayle,

Tierney, 1988; Tewarie & White, 2003).

A study of academic deans by Gmelch (2003) identifies stress

factors deans experience while attempting to meet multiple role

expectations. The stratified sample consists of 524 deans across 200

community colleges from 46 states. Three data collection instruments used in the study include the Dean's Stress Inventory (Gmelch & Swent, 1984), the Faculty Stress Index (Gmelch & Swent, 1984) and the Department Chair Stress Index (Gmelch & Burns, 1991). Factor analysis and varimax rotation to reduce items into clusters reveals the underlying dimensions of stress. Nine factors emerge, two being role strain and constituents' expectations. Responses relating to role strain include feeling torn between internal constituents and the need for greater role clarity. Responses relating to external constituents' demands are related to fundraising activities. In Gmelch et al. (1999), a similar study of academic deans at four-year universities reveals fundraising as causing stress in deans when dealing with external constituents.

A study by Miles and Petty (1975) examines role conflict and role ambiguity in supervisors and concludes that supervisors are typically aware of their role expectations and experience less role strain when role clarity is achieved. The random sample of 180 participants across nine governmental research and development organizations resulted in usable data from 152 of the participants divided between supervisors and non-supervisors for data comparison. The survey was administered to groups of 10-20 participants at each of the nine organizations in the form of a questionnaire. The instrument measured the need for role clarity, job related tension, and job satisfaction. The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations were established through statistical analysis and

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established coefficients for the total sample, non-supervisor group, and supervisory group. The results of the study confirm supervisors are typically aware of their role expectations and therefore experience less role strain.

Summary of Role Strain Research

The findings of Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999), Gmelch (2003 & 1999) and Miles and Petty (1975) indicate individuals who hold higher education administrative roles encounter more role strain when multiple role expectations exist from both internal and external constituency groups, as well as when expectations are not clearly communicated. Fundraising is obviously an emphasis within higher education in general and is a critical activity to support intercollegiate athletics programs (Estler, 2005). The confirmation of role strain by deans engaging in fundraising activities (Gmelch 1999, 2003) suggests that role strain experiences may be similar for intercollegiate athletics directors as well.

Intercollegiate athletics directors may be subject to multiple expectations from multiple internal and external constituents. The clarity of multiple expectations and how expectations are weighed by intercollegiate athletics directors are keys to better understanding intercollegiate athletics administration, which is a central theme in intercollegiate athletics reform strategies (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). Estler (2005) states "…athletics demands the primary attention of those charged with decision-

making at the institution's center" and the manner in which a president, athletics director, board, or faculty leadership addresses the clashing values present within intercollegiate athletics could "ultimately either sabotage leadership credibility or show her or him to be a hero of institutional integrity" (p. 4). Understanding the nature of conflicts intercollegiate athletics directors experience and how those conflicts are resolved needs to be contextually examined.

Existing role theory research is highly quantitative and lacks contextual understanding (Miles & Petty, 1975; Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999; Gmelch, 2003). In addition, existing role theory literature related to studying intercollegiate athletics directors is limited and more concerned with profiling individuals rather than gaining contextual understanding of work-related role problems (Smith, 1973; Richman, 1999; Morrison, 2004). Perceptual differences of intercollegiate athletics programs vary across stakeholders and these differences vary even further across levels of competition (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005; NCAA, 2006). Understanding perceptual differences among intercollegiate athletics directors may also construct an avenue for explaining the problems associated with the administration and control of intercollegiate athletics.

SECTION TWO: CONSTITUENCY-ORIENTED HIGHER EDUCATION

Section two reviews what Covell & Barr (2001) describe as stakeholders, or "a constituency-oriented system of higher education" (p. 414). The term stakeholder was first introduced through research in the industrial work environment (Tsui, 1990). Stakeholders are individuals who are, or who might be, affected by any action taken by an organization, who depend on the organization for the realization of their personal goals, and on whom the organization may also be dependent (Tsui, 1990; Fish, 2007). The term constituency refers to "a group of individuals holding similar preferences or interests pertaining to a focal organizational unit" and the term "constituent" refers to a "single individual within a constituency or a stakeholder group" (Tsui, 1990, p. 461). The current study considers the terms stakeholder and constituent as synonymous.

According to Fish (2007) and Toma (1998), the expansive list of constituents in higher education commonly includes higher education associations, funding organizations, the U.S. Department of Education, related Congressional committees, accrediting institutions, system-level officers, governors, state boards of education, state legislatures, students, parents, alumni, donors, local community members, trustees, senior administrators, faculty, and presidents. Internal constituents or individuals with personal stakes in intercollegiate athletics include students, student-athletes, staff, faculty, and administrators. The external constituents who

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have stakes in intercollegiate athletics include the NCAA, athletics conferences, alumni, parents, donors, legislators, business and corporate partners, and community members. The expectations internal and external constituents have for intercollegiate athletics programs appear to be directed towards intercollegiate athletics directors. But the compatibility of multiple expectations simultaneously, as well as the clarity of communicating expectations is unclear in existing literature.

The inability of universities to meet constituents' increasing expectations quickly enough supports a more decentralized governance system in higher education which places constituents' expectations at the center of decision-making (Fish, 2007; Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). Administrators consider constituents' expectations and remain careful to not simply respond, but rather to respond to the interaction of multiple constituents' influences through the careful analysis of the complex array of multiple and interdependent relationships within the higher education environment (Rowley, 1997).

Wolfe and Putler (2002) suggest the major steps in analyzing constituents' relationships and their roles are 1) identification of constituency groups, 2) determination of constituents' interests, and 3) evaluation of the type and level of constituents' power. Wolfe and Putler (2002) suggest that constituents' fit into one of the following three groups 1) equity stakes or individuals with direct ownership motivated by self-interests, 2) economic stakes or individuals who are market-driven and

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motivated by self-interests, and 3) influencer stakes or individuals whose

interests are neither motivated by ownership nor economic self-interests,

but rather motivated by values and symbolic predispositions. Shulman &

Bowen (2001) cite the "fear of negative reactions" from constituents such as

students, alumni, donors, and legislators as an impediment to changing arms

race behavior and reducing commercialism, which many reformers deem

necessary for systemic change within intercollegiate athletics to be

sustainable (p. 291). Duderstadt (2000) also points to stakeholders

themselves as important agents for successful reform in intercollegiate

athletics. Constituents may influence intercollegiate athletics directors in

areas such as fundraising, community relationships, alumni support, student

recruitment, and rules compliance, but the literature is unclear. The

compatibility and communication of expectations to intercollegiate athletics

directors may be vital, especially in a constituency-oriented higher

education environment.

Wolfe and Putler (2002) determine the priorities of constituents in

their study on role-based stakeholder groups in intercollegiate athletics at an

NCAA Division I university. The study identifies six role-based

stakeholders: current students, prospective students, student-athletes,

alumni, faculty, and athletic program employees. Participants' priority of

factors to determine program success includes win-loss record, graduation

rate of student-athletes, NCAA violations, athletics event attendance,

gender-equity, number of teams, and financial deficit or surplus. Judgment

surveys indicate faculty, student-athletes, potential students, and university student stakeholder groups prioritize factors similarly, while alumni and athletic department stakeholder groups are more similar in prioritizing the factors. For all groups, the factors of graduation rates, NCAA violations, win-loss records, and finances rated as the top priority factors. But Wolfe and Putler (2002) fail to confirm a strong homogenous relationship among stakeholder groups based upon self-interests (or equity and economic stakes). They do suggest, however, that identifying stakeholder groups are useful in management and influencer stakes (values or symbolic predispositions) are important in building a shared, common set of priorities among stakeholders. The results of Wolfe and Putler (2002) provide evidence to support Estler's (2005) suggestion of building a shared set of values and culture on campus helps drive intercollegiate administrative efforts in binding academics and athletics together. The results of Wolfe and Putler (2002) indicate the need for additional research capable of providing a more contextual understanding of the relationships between constituents' expectations of intercollegiate athletics directors.

Scholarly writing and research in intercollegiate athletics generally focuses on academic and social scandal, abuse, and reform efforts throughout the history of intercollegiate athletics (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985; Becker et al, 1986; Bailey & Littleton, 1991; Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000; Newman, Miller & Bartee, 2000; Sperber, 2000; Covell & Barr, 2001; Knight Foundation Commission, 1991, 2001; Gerdy, 2002;

Shulman & Bowen, 2002; Bowen & Levin, 2003). According to Toma (1998), universities rely on intercollegiate athletics as the most visible aspect of the campus to those outside the academic community to foster relationships between campus life and external constituents. External constituents often provide universities with much-needed financial support in exchange for a visible relationship with the university in the community (Toma, 1998). Several studies trace connections between intercollegiate athletics and external constituencies and the impact relationships between the two have had in fundraising (Bergmann, 1991; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1993; Grimes & Cressnathis, 1994) and undergraduate student recruitment (Tucker & Amato, 1993; Sigelman, 1995; Toma & Cross, 1996). The results of such studies produce weak findings and lack contextual insight.

Organizational theory research also provides a platform for studying intercollegiate athletics, but fails to clearly describe the ways in which intercollegiate athletics contributes to institutional culture (Tierney, 1988; Toma, 1998). The premise of organizational research suggests competing constituents exist and are detrimental to organizational activities and processes (Baxter & Lambert, 1991). However, constituents' expectations may present contradictory elements to intercollegiate athletics as the interests of the sports market conflicts with academic values (Estler, 2005). For example, an intercollegiate athletics corporate sponsor may offer contractual stipulations to serve as the sole proprietor on campus. However,

such action limits student and consumer choices, a contradictory element for a social institution providing services for the social good (Duderstadt, 2000; Kezar, 2004). But for public-serving institutions, assessing organizational performance without considerations of constituents' expectations is considered dangerous from both political and financial perspectives (Boschken, 1994).

While commercialism within intercollegiate athletics continues to be a target of critics, Estler (2005) argues the changing social and economic context of the university as a whole is now beyond athletics and helps create even more pressure toward intercollegiate athletics commercialization. University-industrial partnerships, contract research, grant-based funding, and direct services contracts serve as evidence of a growing entrepreneurial culture in higher education in response to less state appropriations and rising tuition costs (Estler, 2005). Thus, competing constituents' expectations probably exist on a larger scale for the university as a whole. However, it is within intercollegiate athletics where the current study remains focused, making momentary reflections upon the university as a whole with regard to issues such as commercialism from time to time where it is appropriate.

Toma (1998) studies how intercollegiate athletics enhances institutional identity through formally interviewing individuals who worked in areas including admissions, fundraising and advancement, alumni relations, government relations, as well as other central administrators and

assistants who interacted with external constituents. Informal interviews with faculty, staff, students and other university personnel in areas such as student affairs, student life, residence life, cultural affairs and institutional research were also conducted. Toma (1998) concludes that constituents' perceive high-profile intercollegiate athletics programs "to be something distinctive, central and enduring about the institution, as well as something that is viewed favorably by others" (p. 10). Institutional identity is enhanced by drawing more people to campus, where constituents learn more about the institution. Toma (1998) suggests intercollegiate athletics "serve important purposes within the university, both in fostering the on-campus community associated with collegiate life, as well as in providing a vehicle for advancing institutional goals to important off-campus constituents" (p. 21). Interestingly enough, intercollegiate athletics directors provide no data in this study.

Summary of Constituency-Oriented Research Literature

Becker, Sparks, Choi, and Sell (1986) suggest a unique problem to intercollegiate athletics is a large and vocal constituency base with little regard for academic issues. Estler (2005) states "a complex web of externally imposed and internally adapted rules and routines influence campus-based athletic programs and the decision-making surrounding them" (p. 20) and proposes three contexts for viewing intercollegiate athletics administrators 1) the rules and regulations of the NCAA

sometimes influence administrators in contradictory ways through loosely coupled compliance practices and result in conflicting demands from external and internal constituents, 2) cultural influences for fairness and equity (i.e. gender and race disparities) require attention to offset legal ramifications, and 3) economic factors such as commercialism in intercollegiate athletics creates internal conflicts and ambiguities for administrators. Without properly considering contextual and long-term institutional impacts, a number of apparently minor administrative decisions made over time in response to constituents' expectations leave leaders with a predefined set of limits when faced with major decisions (Estler, 2005).

Over the years, intercollegiate athletics directors appear to transition from lower-profile, centralized staff into higher-profile, de-centralized administrators. Intercollegiate athletics has substantial power and influence on campuses and literature indicates that seemingly minor decisions made by intercollegiate athletics directors often have long-term effects on the entire university (Estler, 2005). Constituency influences are important to understand as they may exert more influence than organizations perceive (Boschken, 1994). Research designed to gain insight and understanding of the complex web of external and internal constituents, and the role they have in influencing intercollegiate athletics directors, may allow for new strategies in planning and prioritizing intercollegiate athletics programs (Estler, 2005).

SECTION THREE: INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS IN

HIGHER EDUCATION

Section three of the literature review covers the history of intercollegiate athletics in higher education, the problems associated with intercollegiate athletics leading to the academic-athletic divide, literature related to the NCAA Division II level of competition, and campus control over intercollegiate athletics, including administrative roles.

Intercollegiate athletics endures heavy criticism in its effort to remain a vital program that serves to enhance academic missions of institutions (Duderstadt, 2000). At the heart of the debate surrounding the purpose for intercollegiate athletics in higher education is how to "reap educational, social, and economic benefits from a strong athletics program without cost to the institution's academic and moral integrity" (Estler, 2005, p. 3). The academic community has difficulty accepting the overbearing attention given to intercollegiate athletics at times, but recognizes the need to find clear answers to both chronic and acute problems within intercollegiate athletics (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). Critics point out isolated problems within intercollegiate athletics and tend to overlook the overall positive impacts intercollegiate athletics has on campuses. Intercollegiate athletics not only provides access to higher education for student-athletes, but intercollegiate athletics enhances a sense of campus and local community through fostering a sense of devotion, pride, and support among its constituents (Toma, 1998; Covell & Barr,

2001; Estler, 2005). Since intercollegiate athletics is such a highly visible

component of the university, it is not difficult to see why it garners so much

scholarly debate and scrutiny. Many universities establish direct links to

the website of the intercollegiate athletics department from their

homepages. Most daily newspapers and nightly news reports cover local

college sports as newsworthy for the community. Therefore, the general

public's perception of intercollegiate athletics and sponsoring institutions is

probably shaped and influenced by local media outlets. The Knight

Foundation Commission (2001) comments "we recognize that

intercollegiate athletics have a legitimate and proper role to play in college

and university life" and reformers do not necessarily seek to "abolish that

role but to preserve it by putting it back into perspective" (p. 8). Thus the

reformers charge higher education institutions to develop strategies for

addressing the compatibility of intercollegiate athletics programs and

academic missions of universities, which even for collegial-minded critics,

is a complex undertaking (Thelin, 1996; Covell & Barr, 2001). While the

traditional academic ventures of teaching, research and service provide a

heartbeat for academic missions, Duderstadt (2000) counters critics and

elaborates on the scope of academic missions:

> Beyond formal education in the traditional academic
>
> disciplines and professional fields, the university has been
>
> expected to play a far broader role in the maturation of
>
> students….It is this argument that is most frequently used as

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a justification for intercollegiate athletics in higher

education. The argument is that competitive athletics can be

an important development experience for both participants

and spectators. (p.89)

Similar recurring views throughout literature lead Thelin (1996) to

characterize intercollegiate athletics within American higher education as

the "peculiar institution" (p.1). He elaborates:

University officials historically have shown a tendency to avoid

reconciling their commitment to and investment in intercollegiate

athletics with the educational mission of the institution. There is a

slippery quality that characterizes the justifications that university

presidents and athletic directors invoke when they are asked to

explain the connection between college sports and higher

education….The rationales are not wholly convincing because they

are untested claims and, if taken together, are often inconsistent and

even conflicting….Institutions have been reluctant to study and

accurately state what their own policies, practices, and priorities

involving intercollegiate athletics are. (Thelin, 1996, p. 3)

Defining a practice delineating the ways in which intercollegiate

athletics contributes to the academic mission appears to remain

misunderstood and evasive, perhaps because existing evidence fails to

capture a convincing argument. Nonetheless, university presidents and

intercollegiate athletics directors continue to support and defend the

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intangible contributions intercollegiate athletics programs make toward the academic mission, noting its symbolic importance to campus community, alumni, media, and general public (Easter, 1997).

Problems Creating the Academic-Athletic Divide

From the outset, the NCAA has addressed concerns with a growing academic-athletic divide, pressures associated with commercialization, challenges to amateurism, challenges of rising operational costs, and threats to academic missions (Estler, 2005). For over 50 years now, the NCAA has served as a third party establishing the rules, regulations and policies for voluntary member institutions' accountability (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996). According to DeBrock and Hendricks (1996) and Estler (2005), growing concerns within intercollegiate athletics are addressed by the NCAA in 1947 through issuing the *Sanity Code* as a means to gain greater control over problems in intercollegiate athletics. The measure is useful in defining a formal compliance code to be enforced by the NCAA, but fails to sustain control over intercollegiate athletics, as commercialism begins influencing intercollegiate athletics (Estler, 2005). Rather than resist commercialism, the NCAA itself embraces the concept, and in doing so gains the trust and support of institutions by funneling revenues back to universities to support the growing size and costs of their intercollegiate athletics programs (Estler, 2005). By the 1950s, the NCAA evolved into a

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highly organized system of national oversight for intercollegiate athletics and its membership (Estler, 2005). Debrock & Hendricks (1996) state

> While the original intention of the organizing schools [of the NCAA] was not to create the collusive arrangement that allowed the joint decisions about the financial affairs of the sports programs, the growth of the NCAA made such an adjustment natural. (p. 499)

The impact of the meteoric rise of intercollegiate athletics is evident by turning on the television. After all, it is the popularity of broadcasting televised intercollegiate athletics which began generating a true revenue stream for supporting and sustaining the NCAA as a standing organization (Estler, 2005). The willingness of the NCAA to share the spoils with members becomes an immediate solution to rising operational costs, which continue to fuel the growth and marketability of intercollegiate athletics as revenue generating programs on campus. However, the programs are far from being profitable for most institutions (Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000). While the general public sees multi-million dollar budgets, few people realize the majority of all intercollegiate athletics programs lose money each year (Thelin, 1996; Sperber, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). As a result, intercollegiate athletics achieves continuity in American life as a distinctive "entertainment" component in higher education and popular culture, which also results in it "being a perennial source of problems" garnering attention from even Congress and

the Internal Revenue Service (Thelin, 1996, p.197). As big-time

intercollegiate athletics becomes increasingly out of control, many

economists and scholars describe the NCAA as a cartel, controlling the

supply and demand of the market-dominated intercollegiate athletics events

and products American culture craves (Estler, 2005).

Many scholars still believe the role of the university, which is

intended to serve as a social institution, is providing services and programs

for the social good (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003; Kezar, 2004). But

according to Duderstadt (2000) and Sperber (2000), institutions

compromise the social good by hinging the institution's reputation on

intercollegiate athletics programs, which at times provide teachable

moments for dealing with corruption, alcoholism, gambling, edutainment,

and seeking economic gain above meeting societal needs.

Scholars have produced a large body of literature documenting the

century-long problems and reform efforts in intercollegiate athletics,

including challenges to reform and why reform matters (Newman & Miller,

1994; Estler, 2005). Reports from the Knight Foundation Commission on

Intercollegiate Athletics (1991, 2001) and the Mellon Foundation studies

(Shulman & Bowen, 2001) provide useful views of the array of problems

associated with intercollegiate athletics. One recent Knight Foundation

Commission (2001) report calls for reform to address the assurance of

amateurism and to reduce spending, commercialization, and unethical

practices within intercollegiate athletics programs. While reform calls for

intercollegiate athletics to be cleaned up and reprioritized, the influence of constituents' expectations appear to be somewhat discounted in accomplishing reformation.

Most of the attention on reform is directed toward NCAA Division I or "big time" college sports, with lower competitive levels left in the shadows (Eslter, 2005). While the scope of problems related to generating revenue and rising costs in intercollegiate athletics is certainly magnified for big time athletics, it is reckless to assume that similar challenges do not exist at the NCAA Division II level merely because exposure is limited and NCAA Division II universities are believed to embrace a different philosophical approach to intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA system of oversight for intercollegiate athletics programs is designed from the perspectives of high-cost, male-oriented, high-profile sport cultures and practices dating to the early years of football in large universities. Estler (2005) claims that NCAA oversight affects smaller universities through 1) smaller institutions' imitation and emulation of large institutions, and 2) through the application of rules on smaller institutions which are designed to address the needs and concerns related to big-time football and basketball. As a result, studies reveal a growing academic-athletic divide at smaller universities, partly because smaller schools also engage in the athletics arms race and commercial behaviors to remain competitive and to meet rising costs of intercollegiate athletics programs (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

Athletic Arms Race

What is known as the "athletics arms race" within college sports holds some responsibility for the gap between intercollegiate athletics and academics. According to Estler (2005), the term "athletic arms race" is coined to describe the efforts of universities to secure resources, facilities, and student-athletes that place institutions on a competitive level with peer institutions. In other words, the athletic arms race resembles the classic story of 'keeping up with the Joneses,' and reflects perhaps more 'wants' than justified 'needs' in intercollegiate athletics programs. As the costs for intercollegiate athletics programs continue to escalate, revenues do not keep pace with growth and most large and small schools operate at annual deficits while chasing the elusive level of competitiveness (Estler, 2005). Thus, universities become more prone to divert institutional funds to intercollegiate athletics programs, as presidents justify such budgetary decisions as necessary in order to help student-athletes reach their full potential and sustain the university's athletic reputation as an economic boom (Estler, 2005). According to Estler (2005), the complexity of administrative roles considers constituents with economic interests in intercollegiate athletics, as they often have political influence stemming from economic success. In other words, state schools are funded through state legislative appropriations set by politicians, who are elected by

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generous constituents, which creates a larger constituency base to consider in administrative decisions than just the traditional academic community.

Of interest to the current study is the work of Bowen & Levin (2003) which reveals that even NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletics programs, who are typically prestigious academic institutions, engage in athletics arms race behaviors resulting in financial deficits. The Bowen and Levin (2003) study finds that across institutional types and NCAA competitive levels, imitation and emulation of big-time athletics is happening (Estler, 2005). Shulman & Bowen (2001) write: "It is almost impossible to have an extended conversation with an athletics director of a program operating at *any* level of play without hearing the metaphor of an arms race invoked" (p. 227).

Commercialism in Intercollegiate Athletics

Estler (2005) also points to high-stakes commercialism in college sports as a response to escalating costs generated from the arms race on campuses. Arms race behavior, such as enhancing facilities, is also a substantial long-term financial commitment for universities. For example, if a donor offers a large sum of money to help build or improve an athletic facility 'need' the university is prone to accepting the offer, perhaps without thoughtfully considering the long-term commitment the institution makes in maintaining a new, modern facility and how this financial commitment impacts the entire university's budget (Estler, 2005). Examples of such

decision-making in intercollegiate athletics are criticized, but Gayle, Tewarie, and White (2003) suggest most institutions are behaving similarly and relying more on commercialism and entrepreneurial activities across all campus programs to continue meeting constituents' expectations. In 1916, education pioneer John Dewey suggested colleges and universities are a reflection of the society within which higher education is pursued and provided (as cited in Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). Higher education, became recognized as a constituency-oriented system (Covell & Barr, 2001), and appears to lend support for Dewey's philosophical view.

On the other hand, perhaps administrators realize the long-term commitments for accepting such donations and view the decision as a calculated move. If universities are being battered by constituents' expectations from all directions for a football stadium expansion or renovation, trustees and politicians may view accepting a capital gift as a means to fund a project they are typically unable to finance through public bonds or appropriations. Constituents may pressure a president into accepting the gift despite the long-term financial commitment necessary from the institution. Behind the scenes, perhaps appropriating money for utilities and maintenance is acceptable on paper when money for an intercollegiate athletics bricks and mortar project is donated.

To combat rising costs, one route to funding the arms race is through commercialism, such as advertising, merchandising, and other creative ways to generate funding in order to meet rising operational costs.

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Universities are rather creative in external fundraising, commercialism, even resorting to student fees to help finance intercollegiate athletics programs (Sperber, 2000; Estler, 2005). Estler (2005) writes "the path to full-blown commercialism was built through a series of small decisions, often by coaches, athletics staff, and administrators; once institutionalized, movement along this path became nearly impossible to reverse" (p. 80). It should also be pointed out that intercollegiate athletics programs are probably not alone in bearing the increasing pressures of commercialism on campuses. Social, cultural, and economic influences place more pressure on higher education institutions as a whole to become more entrepreneurial to combat financial shortfalls in higher education (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003; Rhodes, 2005; Estler, 2005; Fish, 2007). Even though intercollegiate athletics is not the only campus program highly engaged in entrepreneurial commercialism, intercollegiate athletics with a heritage that Duderstadt (2000) and Thelin (1996) describe as loosely coupled with institutional academic missions, becomes an easy target for critics (Estler, 2005).

The athletics arms race, lucrative commercial interests and other factors such as increased tuition rates all appear to have led universities to accept and even encourage entrepreneurial activity on campus. Arms race behaviors are financially supported through commercial endeavors to keep funding sources flowing into the university (Estler, 2005). Externally-driven sports markets appear to be increasingly responsive to the financial

needs of intercollegiate athletics through corporate sponsorships.

Considering the social and cultural influences upon college sports, along

with a growing and complex external constituency base, intercollegiate

athletics administration face more challenges than ever at all levels of

NCAA membership (Estler, 2005). Estler (2005) suggests the result is

increased financial autonomy in intercollegiate athletics as shared

governance is quietly abandoned, which threatens institutional control over

intercollegiate athletics. Such developments set the scene for the Knight

Foundation Commission's (2001) charge for campus leadership to draw

together in order to change the direction of intercollegiate athletics

programs. Estler (2005) supports developing a shared cultural vision and

set of values across the university so when leadership changes, the decision-

making process capable of controlling intercollegiate athletics does not

collapse.

The Phenomenon: Academic-Athletic Divide

The vast problems and accompanying factors surrounding

intercollegiate athletics which are documented in research literature allows

for the emergence of a phenomenon known as the academic-athletic divide

(Estler, 2005). Such a phenomenon is believed to occur at institutions

across all levels of NCAA member institutions because the problems found

within intercollegiate athletics are no longer evident only in big-time

college sports (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005). Work

by Shulman and Bowen (2001) and Bowen and Levin (2003) confirm the presence of the academic-athletic divide at institutions participating on both the NCAA Division I and Division III levels of competition, yet these studies neglect the Division II level of competition.

Shulman and Bowen (2001) study a group of highly selective academic institutions which offer no athletic scholarships and compete in NCAA Divisions I and III, excluding NCAA Division II. The total sample of 30 institutions include eight NCAA Division I private institutions, four NCAA Division I public institutions, four Ivy League universities, seven NCAA Division III coed liberal arts colleges, three NCAA Division III universities, and four NCAA Division III women's colleges. These institutions are identified as highly selective institutions based on their academic heritage and admission standards. The study is driven by the assumption that student-athletes at academically prestigious universities perform better academically at universities not trapped by the problems found in NCAA Division I athletics because academics is valued more than college sports. The design is quantitative and indicates that there are problems with issues surrounding processes for student-athlete recruitment and academic admission. The results reveal athletes at highly-selective institutions are academically under-performing compared to non-athletes. One conclusion of the study is that even the academically-driven universities, which are presumed to not be plagued by the problems associated with under-emphasizing academics at NCAA Division I

institutions, are actually fostering student-athletes who also under-perform academically. This study is early confirmation that a true academic-athletic divide exists across institutional sizes and types and the study becomes the basis for the book *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (Shulman & Bowen, 2001).

Bowen and Levin (2003) conduct a follow-up study, but this time sample highly selective colleges and universities within a narrowed region of the United States. The sample includes all eight Ivy League institutions, all 11 members of the New England Small College Athletic Conference, and additional liberal arts colleges outside the Eastern region of the U.S for a total sample of 33 NCAA Division I and NCAA Division III institutions. NCAA Division II institutions are once again excluded from the sample. Data collection instruments in the follow-up study include the use of interviews, narrative reflections, and document reviews for data analysis. This study confirms the presence of an academic-athletic divide among smaller, academically elite institutions and provides a clearer understanding of the recruitment/admission nexus contributing to the academic-athletic divide in the prior study. The study presents a more textured explanation of student-athlete recruitment and student-athlete admissions. Demographic data shows student-athletes at smaller institutions account for a larger percentage of the overall student body than at larger institutions. The results indicate student-athletes are recruited based more on their athletic skills and qualities as opposed to their academic skills and qualities,

forgoing the academic values which provide the foundation of being

recognized as a highly selective institution. The follow-up study becomes

the basis for the book *Reclaiming the Game: College Sports and*

Educational Values (Bowen & Levin, 2003).

Shulman and Bowen (2001) and Bowen and Levin (2003) conclude

that smaller institutions are experiencing the academic-athletic divide due to

demands for and acceptance of arms race behavior and commercialization

of college sports in society, along with the de-emphasis on academic

integrity. There are probably additional issues related to the growing

divides as well, such as the changing culture of the university itself. But the

findings of Shulman and Bowen (2001) and Bowen and Levin (2003) are

supportive of the need to study smaller institutions, particularly NCAA

Division II institutions since both studies exclude these institutions.

National Collegiate Athletics Association Division II

The NCAA governs with the purpose of maintaining intercollegiate

athletics as an integral part of the educational program, preserving the

student-athlete as an integral part of the student body, and retaining a clear

line of demarcation between the amateurism of intercollegiate athletics and

professional sports (Estler, 2005). In the 1970s, television revenue from

football and basketball is substantial and at that time, the NCAA is still one

large organization of colleges and universities operating under collective

rules (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996). The smaller and less commercially

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appealing college sports programs seem to be freeloading and NCAA rules no longer appear to serve the interests of all members, in particular those institutions sharing their spoils. When larger, more commercialized programs threatened to leave the NCAA, the decision was made to divide the NCAA into different divisions (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996). Classifications of NCAA competitive levels include Division I, II, and III, each with its own rules and regulations for compliant operation. The divisional structure appears to provide homogenous competition between intercollegiate athletics programs, but may overlook the academic heterogeneity of institutions.

The current study is concerned with institutions electing participation at the NCAA Division II level. NCAA Division II programs historically promote the view that intercollegiate athletics meets educational objectives because they are often affiliated with an academic program (usually physical education) and funded largely through education appropriations (Chu, Segrave & Becker, 1985). Such a philosophical approach appears to also lead to the assumption that intercollegiate athletics is innately bound to the academic mission. But Thelin (1996) argues universities tend to engage in tactics of evasion and self-deception regarding intercollegiate athletics policy reflections of the larger picture – the academic mission. While Thelin's comments are most assuredly directed towards NCAA Division I institutions, it remains unclear whether such a statement also applies to NCAA Division II institutions.

Typical NCAA Division II institutions appear to be medium-sized, regionally based state institutions and vary in the ways in which they promote intercollegiate athletics (Jehlicka, 1997; Estler, 2005). NCAA Division II institutions are often underfunded and understaffed yet still held to high academic and athletic standards imposed by constituents (Estler, 2005). The result is an environment requiring sensitivity to varying internal and external constituency groups' demands. Therefore, due to the lack of research, it is unclear whether or not the NCAA Division II environment cultivates imitation and emulation behaviors of NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics programs.

A goal of this study is to explore NCAA Division II institutions for signs that they are imitating and emulating the operational templates observed and documented in research conducted at the NCAA Division I level (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996; Jehlicka, 1997; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). The legacy of NCAA Division II is best characterized as operating somewhere balanced along the continuum between the ideas held by NCAA Division I and NCAA Division III (Jehlicka, 1997). In other words, NCAA Division II universities have substantial flexibility in their approach to finding the right balance of athletic and academic values at their institutions. The apparent chasm of flexibility for NCAA Division II institutions encourages the current study to explore NCAA Division II universities for greater understanding, especially since they are overlooked in existing literature.

There is limited literature revealing insight into the NCAA Division

II level. For example, the *NCAA DIVISION II Strategic Positioning*

Initiative Quantitative Research Report (NCAA D-II SPIQRR, 2006)

reveals that NCAA Division II is well balanced in the approach to balancing

athletics and academics. The apparent intention of this 2006 report is to

promote the appropriate balance of academics and athletics at NCAA

Division II institutions (Jehlicka, 1997). However, the findings of this

qualitative study suggest confusion and ambiguity exists regarding how

NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics are perceived, although the study

achieves statistical significance during analysis. The research objective of

the NCAA D-II SPIQRR is to understand and quantify perceptions of

NCAA Division II athletics across 1,000 members of the general public,

1,867 student-athletes, and 1,243 intercollegiate athletics administrators and

staff who participate in the study.

Further review of the results of the NCAA D-II SPIQRR reveals that

members of the general public perceive NCAA Division II as the most

balanced of the NCAA divisions, but are generally unfamiliar with

intercollegiate athletics' structure of governance and operation. A majority

of these respondents are unable to correctly identify the number of divisions

in the NCAA and half of the participants indicate they have never attended

an NCAA Division II athletic event (p. 6), further suggesting their

responses lack evidentiary or experiential support for their perceptions.

Student-athletes respond as strong advocates of NCAA Division II

intercollegiate athletics, as 75 percent of respondents perceive their overall experience as 'excellent' or 'very good' (p. 6), yet they are not asked questions pertaining to balancing athletics and academics. Results for the intercollegiate athletics administrators indicate 84 percent perceive NCAA Division II appropriately balanced between academics and athletics (p. 31). However, findings reveal that of 1,243 respondents who describe their roles, there are no academic support roles and administrative involvement by faculty is substantially low (11 percent) in comparison to roles that involve non-academic operation of the intercollegiate athletic department (89 percent) (p.44).

The current study suggests that while NCAA Division II institutions claim to balance athletics and academics, the resources dedicated to accomplish this balance are not convincing and the responsibilities for this rest primarily with intercollegiate athletics directors. The perceptions of responding member institutions also appear to suggest the reasons for designation within NCAA Division II are more often driven by resources (cost, location, demographics) and only marginally by the NCAA Division II philosophy. While the NCAA D-II SPIQRR reveals valuable information to support NCAA Division II as being the NCAA division successfully balancing athletics and academics, it also raises questions warranting further exploration. Of particular interest is the role of intercollegiate athletics directors and the contradictory expectations which may present challenges to a clearly balanced approach between athletics and academics.

Given low faculty involvement and the confusion surrounding the true nature of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs, intercollegiate athletics directors might be experiencing role conflict and ambiguity.

The results of the NCAA D-II SPIQRR study reveal confusion and ambiguity among participants and support the suggestions of Thelin (1996), who implies that universities, despite their claims, take actions which are contrary to balancing academic and athletic commitments. Examples include separating intercollegiate athletics departments from academic departments, moving coaches out of teaching roles, and the presence of under-active, under-supported shared governance structures for intercollegiate athletic programs (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Such trends suggest an enhanced emphasis on intercollegiate athletics programs' to become increasingly self-supported, but questions remain as to the potential impacts of financial self-sufficiency upon balancing academic and athletic values.

The academic heritage of NCAA Division II universities is rooted in their affiliation within academic departments, typically physical education departments where coaches, staff, and administrators teach courses and have other academic responsibilities such as academic advising (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) contend academic affiliated intercollegiate athletics programs are grounded in academic governance structures, are funded similarly to other programs on

campus. As a result they are viewed more as an educational function, serving students and the public through education related to physical activity. In other words, the affiliation fosters an environment where intercollegiate athletics programs supplement the educational process, both financially and philosophically. The themes of affiliated programs appear to include financial control, academic integrity, and student-centered experiences (Chu, Segrave & Becker, 1985).

Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) also contend that intercollegiate athletics programs which operate independent of academic programs must satisfy the demands of external constituency groups and require administrators to focus on business concerns to financially support intercollegiate athletics as an independent department, while creating experiences that appeal to the sports-crazed public. The themes of independent programs appear to include economic development as well as less academic centered and more public-centered experiences, similar to what Estler (2005) considers commercialism. While many NCAA Division II universities remain supportive of academic-affiliated intercollegiate athletics programs, Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) elaborate:

    Affiliated intercollegiate athletics constitutes a special

    dilemma. This dilemma is similar to what was best

    described years ago as 'institutional role conflict' (Seeman,

    1953). Only through credibility derived from legitimate

    academic department affiliation can intercollegiate athletics

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be appropriately administered in the best interests of the

university and students. (p. 204)

Regardless of the nature of the affiliation of intercollegiate athletics

programs' affiliations at NCAA Division II universities, it is apparent

intercollegiate athletics directors face challenges in balancing intercollegiate

athletics and academics. In times of economic retrenchment, universities

are seeking new avenues for revenue streams and publicity, including

intercollegiate athletics programs. One approach for universities is to rely

on athletics to brand their institutions as ways to increase enrollment, donor

contributions, and revenues associated with intercollegiate athletics

programs (Estler, 2005). While branding universities through

intercollegiate athletics boosts the institutional reputation and visibility over

time (Toma, 1998), only weak evidence shows successful athletics

competition results in increased alumni giving (Shulman & Bowen, 2001)

which enrollment appears to increase at NCAA Division I universities only

following a national championship in football (Toma & Cross, 1998).

At the NCAA Division I level, academic transgressions, a financial

arms race and commercialization are responsible for what the Knight

Foundation Commission (2001) identifies as "widening the chasm between

higher education's ideals and big-time sports" (p. 4). At the NCAA

Division II level, an increasing number of programs, seeking greater media

exposure and functioning independently of academic departments could be

construed as slowly treading a path toward institutional integrity problems, especially if arms race behaviors and commercialization are evident.

Many NCAA Division I athletic departments operate with some degree of autonomy compared to other non-academic programs, and in doing so, place the institution in predicaments which "threatens the integrity of their academic mission" (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 103). It appears that for NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics, the only true link to the academic side of the house is through the faculty athletics representative and the fact that the athletes are also students. Many NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics programs establish entire academic service components housed within athletics departments in response to criticisms regarding abuse and neglect of academic integrity. But many question whether the academic services are intended to meet student-athlete's academic need, or merely serve to insure that minimal NCAA academic eligibility standards are met (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Estler, 2005). Ideally, academic service units accomplish both objectives, but smaller universities may not have such elaborate discretionary resources for intercollegiate athletics programs. Therefore, NCAA Division II institutions may be striving to meet academic standards of the NCAA and institution without the dedicated resources and personnel. The intercollegiate athletics director is the administrator largely responsible for meeting these goals within the athletics department.

A factor which may ease the burden for intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions is the assumption that these

programs largely exist as complementary educational ventures, as opposed
to revenue generating machines (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Yet as
NCAA Division II experiences more growth and exposure, it seems logical
to question whether constituency influences threaten the academic heritage
of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs as well. From the
1929 Carnegie Foundation Report to the contemporary Knight Foundation
Commission Report in 2001, academic integrity remains at the forefront of
intercollegiate athletics reform initiatives, mainly because the solution for
fusing athletics and academics remains a challenge (Chu, Segrave, &
Becker, 1985; Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000; Knight Foundation
Commission, 2001). As athletics arms race behaviors and commercialism
escalate across all NCAA competitive divisions, research to better
understand the widening academic-athletics gap is necessary.

Campus control over Intercollegiate Athletics Programs

NCAA member institutions are subject to the influence of governing
bodies by any and all of the following 1) the college or university, 2) the
athletic conferences, and 3) the national athletic associations (Jehlicka,
1997). NCAA member institutions rely on the structure of inter-
institutional governance as a self-governing measure to keep
competitiveness of intercollegiate athletics balanced (Estler, 2005). But this
practice creates as many additional problems as it is intended to curb. Not
all institutions share the same values, culture, and resources, which is

evident in the early failed attempts for inter-institutional control (Newman & Miller, 1994). The NCAA attempts to bridge the institutional gap by establishing specific rules and regulations for all member institutions, but only athletic values appear to coexist well (Estler, 2005). Athletic values appear to eventually become viewed as the NCAA membership trump card over institutional academic culture and values (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996). The establishment of NCAA rules and regulations provide a pathway for strong inter-institutional relationships, but even NCAA rules and regulations relate to such issues as minimum academic requirements for admission and often result in conflicts within academic governance systems of member institutions (Estler, 2005). While the playing field may be level from an athletics perspective, as an external constituent to the university, the NCAA influences institutions by increasing expectations and as a result creates an internal conflict with regard to the institution's academic culture and value system (DeBrock & Hendricks, 1996; Estler, 2005).

Athletic conferences provide another avenue for equitable intercollegiate athletics competitive relationships to be formed among like-minded universities who share some basic core academic values (Estler, 2005). Even though athletic conferences are typically composed of similar size and type of institutions, they are often regionally based (Estler, 2005). Issues related to state and university governance, as well as institutional culture and values tend to lose their principle value due to the influence of athletic conference membership demands (Estler, 2005). While inter-

institutional governance is intended to balance competitiveness, the loosely coupled triad of intercollegiate athletics governance structures apparently overlooks limits in areas such as funding and facilities, thus allowing the most fortunate institutions to set the benchmark of competitiveness (Estler, 2005). In other words, such governance practices may help create a higher education environment by which universities prioritize college sports based on external constituency demands and expectations rather than the universities' academic culture, value system, and mission.

University control over intercollegiate athletics provides the stage for the current study, as it becomes clear that universities straddle a fine line regarding the threats intercollegiate athletics pose to academic culture, values and mission. Considering the influence of external constituents like the NCAA and athletic conferences have upon member institutions, campus administrators may find their institutional identity is being shaped by external constituency demands. For example, the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) defers to externally imposed expectations in their own governance policies. The RUSO policies and procedures manual states:

> 4.4 ATHLETICS. Athletic activities of each university will
> be governed by Rules and Regulations of the appropriately
> affiliated associations, National Collegiate Athletics
> Association (NCAA), National Association of Intercollegiate
> Athletics (NAIA), and by the respective athletic conference

policies and procedures. The Rules, Regulations, Policies

and Procedures are addendums of the Board Policy and

Procedure Manual. The Presidents, Commissioner, and all

other personnel concerned shall be held responsible for all

reasonable efforts to see that the above are faithfully

executed. The Presidents are authorized to direct, manage,

and administer the respective athletic conferences through

the established organizational structures contained in Policy

and Procedures Manuals. (RUSO, 1996, p. 91)

The policy makes no reference to institutional autonomy, academic values,

culture, policy, or mission. The RUSO policy reflects an assumption that

either athletic governing boards protect such components, or the institutions

independently guarantee such protection. Presidents typically work

together in reaching consensus regarding NCAA and athletic conference

guidelines (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). Presidential

involvement in establishing rules and regulations implies the assumption

that academic values are protected. However, there is no clearly

communicated expectation within the RUSO policy regarding

intercollegiate athletics programs. In other words, expectations regarding

the protection of academic values within intercollegiate athletics programs

are highly ambiguous from the highest level of institutional governance.

Campus control over intercollegiate athletics is first initiated by

students as college sports and higher education become tethered,

progressing to administrative decision-making and control only when the potential effects of intercollegiate athletics on enrollment, revenue, and facilities are realized (Estler, 2005). Faculty involvement from a historical perspective is extensive at times, while at times the faculty purview is sequestered or overlooked altogether (Newman, Miller, & Bartee, 2000).

For example, women's athletics was initiated by faculty, who provided complete oversight through affiliations with physical education academic departments (Estler, 2005). In other words, women's athletics had once been viewed entirely as an educational endeavor. Considered a fad at first, the growth of women's college sports became fueled by external demands regarding social issues such as gender equity and the passage of Title IX into law (Estler, 2005). The eventual inclusion of both genders being administered within the same athletic department, as well as the emerging marketability of women's college sports during the past decade, generates more interest in women's athletics than ever before (Estler, 2005). Once social law and the campus culture demands equal representation, university administrators and external constituents (NCAA, athletic conferences, etc) shift oversight of women's intercollegiate athletics from faculty to intercollegiate athletics (Estler, 2005). One can imagine the enormous costs associated with this historical transition and many critics blame gender equity for fueling additional athletics commercial endeavors necessary to finance costs associated with athletics arms race behavior (Estler, 2005). While establishing gender equity in intercollegiate athletics

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is considered moral and ethical, it also demands additional resources such as funding, staff, and facilities to meet gender equity legal requirements (Estler, 2005). However, it is reckless to suggest women's college sports are still a fad. The response of the general public confirms this during the March 2004 NCAA women's basketball championship game, which drew a larger national television audience than the men's game drew (Estler, 2005). Gender equity in college sports is just one example of how intercollegiate athletics and the university as a whole have been impacted by constituency groups. Some argue that many universities have yet to fully recover from the enormous financial commitment gender equity required of intercollegiate athletics programs (Estler, 2005).

The decisions impacting intercollegiate athletics programs and their sponsoring institutions are typically governed through the combined efforts of presidents, faculty athletic committees or representatives, and intercollegiate athletics directors.

The Role of Presidents

Estler (2005) suggests presidents are caught in complex and dynamic dilemmas presented by intercollegiate athletics administration. In 1996, the NCAA amended its policy for intercollegiate athletics administration at member institutions and formally charged presidents with overall responsibility for controlling intercollegiate athletics programs on campus (Newman, Miller & Bartee, 2000; Knight Foundation Commission,

2001). Thus, presidents hold ultimate responsibility and accountability for

ensuring that intercollegiate athletics preserve institutional and academic

integrity. Yet the president's ability to bridge intercollegiate athletics to the

institutional academic mission remains misunderstood and perhaps

misinterpreted by the academic community (Duderstadt, 2000). Newman,

Miller, and Bartee (2000) explain, "Presidents today feel the pressure of

juggling mixed messages of what they can offer the public while

simultaneously serving the student-athlete" (p. 7). Such a statement

suggests that ambiguous expectations exist for presidents as well.

Presidents have so many responsibilities across the institution that they may

rely more on others to make sure intercollegiate athletics is controlled and

balanced with respect to the academic mission. The principle characteristic

of the president's role is delegation of authority and trust to the

intercollegiate athletics director and faculty athletics representative to

manage a compliant intercollegiate athletics program supportive of the

university's academic mission (Duderstadt, 2000). Perhaps charging

presidents with institutional control over intercollegiate athletics programs

is a scare tactic to motivate greater attention to presidents' roles in

intercollegiate athletics administration. Duderstadt (2000), as a former

NCAA Division I president, suggests intercollegiate athletics programs are

far too visible, politically sensitive, and hazardous to presidents and

institutions to be managed as just another student activity. The current

façade of intercollegiate athletics presents presidents with some degree of

conflict in balancing athletic values and academic values as the number of

intercollegiate athletics constituents continues increasing (Estler, 2005).

Presidents face three consistent challenges in intercollegiate athletics

administration 1) financial escalation to seek the elusive level playing field

or competitive edge, 2) threats to academic integrity posed by

commercialization and competitiveness, and 3) student-athlete exploitation

for their athletic abilities without regard for their academic needs (Estler,

2005). The complexity surrounding presidential oversight of intercollegiate

athletics appears substantial and begins with the president's leadership style

and philosophical decision regarding the promotion of intercollegiate

athletics. Is the program an essential component of the academic mission,

thereby possibly limiting the university's competitiveness both on and off

the field? Or is the program promoting the university through the

commercialization of intercollegiate athletics? (Estler, 2005). The current

landscape of the college sports market does not appear to present any

middle ground, but may demand an all-or-none approach from universities.

How and why a president establishes the priority for intercollegiate athletics

on campus could anger constituency groups based on the constituency

groups' expectations of the university's intercollegiate athletics program

(Estler, 2005). Thus, the philosophical decision regarding athletic and

academic values should probably not be made without careful deliberation

through multiple perspectives. Estler (2005) suggests representation of

collegial values improve decision-making and provide a basis for bridging

the academic-athletics divide on campuses. Unfortunately, the conflicting

and ambiguous expectations encountered by presidents may lead to their

own difficulty in communicating compatible expectations to intercollegiate

athletics directors.

The Role of Faculty Athletics Representatives

The relationship between intellectual and academic integrity of

universities has traditionally found refuge and protection within the faculty

(Thelin, 1996). The importance of faculty in the administration of

intercollegiate athletics is well documented (Newman & Miller, 1994;

NCAA, 1998; Gerdy, 2002; AAUP, 2003; Knight Foundation Commission,

2001), and the involvement of faculty in intercollegiate athletics

administration has an extensive history (Newman, Miller, & Bartee, 2000).

The NCAA recognizes the importance of faculty involvement in

intercollegiate athletics administration and the NCAA constitution (rule

6.1.3) states, "each member institution is required to appoint a faculty

athletics representative" (p. 5). In other words, faculty should have a

clearly defined role in developing and monitoring athletic policy and

decision-making, which could impact the role of intercollegiate athletics

within the academic mission. Presidents have autonomy in appointing the

faculty athletics representative, which is a critical appointment if

institutional control becomes problematic. The relationship between

intercollegiate athletics and the academic mission is highly suspect and

remains under the well-guarded protection of central administrators and not faculty (Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000, Newman, Miller, & Bartee, 2000; Estler, 2005).

The basic responsibility of a faculty athletic representative is to monitor the preservation of academic integrity within intercollegiate athletics (NCAA, 1998). The NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative Handbook points out that the faculty athletics representative role is primarily shaped by expectations of presidents, but is also subject to input and advice from many constituents. The faculty athletics representative handbook lists "directors of athletics, senior woman administrators, conference commissioners, compliance coordinators, faculty governance officers, members of athletics boards or committees, and other groups of individuals" in describing constituents (NCAA, 1998, p. 4). In other words, the faculty athletic representative may also be subject to conflicting and ambiguous expectations from multiple constituencies as well. Estler (2005) suggests faculty athletics representatives offer both continuity and independence when engaging in intercollegiate athletics administration, particularly when meeting external constituency expectations pose threats to academic values.

According to the Faculty Athletics Representative Handbook (NCAA, 1998), the faculty athletic representative provides advice to the president "that reflects the traditional values of the faculty and which is rooted in the academic ethic of the institution" (p.10). The faculty athletics

representative serves to collaborate and validate the academic standards of their respective universities with the rules and regulations of the NCAA, to "promote academic integrity in intercollegiate athletics, to facilitate the integration of the athletics and academic components of the collegiate community, and to promote institutional control of athletics on campuses" (p.16). The checklist of faculty athletics representative duties states "Together with the chief executive officer and the director of athletics, develop a comprehensive plan for the institutional control of intercollegiate athletics and ensure that appropriate and explicit assignments of both responsibility and authority are made" (p.20). However, institutions are provided autonomy to determine the faculty member most appropriate to appoint as the faculty athletics representative and to determine the extent of the faculty athletics representative's role on campus. The faculty athletics representative handbook reads,

> The need for a significant faculty athletics representative
> role depends on institutional circumstances. The extent of
> national or regional prominence of the intercollegiate
> athletics program, its previous record with respect to
> compliance with NCAA and other applicable rules, and the
> of authority and responsibility – inside vs. outside of the
> athletics department – for the institutional control of
> intercollegiate athletics will play important parts in
> defining an appropriate faculty athletics representatives

role. Each chief executive officer, with advice from the

faculty governance structure and the athletics

administration, should determine the extent to which a

faculty athletics representative presence in the athletics

program is desirable or required. (p. 3)

The policy of the NCAA suggests the presence of role strain within

the faculty athletics representative's role resulting from expectations which

may be incompatible and unclear. Similar to presidents, faculty athletic

representatives may also be incapable of providing clearly communicated

role expectations to intercollegiate athletics directors.

Studies on the role of the faculty in intercollegiate athletics

administration appear to be more represented in literature than the roles of

presidents and athletics directors. Becker, Sparks, Choi, & Sell (1986)

study the influence of faculty in intercollegiate athletics governance and

administration in ninety-seven NCAA Division I universities. Faculty

athletics committee chairs responded to a 52-item questionnaire about the

responsibilities and operational processes of faculty roles in the

intercollegiate athletics governance process. Six factors concerning

authority emerge and include policy power, autonomous power, hiring

power, academic surveillance power, and NCAA power. The results reveal

power struggles between faculty and administration in intercollegiate

athletics. In this study, quantitative analysis fails to support the proper

balance of power and authority among intercollegiate athletics

administrators and suggests that issues of role responsibility, autonomy and authority require greater understanding.

Smith (1973) studied the role expectations of faculty athletics representatives and athletic committee members in National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) member institutions. The NAIA sponsored the research project, which serves the purpose of analyzing the role behaviors of faculty athletics representatives based upon the role expectations from presidents, intercollegiate athletics directors, and faculty athletic committees. The sample includes all 560 NAIA member institutions at the time of the study. The data collection instrument includes a researcher-designed questionnaire to generate data on faculty athletics representative role expectations and role behaviors. Intercollegiate athletics directors completed role behavior questionnaires and presidents, intercollegiate athletics directors, and faculty athletics representatives complete role expectation questionnaires. The return rate was 69 percent and the questionnaire data were analyzed for comparison against opinonnaire data generated during the pilot study. For data analysis, the NAIA schools are separated into four categories: small-private institutions; large-private institutions; small-public institutions; and large-public institutions. From the data, Smith (1973) describes roles for faculty athletics representatives and faculty athletics committees, which given the time period of the study (1973) is groundbreaking for the NAIA. His results indicate that most administrators and faculty athletics representatives

perceive the major role of the athletic committees to be merely advisory in nature. Smith's (1973) recommendations for further study include studying NCAA institutions for similar purposes and studying the attitudes of athletics administrators which may affect the rationales for decision-making, especially in areas where role expectations and role behaviors have wide variations. The current study considers Smith's (1973) study supportive of furthering research on the role of intercollegiate athletics directors at the NCAA Division II level.

It is clear the NCAA expects faculty athletics representatives to be involved in intercollegiate athletics on campuses, but it is also clear that institutions have the prerogative to determine how involved the faculty athletics representative should be, as well as the prerogative to limit the faculty perspective in the intercollegiate athletics administration (NCAA, 1998). Faculty athletics representatives are capable of aiding intercollegiate athletics directors in applying academic values in decision-making, but the extent of involvement of faculty athletics representatives appear to be an unknown institutional variable. Literature reveals that the role of the intercollegiate athletics director is becoming more de-centralized due to a fast-changing, constituency-oriented higher education environment demanding quick responses to expectations and demands (Covell & Barr, 2001; Estler, 2005).

The Role of Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

Intercollegiate athletics directors most often report directly to presidents and work closely with presidents regarding intercollegiate athletics administration (Estler, 2005). A close working relationship is viewed as not only a key to maintaining a certain degree of institutional control but also makes the selection and support of the intercollegiate athletics director one of the president's most important decisions (Duderstadt, 2000). The most meaningful interpersonal relationships develop when the intercollegiate athletics director's supervisors are reasonably knowledgeable about intercollegiate athletics but, more importantly, when they give the intercollegiate athletics director the responsibility and the authority (i.e. expectations) to operate the program within well established guidelines (Duderstadt, 2000).

Intercollegiate athletics directors are key components in the preservation of the integrity of the institution, but reform efforts suggest intercollegiate athletics directors alone are ineffective in controlling intercollegiate athletics (Duderstadt, 2000; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). Intercollegiate athletics directors may be in roles entirely bound by intercollegiate athletics, depending on whether the intercollegiate athletics program is affiliated with an academic department or stands alone as an independent department (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). The intercollegiate athletics director may be in the best position to monitor the direction of intercollegiate athletics programs, but may also be the

administrator who manages demands and expectations of constituents (Estler, 2005). The Knight Foundation Commission (2001) suggests that leaving daily oversight primarily to intercollegiate athletics directors and athletics staff in the past has led to some of the problems associated with institutional control over intercollegiate athletics.

The changing dimensions of college sports, such as the academic-athletics divide, reveal a potential paradigm shift in the role of the intercollegiate athletics director, especially if the intercollegiate athletics program is academically affiliated (Williams & Miller, 1983; Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Intercollegiate athletics directors continue to be responsible for operations associated with traditional administration, but are now more enthralled in fundraising, compliance, and other administrative roles (Richman, 1999). In other words, intercollegiate athletics directors may encounter multiple conflicting and ambiguous expectations from multiple internal and external constituents simultaneously, indicating the potential for role strain.

The Knight Foundation Commission (2001) recognizes the need for a management-based professional in today's market-oriented athletic environment. In other words, the traditional career trajectory for intercollegiate athletics directors which began as former coaches and teachers is disappearing. As a result, intercollegiate athletics directors may have no academic responsibilities in new, more athletic-driven, market-oriented roles (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985; Richman, 1999; Estler,

2005). Business management skills are essential for intercollegiate athletics directors, not coaching or teaching skills of the past. As a result the athletics director may no longer feel responsible for preserving collegial values in intercollegiate athletics (Richman, 1999).

The academic discipline of athletics administration has been experiencing growth over the past two decades; still the academic and professional preparation for intercollegiate athletics directors for their future roles remains essential (Williams & Miller, 1983). While the increasing problems associated with intercollegiate athletics stem from commercialism, the curricula preparing athletics administrators reflecting collegial values should counterbalance athletic values to aid in improving intercollegiate athletics administration (Estler, 2005). Athletic administration academic programs are relatively new, and it is unclear how these programs are pedagogically preparing future intercollegiate athletics administrators with respect to preserving academic values. Intercollegiate athletic directors today may be missing the key experiences of being former faculty members, which in the past provided a basis for their personal academic values and beliefs they carried with them into administrative roles (Williams & Miller, 1983; Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985; Estler, 2005).

Summary of Intercollegiate Athletics Research Literature

Most scholars agree the combined roles of presidents, faculty athletics representatives, and intercollegiate athletics directors should

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ideally be engaged in decision-making to ensure intercollegiate athletics

coexist with academic programs in supporting institutions' academic

missions (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001;

Bowen & Levin, 2003; Newman, Miller, & Bartee, 2000; Estler, 2005).

However, literature reveals intercollegiate athletics directors are burdened

with the daily battles of meeting growing constituency expectations and are

administering programs which are sliding further away from academic

missions (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005).

What remains a mystery is how intercollegiate athletics directors are

responding to the influence of multiple constituency groups and the impact

such activities have upon their ability to balance academic and athletic

values.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The excessive influence of intercollegiate athletics programs carry

the capacity to either preserve or destroy an institution's reputation (Gayle,

Tewarie, & White, 2003; Estler, 2005). According to the Knight

Foundation Commission (2001), many of the problems plaguing

intercollegiate athletics today began as result of ineffective administration

on campuses. Tierny (1988) suggests differences in perceptions regarding

institutional performance surface from within administrative processes and

decisions. Scholars suggest big-time college sports are responsible for most

of the scandal and abuse within intercollegiate athletics, but the reality is that smaller institutions face the same challenges and encounter the same problems of big-time sports at larger institutions (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). What appears to be lacking in the literature is research to help understand and explain the tensions the academic-athletic divide creates for intercollegiate athletics directors, particularly at NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs.

This phenomenological study will explore the perspectives of intercollegiate athletics directors' lived experiences as administrators at NCAA Division II institutions. Threads of existing research literature reveal the tensions experienced by intercollegiate athletics programs and intercollegiate athletics directors. The phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide appears to create tension on campuses, but research does not explore this phenomenon at NCAA Division II institutions. Role strain theory provides a guiding theoretical framework for the exploration of the research problem from the participants' perspectives in order to construct the essence of athletics directors' experiences. Chapter three presents the research design and methodology proposed for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the academic-athletic divide through the experiences and perspectives of intercollegiate athletics directors. The phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide, including its underlying components, may have different meanings to different people. Qualitative research allows one to understand how component parts of a phenomenon work together to form a whole (Merriam, 1998). Describing how intercollegiate athletics directors make sense of the academic-athletic divide and what the phenomenon means to their individual lived experiences is characteristic of phenomenological methods designed to gain *emic* or insider's perspectives (Creswell, 1998). The literature review for this study suggests a divide exists between academic and athletic values in higher education, but insight from NCAA Division II institutions has not been attained. Additionally, the perspectives of the intercollegiate athletics director role is absent within the research literature. The intercollegiate athletics director is a key administrative role in binding the intercollegiate athletics program to the institution in support of its academic mission. Role strain theory implies conflicting and ambiguously communicated expectations from the intercollegiate athletics constituencies' base hinders intercollegiate athletics directors' ability to effectively bridge the academic-athletic divide.

Since there are voids in existing literature and a greater understanding of this phenomenon is needed, a qualitative approach is merited (Creswell, 2003). This chapter presents the phenomenological design and methods useful in conducting a naturalistic, open-ended inquiry aimed at understanding the problem of the academic-athletic divide.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study uses phenomenological methods to explore the research questions through the participant's perspectives, perceptions, and experiences. The design of this study is grounded in the interpretivist epistemology, believing that reality exists in the participants' self-descriptions and the interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2003). Moustakas (1994) summarizes, "The empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13).

Reflexivity, another critical design component of this study, is a logical, systematic method for analyzing and synthesizing data with the ultimate goal of describing the essences of experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2003). The acknowledgement of personal biases, values, and interests with regard to the academic-athletic divide demands that researchers balance personal interests and consciousness through reflection and intuition as the *emic* perspectives emerge during the study. The method

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for accomplishing this in phenomenological designs is by incorporating a process known as *epoche*, or the suspension of "prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). The formative ideas, questions, and literature review for this study initiates the epoche process and a complete account of the researcher's preconceptions with the academic-athletic divide is bracketed and composed prior to collecting data. The goal of the epoche process is to enable a better understanding of the perspectives of participants' experiences from an unbiased approach (Crewell, 1998).

Research Questions

1. How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience their roles as

    a. administrators of intercollegiate athletics programs?

    b. university administrators?

2. How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletic directors experience the influence of key constituency groups upon the decisions they make as

    a. administrators of intercollegiate athletics programs?

    b. university administrators?

3. To what extent do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience conflict between their roles as intercollegiate athletics administrators and university

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administrators? To the extent these are seen as conflicts, how do

intercollegiate athletics directors resolve these conflicts?

4. To what extent do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics

directors experience academic-athletic divides in their roles?

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Formal application requesting approval of the pilot study (see

Appendix H) and the formal study through the University of Oklahoma's

Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted on September 16, 2008.

Ensuring the welfare and protecting the rights of participants are paramount

safeguards for scholarly researchers (Creswell, 2003). For this study, IRB

granted expedited approval (category 6, 7) for the research design and

methods, including the interview guide (Appendix A) and documents

requested for review (Appendix E), and upon acceptable revision of the

cover letter to Presidents (Appendix B), revised letter to Intercollegiate

Athletics Directors (Appendix C), revised informed consent form

(Appendix D), and revised email and telephone recruitment scripts

(Appendix F). All modifications to this study prospectus based upon the

results of the pilot study or from recommendations by the researcher's

prospectus committee were submitted to IRB for approval prior to

beginning the full study in fall 2009.

Researcher's Self-Reflection

The researcher's perceptions of intercollegiate athletics and the academic-athletic divide are shaped through personal experiences. The researcher is a doctoral student and an assistant professor at a regional university located in the south-central region of the United States. His role at this institution involves serving as the Chair of the Kinesiology Department and the Program Director for the Athletic Training Education Program, as well as the Program Director for the Sports Administration graduate program. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1996 and gained undergraduate educational experiences while working within an NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics program. He became a Certified Athletic Trainer in 1997 and began a career as a sports medicine professional. Professional work experiences from 1997 until 1999 included providing athletic training services within the health care industry, secondary interscholastic athletics, and intercollegiate athletics programs participating within the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). He obtained a Masters in Human Relations degree in 1999 and in August of that same year became the Head Athletic Trainer at the institution of current employment. The researcher has worked for over a decade at a smaller, regional university sponsoring an intercollegiate athletics program that competes at the NCAA Division II level.

The intercollegiate athletics program at the researcher's employing institution is reminiscent of what Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) identify

as an academic-affiliated program. The intercollegiate athletics director served as the academic department chair until the mid-1990s. The intercollegiate athletics program and the Department of Kinesiology continue to share facilities and faculty, but administrative responsibilities have officially been separated. Both departments still overlap somewhat with budget allocations, an example being that all athletic coaches' salaries are paid through faculty contracts. Only one of the 18 full-time faculty members is dedicated entirely to the kinesiology academic programs. The remaining faculty members occupy dual roles split between kinesiology academic responsibilities and intercollegiate athletics responsibilities. The department chair role is evenly split between academics and administration, with no athletic responsibilities. However, the previous department chair's duties included coaching. The only full-time athletics administrator is the intercollegiate athletics director. The intercollegiate athletics department only has two full-time staff members. One position is the sports information director, and the other is the strength and conditioning coordinator, neither of whom have faculty responsibilities. The intercollegiate athletics director and academic department chair share one full-time secretary, and all three of these offices are located in the facility housing both the Kinesiology Department and the Intercollegiate Athletics Department.

All head and assistant coaches, as well as the NCAA compliance coordinator and two certified athletic trainers, occupy dual roles and perform both academic and athletic responsibilities. The majority of these

roles are based upon faculty load and have more academic than athletic

responsibilities, including teaching and advising. However, the researcher's

observations and experiences suggest that the majority of these individuals'

time at work is directed toward fulfilling intercollegiate athletics

responsibilities. First as the Head Athletic Trainer, the researcher's faculty

load was roughly 60% academics and 40% athletics. Working on average

70 hours per week during the first few years at this institution, the

researcher provided athletic training services to all 11 athletic teams in

addition to academic responsibilities, which at times was overbearing. The

researcher first recognized the potential for role strain within his own

position with the university. As years of experience and education mounted

for the researcher, changes within the intercollegiate athletics program and

across the institution suggested a setting conducive to role strain for

individuals.

The researcher's perceptions of this campus are that the institution

has a strong heritage of football and men's basketball success and if not for

Congressional mandates such as Title IX and other external influences, the

institution probably would not have expanded its athletic program. The

most recent expansion from 11 to 13 sports occurred two years ago when a

new president was hired, followed shortly by the hiring of a new

intercollegiate athletics director. The men's basketball team reached the

NAIA finals in 1989 and the football team won an NAIA national

championship in 1993. The football team moved to the NCAA Division II

competitive level in 1994 and the other sports were competing fully on the NCAA Division II level within a few years.

There has always appeared to be a stronger academic emphasis on this campus, as six of the 13 head coaches remain part-time, non-faculty staff members. Justifying the expense of hiring additional full-time faculty who are primarily coaching appears to be a challenge. The previous administration seemed to only emphasize winning football and basketball games against the institution's rival school and financial resources for the intercollegiate athletics department's operations and facilities have been insufficient and embarrassing at times. The increasing costs for intercollegiate athletics may be camouflaged within the academic budget due to the "educational" nature of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics.

Within the past two years, this institution has experienced substantial change. A new president was hired and appeared to place a stronger emphasis on intercollegiate athletics than the predecessor, who had served the institution for almost two decades. One of the new president's initial decisions was to expand the intercollegiate athletics program from 11 to 13 sports to improve gender equity. He also established a defined budget for intercollegiate athletics operations, as well as rectified some problems within athletic-related financial aid. One decision the president made that impacted both athletics and academics was initiating a major branding

initiative to develop a new version of the institution's athletic logo to enhance the institution's identity.

The institution also hired a new intercollegiate athletics director. His background was within intercollegiate athletics at the NCAA Division I level, and he held a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. He arrived with less faculty-oriented academic experience in contrast to the former intercollegiate athletics director, who was groomed from within the faculty ranks on campus and served within the intercollegiate athletics director role for almost 30 years. After observing both the new president and intercollegiate athletics director striving to enhance the intercollegiate athletics programs, it appears that constituency-based obstacles may prevent change at the rapid rate they both desire. First of all, this institution appears to lag far behind conference affiliates in many areas, including facilities and staffing. Secondly, fundraising in this institution's intercollegiate athletics department has been virtually non-existent and external support has been very weak for many years. Recent administrative changes appear to be developing and implementing strategies to eradicate the obstacles to improving the success and visibility of the intercollegiate athletics program.

There appear to be components of the role strain theory visible in the researcher's personal observations and experiences with this campus. As the institution moves forward, long-standing academic values are being challenged, but the level of resistance to such changes remains to be fully appreciated. Exploring how role strain is impacting intercollegiate athletics

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directors' experiences should lead to better understanding how campus-based changes and evolutions impact the academic-athletic divide phenomenon.

The experiences detailed in this initial self-reflection are refined and reflected upon throughout the course of this study. Reflexivity encourages the researcher to take a neutral, non-judgmental stance on the research topic in order to combat excessive researcher bias and promote obtaining accurate and credible findings (Creswell, 1998).

Sampling and Study Participants

According to Moustakas (1994), "There is no in-advance criteria for locating and selecting the research participants" (p. 107). But sampling procedures in qualitative research should consider and discuss the research setting (where), the participants (who), the events (what) and the process (evolving nature of the events in the setting from the participants' perspectives) (Creswell, 2003). Purposeful sampling is desired to be a core strategic theme distinguishing qualitative research methods (Patton, 2002). The rationale behind purposive sampling is relevance to the research questions, or as Patton (2002) describes as "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry..." (p. 230). The validity of qualitative research findings are bound within the

richness of information conveyed in the findings and the researcher's skills

in data collection, analysis and interpretation rather than sample size

(Patton, 2002). Although true purposive sampling was the strategy

proposed for this study, this study utilizes a convenience sample of

participants, but permits the examination of different perspectives on the

research problem and access to cases holding similarities (Patton, 2002;

Creswell, 1998).

Research Setting

The setting chosen for this study is a multi-state athletics conference

composed of 15 member institutions located in the south-central United

States. A single athletics conference provides a population from which

intercollegiate athletics directors were invited to participate in this study.

The institutions within this conference are from multiple states and are

considered regional universities and similar with respect to their

characteristics. All member institutions are subject to the same externally

imposed NCAA and athletics conference guidelines. The regional

universities in this study sponsor intercollegiate athletics programs and

compete within the NCAA Division II level of competition. All member

institutions employ an intercollegiate athletics director. A review of this

particular athletics conference and the member institutions is reported in

Appendix G. The diversity of the institutions within this particular

conference includes both urban and rurally located universities, both public and private institutions, and a variety of sport offerings among the schools.

This conference was chosen as the research setting because the researcher is employed at an institution that is similar in respect to size, type, and nature of NCAA Division II participation. The researcher had no established direct professional relationships with any of the participants prior to beginning the study.

Analysis of institutional similarity reveals why these institutions appear to be suitable competitors within this athletics conference. The member institutions sponsor an average of ten competitive sports teams and an average of 275 student athletes. Only two of the institutions do not sponsor football. The institutions have an average coaching staff of 28 and the average intercollegiate athletics program budget is $3 million. Member institutions closely aligned with these averages are selected as typical cases believed to be representative of the NCAA Division II philosophy.

Sample

Prior to beginning this study, the commissioner of the athletics conference was contacted via email to request the conference handbook and to gain support for this study. Fourteen university presidents were sent letters (Appendix B) to gain institutional support for this inquiry and permission to conduct research with university personnel. These letters explained the purpose for this study and presidents were provided assurance

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of confidentiality and institutional anonymity throughout the research project under the reporting of results. Contacting presidents also provided an opportunity to determine if institutional review board approval was required on each campus prior to soliciting the participation of their intercollegiate athletics director.

After receiving consent from 11 university presidents, letters were mailed to 11 intercollegiate athletics directors announcing the study and invited their participation. The invitation letters explained the purpose of this study, the time commitment and interview procedures, and disclosed potential risks and benefits of participation. The invitation letters also reinforced the promise of anonymity and confidentiality. Upon receiving consent from six participants, the researcher emailed and/or placed telephone calls directly to the intercollegiate athletics directors confirming their participation and to schedule a specific date and time for interviews to be conducted.

Informed consent forms (Appendix D) were signed and returned in a self-addressed stamped envelope by five intercollegiate athletics directors who agreed to participate in this study. All five participants signing the informed consent form were emailed a recruitment script (Appendix F) confirming informed consent with an attached list of documents requested for review (Appendix E) requesting a future interview. A sixth participant contacted the researcher regarding his/her eligibility for participation in the study prior to returning the consent form and the decision was made to

withdraw his/her invitation as s/he was no longer functioning in the role as the intercollegiate athletics director at the institution. One participant never returned email or phone call requests for an interview after signing and returning informed consent.

Interview dates and times were arranged and confirmed via email with four participants. Interviews were conducted with four participants in this study. An institution similar in size and type of those institutions in the study was selected to participate in the pilot study (Appendix H), and this data is not used in the results of this full study.

The unit of analysis for this study is the position of intercollegiate athletics directors. Intervening institutional factors most certainly shaped the participants' perspectives, but anticipating what those factors are during the design of a qualitative study is premature. According to Creswell (2003), phenomenological frameworks focus on exploring a single phenomenon, recognizing that studies evolve into explorations of relationships or comparisons among ideas that emerge during data collection. By establishing the criterion of institutions holding membership within an NCAA Division II athletics conference and the criterion of participants holding the role of intercollegiate athletics director allows this study to interview those individuals who are most capable of providing meaningful responses to answering the research questions in this study (Creswell, 2003).

Research Events & Procedures

Four intercollegiate athletics directors employed at member institutions of an NCAA Division II athletics conference are interviewed in this study. The interview guide (Appendix A) provides a theoretical framework for questioning and reflects the information obtained from the literature review regarding the typical events occurring in the research setting. Questions are designed using the role theory framework and intercollegiate athletics literature to gain participants' experiences with their role expectations, including activities related to maintaining federal mandates, NCAA and athletic conference rules compliance, fundraising, institutional policies and procedures, and strategies for maintaining academic and financial integrity.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected using interviews and documents. One interview was conducted face-to-face, and three interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recording device. The list of documents requested for review (Appendix E) was sent to participants prior to conducting interviews so they could be reviewed and analyzed for leads to possible interview questions.

Instrumentation

The researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection, review, analysis, and interpretation in the current study (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2003). A disadvantage to the researcher serving as the single instrument is researcher bias, whereas an advantage is high inter-rater reliability (Creswell, 1998). The disadvantage of researcher bias is directly addressed in this phenomenological study through the self-reflective process of bracketing the researcher's attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions prior to engaging the study participants (Creswell, 2003). This process, known as epoche, is a Greek term meaning "to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33; Patton, 2002, p. 484).

Interviews

Data sources for phenomenological studies come primarily through interviews with participants, which can be conducted in-person, via telephone, or in the form of focus group interviews (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998, 2003). Interviews serve as the main data source for identifying multiple realities in qualitative research as these best capture the perspectives of participants in order to better understand their perceptions, experiences, expectations, and responsibilities (Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002). This study used semi-structured interviews and an open-ended approach to questioning from a researcher-designed interview guide (See Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews collected data from respondents through

structured lead questions reflecting the role strain theoretical framework and its constructs and also utilized probing questions to engage emerging issues during the interviews (Creswell, 1998, Patton, 2002). The intent of this researcher-designed interview guide is to explore the extent to which role strain is present among participants in their positions as intercollegiate athletics directors. Specific probing questions are difficult to specify ahead of time because probing questions depend upon participants' unique responses to lead questions (Merriam, 1998).

Interviews with participants were scheduled and located at each participant's convenience. As a result, interviews were conducted and recorded over the phone except for one face-to-face interview. Interviews were conducted between November 2009 and September 2010 and the identities of participants are coded to protect anonymity and to ensure confidentiality. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and later transcribed into verbatim text by the researcher. Copies of interview transcripts were provided to the participants for review to ensure that the subjects' responses are accurately recorded. Multiple interviews with each participant were not necessary to establish a consensus among participants, to reach the point of contextual and/or theoretical saturation, or to establish inter-subject agreement. However, follow-up emails of questions for clarification were utilized several times. Patton (2002) suggests strong inter-subject agreement confirms depth and accuracy of the researcher's description of the essence of participants' experiences. Each

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interview was transcribed and analyzed prior to conducting subsequent interviews to allow for refinement of the subsequent interview questions, as well as researcher reflexivity.

Documents

Another source of data for this study includes institutional documents for content analysis. A copy of the athletics conference handbook was obtained from the conference commissioner's office, as well as the NCAA Division II handbook. Athletics conferences and NCAA rules provide insight into intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences because "the complex and convoluted structure to achieve order and fairness in college sports has become one instrument through which the external demands of the athletics enterprise appears to shape campus policies and practices" (Estler, 2005, p. 9).

A copy of each participating institution's most recent NCAA self-study analysis was requested for examination and comparison with institutional documents and interview data. The self-study is member-reported and a cyclic part of institutional certification required for maintaining NCAA membership (Estler, 2005). The self-study document is relevant to the research problem, as the self-study process is a recommendation from "the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991) to study and propose reforms for college sports" (Estler, 2005, p. 31). However, only one participating institution's

NCAA self-study was available for review. The remaining participants were unable to produce a review copy for the study or they were about to undertake the NCAA self study process. Therefore, the unavailable NCAA self-study reports provided probing questions during the interviews.

The published institutional mission statement and/or academic mission, as well as the intercollegiate athletics program's mission were examined for ambiguity and compatibility. Ambiguity has plagued the general academic mission of higher education, historically preventing a clearly defined role for intercollegiate athletics programs in academic missions (Chu, Segrave & Becker, 1985; Thelin, 1996).

The intercollegiate athletics directors' job descriptions were reviewed for clearly communicated and compatible role expectations. Poorly communicated role expectations are linked to ineffective administration (Miles & Petty, 1975; Gmelch, 1999). Ineffective intercollegiate athletics administration challenges campus control over intercollegiate athletics programs and facilitates academic-athletic divides (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991; Bowen & Levin, 2003).

A copy of the intercollegiate athletics programs' annual budget was requested for review to understand the financial impact of intercollegiate athletics on campuses. On average, NCAA Division II institutions generate financial deficits of up to half a million dollars annually when funding supplemented by the institution and athletics-related financial aid are not considered (Estler, 2005).

The intercollegiate athletics programs' handbook is an official institutional publication and was examined to gain a sense of policy-driven attitudes and behaviors. Intercollegiate athletics programs' policies and procedures manual were examined and compared to athletic conference and NCAA manuals for compatibility of expectations.

Intercollegiate athletics department annual budgets were requested for review prior to interviews, but only one document was provided for review. Due to reviewing one budget, this document was not analyzed in the study. However, institutional budgets are public records and this route provides some limited data for each participating institution to aid in establishing institutional similarities and differences during data analysis. The treatment of all institutional documents with confidentiality and anonymity was strictly practiced throughout the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Determining the appropriate unit of analysis depends on what the researcher wants to be able to convey at the conclusion of the study (Creswell, 1998). Data collected from each participant was initially analyzed as a single unit following each interview. The documents obtained from each institution underwent content analysis, which was analyzed parallel with each participant's interview transcript in an effort to interpret participant's real world experiences.   Data collection and analysis are typically ongoing, simultaneous activities in emerging designs, with

reflexivity revealing directions to help identify all possible data sources and meanings of experiences (Creswell, 2003). Once all of the interviews were conducted and documents had undergone content analysis, data collected from participants were analyzed as a single unit of analysis. Grouping participants into one unit for analysis is appropriate since characteristics of the individuals in the group have important implications on the phenomenon of interest in the study (Patton, 2002).

Phenomenological methods have a detailed procedure for data analysis and are highly dependent upon the interpretation of data by the researcher (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenological data analysis begins with immersion in the data to gain a sense of the whole phenomenon, which leads to focusing on details of the underlying components of the phenomenon through bracketing, horizonalization, and clustering (Creswell, 2003). In the phenomenologist's search for all possible meanings, identifying significant statements and generating categorical themes lead researchers to generating the descriptive essence of participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study searched for an essence through the comparison of textual interview transcripts and searched for possible explanations related to the essence through the content analysis of institutional documents and the theoretical framework.

First, the reflective process serves as the pathway through which the structured streams of experiences divulged by participants are grasped and analyzed (Moustakas, 1994). Reflection provides a logical, systematic

means for constructing full, textual descriptions of the participants' experiences, including their thoughts, feelings, examples, ideas, and situations necessary to portray the structural descriptions or essences of the lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998).

The second step in reducing data is horizonalization (Moustakas, 1994), or categorizing themes (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) describes this as a process of "taking the text or qualitative information apart, looking for categories, themes, or dimensions of information" (p. 144). Initial themes emerge from the content analysis of institutional documents and the interview transcripts, some of which are confirmed within the context of the role strain theoretical framework and reported as the results of the study. Phenomenological researchers must realize that horizons are unlimited in reducing phenomenological data due to the amount of textual data for coding (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, horizonalization becomes a never-ending process and data collection and analysis must conclude, even though possibilities for uncovering additional perceptions exist. The categorizing or coding process of the data reduces chaos and confusion when sorting through enormous amounts of data (Patton, 2002). The categories are examined for emerging themes related to the phenomenon and the role strain theoretical framework.

The third and final step in reducing phenomenological data is transforming the coded data statements produced from horizonalization into clusters of meanings, which reveal specific themes for further examination.

Clustering themes allows the researcher to convey descriptive information

about athletics directors' experiences and leads toward production of an

overall essence of experiences (Creswell, 2003). Removing overlapping

and repetitive statements at this point in the data analysis and interpreting

which themes to report as major findings becomes the goal (Moustakas,

1994; Creswell, 1998).

From the three steps of bracketing, horizonalization and clustering

data, these transformations of data are tied together to develop textual and

structural narrative descriptions of the data. Textual descriptions are written

to convey participants' meanings of experiences (Moustakas, 1994;

Creswell, 1998). Structural descriptions and themes are "shaped into a

general description," or a narrative of participants' experiences (Creswell,

2003, p. 194). The process of writing narrative descriptions involves the

researcher seeking all possible meanings, seeking divergent perspectives,

and varying the frames of reference about the phenomenon or using

imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998).

Trustworthiness

The omission of strategies for ensuring trustworthiness of qualitative

data may reduce the validity of qualitative findings (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative methods scholars suggest employing at least three of the

recognized strategies to support trustworthiness in qualitative research

findings (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Patton, 2002). Strategies for validating the

accuracy of findings aid in "determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (Creswell & Miller, 2000 as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 195). This study employs several strategies, including the disclosure of researcher bias, rich narrative descriptions, data source triangulation, member-checking, and reporting of discrepant information (Patton, 2002). These strategies are considered some of the most commonly used and most cost-effective strategies in qualitative methodological designs (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).

First, data analysis in this phenomenological study actually begins with examining the researcher's own personal bias, and then looking outward to participants to establish inter-subject validity (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Researcher bias may shape data interpretation and disclosure of researcher bias serves to "create an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers" and reduce readers' assumptions regarding the motives of the researcher (Creswell, 2003, p. 196).

Second, trustworthiness is enhanced through constructing "rich, thick descriptions to convey findings" capable of transporting "readers to the setting" and giving readers of "the discussion an element of shared experiences" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Interviews are audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and reviewed for accuracy. Accurate and complete interview transcripts provide textual data for writing rich, thick descriptions for the narrative reporting of the findings. Contextually rich narrative

descriptions may reveal shared characteristics which may be transferable to other settings.

Third, data source triangulation reinforces the validity of the current study by utilizing multiple sources of data for analysis. Conducting interviews with multiple intercollegiate athletics directors allows for data source triangulation "by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Furthermore, interview data are examined for comparison with data resulting from the examination and content analysis of institutional documents. The researcher's self-reflection is also considered a data source for triangulation in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2003).

Fourth, trustworthiness of the data is strengthened through collecting data from interview questions and documents, and then returning to participants for confirmation, clarifications, and reviewing transcripts for accuracy (Creswell, 2003).

Finally, the reporting of discrepant information "that runs counter to the themes" adds credibility to the results "because real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Employing the strategies of disclosing researcher bias, rich narrative descriptions, data source triangulation, member-checking, and reporting of discrepant information serve to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings,

Limitations

This phenomenological study is limited by the contextual bounds.

Intercollegiate athletics programs may vary among institutions with regard

to their structure and operation because of institutional differences.

Intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions who are

members of a single athletics conference are interviewed and institutional

documents are reviewed. Interviews pose limitations to this study as Patton

(2002) states: "Interview data limitations include possibly distorted

responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of

awareness" (p. 306). Document reviews pose limitations identified by

Patton (2002) as some requested documents may be inaccessible or

unavailable. One critical limitation is the interpretive nature of qualitative

research as "the researcher filters data through a personal lens that is

situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment" (Creswell, 2003,

p. 182). Finally, a small sample limits the generalizability of results to all

NCAA Division II institutions as well (Creswell, 2003). Strategies for

overcoming these limitations through the design of the study and strategies

for ensuring trustworthiness of the findings are employed.

Assumptions

It is assumed that intercollegiate athletics programs are legitimate

campus-based programs in the context of higher education. It is also

assumed that intercollegiate athletics directors hold the primary

administrative role in administering athletic programs with legitimate

authority delegated from the president and function within the guidelines of

a job description as competent professionals. Finally, it is assumed that

participants will be truthful in their responses and will be capable of

providing meaningful insight to the best of their own personal knowledge

and experiences.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODS

This study invited eleven intercollegiate athletics directors as

participants from NCAA Division II institutions who are members of a

single athletics conference. Data analysis of the current study reduced

textual and structural meanings to the essence of four participants'

experiences (Creswell, 2003). Four interview transcripts were coded, stored

in data files, and analyzed for emerging themes to support narrative

descriptions. The goal of the analytical process is to code data for

generating detailed descriptions and the analysis of themes (Creswell,

1998). The data interpretation is dependent upon the researcher's

understandings of the data, but specific strategies for ensuring the

trustworthiness of findings are also employed.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected in this research study were analyzed for emerging themes. A discussion of these findings and how they provide answers to the research questions is included in chapter five. Finally, the discussion and implication of these findings based upon the outcomes of this study are included in chapter six.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The Athletics Conference

This research study was conducted in an athletic conference in the south-central United States. The higher education institutions which manage the conference come from multiple states and are all considered regional universities competing at the NCAA Division II level of athletic competition. The athletics conference has been in existence for almost 80 years with some variation in institutional membership during its history. The conference was undergoing expansion and realignment of its membership during the time this study was conducted. There is a well-documented history of quality athletic success in this conference, wherein member institutions' athletic programs have won more than 100 national team championships and at least 72 of those championships are at the NCAA Division II level of competition. The researcher interviewed four intercollegiate athletics directors and reviewed documents from four

different higher education institutions holding membership in this athletics conference.

The Institutions

Through content analysis of documents, the basic characteristics of participating institutions were generated and summarized in Table 1 for review. These characteristics are more structural and operational in nature as opposed to philosophical characteristics, which were also explored. Institution A is a public institution with a student enrollment of approximately 3,300 students and located in a city with a population of roughly 92,000. The operating budget of the institution was $41,182,356 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 and the budget for intercollegiate athletics for FY 2009 was $1,498,411, which is 3.63% of the overall budget for Institution A. Institution A reports 143 student athletes, which is 4 % of total enrollment, and sponsors 10 intercollegiate sports, but not football. All 19 coaches on staff also teach courses and serve as academic advisors at Institution A, as the intercollegiate athletics department is affiliated with an academic department. Coaches are employed on 10-month faculty contracts at Institution A.

Institution B is a public institution with a student enrollment of approximately 2,300 students and located in a city with a population of 11,000. The operating budget of the institution was $46,438,000 for FY 2009 and the budget for intercollegiate athletics for FY 2009 was

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$2,942,997, which is 6.34% of the overall budget for Institution B. Institution B sponsors 15 intercollegiate sports and reports 459 student athletes, which is 19% of the overall student enrollment at Institution B. All 22 coaches on staff also teach courses, but do not serve as academic advisors at Institution B, although the intercollegiate athletics department is affiliated with an academic department. Coaches are employed on 12-month administrative at-will contracts at Institution B.

Institution C is a public institution with a student enrollment of approximately 5,600 students and located in a city with a population of roughly 13,000. The operating budget of the institution was $85,457,000 for FY 2009 and the budget for intercollegiate athletics for FY 2009 was $3,099,949, which is 3.63% of the overall budget for Institution C. Institution C reports 294 student athletes, which is 5% of total enrollment, and sponsors 13 sports. The intercollegiate athletics department at Institution C is affiliated with an academic department and the 40 coaches on staff are required to teach three hours per semester, but they do not serve as academic advisors. Coaches are employed on 12-month administrative at-will contracts at Institution C.

Institution D is a private institution with a student enrollment of approximately 4,000 students and located in a city with a population of 115,000. The operating budget of the institution was $83,152,610 for FY 2009 and the budget for intercollegiate athletics for FY 2009 was $5,913,883, which is 7.11% of the overall budget for Institution D.

Institution D reports 396 student athletes, which is 9% of total enrollment, and sponsors 12 intercollegiate sports. The 43 coaches on staff have no teaching responsibilities, but they do have teaching opportunities. They serve in advisement roles to aid academic eligibility and compliance issues related to student athletes. The intercollegiate athletics department at Institution D is not affiliated with any specific academic department. Coaches are employed on 12-month administrative at-will contracts at Institution D.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participant's Institutions

Institution	A	B	C	D
Type	Public	Public	Public	Private
FTE Enrollment	3,385	2,370	5,670	4,145
City Population	92,757	11,131	12,875	115,930
Institutional Budget	$41,182,356	$46,438,000	$85,457,000	$83,152,610
Athletics Budget	$1,498,411	$2,942,997	$3,099,949	$5,913,883
% Budget	3.63%	6.34%	3.63%	7.11%
Sports	10 (no Football)	15	13	12
Student-Athletes	143	459	294	396
% Student-Athletes of FTE	4%	19%	5%	9%
Coaching Staff	19	22	40	43
Coaches Teach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional

According to Estler (2005), athletic conferences provide another avenue for equitable intercollegiate athletics competitive relationships among like-minded universities sharing some basic core values. Documents reviewed in this study and used to help answer the research questions include institutional mission statements, athletics philosophies, and athletics directors' position descriptions.

Institutional Mission Statements

The institutional mission statements of all four participating institutions were reviewed and reflect an emphasis placed upon student-centered teaching, learning, service, and economic development. Excerpts from mission statements include the following:

> Institution A - "Fosters a student-centered academic environment that combines innovative classroom teaching with experiential learning….And is a driving force in the cultural life and economic development of the region."
>
> Institution B - "Excellent teaching and active learning define campus relationships…and professional service is important…."
>
> Institution C – "…is a student-centered learning community…is a significant catalyst for economic development…engaging students through effective teaching…experiential learning and service."

Institution D - "…will deliver a unique, Christ-centered experience that draws students into the community."

The mission statement of Institution C is more extensively defined and promotes a student-centered philosophy coupled with the institution's mission statement. The only mention of intercollegiate athletics with regard to institutional mission statements is found within the addendum to the mission of Institution C, the student-centered philosophy:

Although a student-centered university strives to promote student success, the relaxation or reduction of academic standards or expectations cannot be considered as being a contribution to success. Students must be held to high standards in the classroom, in performances, in exhibiting their work, on the athletic field, or in any other arena of student endeavor. Expectations and goals are important aspects of the student-centered philosophy and must be encouraged campus-wide.

Intercollegiate athletics is not discriminately listed, but included within a list of several examples of student activities identified within the student-centered philosophical statement. The data for institutional mission statements are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Key Words within Institutional Mission Statements

Institution	Mission Statement KeywordAnalysis	Missions Reflect:
A	student-centered	
B	whole student life campus relationships	Student-Centered
C	student-centered learning community	
D	student experience	
A	experiential learning life-long learning innovative classroom teaching	
B	excellent teaching active learning life-long learning scholarship	Teaching and Learning
C	life-long learning critical thinking problem-solving skills effective teaching practical experiences research	
D	critical thinkers student research creative problem-solvers hands-on learning	
A	meaningful contributions citizenship	
B	cultural diversity professional service	Service
C	citizens of the nation and world	
D	global citizens volunteers	
A	economic development	
B	enrichment	Economic Development
C	catalyst for economic development	
D	partnerships corporate America	

Athletic Philosophy Statements

The athletics philosophy documents of all participating institutions were examined for compatibility with the institutional mission statements. Estler (2005) suggests that one of the contributing factors to an academic-athletic divide could be perceived threats intercollegiate athletics programs pose to academic missions. Therefore, an institution's athletic philosophy should be a document worthy of reviewing to determine if participating institutions' intercollegiate athletics programs promote an athletics philosophy in support of the institutions' academic mission statements. Participating institutions' athletics philosophies indicate that NCAA Division II athletics philosophies support institutional mission statements. These data are summarized in Table 3.

These documents contain language and meaning that reflect the overall mission of their respective institutions. The athletics philosophy of Institution A contains, "…The program shall be conducted in the realization that athletics is not an end in itself, but merely one of the contributing factors in the total education of the student." This appears to directly support the mission of Institution A as the mission states, "Prepares students for professional success, responsible citizenship, life-long learning, and meaningful contributions to a rapidly changing world." The athletics philosophy of Institution B explicitly states "The intercollegiate athletics program…exists to complement the mission and goals of the university."

Additional evidence of athletic philosophies coupled with institutional mission statements is confirmed at Institution C, where the athletics philosophy states, "…seeks to further the institution's mission of educating tomorrow's leaders by providing a comprehensive and highly competitive athletic program for the benefit of participants, the student body, our community and (Institution C)". Finally, supportive evidence is further confirmed at Institution D, where the athletics philosophy reads, "The athletics program of the university assists in this mission by recruiting outstanding student-athletes, by employing dedicated Christian coaches and professional staff who embrace the values of (Institution D), and by providing sports events around which alumni, friends and students can rally."

Table 3

Athletics Philosophy Excerpts of Participating Institutions

Institution	Athletics Philosophies Demonstrate Support for Institutional Missions
A	"Since it is a major purpose of the university to provide the opportunity for all students to develop to the fullest possible degree all desirable activities and skills, it shall be the purpose of intercollegiate athletics to provide the opportunity for each student-athlete to attain proficiency in athletic endeavors." "The program shall be conducted in the realization that athletics is not an end in itself, but merely one of the contributing factors in the total education of the student."
B	"The intercollegiate athletics program for men and women at (Institution C) exists to complement the mission and goals of the university." "Since athletic activities aid in the intellectual, physical and social development of students, there is an important role for intercollegiate athletics to play at the university." "The intercollegiate athletics program is an integral part of a total program of instruction and recreation." "In addition to the development of skill, the program is designed to provide meaningful emotional, social and intellectual development for each individual." "Pressure to win without regard to the academic and physical well-being of the student athlete must be avoided." "The program is to be conducted under procedures and actions that exhibit sound educational practice." "The program is to be administered in accordance with the policies of conference and other state, regional and national organizations in which the University holds membership."

C	"…seeks to further the institution's mission of educating tomorrow's leaders by providing a comprehensive and highly competitive athletic program for the benefit of participants, the student body, our community and (Institution C)." "In addition to the knowledge gained from a challenging academic program, we believe that participation in intercollegiate athletics should include opportunities for student-athletes to develop and hone critical leadership and life skills that will assist in shaping their future success after graduation." "The Department advocates service to our community and embraces the NCAA Division II philosophy of balance between academics and athletics."
D	"The athletics program of the university assists in this mission by recruiting outstanding student-athletes, by employing dedicated Christian coaches and professional staff who embrace the values of (Institution D), and by providing sports events around which alumni, friends and students can rally." "Athletics will encourage, endorse and emphasize the academic mission of the university;" "Athletics will comply with *(Institution D), (Conference)* and NCAA regulations."

Similarities among Institutions

Three of the institutions in this study operate intercollegiate athletics departments affiliated with an academic department. Although the fourth intercollegiate athletics program is not "formally" affiliated with an academic department, the athletics department staff has duties and responsibilities within academic advising and the option to teach courses at the institution.

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All four institutions embody the NCAA Division II philosophy of promoting academic values, as reflected in both their institutional mission and athletic philosophy statements. Data indicate that these institutions are student-centered, focus on teaching and learning, encourage service, and embrace their roles in the economic development of the local community. Comparing the four institutions' mission statements with the participating institutions' athletics philosophies suggests compatibility in that athletic philosophies are aligned with and in support of institutional mission statements.

Differences among Institutions

Differences are also evident among the institutions. For example, one participating institution is private and three are public. One of the public institutions does not sponsor the sport of football. Two of the institutions are located in highly populated communities, and two are in less populated communities by comparison. One public and one private institution are located in the same state and had institutional budgets almost twice the amount of the budgets of the institutions from the other states. The athletics budget from the private institution was over five times higher than the non-football school which was not initially a concern. But the athletics budget of the private institution was almost two times higher than the athletics budget of the public institution located in the same state and

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which offers more sports. Two institutions from the same state have a coaching staff twice the size of the institutions from other states.

One institution presents some outlying data in this study. For example, this institution sponsors the most sports (15) of the four institutions. This institution is located in the city with the least population (11,131) and has the lowest student full-time equivalency (FTE) enrollment (2,370). However, it has the highest number of student-athletes (459) which accounts for a staggering 19% of the overall student FTE for the institution. The percentage of student-athletes representing the overall student FTE of other participating universities are all less than 10%. Such functional and operational characteristics suggest that competitiveness and athletic success among conference members not able to operate on similar levels of resources and funding could be disadvantageous, undermining the purpose of athletic conferences. Literature (Estler, 2005) warns that while athletic conferences and inter-institutional governance is intended to balance competitiveness, the loose coupling of intercollegiate athletics governance and institutional governance structures inherently overlooks institutional differences in areas such as funding and facilities.

Key Institutional Characteristics Identified

Key institutional characteristics that emerged include the academic-affiliated model for intercollegiate athletics programs, student-centered academic mission statements, and athletics philosophy statements

supportive of academic mission statements. According to Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985), NCAA Division II programs historically promote the view that intercollegiate athletics meets educational objectives because they are typically affiliated with physical education programs in which coaches, staff, and administrators teach courses and have other academic responsibilities. The participating institutions appear to embrace a similar approach to their operations in that coaches are either assigned or offered the opportunities of teaching and/or academic advising. Another key characteristic of the institutions is student-centered experiences, which literature also suggests is reflective of the NCAA Division II heritage. In addition, document analysis reveals athletic philosophies that are complementary and supportive of academic missions.

The Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

Through document analysis, the basic characteristics of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors are generated. These characteristics are summarized for review in Table 4 and further explained in narrative.

Education and Experience

Participant A is a male entering the late-career stage of professional work. He has been the intercollegiate athletics director at Institution A for five years. He has a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in

sports management. His early professional work experiences include over 15 years in the corporate business environment. When he decided to make a career change later in life, he drew from his undergraduate degree and entered the teaching and coaching professions. He earned a master's degree in sports management in pursuit of his goal of becoming an intercollegiate athletics director. He has coaching, teaching, and athletic administrative experiences at the high school, junior college, and NCAA Division III levels prior to becoming the intercollegiate athletics director at an NCAA Division II institution.

Participant B is also a male entering the late-career stage of professional work. He has been the intercollegiate athletics director at Institution B for ten months. He holds a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in education administration, and a Ph.D. in sports administration. His professional work experiences include over 22 years of coaching and teaching at other NCAA Division II institutions, during which time he held the roles of associate intercollegiate athletics director, interim intercollegiate athletics director, intercollegiate athletics director, and even the role of academic department chair. He is the only participant in this study who does not appear to have a business-based, corporate experience background. It is also noteworthy that he is also the only participant holding a terminal degree.

Participant C is a male entering the mid-career stage of professional work. He has been at Institution C for ten years, the first six years as

Associate Athletics Director and the past four years as the intercollegiate athletics director. He earned a bachelor's degree in business and a master's degree in sports management. His professional work experiences include over eight years in corporate sales and marketing prior to entering athletics administration in the higher education environment.

Participant D is a male entering the early-career stage of professional work. He has been the intercollegiate athletics director at Institution D for over six years. He holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in education administration. He has a strong relationship with Institution D, which began for him as a student-athlete. His professional work experiences include being a professional athlete, then returning to his alma mater (Institution D) as an assistant coach. In the ten years he has been at Institution D, he has been assistant athletic director, spent time as the interim intercollegiate athletics director, and has now been the permanent intercollegiate athletics director for six years.

Table 4

Characteristics of Participants

Participant	A	B	C	D
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male
Education Bachelors	Education	Education	Business	Education
Masters	Sport Mgt	Education Administration	Sport Mgt	Education Administration
Doctorate		Sport Administration		
Years at Current Institution	5	Less Than 1	10	10
Professional Environment Experiences Prior to Current Role	Corporate Secondary Education Higher Education	Secondary Education Higher Education	Corporate	College Coach Professional Athlete
Faculty Experience	Yes	Yes	No	No
Academic Administrative Experience	No	Yes	No	No

All participants had earned master's degrees for employment in the higher education work setting. Participants A, B and D hold bachelor's degrees in education, while Participant C earned a bachelor's degree in business. Participants A and C hold master's degrees in sports management, while Participant D earned his master's in education administration. Only Participant B holds a terminal degree, and it is a Ph.D. in sports administration.

Literature suggests that the nature of education and preparation for athletics administrators is an issue worthy of future scholarly attention (Estler, 2005). The Knight Foundation Commission (2001) has admitted that a management-based professional is probably appropriate in the market-oriented athletics administration role of today. Obtaining intercollegiate athletics directors' perceptions of the impact their education and professional preparation has upon their current role is important to understand.

In his interview, Participant A said, "I think you need that education background" and then couples his response with reflections on his real-world corporate experience:

> I had the advantage of being away from the umbrella and protection
> of education and see what really happened out there…and it was
> really cut-throat! So I think that my education, my business

background and then the (athletic director) experience I got at

(JUCO) prepared me for D-II.

Participant B confirms the common belief that academic preparation is

merely the first step toward consideration for a job in higher education:

…when I called the athletic director and inquired about the job (first

college head football coach position) his first question out of his

mouth was not how many games I had won, but his first question

was 'Do you have a master's?' That allowed me to get the (head

football coaching) job.

He goes on to share his experience with how education is critical for

advancement:

I was able to get a Ph. D. while I was a head football coach…still do

not know HOW I was able to do it, but I pulled it off! Then when I

was ready to get out of coaching, I was able to move into athletic

administration and then the administration of the academic

department because I had the doctorate.

Participant D explains how his educational experience was critical in

preparing him for athletics administration:

The plan was to coach and do that for a while, then when I got to be

an old man, move into the administrative side (chuckling)! I think

obviously anything in education prepares you just from a discipline

standpoint…from the ability to understand how to interact and

engage with people in a setting, being able to work with other

students and faculty and staff to achieve certain things. I think one
of the things I drew from that…the legal aspects of what we do and
just the liability and opportunities to get into situations that would
not be beneficial to the institution. So I think that there are always
aspects of that experience in my master's program that I was able to
take away and I probably do not even realize that I use every day.

Position Descriptions for Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

A theoretical implication of the role strain theory framework is that
people tend to experience less role strain when there are clear role
expectations, clear communication of role expectations, and established
evaluation criteria and feedback. Organizations tend to rely on position (or
job) descriptions to establish role expectations for individuals. The position
descriptions were requested from each participant for review prior to
conducting their interview to seek additional lines of questioning with
participants. All participants provided some form of a position description
for review. However, there is some variance with respect to the detailed
completeness of the documents, which Creswell (2003) cautions is possible
with document reviews. However, I was able to collect interview data that
appears to reduce the impact of this limitation on the study, as the interview
data provides clarification of the intercollegiate athletics directors' formal
roles.

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The document provided by Participant A is merely a job vacancy posting from 2005, the year he was hired at Institution A. It contains a basic overview of the position, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications for consideration. However, the document contains language similar to the more comprehensive job descriptions provided by other participants. It establishes that the position "reports directly to the President" and charges the intercollegiate athletic director with "ensuring that the overall vision and mission of the university is carried out through the department of athletic and its staff." Other key words include "fundraising, promoting, management and leadership."

Participant B provided a more formal job description, which also establishes a direct line of supervision under the President. The job description contains key words including "generate external funding (i.e. fundraising), promotion, administer (manage) and supervise (leadership)."

Participant C provided a job description that is similar in length and scope to what Participant B provided and again confirms that the intercollegiate athletic director is "responsible for the overall management of the intercollegiate athletics programs, policies, procedures, and guidelines established by the President…consistent with the University mission and in compliance with University policies and the Philosophy and Objectives of Intercollegiate Athletics." Once again, job duties include the activities of "fundraising, promoting, management and leadership."

The job description provided for review by Participant D is by far the most extensively detailed position description at five pages long. It establishes that two key principles of the job are, "Support Mission" and "Support Vision." It also establishes the line of authority, "Responsible to the President," and further verifies the previously noted language of "fundraising, promotion, management and leadership."

Following the analysis of the position descriptions, keywords were coded to develop the core characteristics and responsibilities of intercollegiate athletics directors. Content analysis data of the position descriptions are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Keywords within Position Descriptions of Participants

Institution	Job Description Keyword Analysis		Key Terms Confirmed
A	Master's Degree Experience Management Communication Interpersonal skills Rules Compliance High Energy	President Superv. Mentoring Promoting Organizing Fundraising Supervising Leadership	**Characteristics:** **Educated Experienced Ethical Motivated Communication**
B	Supervision Motivation Initiating Representing Planning Promoting	President Superv. Management Administration Negotiating Supervising Fundraising	
C	Represents Liaison Public relations Community Evaluates Management	President Superv. Fundraising Administers Supervises	**Responsibilities:** **Presidential Reporting Administration Supervision Management Fundraising Promoting**
D	President Supervision Masters degree Experience Motivation Communication Resourceful Negotiating Creative Flexible Work ethic Self motivated Goal oriented Reliable	Management Superv. Conflict management Administering Fundraising Coordinate Planning Promoting Leadership Decision making Fundraising	

Similarities among Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

The similarities found through document analysis and interviews establish some basic characteristics and responsibilities for the role of intercollegiate athletic directors. The common characteristics for intercollegiate athletics directors include graduate education, with each holding a Master's degree, experience in athletics operations, articulating ethical principles, motivation to succeed, and possessing good communication skills. The common responsibilities for intercollegiate athletics directors include maintaining a line of presidential reporting, administering the intercollegiate athletics program, supervising personnel, managing daily operations, fundraising to support the intercollegiate athletics program, and promoting the intercollegiate athletics program.

Differences among Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

There are considerable differences as to the detail of the position descriptions provided for review. One of the documents is merely a job vacancy notice institutions may routinely rely on to seek candidates for a position. Participant A points out during the interview, "I asked them (human resources) to send me the job description for the athletic director (chuckling) and THAT is what they sent me!" So it is obvious that this

particular intercollegiate athletics director does not rely on a formal position description to guide his actions and behaviors.

The other three position descriptions range from being very basic to very detailed. But these three position descriptions are capable of providing basic guidance for the intercollegiate athletics director. However, it is unclear how accurate and updated the position descriptions are. During his interview, Participant B reminds me that he is just in his first year at Institution B and "the position description I sent you electronically was in the handbook dated the year 2000." The documents provided by Participants A and D are the only position descriptions that include a section titled "qualifications" for the intercollegiate athletic director position.

Key Characteristics of Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Identified

All four participants in this study are Caucasian males with diverse past professional experiences, but who all have earned graduate degrees in the field of sports administration. Two have past professional experiences in the private sector before entering their roles as intercollegiate athletics directors and two have spent the majority of their careers within NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs. Two of them have previous experience as intercollegiate athletics directors at other institutions prior to entering their current positions at NCAA Division II programs. Three of the four participants have formal written position descriptions, but none of

the four participants indicates during their interviews that the position

descriptions are anything beyond a formality or even used for evaluation

purposes. Discussion related to how the position descriptions are used is

included in the next section.

The literature describes a possible trend of athletics administrators

transitioning from coaching and teaching into athletics administration as an

abandoned and outdated career pathway (Knight Foundation Commission,

2001). However, the perspectives gained from participants do not appear to

confirm this, as three of the four participants traversed this specific route

into their current roles as intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA

Division II institutions. But the trend toward professionalization of athletics

administration described in the literature (Richman, 1999; Williams &

Miller, 1983) is recognized, as athletics directors confirm that other fields

are valuable in preparing future intercollegiate athletics directors for their

roles.

ROLE STRAIN

Organizations are typically managed by individuals holding

interacting roles that inherently present those individuals with bouts of

conflict to be mediated while also meeting challenges and goals.

Universities, as complex organizations, have provided a research setting for

applying the role strain theory to various administrative positions for

examination in the past. However, the intercollegiate athletics director role

remains somewhat of a mystery in documented literature. This section of

the data analysis examines the role expectations of these individuals and

identifies key constituents they interact with regularly.

Role Expectations

To gain a better understanding of participants' role expectations,

participants are asked about the job descriptions they had provided for

review prior to interviews. The job descriptions were analyzed for

keywords with intent to gain a better understanding of the true nature of

participants' roles by looking for confirmation of the keywords during the

interviews. The goal is to determine the nature of expectations for athletic

directors, if they are clearly communicated to athletic directors and if those

expectations appear to change over time. Three of the four participants

provided traditional job descriptions for their roles. Participant A had

obviously never seen his formal job description prior to this study. But

when asked about his role expectations he indicates that he clearly knows

what he was brought in to do: "To come in and gain support, to get the

athletic staff back into more of a fundraising mode." Fundraising is a key

word that emerges from the document analysis of the position descriptions

and became a topic of conversation in all of the interviews. Later in the

interview with Participant A, he summarizes his role expectations from a

general perspective:

To build a quality overall program that fit into the mission of the

university that stressed two things: winning and academics. The

expectations were we want to build an athletic program where we

can be proud to put them (student-athletes) in the community, to put

them in front of our faculty, to go with the overall mission of the

university.

Participant B shares that he was made aware of his role expectations from a

light-hearted point of view:

On the record or off the record (laughing)? You know, I did [know

the expectations] through the position description…and of course,

through interviews it allowed me to ascertain the entire role of the

athletic director…but mainly through the position description when

I interviewed for the job.

The other two participants are able to offer a similarly concise overview of

what they perceive their role expectations to be. Participant C immediately

responds, "Here at (Institution C) they expect us to win, they expect us to

graduate student-athletes that go to class, and when they come to games

they expect to have a great time." Participant D has a strong overall

perception of his role as well: "At (Institution D) we have clearly said that

at this point in time, we want to continue to be a nationally competitive and

recognized program. I mean, you know what the expectation is…to ensure

that you can continue the success on the field."

The participants provided comical responses at times during these questions. While what they describe may not be considered ideal in nature, they describe their real experiences and that is what phenomenological studies are intended to uncover. There may have been procedural issues to be more closely explored in this area, but the end result interpreted from the data is that whether or not they have an updated and accurate formally written position description, intercollegiate athletics directors are aware of the role expectations placed upon them and comfortable with how that is communicated to them.

The President is in Charge

Participants acknowledge that a position description is valuable and they have a comprehensive understanding of their general and overall role expectations. However, communication of the more specific role expectations appears to be more dependent upon clear lines of communication with their Presidents and by getting a good "feel" for the culture and climate of their institution. When asked about how they are made aware of specific expectations placed upon them, Participant B answers,

> [I] answer directly to the President. The President has the
> ultimate authority on all decisions relating to the athletic
> department. I came into the position knowing exactly what

to expect. [Nobody] put a gun to my head! You know? I

stepped in fully willing to take on the challenge.

Participant D responds,

[President] sets those expectations. I think one of the things,

not spoken, but just in this job in general when you look at

the rich history and success…you know coming into the

position, there are a lot of things that did not even have to be

communicated.

When participants are asked if their role expectations have changed

over time, Participant A says: "No, I think the expectations are the same."

Unsure of how to answer being new to Institution B, Participant B begins

with, "You know…it is hard to answer that question" but then continues

with,

When I look at that position description, I do not know that it has

changed a heck of a lot. When I look down the list, we are doing all

of those things. I do not know that I would tweak it at all.

Participant C is adamant in his response, "No. They were high from day

one and they remain high today." Finally, Participant D is also able to

confirm that role expectations for intercollegiate athletics directors appear

to remain consistent when he answers:

I do not get a sense that that has changed over time.…it has been

pretty consistent over time and I think a lot of that just has to do

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with the leadership of the campus and the fact that it has been so

stable for the last 19 years.

Participant D reveals that the long-term president at Institution D has

announced the intention to retire and he further shares,

The incoming president is an internal person and is very familiar

with a lot of the direction we have set in athletics. So I am hopeful

and anticipate a pretty smooth transition there so I do not think

expectations will change very much.

When participants are asked questions about the evaluation of their

performances and the criteria used for evaluation, they once again indicate

that they report directly to their presidents. Participant A begins with, "The

President evaluates my performance… [laughing] and I do not know

[evaluation criteria]! I have never had an evaluation." He then continues to

explain, "HOWEVER, I meet with the President at least once a month in a

regular meeting. I know when I come out of those meetings how I am

doing."

Participant B, being relatively new at Institution B, seems unsure of

the formal evaluation process when he answers, "The President did send

out…actually the department of research, they sent out evaluations to all

administrators asking us to evaluate each other.…I am not sure if it was part

of a formal evaluation process." But Participant C is very clear in his

response: "President (evaluates my performance). It (criteria) is lined out

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every year." Similarly, Participant D is able to clearly explain the

evaluation process and the value he places upon the process:

> [President] sets those expectations…and handles my evaluation and
>
> it is a very interesting process and one that I really have enjoyed and
>
> really appreciate. We do not sit down and go through my job
>
> description saying 'did you get that done?' It is really more about
>
> overall, how is the culture and atmosphere within the athletic
>
> department. Are we able to maintain that at a level that is
>
> appropriate and expected? A lot of dialog, a lot of open
>
> communication has certainly helped in that area. There are check-
>
> ups along the way that I think made that process work.

Throughout conversations about formal position descriptions and

evaluation procedures, the interviews consistently refocused back toward

the direct line of communication between intercollegiate athletics directors

and presidents and how athletic directors rely strongly on this ongoing

communication process for both expectations and evaluative feedback. The

only participant who did not have a tremendous amount of insight in this

area is Participant B, who has been at his institution for less than one year.

But other participants describe the ongoing and open communication with

their presidents. Participant A says, "…I meet with the President at least

once a month in a regular meeting." Participant C reveals that he engages

in even more frequent meetings with his president:

We [President and Athletic Director] meet every week to talk about

what is going on; we meet once a year to review accomplishments

for the previous year and set targets for the next year. We share the

same visions for what the athletic program should be; we develop a

strategic plan that guides us through decisions and the vision of what

we want to accomplish over a five-year period. There is always

opportunity for dialog to take place. I am fortunate from the

standpoint that we are a lot alike, and we both want the same thing.

Participant D explains that the communication process is ongoing and

comprehensive in nature for him as well:

Well, I meet twice a month right now with our President and we

consistently talk about where we are in the landscape. I mean I have

an opportunity to submit what I thought some of the key highlights

of the year were. What I felt were my greatest strengths and

accomplishments during the year. I also share what my greatest

challenges and weaknesses as a leader are. So we have a good

dialog and it is a great opportunity to either affirm what I am feeling

or to maybe point out that things are 'OK, but here is maybe some

other areas where I am hearing we may need to focus on'. I do not

know if that evaluation style would work if (we) did not have as

much communication throughout the year.

Participants also acknowledge that even though they are aware of

their role expectations and evaluation criteria, they all have higher self-

imposed expectations. When asked if they put higher expectations upon themselves than their presidents, Participant A explains,

> Yeah, I think so. I wanted a good program that we could be proud of and we wanted to be competitive. This level is Division II.…it is a step up and we need to win. [I] do not have to win championships, but give me kids going to class, staying out of trouble in the community, competing.

Participant B confirms this when he shared, "I have expectations and mine are actually higher than the President's [Chuckling]."

Realistic Role Expectations

One strategy for exploring for the evidence of role strain in the study is to ask questions designed to get a feel from participants if at the end of the day they feel the expectations placed upon them are compatible and realistic. Participant C confirms, "I think our expectations are realistic. They are reachable goals, but they are certainly out there! I expect we can do it, but the expectations are high and we have some pretty big goals." Participant D echoes, "I have this conversation pretty often with our President and you have to. Coaches want to know what the expectations are and you must have those realistic." Participant B adds, "Yeah, I certainly think [expectations] are realistic."

Participants are asked about meeting multiple expectations and if they feel torn in different directions while trying to meet those expectations.

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Participant A suggests funding as a potential barrier to meeting expectations
at his institution:

> Acquiring enough funding so that we CAN meet our expectations,
> whether it is from the university, from the state, or from our donors,
> is a challenge. We take on more because we have good ideas and
> we want to do more, but nothing ever really goes away….you never
> get rid of any responsibility, but you take on more. Then all of a
> sudden you go, 'I cannot do this anymore.…I cannot do this with
> what I have'.

But Participant D shares that he is confident in meeting expectations and
welcomes an honest, even critical evaluation of his performance:

> Given the resources we have invested in athletics over the last two
> to three years, I mean, we should perform. It definitely makes it a
> lot more realistic because we are able to do so much behind the
> scenes work to support coaches and student-athletes now than we
> did, you know, seven…eight years ago. And if we do not perform
> well, I think we should be held accountable and should be very
> honest with how we are allocating and utilizing those resources that
> have been given to us.

When Participant C is asked if meeting externally imposed expectations
from the conference or NCAA is a struggle, he does not see this as a barrier
to meeting expectations:

No, it is not a struggle at all. The thing about NCAA and

[conference] requirements and things like that is those are all voted

on by the members! I mean, we are the ones putting those in place!

I mean, we have decided as a group that this would be the best

practice and we should all abide by this. So there are no real

surprises when we get that kind of stuff because we have got a lot of

time to plan for it.

Intercollegiate Athletics Department Staff

Literature suggests that the current and future demands upon NCAA

intercollegiate athletics departments will require extensive specialized staff

in order to maintain academic integrity and financial stewardship within

campus control (Wolverton, 2007). Data suggests that some NCAA

Division II programs may be realizing these pressures and providing

additional athletics administrative positions to assist intercollegiate athletics

directors in meeting expectations, while some programs may be ignoring

these forecasts and leaving intercollegiate athletics directors of smaller

programs alone in the trenches.

Participants were asked if they felt they had adequate staff to help in

meeting the expectations placed upon the intercollegiate athletics programs.

It became clear during the interviews that the institutions are not operating

on equal grounds in this area. Participant A reveals during his interview

that not only is he over the intercollegiate athletics program, but the

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intramural sports program and the university's wellness center are both

within his administrative purview as well. This is confirmed when

reviewing the informal position description (job posting) he had provided

for review. At Institution A, the intercollegiate athletics directors, the

department secretary and the sports information director are the only full-

time athletics staff members. There is an NCAA compliance coordinator,

but this position is considered half-time because it is combined with the

wellness center director position. He explains, "The fitness center here falls

under athletics…I would say it is NOT full-time compliance…BUT,

[laughing] it IS full-time compliance!" When Participant A makes the

comment later that he has "a great staff that makes him look good," he is

speaking in general about his coaches and the individuals working within

the intercollegiate athletics program. But it is evident that he is also content

with what he has when he explains his love for the NCAA Division II level

in comparison to his Junior College experience, "it is big enough that you

have some sort of staff!"

Participant B indicates that he is the lone administrator during a

point in his interview when he is comparing NCAA Division II with

Division I. He indicates that "The buck stops with me and almost

everything related to the athletic department." He does not clearly describe

the extent of his current staff, but indicates that his staff is himself and an

NCAA compliance coordinator, or a similar staff to what Participant A had

described. This is confirmed to be the case after checking the athletic

department website at Institution B. But the cases are different for

Participants C and D. Institutions C and D both have more staff in place

than either Institution A or B, and at times express the need for additional

administrative staff. Participant C begins, "I am pretty fortunate. I have a

pretty good staff" and then he proceeds to explain his athletics

administrative staff:

> I have a Senior Associate AD for Administration, an Associate AD
>
> for media relations, an Associate AD for compliance, and Associate
>
> AD for marketing and development. Then I have an Assistant
>
> Athletic Director for internal operations, an Executive Director for
>
> our [fundraising] Club…that is our donor group, and I have an
>
> Assistant AD for ticket operations. I could use one or two more
>
> fundraisers or marketing type people.

Thinking that this may be an unusual circumstance, the response of

Participant D is comparatively analyzed and his response begins: "Well

(clearing throat), that was the first big battle that I undertook when I

came…when I was named athletic director, I was the only staff person

here!" Then he continues to explain a similar structure recognized during

analysis at Institution C is in place at Institution D as well. The experience

of Participant D is interesting because he is able to describe the history of

staffing issues to some degree as he continues his response:

> …So we had to make a case and present a plan and a lot of research
>
> on what other schools were doing. We had to provide a lot of

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anticipated goals and expectations that would justify us having some

of those positions. We now have three Assistant Athletic Directors

currently…one for operations, one for compliance, and one for

academics. We also have a Sports Information Director and he has a

full-time assistant. We are getting ready to add an Associate

Athletic Director to handle some of the day-to-day functions on

campus, but to also play a key role in helping us raise money and

meet with donors. And then we have three administrative assistants

who help. I feel we have got it…it is right where it needs to be…we

have 45 individuals that make up our assistant and head coaches and

our administrative teams. So I think at some level, because of the

complexity of intercollegiate athletics, [staff] is one of the areas I

thought for a brief time that we were stretching…it was very

difficult to meet the expectations just from a man-power standpoint.

Regardless of staff size, none of the participants indicates that they

have difficulty meeting multiple expectations with what they have to work

with.

Experiences with Conflict

Participants are asked about their experiences with conflict within

their roles and the consensus appears to be that there is conflict, but it does

not serve as an overwhelming barrier to their productivity and/or success.

Participant A explains, "No matter what you do, how good you are, how many wins you have, there's somebody there taking a shot at you." Participant B adds, "Like anything, you are always going to encounter a problem you were not aware of." Institution C shares athletics facilities with local high schools and Participant C relates some of the conflicts, "Sometimes there are conflicts with practice times and you have to figure out ways to work around that…." Participant D is asked specifically about experiences with conflict resolution because it is listed as a duty in his position description. He responds, "I do not know that I would say conflicts, but I mean it is compromise…situations where you have to negotiate". Participant A suggests that, "I think that there are conflicts, but I think…anybody who manages people, the biggest thing you spend your time on is interpersonal problems."

But there is no indication that conflict is an overbearing burden upon their jobs. Participant A indicates that fundraising brought conflict to smaller institutions:

> Capital campaigning [by the institution] was a real conflict with
> what we are trying to do here [in athletics]…The donor base of
> small institutions. We are all hitting the same donors…the same
> people who support the university

He went on to later state that in comparison to his counterparts at other institutions, "I think with football, my job would be a lot different. I think my job would be MAINLY fundraising, which I am okay with it NOT

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being THAT!" At one point, Participant C also shared that it is a challenge

for him "to raise the money that would be expected to get some of these

things done" when referring to the goals and expectations he and the

president have established, but he also says, "I expect we can do it."

Participant D also discusses the importance of fundraising at Institution D

due to the reliance of private institutions upon donors, but does not see it as

conflict. Rather, he suggests that being a private institution leads to "less

red-tape when it comes to spending" and "things move more quickly and

easily" when an athletic donor comes to the table.

Another issue that participants mention at some point during the

interviews as examples of conflict in their programs is the travel demands

on student-athletes, which tend to result in missed classes. Participant B

admits, "I think we have a higher number of days missed from class and

things like that" but he continues to explain that unlike NCAA Division I

programs, "We are not in a position where we can just fly to a game and get

right back." This sentiment is echoed by Participant C: "Oh sure, I mean as

much as some of these kids have to travel, it is difficult on missed classes."

Intercollegiate athletic directors do not dwell on any negative

aspects of conflict. Participants suggest that conflict is manageable and

describe embracing a preventative approach to conflict and conflict

resolution. When he is relaying an experience with conflict over religious

expression that occurred at his annual athletic awards banquet, Participant A

offers his solution to conflict resolution, "Maybe I should be at a private

school [laughing]". But taking a more serious tone, Participant D shares, "When you are working day-to-day, there are always going to be misunderstandings or situations where you have to compromise and find ways to meet in the middle," and he goes on to conclude his preventative strategy, "When you anticipate that something might come down that would create anxiety or stress, communicate it in a way that can maybe shed more light on it and keep you from having to spend so much time dealing with it."

Key Constituents

The interview guide is designed to ask participants in this study to identify key constituents in higher education and to also identify key constituents in intercollegiate athletics. During the interviews, it becomes obvious that participants are having difficulty determining a difference between the two and how to answer. Both participants A and B are unable to clearly distinguish a difference between constituents for higher education and constituents for athletics and even ask for clarification of the question. Participant A says, "Are you referring to on campus?" and Participant B echoes, "The key constituents in higher education? I am not sure I follow you."

The intent is to see who participants identify as groups of people with expectations of intercollegiate athletics programs. A goal of this study is to see if NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs function in

support of institutional missions. In essence, determining if athletic directors are feeling pressure from constituency groups to meet athletics expectations that require them to engage in activities posing threats to the institutional missions is a goal of the study.

For the most part, participants appear to believe that constituents in higher education and intercollegiate athletics are essentially the same people and have the same basic expectations. However, providing clear and convincing responses to the questions is challenging, as participant D asks, "Um…when you say constituents, can you define that a little more?" Although these questions are asked but not thoroughly answered in ways hoped for, participants provide enough dialogs during the interviews to analyze the interview transcripts and identify some common constituency groups.

Student-Athletes

Intercollegiate athletics directors describe student-athletes as important constituents. Participant C explains, "Student-athletes…they are our primary customers in recruiting them to campus." Participant D identifies student-athletes as the most important constituents of his program:

> I mean, they [student-athletes]…without them, we do not have much
>
> of a purpose at all. That is a very important constituent and one that
>
> you definitely better have a good feel on. They [student-athletes]

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want to have a great experience, the opportunity to win

championships, and they want a great education to go along with it.

Participants A and B identify student-athletes as a key constituency

group, which is determined through their responses to other questions

throughout the interviews. All participants appear to view this group as

their primary concern for attention and this view supports the institutions'

student-centered mission statements and intercollegiate athletics

philosophies.

President and Campus Community

One concern held going into this study is whether or not

intercollegiate athletics programs are fostering meaningful relationships

within the academic community in order to tether academic and athletic

values. Participants refer to the importance of meeting the expectations of

the campus-based constituents, like presidents, faculty, staff, and general

student body in responses to questions about constituency expectations.

Participant C says, "I think one of the key constituents is…THE campus. It

is your president, the people you work with on a daily basis."

Participant A also shares,

> There are expectations put on me obviously from the administration
>
> here and even further down maybe just the employees of the
>
> university. And because we belong to a strong conference, I think
>
> there is some responsibility that we have…that I have some

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expectations from the conference about how we conduct our

business, how we perform, and how we represent the conference.

Participant D says, "Next in line [after student-athletes] would be the

university community at-large…the general student body and the faculty

and staff. Furthermore, Participant B describes how the campus community

at his institution is engaged in his program by saying, "Our faculty rep is

always preaching to the faculty senate about some of the issues that student-

athletes have." At other times during the interviews when participants C

and D relate the evaluation aspects of their roles, they make references to

athletic committees and how they inform them of the activities within the

intercollegiate athletics department. Based on the responses from

participants, it is clear that the primary constituents intercollegiate athletics

directors are concerned with above anyone else are the people on their

campus.

Community and General Public

Discussions about the community and general public are rather brief

and the participants reveal generally positive experiences. Data reveals that

participants recognize the importance of building good relationships with

the community and general public, but do not indicate that athletic directors

feel any excessive pressure or burden being placed upon them by these

people. It is almost as if intercollegiate athletics directors recognize the

presence of the public eye, but as Participant D offers "at the end of the day

that comes back to relationship building." Participant A does feel that the community places expectations on his program, but he makes these comments during the discussion about his institution bringing back the sport of football:

> I think there is a certain expectation from the community and they [laughing] have nary a clue about what I do…but they have expectations! Community is probably the biggest of what I feel.

But Participant A is able to describe how he feels this pressure and that he is able to respond in ways that are diplomatic in nature. He does not appear to be pushing Institution A to add the sport of football back into his program, despite the pressure to do so from the community. Participant A explains,

> I think it [football] would be a little more complex with the bigger staff and I think we would struggle financially like the other [state] schools are…I feel for those guys because they do not want to be 0-11! But the fact is they are probably putting in one-third of what the other schools in the [conference] are putting in. So I think it is a lot of frustration and I think with football, my job would be a lot different.

Participant D echoes that conflicts with community constituents do occur when he says:

> There are always external constituents where we have the most of it [conflict]…90% of the time it is just bad communication. They have got misinformation or they are just not fully aware of the big

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picture. So there is always a situation that comes up where we just

have to continually communicate.

Through probing questions, he confirms that he is saying that when

conflicts happen and they happen occasionally, that they are manageable

and that he "does not feel torn in different directions."

Participant B identifies community constituents from a general perspective:

I guess the first obligation would obviously be to the taxpayers to

provide educational opportunities and serve that role and

mission…and of course you are always going to have the local

community. Whether they went to [Institution B] or not, they are

going to identify with the local university or college and of course

they all have high expectations and concerns about what happens on

the scoreboard.

Participant C is also very generic in his response to identifying constituents:

"…general community and your ticket buyers."

All participants at some point during the interviews mention alumni

and their importance to their programs. Participant B provides the only

response that appears to identify alumni as an independent constituency

group and they are actually at the top of his list: "The first one that comes

to mind is your alumni, including the [donor] club which is our support arm

of the athletic department." As the new intercollegiate athletics director at

Institution B, it is possible that alumni have been identified as a top priority

as he begins his tenure. Participant C also references the importance of

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alumni expectations: "We have 15,000 alumni within 30 miles of campus; the expectation is that we are supposed to be pretty good!"

Pressure from Constituency Expectations

Participants are asked if they feel any excessive pressure from constituency expectations and the consensus is generally no, despite acknowledging that some pressures do exist. Participant A responds,

No, because I am confident we are doing good things for student-athletes…and we are preparing them. I think part of my business training gets me over that. If you feel like you are doing the right thing, and you can look in the mirror in the morning, then you are doing the right thing. It may NOT be the right thing [laughing]! You are doing it because you think it is right…I mean, it hurts your feelings when people criticize you, but the fact is people criticize you no matter what! We make mistakes! We kind of run this department on mistakes, actually [laughing]. When I hire people, I tell them I want 'doers'…doers make mistakes. We cannot correct idle time…do something!

Participant C summarizes his response to constituency expectations as, "They [constituents] expect us to win, they expect us to graduate student-athletes that go to class, and when they come to games they expect to have a great time."

When Participant D is asked if he feels constituency expectations will change in the future, he thinks about his response and then prophesizes that in general;

> There is going to be a lot of pressure, I think, in the coming years just because there is so much money involved, not at our level, but just the money that is involved in Division I athletics.…I think you are going to see a lot of pressure just from…the visibility…and I do not really know what the constituent would be, but maybe just the general public. The visibility that college athletics has now, the availability of information and the knowledge of what people are making and how much you are spending on programs…you are just under constant scrutiny and so trying to keep that balance of the purpose and mission you have as a program, you definitely feel that from the outside as well.

The Academic Athletic-Divide

The causes of academic-athletic divides vary, but focal points appear to be institutional values, contentment with program success, the athletics arms race behaviors by institutions, and the commercialism of intercollegiate athletics programs by institutions. This study explores these key critical areas for signs of academic-athletic divides at NCAA Division

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II institutions in efforts to determine if these institutions appear to embrace the values of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics.

NCAA Division II Values

One of the biggest concerns with scholars reviewing the academic-athletic divide in search for athletics reform strategies has been institutional control over athletics programs (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). When exploring for the lack of institutional control and the presence of an academic-athletic divide on campuses, some of the signs identified in literature are contentment, mission drifts, athletic arms race behaviors, and commercialism of athletics programs (Estler, 2005). Topics and issues surface during the interviews related to each of these issues and are explored to grasp whether there appear to be conflicts that could perpetuate an academic-athletic divide dilemma at the institutions.

Contentment with NCAA Division II

At times, comments and insight initially appear as signs of pursuit of arms race and commercialistic behaviors required for making a jump up to a higher competitive level. But through analyzing and reducing the data, such comments appear to come down to athletic directors and presidents having high, self-imposed expectations of their programs. Overall, comments reflect contentment with the level of competitiveness of their programs as

NCAA Division II institutions. Participant A confirms his personal choice and satisfaction with Division II when he says: "I always wanted to be at the D-II level because I think you are still small enough that you have the daily interaction with the coaches, with the staff, and with the student-athletes."

Participant C explains,

> We are of like mind (the President and I) to push the envelope and to go see how good we can be. I do not know that a lot of institutions are like that. I believe the majority are not.

Participant D echoes,

> We [the President and Athletic Director] talk about where we are in the landscape of not only our conference, but how our teams are doing nationally and competitively.…it is difficult for our coaches to look across the way and not realize that they have got a pretty good setup and one that allows them to be successful.

But appearing to better understand the intent of the questioning, Participant C further explains his view:

> I think there is a widening gap in Division II; of schools that have a vision, can see some opportunities, and want to go for it. And there are some…some athletic programs that are in place to I guess complement university offerings with no aspirations to kind of push the envelope and be the best you can be. [But] we have no

aspirations of moving up [to Division I]. Our objective is to be the

best Division II program in the country.

When Participant D is asked if Institution D is content with the NCAA

Division II level he confirms, "Oh, I think at the current time there is no

doubt about it. I think it is the place we need to be [Division II]. I think it

fits." When asked if the rich heritage of athletic success at Institution D

possibly impacted the expectations placed upon him and his program his

response is intriguing:

> Oh, I think it definitely does. But I think one of the things that is
>
> unique is it gives us a platform because we have had a lot of great
>
> academic accomplishments as well from our student-athletes.
>
> Whenever you have successful programs, people want to be
>
> involved. But it is also a platform we have to recognize to be able
>
> to…make sure we are not just telling the athletic successes, but
>
> finding ways to celebrate personal growth and academic success as
>
> well.

Participant A offers some insight into why Division II programs appear to

be further apart in relation to the competitiveness of institutions within

conferences when he is asked about the value of a sport like football to an

institution:

> When I was hired here, quite frankly, [Institution A] was pretty
>
> apathetic about its sports programs….there was not much emphasis
>
> put on winning, there was not much emphasis put on

fundraising…when football was dropped in 19XX, you go through a

loss of enrollment, you go through a loss of booster support,

community support.…I think football would be a good asset to this

university and to this community, but at what expense? I think a lot

of universities our size would LOVE [emphatically] to drop

football! But they cannot pull the trigger in doing that because of

the backlash in the community.…they are afraid to do that.

Intercollegiate Athletics and Institutional Mission Compatibility

The heritage of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics has been

that member institutions are known for embracing institutional missions,

operating within those missions and fostering a balanced approach to

operating an intercollegiate athletics program (NCAA D-II SPIQRR, 2006).

Upon reviewing the institutional missions and athletic philosophies of the

participating institutions, compatibility among the participating institutions'

missions and intercollegiate athletics philosophies is confirmed. (Table 2;

Table 3).

NCAA Self-Study Reports were requested to review of all

participants. Only the most recent report of Institution A is provided, so

questions are asked relevant to the NCAA self-study process at the other

institutions during the interviews. Institution B is engaged in the process at

the time of the study, and Institution C concluded their most recent review

roughly three years ago and are about to embark on a new five-year self

study. The response by Participant D is not clear on where his program is at in the self-study process, but relates that strategic planning and regular program reviews conducted at the institutional level are the most useful benchmarking strategy for his program.

When asked about how useful the self study process is, Participant C felt it is mainly helpful with evaluating the daily operational procedures and issues related to NCAA compliance as opposed to mission or philosophical grounds:

> …we take into account everything that is reported and we do make
> changes. I mean, we have made changes in the way we handle
> ticket procedures, we made changes in the way we handle
> compliance paperwork….that was one that came out either through
> the NCAA self study or the compliance audit we had from the
> [conference].

One participant offers that the NCAA self-study conducted every five years confirms strong relationships between their program and mission, mainly because it forces them to review mission compatibility. According to Participant B:

> …we are going through our five year NCAA self-study and one of
> the very first things we had to do was look at our philosophy of
> athletics and make sure that our philosophy of athletics is
> compatible with the philosophy of [Institution B] and we have done
> that.

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When the self-study provided by Participant A is reviewed again following the interviews during data reduction, it appears that the responses provided by other participants relating that the process is useful in evaluating daily operations and issues related to compliance, as well as athletics philosophy, missions, and control is evident. Institution A had only taken action on issues related to compliance and operations, as opposed to philosophical aspects of the program.

Intercollegiate Athletics Support for Institutional Mission

Participants are asked how their programs support institutional missions and all participants seem to be fully aware of the importance of preserving and supporting institutional mission statements. Responses reveal their knowledge about and recognition for mission support prior to even asking these questions directly or entering into any discussions planned for exploring the issue of potential mission drifts with participants. Participant D states very confidently,

> I feel strongly here at [Institution D] that we have been able to support the institution's mission. We do stress, I mean, in the world of coaching winning is expected, regardless of where you are at. And so we have that expectation of our coaches. But we also spend a lot of time and we put a lot of resources into programming and other items that have absolutely NOTHING to do with athletic

competition, but more to do with personal development and growth.

So I think we have been able to do that.

Participant C offers this response while answering a different question prior to being asked any questions about mission: "One, the athletic program needs to fit within the mission of the university." Participant D also reveals,

You know at our level, you have to have an athletic program…it has to be a central component and work hand-in-hand with the academic mission. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to have a successful rapport with your on-campus community.…If that gets out of whack and you are just touting your wins and losses, you definitely can lose your identity and find yourself trying to explain what you are there for on a campus.

Participants are asked to explain in more detail how their intercollegiate athletics programs support their institutional missions to see if participants fully grasp the concept of mission support. They are able to offer insight into how they preserve this characteristic. Participant D confirms that at the NCAA Division II level, preserving the heritage of "balance" is important: "…trying to keep that balance of the purpose and mission you have as a program, you definitely feel that from the [inside and] outside as well." When Participant B is asked how he feels his program support the mission at his institution he responds in a way that suggests preserving the Division II identity is vitally important:

Well, the educational mission is to prepare students for careers and life.…What we have at Division II is what intercollegiate athletics began as in 1903 when the NCAA was founded…the emphasis on the student-athlete.…I believe athletics is doing that and doing it quite effectively in terms of being an extension of the classroom and teaching life-long lessons that you are not going to get out of a typical Biology 101 or English 202 class.

Participant A also relies on the analogy of athletics being a form of valuable, informal education that supports the basic educational mission: "I think…there is an education outside of the classroom…and I think we are a big part of that." Participant B further explains his view:

…there are lessons that cannot be taught here [Institution B] or anywhere else BUT athletics! We really feel like we are an extension of the classroom and I think that model is more true at Division II.…man Division I institutions have a problem in that their athletic philosophy does not jive or fit with the mission of the university because in reality, many of those programs are simply farm systems for professional sports. I think Division II and Division III are much more closely related to that model in terms of fitting into the mission of the university.

When participant B is asked if he feels the ability of his program to support the mission is a source of conflict he immediately draws upon recognition of the problems and conflicts encountered at the NCAA Division I

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institutions by sharing, "We have this 'gap' between athletics and academics… [but] Division I has got a real conflict! That divide [in your problem statement] is getting wider and wider every year [at Division I]." Participant A believes that bringing student-athletes into his institution alone is supportive of the mission:

> We are perceived as being a positive arm. I think the diversity we bring to this university serves the mission of the university as far as its diversity.…we do have local kids and we do have [in-state] kids, but we recruit coast-to-coast and we recruit internationally.

Participant C explains:

> I mean I think from a standpoint of supporting the academic side, we work hand-in-hand with them and then use our events to provide them opportunities to recruit the traditional students. We take some of our games; for example a football game might be [academic program] day and it is a big recruiting event for the school…they will bring in 500 potential freshmen to a football game.

Participant D shares that his program supports the mission of Institution D and evidence is confirmed through an ongoing process:

> We meet with the Board of Trustees every two to three years for a more in-depth look at athletics…an opportunity for us to pull a lot of data together and just give them kind of a big picture view of what we do and the impact we have on campus and how we fit with what our university's mission and outlined vision is.

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Participants are asked if they feel there are ways in which their intercollegiate athletics programs conflicts with the educational missions at their institutions in any way, and they appear to be caught off guard, or perhaps have not even considered the possibility that their programs would not be in support of educational missions. Participant A, grasping for a response while shaking his head, "Uh, I cannot think of any." Participant B, "No [thinking]…I do not think there is any conflict. I think again, it [intercollegiate athletics] supplements the mission of the university." Participant C relays back to his comments about conflict and the balancing necessary to avoid conflict and continue supporting the academic mission:

> Oh sure, I mean as much as some of these kids have to travel, it is difficult on missed classes.…Sometimes there are conflicts with practice times and you have to figure out ways to work around that and when you can take your classes. It is a balancing act, there is no question.

Participant B also does not seem convinced that the issue of class conflicts, for example, is a direct conflict between his program and mission, and offers a different perspective of a scenario involving a pre-med major who is a scholarship student-athlete. He feels that student-athletes are often torn between attending a required practice or a required afternoon science lab:

> I think many times faculty do not understand the predicament that they put student-athletes in…where student-athletes are forced to make a decision. I have seen it in my career where some of these

student-athletes who were in those types of scenarios have literally

changed majors. They gave up their dream of becoming a doctor

because they were kind of forced into making that decision. I think

many times, the academic side does not see life through the eyes of

the student-athlete. So the blame may be on academics for not

looking and taking a concern for student-athletes.

Participant D seems content to reflect back on emphasizing ways the

program confirms the mission:

…I think constantly reminding ourselves and ensuring that we have

got our focus on how we can meet and prepare students who come

on our campus…be prepared to communicate and share with them

[student-athletes] what makes your program different and the ways

that you can help them with their personal development and not just

their athletic development.

Participant A offers his personal experiences as evidence that social and

cultural influences are important considerations in coupling athletics with

missions because of the benefits to be realized:

Being a collegiate baseball player is how I got hired [in corporate

America upon graduation]…they hired ex-college athletes because

of their discipline and competitiveness and commitment. You

know, athletics and academics…it always amazes me when you hear

people that have made it, be it in the world of politician,

CEO's…their connection with athletics and what did they learn?

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Every one of them will tell you the same…discipline, commitment, work ethic….

The public image and exposure of intercollegiate athletics programs today also seems to be a common topic of discussion. Participant C says, "I know some people do not agree with it, but its more fact than not that your athletic program gets more inches in the newspaper and more time on TV than your academic programs." Participant A quips, "Half the people who read the paper in the morning, the first thing they do is go to the sports page!"

Participant C suggests that accountability within athletics programs today is higher than most other campus programs when he says, "Well, I believe that student-athletes, right or wrong, should be held to a higher standard." Furthermore, participants' perceived that their institutions had a good grasp on the purpose of NCAA Division II programs on campuses. Participant A explains,

I think what makes it [Division II] so good, is I think we understand our place…and it is not about athletics…you can balance it…you can have good students and you can win at the same time.

Participant B echos, "It might surprise you to know that our President really is not into wins and losses. [President] wants to see our teams continue to be an economic driver for enrollment." Participant C relates,

…at our institution, the President is ON RECORD as saying athletics should be an outlet for the student body to relieve the stress

associated with academics…to go out to a game and have a good

time and for faculty members to do the same.

Participant D suggests, "Everyone wants to win and everyone likes a

winner. But ultimately what are you doing in the context of their education

here on campus that is going to help them when their athletic eligibility is

done."

Participant A concludes,

The days of the 'dumb jock'…those days are long gone…education

is a means to making a living and supporting your family. Our

research shows that we are right at the 3.0 GPA for our department

every semester, which is .2 or .4 GPA points higher than the student

body. Athletics, I mean it is just the fun stuff. And I think those

kids understand and I think we understand…you better get your

education.

Participant C adds,

From the ground floor aspect, we support the academic aspect by

putting requirements on our student-athletes to do what they're here

to do, and that's to get a degree. So we have academic requirements

on all of our student-athletes. They have to go to class. In our

strategic plan, our goal is to have an overall department GPA of 2.8.

The Athletic Arms Race in NCAA Division II

The literature review conducted for this study reveals athletic arms race behaviors are the efforts of a university to secure resources, facilities, and student-athletes that placed institutions on a more competitive level with peer institutions (Estler, 2005). Shulman and Bowen (2001) suggest that rarely a conversation occurs with an athletic director during which athletic arms race and commercialism behaviors do not surface. While specific questions using these particular terms are not used in the interview guide, at times the interview responses from participants appear relevant to athletic arms race behaviors described in the literature. However, contextual analyses of the responses dispel the notion that athletic arms race behaviors are widespread in NCAA division II intercollegiate athletics programs.

Participants appear to understand and grasp the nature of financial resources in higher education. Participant C explains, "Some of the things we want are going to be very expensive, so there is a barrier there of whether or not I can raise the money that would be expected to get some of these things done."

Participant D suggests,

> I thinks it is easy a lot of times we just jump and think, "OK, if this is going to happen, then I have to"….it is always going to take more money or it is going to take a lot more staff…when in reality, we

have a lot of that already on campus. Our philosophy is that we

fund everything and try to fund it fairly well.

One area that three of the four participants seem to openly discuss is the need for better athletic facilities, which the literature suggests constitutes athletic arms race behaviors often funded through the rumors of widespread commercialism in athletics (Estler, 2005). The only participant who does not specifically talk about the current state of his institution's athletic facilities is Participant B, who has only been employed at Institution B for 10 months. Perhaps he has not been at Institution B long enough to envision a plan for athletic facilities. However, the other three participants are very vocal about the status of their athletic facilities. Participant A says, "You have seen our gym! It is an OLD gym…and [sister institution] just opens up a new complex…and you know, you got to keep up with them! So we are going through a lot of improvements in facilities." While the notion of keeping up with competitors is clearly defined in literature as athletics arms race language (Estler, 2005), the context of these interviews reveals that new facilities are not a mere desire, but a demonstrated need on their campus as many smaller institution's facilities are as old as the 1950s. Participant C explains,

We desperately need new facilities. Softball field was…we had

renovated a baseball field for our softball team so they would have a

place to play. Our football locker room had been the same for fifty

years, so that has been torn down. We are in the process of a $23

179

million upgrade right now.…when that is done…I think we will

have among the best facilities in the country. We have a basketball

arena that was built in 2002.…our volleyball team has their own

gym, which is rare in Division II.

However, he further explains that new athletic facilities are in conjunction

with facility projects that will benefit all students at Institution C, "Our

fields are coming along with a whole new package on the north side of

campus. It is not just athletics…but [recreational] sports and community

also." Perhaps Participant C feels the need to justify his statement about

new athletic facilities because using institutional funds to build and or

enhance athletic facilities is often a source of conflict and contention on

campuses. Participant A, taking a quieter tone explains his predicament:

We are going through a lot of improvements in athletic facilities. I

think some of those are kept quiet [laughing] for fear of the

backlash! But we are renovating a gym and we never announced

that. We are about halfway done, and right now we are in the locker

rooms, but we did not announce it. It needed to be done. What I

had to do was take the President over there…into the men's locker

room, (show her the room) and say "This is where they DO NOT

shower! That is how we are treating our students!"

When asked if he feels that building projects on campus are equally

emphasized, including athletics Participant A explains,

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I think the same. But you know what? We talked about this in our

staff meetings. That garden? [Pointing out the window] That park?

[Pointing again] That is not an athletic facility, but you know what?

We think it is! Because where are we going to walk them [recruits]?

We are going to walk them right by that pond, that water fountain,

and we are going to stop on that park bench and it is going to be

warm out and it is going to be beautiful! That is an athletic facility!

He is referring to the general facilities of the campus and not distinguishing

between athletic facilities and general facilities. He views them all as

necessary to his institution and his program. When he is asked if new or

renovated facilities are a key to successful recruiting he responds,

Yeah, I do think so. I think when you recruit student-athletes, the

number one thing that they are going to come for, is they are going

to come for the coach. So it is important that we have a good

staff.…They are coming for the coach, not the locker room. But I

think it is important and I think it is a selling point. We have always

said that our best recruiters are the kids that played here that leave.

It is more important for them to say 'Here is my experience at

[Institution A] than the coach…or from me…if that makes sense. I

guess part of that is retention. Part of that is the kid saying, 'and you

know what? Our clubhouse was cool because we hung out in there

and had a big screen and the lockers were oak and it was really

neat'.

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Another issue with facility needs at smaller athletics programs seems to be the lack of facilities altogether, as the number of sports offered has increased over the years, even without accommodating athletic facilities. Participant A explains,

A potential recruit was here in my office preceding our interview and "selling" recruits came up in your questioning. We do not have a softball facility, but we have got plans…"here is our vision for our softball complex". She [recruit] just needs a field to play on and she needs to play for a good coach and she will come for a good coach. But I think it [softball complex] will help. But we have NOTHING but a field right now!

Along with the story of Participant A, Participant C also demonstrates need for athletic facilities when further describing the athletic facility expansion underway at Institution C: "Our baseball team did not play on campus…they played 25 miles away! So a new baseball field [so that we have baseball and softball on campus] is good."

Participant D is asked if there are any unique challenges for a private institution with regard to athletic facilities and he shares,

All of our facilities are 100% donor funded. That is somewhat of a challenge because we cannot go make a presentation to the state and get some of that funded by them. So you do run into that. I think one of the things here that we have been able to do…we have had donors step up and make investments in our athletic facilities. I

mean, we have got facilities that are in great condition, that are taken care of and will serve us for a number of years to come.…it is just always trying to stay ahead of the game and plan accordingly to where you are not faced with two or three major facility issues or renovations that need to take place because you only have so many resources that you can tap into. That is certainly at times challenging.

Another sign of athletics arms race behavior identified in the literature is adding sports, despite the lack of adequate resources (Estler, 2005). At various points during the interviews, questions are asked about increasing or decreasing the number of sports for participants' institutions. One unique story that surfaces during the interviews contradicted what the literature considers athletic arms race behaviors: eliminating a major sport. Participant A discusses the fact that he "inherited" a problem in his role and it dates back to when the institution decided to drop football as a competitive sport, with the reason being financial in nature. His story is very insightful into how a decade-old decision still haunts the institution:

> We won the national championship in NAIA in [year] and in [year] we went NCAA D-II with the same budget we had in [year]. So we went from being the best in NAIA to possibly to worst in NCAA D-II because they did not have the funds.…People do not want to support a loser, and you are going to lose if you do not fund it properly…it does not matter whatever conference…if your

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competitors are funding it properly…and its sad to say, but if they

have more money to put more emphasis on it, then you are at a

disadvantage… [so] the decision was made to drop football. That

was 19XX…our last competing year.

When asked about expanding Institution A's intercollegiate athletics

program by adding football back into the program, Participant A responds

by saying,

No, we are…I have to address football every week. We are not

going to add football! We are going to add football when its right,

when we have the money, and when we can compete, you know?

But I have to be politically correct in the community…."Yes, we are

talking about it"…and we ARE talking about it. But you know, if

you cannot fund it at two million [dollars] a year…no, we are not

expanding. A lot of [schools] in our conference are in that situation.

They are not funding it [football] properly and therefore, they are on

the bottom. We are trying to get to the top of the [conference] with

what we have.

Yet, Participant C reveals that he anticipates growth and expansion

of both facilities and the program offerings, which seems contradictory to

his earlier responses about the need for new facilities just to enhance what

they already have: "We have added track and field so we did not have a

track on campus so we are building that." A probing question follows his

response and asks if there are aspirations for additional sports at Institution

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C as they move forward and he responds: "Yeah, we will look at adding (sports) in the next three to five years. Our football stadium is the largest in Division II and it is nice, but I would like to build a new one here in the next decade." Perhaps his comment is based on the fact that he perceives that Institution C is finally achieving their goals by replacing outdated, aged facilities, after which the program can move forward in establishing new goals for where their program wants to be five years down the road. He does not seem sure about what sports to add or other specific details. He is possibly just indicating that his institution is open to growth and expansion, which seems to be an institution-wide driven objective at Institution C.

Commercialism in NCAA Division II

The literature reviewed for this study suggests that intercollegiate athletics rely on advertising and merchandising to fund the rising costs associated with the operation of athletics programs (Sperber, 2000; Estler, 2005). The perceptions of the intercollegiate athletics directors in this study are that selling, promoting and fundraising are just the routine aspects of the athletic directors' role today. Participant C explains,

> I think in this day and age…you have to know how to sell either
> tickets, raise money through donors, things like that.…you have to
> be able to do that as an athletic director today….I mean, it is just
> kind of evolved as state funding levels for higher education have
> gone down, your costs certainly do not go down!

But the next comment by Participant C seems to lend credibility to the literature claims that the overall mission of higher education has shifted more towards commercialism in general when he says, "You have to be able to do that as a university administrator in most places." Later in the interview Participant C is asked if he feels he has adequate staff in place to meet expectations: "I could use one or two more fundraisers or marketing type people." Participant D echoes this sentiment: "We've had instances where some of our coaches, because of their strengths, were able to assist us in things like corporate sponsorships….they [coaches] would go out and make sales presentations…."

However, the level of commercialism revealed in this study is not as aggressive as the commercialism revealed in the literature review. Commercialism for major college sports is reflected in the literature through using terms like media contracts, merchandising companies, athletic apparel contracts and similar large-scale, multi-million dollar endeavors (Sperber, 2000; Estler, 2005). The activities revealed by NCAA Division II athletic directors in this study pale in comparison. For example, intercollegiate athletics directors seem to me more attuned to how their programs help in "branding" institutional identity on the campus. Intercollegiate athletics directors promote their programs and develop their base of support from within the campus and local community. Participant A offers his take on promotion and recognition of his program: "I think they (Institution A) will lean on us to be big players because whether anyone in education likes it or

not, you know…we are the visible ones…. [Laughing] we are on the front porch!" He goes on to further explain his perspective and how the institution relies on his program for exposing the university at large to the campus and local community: "I get questions like, 'Can we set up a table in the gym at the basketball game?'…Now THESE are the people who DO NOT always support us, but yet they want to piggy-back on us!"

Participant C relates that his institution also relies on athletics for what he perceives as successful on-campus promotion through athletics venues:

> …that is something that we started doing three or four years ago to use athletic events to promote the institution's academic programs. I know our faculty members and deans will tell you that having a winning football program where we have 15,000 people in the stands on a Saturday night….just to be able to bring a kid to our campus and show them that this is the real deal certainly helps!

When Participant C is asked about the divisiveness that sometimes exists on campuses and the apathetic attitudes that the academic community often has towards athletic programs, Participant C counters,

> Well, I think you are going to have that [apathy] on any campus with a certain percentage of the faculty members…that is just inherent…but I do not think it is AS STRONG [emphasis] on Division II campuses as it is on Division I.

Participant B relates: "Many faculty feel that athletics is a waste or a burden on the overall financial situation of the university." Participant A sums up most of the participants views with his perception:

Education is just so weird to me, because half the people across this campus really would like to project the idea that athletics really does not need to be here. But yet, who is the first that they call when they need help?

Similarities among Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Experiences

The four intercollegiate athletics directors participating in this study understand their role expectations clearly. They rely on a direct and open line of regular communication with their Presidents for establishing role expectations and evaluating their performances. In the literature, role strain often surfaces when university administrators are not fully aware of their role expectations, nor are their role expectations clearly communicated (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). However, the four intercollegiate athletics directors interviewed in this study give no indication that they experience role strain that negatively impacts their job performances because expectations are clearly communicated to them, and those expectations appear to be realistic in nature.

The four intercollegiate athletics directors admit that they do experience conflicts in their roles, but indicate that they are not conflicts

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that could perpetuate an academic-athletic divide. For example, the intercollegiate athletics directors indicate that their programs are supportive of the academic mission statements and that they are content with the NCAA Division II level of competition, both issues the literature suggests could indicate shifts toward an academic-athletic divide (Estler, 2005). The conflicts related are basic issues such as student-athlete missed class time, scheduling, and logistical issues related to facilities.

The constituents identified and prioritized by intercollegiate athletics directors in this study are encouraging as they primarily discussed their commitment and dedication to meeting the expectations of student-athletes and the members of the campus community first, and then responding to the community at large.

The intercollegiate athletics directors do not indicate that they engage in what the literature describes as athletic arms race or commercialism behaviors as a result of pressure from the constituency-oriented system now evident in higher education (Covell & Barr, 2001; Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003; Estler, 2005). It appears that institutions engaging in facility projects do so because they either have no existing athletic facility they need or what they do have is outdated. True athletic arms race behaviors typically involve institutions who already have adequate existing facilities and choose to chase a bigger and better facility to keep up with their competition. The data does not reveal what literature describes as athletic arms race behaviors in the responses of these

intercollegiate athletics directors, nor at the NCAA Division II institutions that they represent. The literature describes wide-spread commercialism of intercollegiate athletics as a practice for funding athletic arms race behaviors, but this level of commercialism is not evident at NCAA Division II institutions. The NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors' view of commercialism and promotion are things like selling tickets, enhancing game-day activities, and using athletic events to promote other campus programs.

Differences among Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Experiences

One notable difference among the intercollegiate athletics directors is their knowledge of and access to a formally written position description. The literature suggests that when administrators are typically aware of their role expectations and role clarity is established, then they experience less role strain (Miles & Petty, 1975). This appears to be the case with intercollegiate athletics directors participating in this study, who report that they receive role clarity on a continuous basis due to the nature of the working relationships they have established with their Presidents.

One area that is clearly different between the participants and their respective institutions is in the area of athletics staffing. Two of the intercollegiate athletics directors have most of the administrative duties and responsibilities upon their own shoulders, whereas the other two have

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several additional staff members to delegate much of the daily operations workload. Data reveal that two participants confirm that many NCAA Division II programs rely on a single intercollegiate athletics director to oversee the entire program. However, the other two participants reveal experiences that suggest programs may be realizing the lack of administrative support necessary for meeting the growing expectations of intercollegiate athletics programs and respond by expanding administrative oversight.

SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study reveals that two of the four participants have clearly defined, well-written, comprehensive position descriptions. The remaining two participants have one-page generic position descriptions to work from, with one of the participants admitting that the document request had caused him to request this document and it was the first time he had ever seen it himself. These differences were initially considered a substantial finding and a possible indication of role ambiguity. However, upon triangulating the data, it is evident that all four intercollegiate athletics directors are very much aware of the role expectations placed upon them due to their close working relationships with their presidents. They all expressed that they know exactly what the expectations are upon them individually, and the expectations placed upon the programs they administer. More importantly, intercollegiate athletics directors feel comfortable with the expectations that

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have been placed upon them and their programs. In fact, participants do not seem concerned about the status of their official position description being accurate and updated, but rather they consider the ongoing communication with their presidents as the most valuable component in determining both their immediate and long-term job expectations. In essence, they are not experiencing role strain in their jobs, despite conflicts that they encounter.

Data also reveal that the primary constituents with expectations upon intercollegiate athletics directors are the student-athletes, the president and campus community, and the local community. However, participants do not reveal any indication that they feel excessive pressure from constituents to meet multiple and/or conflicting expectations in their roles.

This study also reveals that NCAA Division II institutions hold a commitment to the NCAA Division II values, are content with the NCAA Division II level of competition, and operate intercollegiate athletics programs in support of their institutions' academic mission. These institutions do not appear to be engaged in an athletic arms race or the commercialization of their intercollegiate athletics programs. Lack of contentment, evidence of mission drifts, athletic arms rac, and commercialism behaviors are the activities defined in the literature that lead to an academic-athletic divide (Estler, 2005). Content and conversation analysis of the data does not reveal words like "television contracts" and "athletic apparel contracts" and issues often associated with what the literature considers commercialism in athletics today (Sperber, 2000; Estler,

2005). These participants engage in fundraising and promotion to basically

raise enough money to fully fund their programs, promote the institution at

large, and build relationships in the process.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors for signs of role strain and signs of academic-athletic divides at NCAA Division II institutions. Understanding and explaining tension academic-athletic divides create for intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions is undocumented and unknown. The findings of this study are intended to enhance understanding of how the components of academic-athletic divides impact the role of the intercollegiate athletics directors and ultimately the institutions they represent.

This phenomenological study collects data using semi-structured interviews driven by the role strain theory and the posited literature on academic-athletic divides. The interview transcripts are analyzed for emerging themes to help answer the research questions of the study. The findings are presented in narrative form.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE - How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience their roles as administrators of intercollegiate athletics programs and as university administrators?

Participants were able to relate their experiences in higher education directly with their past educational and professional work experiences

within intercollegiate athletics programs. They seemed to answer the two questions about university administrative experience and athletics administrative experience concurrently and did not discern a difference between them.

Participants were asked to describe their administrative experiences in higher education and to describe their experiences as university administrators. Finally, they were asked to describe their experiences as intercollegiate athletics administrators. The intent was to determine how participants perceive their roles overall within the spectrum of higher education administration. Perhaps intercollegiate athletics directors do not distinguish any difference between the two roles of university administrators and intercollegiate athletics administrators, considering them one in the same. Perhaps they fail to see the role of intercollegiate athletics directors to be legitimate university administrators because they do not fall under the normal precedence of the traditional shared governance approach. With a reporting line of authority directly to the president, they perhaps see this as a circumstance that removes them from the landscape of typical university administration. If true, this supports what Thelin (1996) describes as a peculiar situation when examining the position intercollegiate athletics programs have within the academy. Other university administrators may report to the president depending upon the purview of their role. However, few programs on campus are managed by an administrator overseeing a single department and reporting directly to the

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president on all matters related to that program. They tend to report up a hierarchical chain of command recognized by most higher education institutions.

Educational and Professional Experiences of Participants

Participants openly confirmed that their education and professional work experiences had prepared them for their roles as intercollegiate athletics directors. All participants held graduate degrees in the area of athletics administration and all but one had professional work experiences including teaching and/or coaching in higher education prior to becoming intercollegiate athletics directors. One participant explained that earning degrees is the first step in establishing the qualifications for becoming an intercollegiate athletics director. This participant seemed to hold the most regard for formal education as he was the only participant with a terminal degree. All but one participant had traversed a traditional pathway to becoming an intercollegiate athletics director by completing degrees and gaining experiences in teaching and coaching in the higher education environment. One participant had earned a masters degree in athletics administration, but had no experience teaching and coaching in higher education prior to entering into athletics administration directly from the corporate business world. All participants placed a high value on earning masters degrees in the discipline of athletics administration and viewed this as critical to their success.

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How do Intercollegiate Athletics Directors experience their roles as University Administrators?

One participant had extensive experience, which included both academic and athletic administrative experiences. He seemed to be the only participant appreciating the intent of the question concerning university administration, which was to explore for administrative experiences that reflected a balance of academic and athletic responsibilities. The data revealed that the focus of intercollegiate athletics directors is typically on the athletic side of the house in order to realistically meet goals and expectations. The data fail to indicate that intercollegiate athletics directors even consider their roles to be that of a university-wide administrator, as participants provided answers relative to their roles as athletics administrators.

How do Intercollegiate Athletic Directors experience their roles as Athletics Administrators?

Participants were functioning in athletics administrative roles, so logically they shared their experiences from within the athletics realm. This study reveals that intercollegiate athletics directors perceive their role primarily as athletic administrators responsible for the management and supervision of the intercollegiate athletics program under the leadership of the president. All participants described their athletic administrative experiences, but at times their responses were brief and appeared to reflect

more of the daily duties and tasks of managing an intercollegiate athletics program. Two participants in the later-stages of their careers had extensive athletic administrative backgrounds at other institutions prior to entering their current positions. They had diverse experiences in teaching and coaching prior to focusing their careers on athletics administration. One participant had even served in the role of an academic administrator at a previous institution and more clearly understood the use of the different terminology within the line of questioning. He revealed that due to the experiences he had as both a department chair and an intercollegiate athletics director, he is now able to see and appreciate both the academic and athletic perspectives simultaneously. But he also revealed that he is glad he no longer had both sets of administrative duties on his shoulders. While he had an appreciation for the experience, he explained that athletic administration is now so burdensome that it would be difficult to manage both roles today.

Posited literature suggests that many current intercollegiate athletics directors gain administrative experiences that may not emphasize academic values (Richman, 1999; Estler, 2005). All but one participant lacked any formal academic administrative experience and had gained their overall administrative experience within intercollegiate athletics programs. In fact, one participant explained that he had worked in the private sector and had no experiences at all with university or athletics administration prior to taking his current position as an intercollegiate athletics director. His prior

experiences were related to sales, marketing, and promotion as opposed to the traditional higher educational experiences of teaching and coaching. This appears to support literature claims that institutions may be relying on the corporate world for preparing future athletics administrators, which is troubling if there is no grasp on academic values by these individuals. However, he also indicated that his private sector experiences had prepared him for the challenges of managing an intercollegiate athletics program within the higher education environment and although he lacked the comprehensive higher education work experiences identified from among the other participants, he appears to have a handle on how the program functions within the higher education environment. Another participant had relied entirely on the higher education environment to gain all of his formal and informal education, as well as to gain professional administrative experience, all of which had been within intercollegiate athletics programs at higher education institutions.

Experiences with Role Expectations and Evaluations

One purpose of the study is to determine if role strain surfaces in exploring the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors. Role ambiguity, one construct of role strain, is diminished when expectations are realistic in nature, when expectations are effectively communicated, and when evaluation criteria are established. Literature identifies position descriptions as the most usual and reliable form of establishing and

communicating role expectations (Miles & Petty, 1975). The results of this study indicate that intercollegiate athletics directors are not as reliant upon formally written position descriptions as they are regular, ongoing communication with their presidents.

Participants agree that the role expectations and the evaluation criteria are set by the president and have been consistent over time. One participant had never seen a formally written position description for his role in his five years of employment at that particular institution and had never been formally evaluated by the president. But he is fully aware of his role expectations and how his performance is evaluated through regular interactions with the president. The remaining participants are aware of formally written position descriptions and recognize their value in providing a basic structure for their roles, but it does not appear that they depend on position descriptions for guidance. In fact, all participants confirm regular interactions with their presidents as more valuable in establishing and communicating role expectations than their position descriptions. It is the regular and ongoing meetings with the presidents that guide intercollegiate athletics directors in their administrative roles and they all credit the president with both setting their role expectations, as well as establishing the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation of role performance is an area that intercollegiate athletics directors perceive as under the purview of presidents. It appears that intercollegiate athletics directors experience ongoing evaluation as they

regularly interact with presidents. While the position descriptions, strategic

plans, and the establishment of goals and objectives assist with delineating

role expectations for intercollegiate athletics directors, it is the close

interpersonal working relationship with presidents that provide confirmation

of role expectations and provide useful performance feedback as they go

about their jobs. In essence, participants are able to relate that their role

expectations included building a quality, competitive athletics programs

with quality student-athletes who graduate and providing a collegial campus

based experience for patrons.

Experiences with University-Wide Decision Making

An area that two participants in the early- or mid-stage of their

professional careers spoke openly about was their role in the strategic

planning process at their institutions, which most likely places the

intercollegiate athletics directors into more of a university-wide

administrator role. They related that they feel welcome at such meetings

and feel like they have a voice at the table during these discussions. These

same two participants had no academic and limited athletic administrative

experiences prior to entering their current positions, but they valued the

strategic planning process and their involvement with the rest of the campus

administration during this process.

Two participants in the later-stages of their careers did not relate any

involvement in strategic planning or university-wide decision making at

their institutions, but they also indicate that they do not have a desire to be involved as their workload is already a burden. It is worth mentioning that these two individuals are also the two participants who essentially run their entire programs single-handedly. They have no assistant athletic directors to delegate duties to, whereas the two participants who spoke about their involvement in their institution's strategic planning process have a larger staff to rely on for daily workload management. Even though participants do not readily perceive that they are engaged in university-wide decisions, their responses indicate that they do have some indirect involvement through their regular involvement with their presidents and for two of them, the strategic planning process. All participants feel confident in the preparation they had received in their prior academic and administrative experiences that they carried academic values into their current roles despite a lack of engagement in university decisions. They are content to be handling decisions as they relate only to intercollegiate athletics and find refuge in their strong relationships with their presidents. Perhaps they feel the president guides them and provides additional discernment when it comes to athletics decisions that may have university-wide impacts. In essence, intercollegiate athletics directors feel comfortable in the fact that their presidents have the ultimate authority on all decisions relating to the intercollegiate athletics program.

Experiences with Academic Values and Mission.

Intercollegiate athletics directors have a grasp on the role their programs play in helping their institutions meet academic missions. All participants indicated the importance of their programs fitting within and supporting the academic missions of their institutions. The focus for intercollegiate athletics directors is on student-athlete success, both academic and athletic. While they all were able to relate that their programs receive both heavy criticism at times and unprecedented promotion of success at times, they are comfortable being under scrutiny from the campus community. They all agree that student-athletes should be held to high academic and athletic standards due to the institution's investment in their education and personal development, as well as the institution's overall investment in the intercollegiate athletics program.

Participants reveal that their programs also fulfill mission objectives through activities such as recruiting a diverse student body and being an economic catalyst for enrollment. Their programs also provide a platform for the entire campus community to promote all campus programs, including using athletic events for academic recruitment. The commercial appeal of relying on intercollegiate athletics to promote the institution is an area intercollegiate athletics programs identify as supporting the institutional mission. However, their idea of commercialism is using athletics to brand the institution and provide an identity for developing campus community relationships and pride. Permitting academic programs

to rely on athletic events to promote student involvement and participation is viewed by these participants as a form of commercialism. Community and corporate partners sponsoring athletic events to build campus relationships is a strategy for garnering financial support and fostering involvement from within and among the community. Commercialism is a way to open the campus up to invite the broader constituency base to become involved with what is happening and feel welcome to become a part of the process of student growth and development.

Experiences with Staff and Resources at the NCAA Division II level

Data reveals that participants are more different than similar in this area. One participant is not only the intercollegiate athletics director, but also is the administrator in charge of the institution's wellness center. While these duties would appear to thrust him into university-wide decision-making, it was revealed that he delegates those responsibilities to a wellness center director, who is also the only staff member to assist him with intercollegiate athletics administration in the area of NCAA compliance. Another participant also has a similar staff that includes him and an NCAA compliance coordinator responsible for the daily management. However, two of the four participants have larger staffs, including several assistant athletics directors with delineated responsibilities across the department. A notable difference among the participants is their contentment with their staff sizes. The intercollegiate athletics directors

with the fewest staff, but the most responsibility are content, whereas the intercollegiate athletics directors with the larger staff are able to articulate the additional staff positions they need to maintain their progress and move forward.

Outside of intercollegiate athletics administrative staff, the coaching staff appears to be sufficient for the needs of the programs and provide another avenue for intercollegiate athletics programs to support academic missions. Only one institution does not require coaches to teach, but makes the option of teaching available to them if desired. All but one of the institutions are formally affiliated with Health and Physical Education academic departments, but all institutions either require or encourage the coaching staff to have limited academic duties and responsibilities.

Another area that indicates support for academic values is in the area of athletic facilities. All participants related their experiences with inadequate facilities, with some of their sports programs not even having the basic facilities such as playing, practice or locker facilities. However, participants indicate that athletic facility projects are ultimately linked with improving student experiences at the institution in support of academic missions. Participants explained how their programs depend on the campus facilities to house, educate, and care for their student-athletes and likewise, how athletic facilities are used to provide experiences and opportunities for the general student body. The facility projects mentioned by participants

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are all projects in conjunction with campus-wide improvements in updating and replacing dilapidated facilities.

Experiences with NCAA Division II Level of Competition

Intercollegiate athletics directors report contentment and satisfaction with the NCAA Division II level of competition. They recognize the challenges of fully funding their athletics program and the desire to be more competitive within their conference and region, but they also temper this within the bounds of student growth, academic achievement, and overall success. They indicate that while the expectations of a successful and fully funded program are high, this is not to be done at the expense of the purpose of the program, which is educating student-athletes. Participants enjoyed the daily interaction with their coaches, student-athletes, and the members of the campus community many of their NCAA Division I colleagues are not afforded. Rather than imitate and emulate NCAA Division I programs, their goal seems to become the best programs within the NCAA Division II level, reinforcing the strong balance of academics and athletics at this level.

Similarities and differences

A key similarity of participants is that they all have completed graduate-level educational programs in athletics administration. Only one participant holds a terminal degree and has prior academic administrative

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experience. Participants have limited faculty teaching experiences; two of the four participants have extensive past professional experiences in corporate America, and two of the four participants have gained all of their higher education administrative experience solely within intercollegiate athletics.

The participants in the later stages of their careers have both academic and athletic professional experiences at other institutions prior to entering their current roles and both credit their prior administrative experiences in higher education with better preparing them for their current roles. They seem to rely on their past experiences for carrying academic values into their decision making roles as intercollegiate athletics directors.

However, participants also have diverse experiential backgrounds. The participants in the earlier stages of their careers lack academic and athletic administrative experiences prior to entering their current roles, but both credit their involvement in their institution's ongoing strategic planning process as providing academic values for their decision-making roles as intercollegiate athletics directors. The study reveals that two of the four participants possess adequate administrative preparation and experience to be somewhat of a valuable asset in preserving academic values in university-wide decision-making, but prefer not to be involved. The study also reveals that two of the four participants lack adequate administrative preparation and experience to contribute to preserving academic values in university-wide decision making but welcome the

opportunity to be involved with activities such as strategic planning, probably so they can gain such academic experiences.

Similarities among conference member institutions in this study establish a higher education environment conducive for intercollegiate athletics directors to administer programs supportive of academic missions and values. The intercollegiate athletics directors participating in this study confirm this through their interviews.

Literature suggests that all NCAA institutions experience a widening gap between athletic and academic interests (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). However, the NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors participating in this study relate experiences about how their programs focus on meeting their institutional mission statements, how their programs promote academic achievement, and how their program goals are to prepare and educated student-athletes.

Summary for Research Question One

Literature cautions that intercollegiate athletics directors are missing the key experiences of being former faculty members, which in the past has provided a basis for personal academic values and beliefs they carried with them into administrative roles (Williams & Miller, 1983; Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985; Estler, 2005). Literature suggests that corporate minded professionals with business and marketing experience characterize today's intercollegiate athletics directors and that business management skills are

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essential for intercollegiate athletics directors, not coaching or teaching skills of the past (Richman, 1999; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005). Data from this study confirms literature suggesting that the evolving role of the intercollegiate athletics director requires emphasis on the athletic venue, but the data does not support that intercollegiate athletics directors do not possess a sense of academic values. There appear to be too many administrative challenges for intercollegiate athletics directors to venture into administrative duties and responsibilities beyond their primary role in athletics administration. In essence, the intercollegiate athletics directors in this study understand the need to preserve academic values in decision-making and are doing so within their intercollegiate athletics programs. The intercollegiate athletics directors who lack exposure to academic values in their preparation for their roles appear to be compensating for this deficiency in other ways and in doing so, are preserving academic values in decision-making within their intercollegiate athletics programs.

The intercollegiate athletics directors participating in this study emphasize their role mainly as athletics administrators. The data in this study supports that marketing, promotion, and fundraising impact the intercollegiate athletics director role. Therefore, the importance of being equipped in these areas is logical. In the past, faculty and coaches were often groomed to become intercollegiate athletics directors from within the higher education environment, which is believed to instill a sense of

academic values and perspectives. However, this pathway lacks a strong

emphasis on marketing, promotion, and fundraising. The graduate

programs in athletics administration, as well as the corporate work

environment, teach such skills. Two of the participants relate their past

professional experiences in corporate America with helping to develop their

knowledge and skills for their positions. However, academic values and

beliefs are central features in their roles as they discussed them.   Diverse

past experiences and academic backgrounds of the participants are probably

responsible for their sense of academic values. All of the participants had

earned master's degrees and one participant held a Ph.D., and he had

significant professional experiences in both academic and athletic venues of

higher education. Three participants had gained all of their experience in

higher education administration solely within the athletic venue and lack

any higher education academic experiences. They appear to have minimal

faculty experience and no academic administrative experience prior to

becoming intercollegiate athletics directors, yet all four participants reveal a

sense of academic values during their interviews.

One indication of the trend toward solely athletic administrative

experiences is confirmed by the individual with both academic and athletic

administrative experiences. While he believes such experience was

valuable in developing his administrative abilities, he is relieved to no

longer have any academic administrative responsibilities, allowing him

valuable time to focus on athletics. From the conversations that took place

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in this study, it appears that intercollegiate athletics directors do not see a clear need for gaining administrative experiences in higher education prior to jumping right into an athletic administrative role. While they all relay that there are differences between what they do and what other administrators do at their institutions, they seem to feel comfortable with those differences because of their close working relationships with their presidents. This may be a source of greater confidence they carry into their roles because of this direct line of communication with presidents that other campus administrators are not always afforded. Intercollegiate athletics directors do not seem to want to be burdened with the slow and incremental decision-making typically occurring at the university-wide level. Literature cautions that discounting the value of academic perspectives by intercollegiate athletics directors often results in ineffective administrative decisions (Estler, 2005). Perhaps the lack of intercollegiate athletics directors' academic administrative experiences are tempered and compensated for by quality communication with and oversight by NCAA Division II presidents. Perhaps intercollegiate athletics directors at the NCAA Division II level have a clear understanding and commitment to the higher education mission and this prevents decision-making which threatens the academic mission. None of the participants gave any indication that academic values are ignored or not valued within their intercollegiate athletics programs but rather are upheld and promoted openly. Once again, perhaps the presidents are maintaining this perspective on behalf of the

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intercollegiate athletics directors as decisions are being made that have the potential to impact the institution overall. This is most likely the case since intercollegiate athletics directors rely on presidents for establishing role expectations and evaluation criteria. It seems logical that presidents would inherently instill academic values into their intercollegiate athletics directors.

Another concept realized in analyzing the data in this study came in the discussions about the functions of presidential cabinets and roundtables in strategic planning and institutional decision-making. All of the participants were able to share their past experiences in these settings, and two of the four participants are actively participating in presidential cabinets in their current roles. It appears that since intercollegiate athletics directors maintain a good line of communication with their presidents, they do not seem to view participation within these cabinets as necessary or view non-participation as punitive threats to their program objectives. All participants continue to reflect on their relationships with their presidents and at times they also indicate that they welcome more interaction within presidential cabinets and planning. It appears that the main barrier to participation is scarce time in an already hectic, task-oriented environment.

The data in this study confirm that although intercollegiate athletics directors are functioning primarily in athletic-based administrative roles and view of convergence of the roles of athletics administrator and university administrator as posed in this research question. Failure to discriminate

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between these two roles poses little threat to academic integrity or loss of institutional control over intercollegiate athletics programs at NCAA Division II institutions because participants view their roles as important in fulfilling their institution's academic missions. Data legitimizes this claim as intercollegiate athletics directors' role expectations are defined and communicated to intercollegiate athletics directors through close working relationships with presidents, which fulfills the NCAA guideline for presidents having ultimate authority in ensuring institutional control over these programs.

The administrative experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II programs reveal that they are educated, experienced, and consistent in their approaches to operating programs that embody the NCAA Division II value system and are effectively balancing academic and athletic values at their institutions while working in tandem with presidents in maintaining institutional control over their intercollegiate athletics programs.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO – How do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience the influence of key constituency groups upon the decisions they make as athletic administrators and university administrators?

Intercollegiate athletics directors were asked to identify key constituents for higher education and key constituents for intercollegiate

athletics. The intent of the questions are to see if intercollegiate athletics

directors know who key constituents are and if they are feeling pressure

from constituents to meet athletics expectations that result in decision-

making contrary to academic missions. Literature suggests that a unique

problem for intercollegiate athletics is a large and vocal constituency base

with little regard for academic issues (Becker, Sparks, Choi, & Sell, 1986).

Covell and Barr (2001) suggest that higher-education decision-making has

evolved to a level that has become constituency-oriented, holding

substantial influence over administrative decision-making. However,

administrators are cautioned to consider constituents' expectations before

responding (Rowley, 1997). Wolf and Putler (2002) suggest the steps in

analyzing constituents' relationships to be first identifying constituents,

determining their interests, and determining their power.

Influence of Constituency Groups

Intercollegiate athletics directors believe that constituents for higher

education and for intercollegiate athletics are essentially the same people

and have the same overall expectations. The key constituents identified by

intercollegiate athletics directors are student-athletes, presidents and the

campus community, and the local community.

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Student-Athletes

Student-athletes are viewed as the primary constituents and intercollegiate athletics directors felt this group gives them and their programs a purpose. The responses throughout interviews revealed threads of this theme as there is a continual emphasis on topics including student experiences, academic achievement, athletic success, personal growth and development, and degree attainment. Such responses confirm document analysis that presents student-centered institutional missions and athletic philosophy statements. Student-athletes are the constituency group intercollegiate athletics directors appear to serve directly, and theytake pride in doing so.

President and Campus Community

Participants also identified the president and campus community as a key constituency group for providing a nurturing culture for their programs to succeed. It appears that intercollegiate athletics directors consider this group, along with student-athletes, as the driving force behind decisions they make with regard to their programs. They relate interaction with not only presidents, but faculty, staff, faculty senate members, faculty athletic committees, and faculty athletics representatives. It appears that these intercollegiate athletics directors value the campus community and desire a reciprocal relationship wherein there is a collegial environment for collectively and collaboratively promoting campus programs.

Community and General Public

The third constituency group participants identify is the community and the public, but the degree of their influence is less than the influence of student-athletes and the campus community. Participants admit that managing constituency expectations revolves around the central component of building quality relationships through constant communication.

One constituency group all participants identify is alumni, but placing them in their own defined group or embedding them within the campus community is challenging based upon participants responses. However, it is noteworthy that participants do stress the importance of alumni expectations for the intercollegiate athletics program to be successful. But the data is unclear if success means just winning, or if the perceptions of success by alumni encompass all aspects such as winning, quality students, graduation rates of student-athletes, fundraising and other such expectations.

Influence of Constituency Groups on Decision-Making

There does not appear to be any overbearing influence from constituency groups upon the decisions intercollegiate athletics directors make in their administrative roles at the NCAA Division II level. There are signs that intercollegiate athletics programs must promote their programs, sell tickets, and engage in fundraising, but none of these activities appears

to be outrageously promoting athletic values above academic values. Quite the contrary, most of the decision-making appears to come from high self-imposed expectations within the intercollegiate athletics directors themselves. In their roles, intercollegiate athletics directors report that they are constantly advocating for student-athletes in many areas. For example, there are budgetary and time constraints related to travelling logistics that result in student-athletes missing classes at times and these issues must be reconciled. There are athletic programs that require additional funding and resources, including facilities that must be addressed, which results in the intercollegiate athletics director advocating on behalf of their program to the president and campus community, as well as the general public. The data indicates that participants do not possess a negative view of constituency influences, but perhaps even welcomes constituency input in making decisions regarding their programs. In fact, data suggests that the intercollegiate athletics directors are seeking out constituents for more involvement in their programs and educating them in the areas of promotion, fundraising and partnerships in support of the intercollegiate athletics programs.

Similarities and Differences in Constituency Influences

This study reveals few distinguishable differences among constituency influences identified by intercollegiate athletics directors. However, several similarities emerge in the data.

The key constituents identified by intercollegiate athletics directors are student-athletes, presidents and campus community, and local community. Ironically, this study reveals that intercollegiate athletics directors exert more pressure on themselves than they feel from constituents. Intercollegiate athletics directors have honest, meaningful relationships with their presidents, who they view along with the rest of the campus community, as the constituent holding legitimate power and authority in relation to their role expectations. They do not appear to feel threatened by what might be considered unrealistic expectations, but rather they feel challenged and enthusiastic about the expectations placed upon them. They appear to feel more pressure to provide a better overall experience for the student-athletes, the campus community, and the general public with regard to their athletics programs, but the pressure is self-imposed. There are no signs that the identified constituency groups are bombarding intercollegiate athletics directors with unrealistic or unethical demands, or encouraging decisions that pose threats to academic values and academic missions.

Summary for Research Question Two

Intercollegiate athletics directors appear to be passionate about their jobs and take a great deal of ownership in their role of overseeing quality programs in support of academic missions at their respective institutions. Participants shared their experiences dealing with constituency groups and

there is no evidence of what literature describes as a very large and vocal constituency base with little regard for academic issues posing unique problems for intercollegiate athletics (Becker, Sparks, Choi & Sell, 1986). Intercollegiate athletics directors feel confident in how they operate their programs, despite mistakes they make at times. Their main objective and ultimate outcome is securing a great college experience, the opportunity to play competitive sports, and a quality education for student-athletes. Participants appear to realize that this complex process requires the involvement of constituency groups in order to succeed and lack of involvement may actually be the problem as opposed to overbearing influence observed at other NCAA levels of competition (Estler, 2005). Nonetheless, it appears that intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions embrace this overall objective and are capable of filtering expectations with regard to how they make this objective attainable for their program. Participants recognize that the overall constituency expectations of their program are for their programs to be successful, to be competitive, to produce quality student-athletes who graduate, and to provide a quality experience for patrons of athletic events. In essence, the expectations of constituency groups appear to be in line with the expectations of the intercollegiate athletics directors, with no evidence that constituency groups pose threats to institutional control over intercollegiate athletics programs at NCAA Division II institutions.

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RESEARCH QUESTION THREE - To what extent do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience conflict between their roles as intercollegiate athletics administrators and university administrators? To the extent these are seen as conflicts, how do intercollegiate athletics directors resolve these conflicts?

Intercollegiate athletic directors indicate that they experience ongoing conflict in their roles, but report that conflict is manageable through embracing a preventative approach to conflict and conflict resolution. Participants' experiences reveal data suggesting that there are always going to be misunderstandings and situations for compromise in a day-to-day working environment. The results suggest no substantial issues related to constituency influences or pressures and no evidence suggesting conflict as a major barrier to the productivity of intercollegiate athletics directors or threats to their programs' success. Intercollegiate athletics directors appear to believe that the conflict they encounter is easily reconciled when anticipated and is even prevented through proactive communication with constituents.

Signs of Role Strain in Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

Role theory literature suggests that administrative roles are often occupied by individuals straining to meet differing expectations from multiple constituencies (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1994). The basic

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assumption behind role theory is that dissention, conflict, and strain are normally experienced and creates what Goode (1960) first termed role strain, or difficulty in fulfilling role demands. The theoretical constructs of role strain utilized by this study are role ambiguity and role conflict.

Signs of Role Ambiguity in Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Experiences

Role ambiguity is the absence of clearly communicated role expectations and/or evaluation criteria (Kahn et al., 1964). Data reveal little signs of role ambiguity in this study. While formal written position descriptions for all participants are not evident in the study, intercollegiate athletics directors are fully aware of the role expectations placed upon them by their presidents and indicate that the expectations have been consistently high over time. The awareness intercollegiate athletics directors have of their expectations is accomplished as a result of regular ongoing meetings between the presidents and intercollegiate athletics directors, during which goals are emphasized and discussed. So in essence, the expectations are clearly communicated and in a manner that compensates for any changes the expectations encounter over time.

Formal evaluations are noted in the literature as preventative for avoiding problematic and unpredictable work environments (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999), and participants describe receiving regular performance evaluations from their presidents during regular meeting

sessions. However, only one participant indicates that there is not a formal evaluation process per se, but all participants indicate the value of regular evaluation which occurs during their regular meetings with presidents. While all participants admit that formal evaluations are helpful to them and institutions, they value the informal feedback and evaluation during their regular meetings with their presidents more than a formalized evaluation procedure.

Signs of Role Conflict in Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Experiences

Another foundational factor of role conflict is found within expectations being realistic and compatible. Participants agree that while their role expectations are high, they are realistic in nature. Intercollegiate athletics directors indicate that they have challenges to meeting those expectations, particularly with regard to fundraising, but they feel equipped and capable of meeting those challenges. However, it appears that the true challenge of meeting their role expectations lie within the notion of expectation compatibility. There are several issues that surfaced with regard to expectation compatibility for discussion.

Role conflict is defined in the literature as the presence of two or more incompatible role expectations simultaneously, making compliance with one over the other a conflict (Kahn et al., 1964). Data reveal some possible signs of role conflict in this study to discuss, but do not appear to

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be thematic barriers to effectiveness as described in literature (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). Within role conflict, there are some established sub-categories. Inter-role conflict requires role occupants to reconcile multiple incompatible role expectations. Person-role conflict requires role occupants to reconcile role obligations in light of their personal values and beliefs. Inter-sender conflict requires role occupants to accommodate work overload to fulfill expectations placed upon them by others. There are subtle signs of inter-sender and inter-role conflict in the data to be further discussed for clarity.

Staffing Challenges for Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

Data examining staffing issues related to meeting their programs' expectations reveal subtle signs of inter-sender role conflict. One participant with the least amount of staff of the participating institutions related that he feels like he just keeps taking on more and more responsibilities only to realize that he really cannot do everything expected with the resources available. Even the intercollegiate athletics directors with larger staffs at their disposal express the desire for additional help to better meet expectations. One participant related that staffing is the first battle he engaged in when he entered into the intercollegiate athletics director's role at his institution because he felt their staff was stretched too thin at that point in time to meet the program expectations. However, all participants indicate that they are able to work with their presidents in

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reconciling their expectations into realistic goals in spite of their staffing

deficiencies. It appears that while the expectations are high, the outcomes

are also viewed realistically given the human and financial resources

intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions have at

their disposal.

Student-Athlete Academic Challenges for Intercollegiate Athletics

Directors

Another example of inter-sender role conflict to emerge in the data

deals primarily with the issue of time demands placed upon student-athletes.

Intercollegiate athletics directors admit that student-athletes are at their

institutions with the ultimate goal of earning a degree and becoming a

successful contributor to society. However, they also recognize the import

role intercollegiate athletics plays in providing student-athletes with the

opportunity to attend college. Data reveal that intercollegiate athletics

directors find themselves mediating such issues as athletics schedules

conducive to academic achievement, missed classes due to travelling, and

other such related issues. The experiences of participants reveal the

possibility for inter-sender role conflict associated with these incompatible

role expectations as well. Even though the true nature of the inter-sender

role conflict lies with the student-athletes trying to reconcile too many

expectations from multiple role senders, the intercollegiate athletics

directors embody the advocacy role and feel compelled to face this
challenge on behalf of student-athletes.

The overall role expectations of intercollegiate athletics directors
include developing programs with quality student-athletes who graduate
and developing competitive athletics programs. The variable of time must
be a consideration for achieving both objectives. If students do not spend
adequate time in academics, they are unprepared for their career. If students
fail to spend adequate time in athletics, they are unprepared for competition.
Thus, intercollegiate athletics directors report that they are consistently
addressing this issue and trying to find balance. One participant suggests
that the academic community is intolerant of the time demands placed upon
student-athletes, whereas another participant relates experiences where
student-athletes have changed majors due to resistance from faculty in
working with student-athletes in balancing time demands. Intercollegiate
athletics directors indicate that this scenario poses another substantial
challenge in reconciliation within their roles.

The challenge of missed class time by student-athletes is mentioned
by all participants when discussing conflicts occurring within their roles.
One participant points out that unlike a NCAA Division I program, an
NCAA Division II school is unable to just fly to a game and come back the
same night. They are limited in funding and may miss three days of class as
opposed to student-athletes at NCAA Division I who may only miss one
day of class. However, he refrains from stating this as a fundraising goal

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for overcoming this challenge. Rather, he suggests that working with

faculty and administration in finding balance to this issue is the appropriate

strategy and all participants indicate likewise. It is unclear whether they

view having the funding for such travel is unrealistic or unattainable, but

they choose to focus on enhancing on-campus relationships to alleviate this

challenge. One participant indicates that improving relationships with

faculty through increasing their involvement with the intercollegiate

athletics program is successful in improving this issue for student-athletes.

If the faculty-student relationship extends campus-wide, beyond the

classroom, then all parties develop a stronger respect and regard for

becoming more student-centered across the campus.

Fundraising Challenges for Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

One area that all intercollegiate athletics directors indicate is a

challenge at the NCAA Division II level is fundraising, which emerges as a

sign of inter-role conflict in the study. Data indicates that these programs

must engage in fundraising, but does not confirm literature that suggests

intercollegiate athletics programs do this through escalated commercialism

to generate revenues for funding athletic arms race behaviors (Estler, 2005).

Fundraising for NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors involve

basic program marketing and promotion through local community

partnerships via sponsorships and ticket sales for athletic events. The

incompatibility surfaces as intercollegiate athletics directors describe how

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their entire institutions often engage in capital fundraising campaigns, which also seeks support from community partners and patrons including alumni. The challenge comes in the form of the expectation that intercollegiate athletics directors must raise supplemental funds in order to fully fund their programs due to the ever-decreasing state appropriations. So on one hand, the presidents are telling intercollegiate athletics directors to raise sponsorship funding, but also directing and limiting who they can pursue for these funding sources as the university is also pursuing the same funding sources for overall institutional funding. All participants indicate that this creates some incompatibility, frustration, and tension at times. However, the close working relationships with their presidents appear to abate such incompatibilities for intercollegiate athletics directors because they may receive a clearer directive in their fundraising strategy. This is once again evidence that their access to the president is a critical key to avoiding role conflict. Nonetheless, intercollegiate athletics directors indicate that fundraising is one challenge to their expectations that they must continually work at reconciling within their roles.

Summary for Research Question 3

Intercollegiate athletics directors believe that the expectations placed upon them are challenging but realistic as well as compatible. In fact, all participants admit that their self-imposed expectations are actually higher than what the president and institution places upon them.

Possible signs of inter-sender and inter-role conflict appear at times in the data, but do not appear to be barriers to successful program administration. Rather, the subtle signs of role strain appear to be issues that intercollegiate athletics directors feel comfortable in talking to their presidents about with regard to attaining their goals and the remaining challenges to unfulfilled goals. The study anticipated role strain to emerge due to the posited literature's claims related to the complexity of balancing athletic and academic values. However, strong relationships between academic missions and athletics philosophies, as well as quality leadership through presidential oversight and effective athletics administration appear to combat role strain at the NCAA Division II level.

Person-role conflict emerges from the experience of one participant, who through his duty of supervising the annual athletics awards banquet, battles a conflict with his president over a religious expression. But otherwise, no other tangible situations come to light indicating person-role conflict to be a theme among participants.

Inter-sender and inter-role conflicts emerge at times during this study in the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors related to staffing issues, student-athlete academic issues, and fundraising issues. However, participants indicate that they feel capable of alleviating these ongoing challenges in their roles and do not perceive them as anything unusual or diminishing to their effectiveness in their roles.

The consensus of the participants in this study confirms that conflicts arise in their roles, but conflicts do not present a barrier to their effectiveness as administrators, nor do conflicts present barriers to the success of their programs. In essence, intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions do not experience role strain in their roles.

RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR - To what extents do NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors experience academic-athletic divides in their roles?

This study reveals that NCAA Division II institutions have a sense of the shared mission objectives of being student-centered, focusing on teaching and learning, encouraging service, and embracing their role of economic development. Intercollegiate athletics reformers speculate as to whether intercollegiate athletics provides support for such missions grounded within academic values (Newman & Miller, 1994; Thelin, 1996; Duderstadt, 2000; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005). Literature reveals that from its formation, the NCAA has faced concerns with a growing academic-athletic divide (Estler, 2005). Past research on the phenomenon of academic-athletic divide reveals that the divide exists and studies suggest a growing divide at smaller institutions occurring because they are forced to engage in athletic arms race and commercialism behaviors to remain competitive, as well as to meet the rising costs of

intercollegiate athletics programs (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen &

Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). This study explores for evidence of an

academic-athletic divide at each institution by exploring for evidence of

mission drifts, athletic arms races, and commercialistic behaviors through

the experiences of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors.

NCAA Division II Mission and Values

Literature suggests that conference member institutions may vary in

the ways in which they promote intercollegiate athletics programs (Jehlicka,

1997; Estler, 2005).

Data in this study reveal important philosophical similarities among

institutions in how they promote intercollegiate athletics programs. An

athletic philosophy coupled with the institutional mission is identified in

literature as an important strategy for avoiding an academic-athletic divide

(Estler, 2005). Data reveal the essence of the institutional mission

statements of participating institutions is student-centered, focuses on

teaching and learning, promotes engagement in service, and embraces their

roles as economic catalysts for their communities.

Institutional Athletic Philosophies in NCAA Division II

All of the institutions' athletic philosophies promote athletics

programs in direct support of their institutional missions. These findings

give credibility to the notion that athletic conferences are composed of like-minded institutions (Estler, 2005).

Institutional Control in NCAA Division II

From the beginning, intercollegiate athletics has faced pressures and challenges associated with commercialization, amateurism, rising operational costs, and perceived threats to the academic mission of higher education (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Estler, 2005). Literature suggests that a key to maintaining institutional control over intercollegiate athletics is the selection and support of a quality intercollegiate athletics director to combat such challenges (Duderstadt, 2000). Data reveal the common characteristics of intercollegiate athletics directors to be education, experience, motivation, excellent communication, and ethics. Data reveal the common responsibilities for intercollegiate athletics directors include presidential reporting lines, administration, supervision, management, fundraising, and promotion. Literature suggests establishing a meaningful working relationship between presidents and intercollegiate athletics directors help to establish clear lines of authority and responsibility to operate an intercollegiate athletics program within well established guidelines (Duderstadt, 2000). The findings of this study indicate that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors have excellent working relationships with their presidents and work together to ensure institutional control over their athletics programs.

This study reveals intercollegiate athletics directors experiences and perspectives indicating the basic academic mission of teaching, learning, and generating knowledge is acknowledged and respected within intercollegiate athletics programs at NCAA Division II institutions. Data reveals that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs promote cohesiveness between their athletics philosophies and their institutional missions. All participants explain how their programs fit into the missions of their institutions, at times even before they are explicitly asked to do so. The consensus of participants appears to be that it is essential for the purpose of intercollegiate athletics programs to be identified in support of the institutional mission statements. One participant provides a provoking summary to support this data when he explains, "What we have at Division II is what intercollegiate athletics began as in 1903 when the NCAA was founded…the emphasis on the student-athlete…." In essence, there is little evidence of mission drifts, but rather confirmatory evidence that academic missions at NCAA Division II institutions are a recognized priority of the intercollegiate athletics programs. Furthermore, it is clear that presidents and intercollegiate athletics directors are working in tandem to ensure institutional control at these institutions as the NCAA envisions it to be secured.

Commercialism and Athletic Arms Race Behaviors in NCAA

Division II

Recent studies reveal that a growing academic-athletic divide at smaller institutions is because these schools are engaged in athletic arms race behaviors to remain competitive and engage in commercialism of their athletic program to finance the arms race (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). One concept brought to light in the literature is that athletic arms race behaviors often signify institutions' wants above justifiable needs with regard to athletic facilities and resources (Estler, 2005). This study reveals that NCAA Division II institutions have the need for athletic facility enhancements that are planned or already underway on their campuses. Participants relate how their athletic facilities are in some instances 50 years old, and their reasoning for facility enhancements are based upon providing quality experiences for student-athletes as opposed to improving program competitiveness among peer institutions. One participant from a highly competitive football program in the conference shared how the football locker room is fifty years old and later shared that the program's baseball team uses a facility 25 miles away because the campus does not have a baseball facility. Another participant shared how he walked his president over to a decrepit basketball locker room and explained that his team refuses to use the degraded facility. Data indicate that these intercollegiate athletics directors are not envisioning plush athletic facilities to try to land the best recruits or display their program's

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greatness, but rather they are just attempting to secure adequate, reasonable athletic facilities that have long been ignored and under prioritized by their institutions. Data from this study leads to the conclusion that these institutions are not engaging in what the literature considers as athletic arms race behaviors.

The literature also points out that high-stakes commercialism within intercollegiate athletics has become a means to an end for securing better facilities and resources for institutions engaging in athletic arms race behaviors (Estler, 2005). This study reveals that commercialism at NCAA Division II institutions is well below the magnitude of what literature considers high-stakes commercialism behaviors. Intercollegiate athletics directors admit that they engage in fundraising and promotion. They concede that selling, promoting, and fundraising are common duties of their roles and that they understand such expectations and why they exist. One participant indicates that raising money and selling tickets is a normal expectation for intercollegiate athletics directors today. Recognizing the funding challenges in higher education overall, one participant suggests that most all university administrators engage in supplemental fundraising for all campus-based academic and auxiliary programs.

Intercollegiate athletics directors also recognize the role their programs play in providing an institutional identity for the campus and local community. Participants indicate that their programs are utilized by other campus programs to help in the areas of student-recruitment, campus-wide

events, and promotions, suggesting that intercollegiate athletics provide a quality arena for such events due to the high visibility of intercollegiate athletics programs. There are minimal signs of aggressive merchandising, licensing, or television contracts in order to promote these intercollegiate athletics programs. Although participants indicate the value of media exposure is high, they are equally motivated to gain exposure related to student-athlete academic success as they are to gaining exposure for winning and competitiveness of their athletic programs. What this study reveals is that NCAA Division II programs are not forced into commercialism in order to fund athletic arms race behaviors and there is no indication that such activity will occur in the near future.

Summary for Research Question 4

One aspect of the academic-athletic divide this study explores is an issue of great debate among intercollegiate athletic reformers: The oversight and control of intercollegiate athletics.   Literature suggests that institutional control over intercollegiate athletics has slipped away (Duderstadt, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Knight Foundation Commission, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005). This study reveals that institutional control over NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs is intact and may provide a suitable model for other NCAA Divisions.   All participants indicate that they have strong relationships with their presidents which, in essence, appear to safeguard against threats of the

possibility of losing control over intercollegiate athletics programs on their campuses. Contrary to the literature claims that academic-athletic divides infect intercollegiate athletics programs at all NCAA levels of competition, there is little evidence that NCAA Division II institutions participating in this study experience an academic-athletic divide. Institutions appear to have adequate control over their intercollegiate athletics programs, operate in support of institutional mission, and are administered by educated and experienced intercollegiate athletics directors. There are few, if any, signs of what the literature defines as athletic arms race or commercialistic behaviors jeopardizing their status and the programs appear to be content as NCAA Division II members. In essence, the data in this study appears to confirm the promotion of Division II by the NCAA as the most balanced of competition within intercollegiate athletics (NCAA D-II SPIQRR, 2006).

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Intercollegiate athletics programs are considered sources of great pride for institutions. At times, scandals appear to overshadow the positive influence of intercollegiate athletics as avenues to higher education, programs supporting character development, and an institutional brand supporting broad affiliation. As intercollegiate athletics reform continues to be debated, programs must work toward improved understanding about the purpose and role of athletics in higher education at all levels of competition. Research documents the existence of an academic-athletic divide in higher education. However, the focus has been primarily upon NCAA Division I and Division III intercollegiate athletics programs (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Estler, 2005) with little research on NCAA Division II institutions. This study attempts to fill that void by exploring the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions from the perspective of the academic-athletic divide.

This study investigates the presence of the academic-athletic divide using role strain theory as a lens from which to view the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions with respect to compatibility with NCAA Division II principles, the athletics and academic missions, and how intercollegiate athletics directors experience role strain as a result of competing values and expectations.

Limitations

Four intercollegiate athletics directors employed at member institutions of a single intercollegiate athletics conference provided the data for this study. Although only four participants are interviewed, the findings of the study were reviewed with confidence due to the common experiences revealed by all participants reflecting diverse backgrounds and representing diverse institutions. However, the results of this study must remain within the context of the study conducted because there is no certainty the results would have been the same if all invited intercollegiate athletics directors would have elected to participate in the study. The limitations of this study include convenience sampling of intercollegiate athletics directors within the contextual bounds of a single athletics conference. The time demands of participants serve as another limitation as the schedules of the intercollegiate athletics directors frequently prevented prolonged engagement (Creswell, 2003).

Discussion

Existing studies suggest the existence of an academic-athletic divide resulting from the view that intercollegiate athletics programs are increasingly isolated from academic values of colleges and universities (Estler, 2005; Thelin, 1996). One area ignored in literature is institutions which compete at the NCAA Division II level and the extent to which in

this increasingly competitive environment, these institutions are operating

in a manner consistent with NCAA Division II values. Reformers argue

that this academic-athletic divide is reaching smaller schools as they

emulate the competitive values of athletics programs of the larger NCAA

Division I institutions as manifested in the growing athletics arms race

(Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003). As a result, concerns

about institutional control over intercollegiate athletics at all levels of

higher education continue to grow.

This study analyzes qualitative data in search for the signs of an

academic-athletic divide through evidence including mission drifts, athletics

arms race and commercialism behaviors, and excessive constituency

demands. Literature confirms these as causes of academic-athletic divides

in prior studies (Estler, 2005) and prior studies also confirm that role strain

leads to ineffective decision making among higher education administrators

(Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999).

NCAA Division II Philosophy

This study reveals that NCAA Division II institutions have a strong

grasp of their unique place in the NCAA Division II structure with respect

to their roles in the overall mission of their respective institutions. The

NCAA and athletic conference oversights create no substantial conflicting

barriers to their overall success. The results of this study suggest that

intercollegiate athletics directors appear to be effective administrators and

work to promote programs that reflect academic values as a priority over athletic success. The findings of the study suggest that NCAA division II institutions may not experience the phenomenon of an academic-athletic divide, but rather avoid such problems through close working relationships between intercollegiate athletics directors and presidents who operate programs with oversight and control strategies that perhaps instinctively thwart an academic-athletic divide. The experiences shared by NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors indicate that the athletics programs are compatible with institutional missions, and in fact the institutional mission drives the values and decisions of the athletic departments. In essence, the data suggest that the participating NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs embody the NCAA Division II heritage of a balanced approach to preserving academic values above athletic values.

NCAA Division II Intercollegiate Athletics Directors and Decision Making

This study reveals that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors are prepared for and capable of functioning within an administrative decision making role that helps safeguard the NCAA Division II philosophy. There are few signs of an overbearing and demanding constituency base exerting influence on the decision-making process for intercollegiate athletics directors. The experiences shared by

NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors suggest that they make decisions based on how those decisions will impact student-athletes and the institutions. The study also reveals that some intercollegiate athletics directors function within presidential cabinets, or similar administrative teams, taking a larger role in the strategic planning and decision-making process on their campuses. While some view this activity as beyond their scope of role expectations, others view this activity as critical to ensuring their programs are embedded into the mission of the institution as it moves forward in accomplishing strategic goals. It appears that these individuals see their participation in these activities as unique opportunities for themselves and their programs.

Evidence of Role Strain

This explorative study uses the role strain theory framework to search for evidence indicating that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors are subject to diverse influences, which at times may require these administrators to reconcile incompatible expectations. Literature suggests that ineffective administration is often tied to role conflict and role ambiguity in prior studies (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). This study reveals that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors do not experience role strain in a dysfunctional way within their administrative roles. The experiences shared by these administrators suggest that they have clearly established role expectations

and that these expectations are clearly communicated either through written position descriptions or ongoing communication with presidents. The results of this study furthermore suggest that intercollegiate athletics directors understand the evaluation criteria for their roles and receive regular feedback on their performance, not so much as a result of formal evaluations but due to the regular meetings with presidents.

While there are regularly occurring conflicts in their daily work environment, the intercollegiate athletics directors have a clear grasp on their role expectations, the absence of an overbearing and demanding constituency base, and good management tactics appear to diminish the impact of such conflicts. The experiences shared by NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors suggest that they are fully aware of their role expectations and they have regular evaluation and feedback from their presidents with regard to how they are performing in their administrative role and therefore, do not experience role strain.

Implications for Practice

Education and Administrative Experiences of NCAA Division II Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

The results of this study indicate that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors are educated within the discipline of athletics administration, gain professional experiences that support athletics administration, and are responsive to academic values in their decision-

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making roles. Literature suggests that the traditional career trajectory for intercollegiate athletics directors of transitioning from coaching and teaching into athletics administrative positions is disappearing in favor of individuals with past professional experiences suitable to the market-driven sports industry. The results of this study suggest this may be true, as two of the four participants had gained much of their professional experiences outside of the higher education environment. However, the results of this study also suggest that despite past experiences, intercollegiate athletics directors are prepared for their athletics administrative roles and function within those roles to effectively bridge academic and athletic values at their institutions.

Communicating Expectations and Evaluating Performances of NCAA Division II Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

The results of this study indicate that intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions are keenly aware of the expectations placed upon them and their programs and they continuously receive evaluative feedback regarding the performance of their programs through a close working relationship with their presidents. Literature suggests that the authority for preserving academic values and maintaining institutional control over intercollegiate athletics programs are ultimately presidential responsibilities (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). It appears that presidents at NCAA Division II institutions take this

responsibility seriously and regularly interact with intercollegiate athletics directors. Ultimately, regular meetings and conversations most likely diminishes the potential for role strain, despite some intercollegiate athletics directors admitting they have no formal position description and no formal evaluation process. The informal process of regular meetings appears to transcend the requirements of formal position descriptions and performance evaluations as suggested in literature for reducing role strain.

Managing Conflict between Academic and Athletic Values Effectively: Organizational Structures within Higher Education for NCAA Division II Intercollegiate Athletics Directors

The unique marriage of intercollegiate athletics programs within the higher education environment remains a puzzle to many scholars, but the position of intercollegiate athletics directors is afforded a unique opportunity in working directly with the president on a regular basis. The president must delegate the daily management and oversight of the program to the intercollegiate athletics director and place trust in the knowledge, ability, and skill of this individual to carry out established goals and objectives. The results of this study indicate that intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions may benefit from participating in presidential cabinets during activities such as strategic planning. The benefits of such involvement place the intercollegiate athletics program at the table with all other campus programs and initiatives during the strategic

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planning process used to determine how the university collectively meets its academic mission. Athletics administrators having an identified role and purpose within the organizational structure lends support for balancing academic and athletic values in decision-making on campuses, as well as providing an opportunity to effectively address conflicts that may arise and potentially pit athletic values against academic values.

Implications for Research

The results of this study provide topics for greater exploration and confirmation at the NCAA Division II level in future studies. Role theory framework is used in this study to explore the roles of intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions. The purpose of the study is to explore for the presence of an academic-athletic divide on campuses by looking for signs of the phenomenon through the experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors.

Role Strain Theory

The results of this study appear to confirm and support the basic tenants of role strain theory, which posits that when role conflict is minimal and role ambiguity is clarified, role occupants experience less role strain (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). The role strain framework suggests that diverse constituency influences places intercollegiate athletics directors in roles that require them to respond to multiple competing

expectations, which can lead to role strain for intercollegiate athletics

directors. The experiences shared by NCAA Division II intercollegiate

athletics directors suggest student-athletes and the campus community are

the most important constituency groups having direct impact upon their

administrative decision-making roles. The results of this study suggest that

intercollegiate athletics directors have clearly established role expectations

and that these expectations are clearly communicated through position

descriptions and ongoing communication with their presidents. The

experiences shared by NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors

suggest that they understand their evaluation criteria and have a good grasp

on their role performance, not so much as a result of formal evaluations but

due to the open and regular communication with their presidents. The

regular interaction between intercollegiate athletics directors and presidents

at NCAA Division II institutions is most likely the reason role strain is not

dysfunctional for these administrators. Even though there are some signs of

role conflict among intercollegiate athletics directors, the shared

experiences of intercollegiate athletics directors do not indicate a

dysfunctional conflict that they perceive as a barrier to their success as an

athletics administrator. In the end, this study reveals that while NCAA

Division II intercollegiate athletics directors do not experience role strain in

their administrative positions, the role strain theory framework is a useful

tool in assessing role occupant behaviors and experiences. The examination

of the importance of formally written role expectations and formal

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evaluations as opposed to informal procedures and the impact upon
diminishing role strain should we weighed and explored in future studies.

Future Research

The intercollegiate athletics director position provides a focal role
for exploring experiences for signs of role strain in this administrative
position and the presence of academic-athletic divides at institutions in this
study. The results indicate that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics
directors are educated, experienced, and responsive to their decision making
roles within the higher education environment. Furthermore, these
administrators function in their decision-making roles in a close
collaborative relationship with their presidents and experience no excessive
pressure or unrealistic expectations from constituency groups. The results
of the study imply that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors
do not experience role strain and NCAA Division II institutions do not
show signs of an academic-athletic divide. A more detailed discussion of
these findings is included and suggests that future studies should look more
closely in theses areas for greater understanding.

Education and Experience Backgrounds of Intercollegiate Athletics
Directors

The education and professional backgrounds of intercollegiate athletics directors in this study hold similarities at times and at other times are diverse in nature. Although this study uses a small sample, the results indicate that NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors are educated and prepared for their roles. But this study fails to fully explore the true impact education and experience has individually or collectively in preparing future administrators for their positions.

Working Relationships between Intercollegiate Athletics Directors and Presidents

The close working relationships intercollegiate athletics directors have with their presidents are critical in the perceptions of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors. This study suggests that role strain is minimal and an academic-athletic divide is not likely at NCAA Division II institutions due to the nature of this working relationship. However, the study fails to fully explore the context and bounds of this important relationship, particularly athletics-driven decision-making, by gaining the perspectives of presidents. Future studies directed at better understanding this relationship may reveal how decisions are weighed and balanced, may better identify who influences decision-making, and may reveal clearer strategies for balancing academic and athletic values in the process. One particular area that needs better definition and understanding is the perspectives of intercollegiate athletics constituents. Perspectives of

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presidents, academic administrators, student-athletes, and others may
provide additional insight.

Understanding the Constructs of Role Expectations and Role
Ambiguity

This study suggests that role strain does not appear to be a barrier to
the success of NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics directors.
However, one area for greater understanding is the optimal method for
establishing role expectations and communication of role expectations. The
results of this study suggest this may best be accomplished face-to-face and
occur regularly. Better understanding the likelihood of such interpersonal
interaction and communication could be a key to reducing role strain, but
could also result in additional problems related to workload and time
management. Another area of the study in need of greater understanding is
how role expectations are viewed in light of available staffing and resources
available to intercollegiate athletics directors while meeting expectations.

The NCAA Division II Institutions Overall

One purpose of this study is to determine if NCAA Division II
institutions reveal signs of academic-athletic divides. It appears that the
institutions participating in this study do not show overt signs of this
phenomenon, but a small convenience sample limits the ability to escape

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the context of these participating institutions. Greater understanding of the absence or presence of academic-athletic divides at the NCAA Division II level of competition should be pursued in future research endeavors by broadening the scope to include a larger sample of these institutions for examination. The results of this study should lend itself toward the development of a larger scale study to determine the appropriate use of these results.

CONCLUSIONS

One conclusion drawn from this study is that intercollegiate athletics directors at NCAA Division II institutions perceive their roles to be athletics administrators appearing to escape the snare of role strain due to their unique working relationships with presidents. The nature of their administrative position places them at the executive level of administration, yet they do not perceive the scope of their decision-making role to be university-wide, but rather limited to decision-making within the athletics department. Their unique working relationship with presidents probably reduces or eliminates role strain for these individuals and at the same time helps create a suitable environment for balancing academic and athletic values on campus.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is that academic-athletic divides do not appear to be prevalent at NCAA Division II institutions and the reasons for this lie within intercollegiate athletics programs' support for

institutional missions and the important role intercollegiate athletics programs serve in helping these institutions achieve their missions and objectives. NCAA Division II institutions demonstrate little evidence that they are engaging in either athletic arms race or commercialistic behaviors. Instead, these institutions rely upon their intercollegiate athletics programs to be an essential program in achieving institutional goals and objectives. Due to limited resources, NCAA Division II programs struggle to fully fund the basic operations of their existing programs, much less imitate and emulate NCAA Division I programs in their quest for building expensive facilities and capturing a segment of the sports entertainment market. In contrast, NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletics programs appear content with offering competitive programs and being able to provide access to higher education for quality students, both of which help build their campus community.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How long have you been at your institution and in what roles?

2. What were the expectations placed upon you at the time you were hired?

3. Can you describe your administrative experiences in higher education?

4. Can you describe your experiences in intercollegiate athletics administration?

5. Who are key constituents in higher education and what do you perceive their expectations to be?

6. Who are key constituents in intercollegiate athletics and what do you perceive their expectations to be?

7. How much pressure do these constituents place upon you?

8. What amount of pressure do you place upon yourself outside of constituency influences?

9. Who sets the expectations for your role as intercollegiate athletics director?

10. Have these expectations changed over time? If so, in what ways?

11. How are those expectations communicated to you?

12. Who evaluates your performance as intercollegiate athletics director and what do you perceive the evaluation criteria to be?

13. Who evaluates your performance as a university administrator and what do you perceive the evaluation criteria to be?

14. Can you describe conflicts among the expectations placed upon

you?

    a. Are expectations incompatible?

    b. Do expectations conflict with your personal values?

    c. Are expectations unrealistic?

15. If so, can you explain how you resolve these conflicts?

16. Can you think of one example of a situation that best represents the

conflict you experience as a college administrator;

    a. As an intercollegiate athletics administrator?

    b. Can you describe this situation?

    c. Can you discuss the resolution of the conflict?

17. How does your institution provide oversight of intercollegiate

athletics?

18. How do you feel intercollegiate athletics supports the educational

mission at your institution?

19. How do you feel intercollegiate athletics conflicts with the

educational mission at your institution?

20. What is the biggest challenge you perceive at the NCAA DIVISION

II level of competition for athletics directors?

21. Are capital campaigns, building projects and corporate partnerships

equally emphasized in various programs across the entire

institution?

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE LETTER TO PRESIDENTS

October 9, 2008

President   :

The following information is provided to gain your support for this study and ask permission to conduct research at your institution.

The purpose of this study is to explore intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences with the phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide at NCAA DIVISION II institutions. More specifically, this study will examine the impact of constituents' expectations on intercollegiate athletics directors in balancing academic and athletic values. As an employee of a regional university, I am intrigued by the administrative activities of the university. I am especially mindful of the athletic administrators who work so diligently to administer quality intercollegiate athletic programs while also adhering to the institution's academic mission to educate students. As a part of my doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma, I am conducting a qualitative study to establish the essence of intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences. Data will be collected through interviewing participants and reviewing institutional documents.

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify institutions and participants against their wishes. I will share my findings with you after the research is completed. The benefits of the study's results are intended to better understand participants' administrative roles.

I look forward to your institution's participation in my research project. Please respond if you are willing to allow me to include your institution in the study and collect data on your campus. **PLEASE DO NOT ENCOURAGE, NOR DISCOURAGE YOUR INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.**

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (580) 559-5357 or jwillims@ecok.edu or my advisor Dr. Connie Dillon at (405) 325-5984.

      Signature   Date

Sincerely,

Jeff Williams

APPENDIX C – SAMPLE LETTER TO INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTORS

October 20, 2008

Mr.   :

The following information is provided to inform you of a research project I am conducting relative to your role as an Intercollegiate Athletics Director.

The purpose of this study is to explore intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences with the phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide at NCAA DIVISION II institutions. More specifically, this study will examine the impact of constituents' expectations on intercollegiate athletics directors in balancing academic and athletic values. As an employee of a regional university, I am intrigued by the administrative activities of the university. I am especially mindful of the athletic administrators who work so diligently to administer quality intercollegiate athletic programs while also adhering to the institution's academic mission to educate students. As a part of my doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma, I am conducting a qualitative study to establish the essence of intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences. Data will be collected through interviewing participants and reviewing institutional documents.

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to indentify institutions and participants against their wishes. I will share my findings with you after the research is completed. The benefits of the study's results are intended to better understand participants' administrative roles.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (580) 559-5357 or jwillims@ecok.edu or my advisor Dr. Connie Dillon at (405) 325-5984. The OU Institutional Review Board may be reached at 405-325-8100 or irb@ou.edu.

Please read and sign the accompanying consent form to become a participant in this study. I will return a copy of your signed consent form for your records. I look forward to your participation in my research project.

Sincerely,

Jeff Williams

APPENDIX D – INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: The Academic-Athletic Divide: A Phenomenological Study of Intercollegiate Athletics Directors' Experiences

Principal Investigator: Mr. Jeff Williams

Department: Educational Leadership And Policy Studies

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted at NCAA DIVISION II regional universities holding membership in a single Athletics Conference. You were selected as a possible participant because you hold the administrative role of the Intercollegiate Athletics Director at one of these institutions.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is:

To understand the academic-athletic divide from the perspectives of intercollegiate athletics directors' lived experiences at NCAA DIVISION II institutions. The research question(s) for this study seek to gain intercollegiate athletics directors' perspectives regarding their roles as both athletic administrators and university administrators, as well as the key constituents influencing the decisions intercollegiate athletics directors make and the conflicts which may arise throughout such interactions.

Number of Participants

About five (5) participants will take part in this study.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Consent to face-to-face interviews with the researcher at your place of employment or an alternate site of your discretion. When face-to-face interviews or determining an alternative site cannot be arranged, telephone

interviews may be conducted. Interviews will consist of initial open-ended questions and additional probing questions when appropriate.

In addition to interviews, the researcher will request access to specific institutional documents for review. These documents may include: Athletics Conference Handbook; NCAA DIVISION II Handbook; Institution's NCAA Self-Study Analysis (most recent); Institutional Mission Statement; Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Job Description; Intercollegiate Athletics Department Annual Budget; Intercollegiate Athletics Department Handbook (policy & procedure manual). Documents (or copies) you provide will be maintained in a locked file by the researcher to protect your identity and the identity of your institution from becoming disclosed against your wishes.

   You may be terminated from this study at the discretion of the researcher should one of the following occur prior to the conclusion of this study:
   - If you experience a change in employment role at your institutions;
   - If you leave your institution of employment;
   - If you disclose and/or discuss the identities of fellow participants and/or institutions with persons other than approved researchers in ways that breach confidentiality.

Length of Participation

You will be asked to consent to an initial 45 minute interview with the researcher. A 45-minute follow-up interview may be requested. This study will conclude by December, 2009.

This study has the following risks:

The researcher recognizes disclosure of your identity in relation to your responses could pose varying degrees of social and economic risks should your responses reflect poorly upon key constituents. The interview questions will be seeking honest responses regarding an "insider's perspective" to what many may consider to be sensitive information regarding the true nature of athletic and academic values at your institution. Therefore, protecting your confidentiality throughout the duration of this study and the reporting of the results will be the researcher's highest priority to avoid any possible retaliation against you by constituents. In addition, the amount of time required for conducting face-to-face interviews will pose an intrusion upon your already hectic schedule as an Intercollegiate Athletics Director. The likelihood of these identified risks becoming realized is minimal to none. However, should the identity of participants and institutions become breached against participants' wishes, this study will be terminated.

Benefits of being in the study are

The knowledge gained from this research may benefit universities sponsoring intercollegiate athletics programs and the individuals working within these programs, specifically intercollegiate athletics directors and presidents. Furthermore, the knowledge may become beneficial for institutions, athletics conferences, athletic governing organizations, and society in general. One progressive movement in the United States is reforming intercollegiate athletics by refocusing on academic values. This movement has become a highly debated issue with very little strategic evidence that reform is viable and realistic. Absent from the existing research literature is data from NCAA DIVISION II institutions, which has a heritage of effectively balancing athletic and academic values. These understudied institutions may offer valuable and practical information for the reform debate to consider.

Confidentiality

In published reports, neither individual participants, nor institutional identities will be reported to reduce unforeseen risks to participants and/or institutions. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. These organizations include the OU Institutional Review Board.

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for you time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording.   ___   Yes   ___   No

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at (580) 559-5357 or jwillims@ecok.edu. My advisor is Dr. Connie Dillon who may be contacted at (405) 325-5984 or cdillon@ou.edu.

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature   Date

APPENDIX E – DOCUMENTS REQUESTED FOR REVIEW

1. NCAA Self-Study Analysis (Institution's Most Recent)

2. Institutional Mission Statement

3. Intercollegiate Athletics Directors Job Description

4. Intercollegiate Athletics Department Annual Budget

5. Intercollegiate Athletics Department Handbook (Policy & Procedure Manual)

SCRIPTS

Email Recruitment Script:

My name is Jeff Williams and the purpose for this email is to follow-up with you regarding an invitation letter you received approximately 2 weeks ago requesting your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project. As the letter mentioned, the purpose of my study is to explore intercollegiate athletics directors' experiences with the phenomenon of the academic-athletic divide at NCAA DIVISION II institutions. More specifically, this study will examine the impact of constituents' expectations on intercollegiate athletics directors in balancing academic and athletic values.

If for some reason you did not receive an informed consent letter, I have attached a copy to this email. Please return a signed copy verifying your voluntary consent to participate and I will contact you via phone to confirm you participation and discuss a potential interview schedule. Please let me know any questions you might have and I thank you for your time regarding my request.

Phone Recruitment Script:

"Hello. My name is Jeff Williams and I'm calling to confirm your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project. I have received a signed informed consent form and I wanted to verify that you agree to voluntarily participate in this project."

"Are there any questions you might have regarding the purpose of the study?"

"Is there a convenient date, time and location for scheduling an interview?"

"Are there any other questions you might have that I may be able to answer?"

"Thank you for your time and I will contact you prior to our interview on (date) to confirm the scheduled interview date, time and location."

APPENDIX G – INSTITUTIONAL DATA SHEET

	Enrollment	Student-Athletes	Coaching Staff	Sport Offerings	Athletics Expenses
Institution 1 (Pilot)	3,288	255	31	13	$1,892,935
Institution 2 **	3,385	143	19	10	$1,498,441
Institution 3	8,271	284	27	10	$3,504,147
Institution 4	2,958	267	23	10	$1,665,498
Institution 5	4,422	291	25	12	$2,408,245
Institution 6	14,429	232	29	12	$4,477,389
Institution 7 *	4,145	396	43	12	$5,913,883
Institution 8	4,900	372	33	9	$2,953,500
Institution 9	3,875	259	32	11	$3,133,179
Institution 10	6,007	336	25	10	$4,053,702
Institution 11	3,810	217	25	9	$3,454,086
Institution 12	6,054	267	30	9	$3,261,516
Institution 13 *, **	4,549	81	19	5	$1,870,721
Institution 14	5,670	294	40	13	$3,099,949
Institution 15	2,370	459	22	15	$2,942,997
Averages	**5,209**	**276**	**28**	**10**	**$3,075,345**

Private institutions denoted by *

Institutions not sponsoring football denoted by **

APPENDIX H – PILOT STUDY REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this pilot study was to apply and evaluate the procedures and instrumentation of a proposed phenomenological study prior to finalizing the researcher's prospectus project.

Initiating the Pilot Study

Approval was obtained from the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB) on September 16, 2008 to proceed with the pilot study. The study followed the approved procedures and began in October, 2008 at a NCAA Division II institution. An invitation letter was sent on October 9, 2008, signed and returned by the President on October 20, 2008, granting campus access for the purposes of conducting the study. An invitation to participate was sent to the participant on October 20, 2008, followed by an email invitation on November 6, 2008 with a signed consent form attached. Signed consent was returned by the participant on November 10, 2008 and an appointment for a face-to-face interview at the participant's convenience was scheduled for November 12, 2008 at 9:30 am. The day prior to the interview (November 11, 2008), the participant was emailed to confirm the interview appointment.

Data Collection

The pilot interview was conducted on November 12, 2008 and lasted approximately 42 minutes. The interview was audio recorded on a digital

audio recording device. The interview guide was followed and 15 of the 16 questions were asked in sequential order. Question five was not asked in sequence, and never truly asked the way it was written. However, discussions later in the interview came "full circle" and the context of question five was discussed and the intended data was collected. A total of 40 probing and/or follow up questions were asked over the course of the interview. Immediately following the interview, the digital audio file was downloaded to the researcher's personal computer (PC) and saved on a secure network drive. The Dragon Naturally Speaking software package was used for the first and second transcription attempts, but failed in two distinct ways. First, the parameters of the software transcription program would not process the entire audio file; second, the software package only recognized the researcher's voice and not the voice of the participant, thus producing an inaccurate and unformatted transcript. Since the automated transcription process failed, the researcher personally transcribed the entire digital audio file for accuracy into a Microsoft Word data file. For these reasons, the Dragon Naturally Speaking software package will not be used for the full study, but rather the researcher will manually transcribe audio files.

Related documents were collected and underwent content analysis to explore compatibility among the policies of the athletics department, institution, athletic conference and NCAA. The NCAA Division II Manual was examined and revealed the fundamental policy in Article I of the

constitution to be "…to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part

of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student

body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between

intercollegiate athletics and professional sports" (p. 1). The conference

handbook was examined and revealed its basic purpose in Article II of the

constitution was to "encourage policies that make intercollegiate athletics

an integral part of the total educational offerings at member institutions" (p.

21). The institution's Student-Athlete Handbook was examined and

revealed a philosophy stating, "the…athletics program is maintained as a

vital component of the student body" (p. 8). These three documents

reflected similarities in professing the intended role for intercollegiate

athletics on campuses as an educational component of academic missions.

Each policy manual contained constitutional articles addressing mission,

purpose and/or philosophy, institutional control, and sound academic

principles within intercollegiate athletics programs. The institutional policy

appeared to be the most elaborate policy reflecting academic principles

through delineated operational procedures and policies tied directly to

accomplishing the institution's academic mission.

The institutional mission was examined for comparison with the

mission of the athletics department. The institutional mission stated:

> "University's mission is to foster a learning
>
> environment in which students, faculty, staff,
>
> and community interact to educate students

for life in a rapidly changing and culturally

diverse society. Within its service area,

University provides leadership for economic

development and cultural enhancement."

The athletics mission stated:

"Within this mission, the evolving

Department of Athletics will be an integral

part of the institution and its education

programs."

The institution's 2008 NCAA self study was examined and indicated that

the mission statement articulated the philosophy of the Department of

Athletics and reflected a clear understanding of the supportive role of

athletics in the broader institutional mission. However, all policy-related

documents appeared to be rather vague and ambiguous, lacking specific

guidance and instruction for accomplishing intended missions.

The 2008-09 line-item budgets were reviewed and revealed little

adjustment in the operating costs delineated for each sport between fiscal

years 2007-08 and 2008-09. However, expansion and growth within the

athletics program budget revealed the addition of two women's sports

programs over the course of fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09, requiring an

additional $84,325.63 proposed in the 2008-09 budget to provide funding

for the mandatory costs associated with scholarships, books, room and

board. The 2008-09 budget did not include an operating budget for one of the new sports.

The Director of Athletics job description was examined and revealed keywords such as "promotional activities, athletic fund raising, effective communication with…interested constituencies" and other descriptions related to human resource management and leadership. There were nine specified job responsibilities (role expectations), yet the only mention of academic values and the use of the word "academic" within the job description appeared in item six, which stated "Establish administrative policies and procedures that aid in achieving athletic goals and maintaining sound academic standards". It is important to note that athletic goals were to be "achieved", while academic standards were to be "maintained". It appears that this institution placed a higher emphasis on athletic values, possibly as a result of history of under-emphasizing intercollegiate athletics on its campus.

The researcher, after obtaining and reviewing the NCAA and athletics conference handbooks, removed these two documents from the list of requested documents for the full study, which reflected in the recommendations section, as well as in the modified appendix for the revised prospectus. However, these two documents were maintained for review during the full study as the NCAA document was relevant to all member institutions and the athletics conference handbook was relevant to the remaining institutions serving as the population for the full study. These

documents were used to examine institutional policies and behaviors within

the guidelines of these two governing bodies, which will also be their

purpose within the full study.

<u>Initial Data Analysis</u>

A copy of the interview transcript was provided to the participant on

December 16, 2008 to review for accuracy and no corrections were

requested upon its return on February 7, 2009. Upon analyzing the pilot

interview transcript, the academic-athletic divide phenomenon was explored

for the emergence of possible themes useful in deriving the participant's

essence of experience in attempting to answer the research questions.

The first research question addressed how intercollegiate athletics

directors described their roles. When asked to describe their role as both an

intercollegiate athletics director and as a university administrator, and what

those experiences have been like, the participant responded:

> "Being the athletic director, it's a combination
>
> of the two – the academic and the athletic
>
> experience of the student-athlete….It's been
>
> able to allow me to see things
>
> differently…it's given me a real good look at
>
> the educational system and how academics
>
> and athletics are tied together and how they
>
> work cooperatively"

The participant also described how role expectations in general had changed over the course of time:

> "I think the expectation of the NCAA has
> changed in they put more of an emphasis on
> the academic side. So now we monitor
> graduation rates, we monitor continuing
> eligibility for our athletes, graduation tracks,
> percent of degrees…all of that stuff is
> relatively new in the existence of the NCAA.
> So the shift has definitely gone from just the
> athletic to now more the academic side, just
> mostly because of a lot of people cheating on
> that side of the coin…better success
> athletically…when Miles Brand was hired as
> the head of the NCAA, a lot of that stuff
> started to change as far as the academic side
> of the house."

When probed deeper about the impact Miles Brand had upon the status of intercollegiate athletics and why there appeared to be a higher emphasis on athletics, the participant responded:

> "I wouldn't say there was a higher emphasis;
> I would just say there wasn't a high emphasis
> on academics. They were just looking at the

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athletic piece of it. Really, the priority wasn't

on the academic side…it really wasn't on any

side. They just didn't worry about it.…He

came in and changed a lot of that. And there

were some studies done by the Knight

Commission and different folks like that

started to change the emphasis of who had

control over the athletic departments on

campuses. You know, who had the oversight

and that control really shifted to the

president."

Despite such admissions of an academic shift, many of the participant's

responses appeared to cast the perception that s/he viewed his/her role as

largely athletic in nature at this institution. As a result of new

administrative leadership, this particular institution began to emphasize

athletics more so than in the past. When asked about why s/he perceived

this institution to be lagging behind other members of the conference

athletically, warranting a renewed emphasis on athletics, s/he responded:

"Just from a history of procrastination and

trying to develop athletics, it just wasn't a

priority here. So as the years go by and the

budgets stay the same and you keep falling

behind and behind. And now you're in a

period of consequence, you're trying to catch

up fast and that's very difficult to do…."

When asked if the shift to prioritizing athletics at his/her institution had

resulted in a shift in the role expectations s/he encountered, s/he responded:

"Oh yeah, the institution has bigger

expectations! Now they're putting more

money into it than they ever have before. The

problem is that money is not even getting me

back to normal or the average…we're so far

below that the expectation really shouldn't

change until we get on a level playing field.

But that's not the case…the expectation has

changed."

When asked about who is setting the new expectations, s/he responded:

"The president, without a doubt…the president has

an expectation,

but how to get to that final reality, s/he may not have

any knowledge on…that's where I come in to try and

get us there."

The second research questions addressed how intercollegiate

athletics directors described the influence of key constituents on decision-

making. When asked to identify key constituents in higher education

administration and what their expectations were perceived to be, two key

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internal constituents were the president and provost. The participant responded:

> "Obviously the president, because that is who I
>
> directly report to…his expectation is competitive
>
> programs, winning, graduating our student-athletes.
>
> Another key constituent is the Provost, more
>
> concerned on the academic side…if your coaches
>
> teach how they are performing in the classroom…."

Some key external constituents that emerged from the data included alumni and fans placing the most expectations upon the athletics director, primarily because the participant perceived these individuals as also evaluating his performance based on the success of the athletics program and his/her own evaluation in his/her ability to secure external funding:

> "Well, I think the expectations from outside
>
> the institution are from alumni and fans that
>
> want to see the program succeed…and they
>
> don't understand the full brevity of the
>
> situation here from a financial standpoint, nor
>
> should they. But they're expectation is
>
> winning and how do you win? Well, you
>
> gotta put money into it."

The last research question drove at gaining intercollegiate athletics director's experiences with conflict in their roles. When asked about

conflicts experienced by the participant as a result of conflicting and/or

unrealistic expectations, several examples provided opportunities for

probing questions for greater exploration. One example reflected unrealistic

role expectations and related to replacing a head coach:

> "Just last year, our head football coach…the
>
> expectation of winning, I thought was
>
> unrealistic with just being only a head coach
>
> for two years. So we gave it a third year, with
>
> no change in result, but also with differences
>
> in personalities, opinions and operations that
>
> had nothing to do with W's and L's. So there
>
> are times when expectations are different
>
> from what the president may see and from
>
> what I may see."

When asked to relate a specific experience related to unrealistic

expectations resulting in conflict specifically within his/her role, s/he

replied:

> "The best example is the addition of women's
>
> volleyball and golf here last year. I had a
>
> difference of opinion with the president on
>
> doing that. And that is simply, from an
>
> athletic director, seeing that programs are
>
> underfunded now, why add? Not having the

personnel to support those other two

programs…the resources to support their

programs. And explaining to coaches that,

'yeah we know you're underfunded, but we're

gonna add two more sports'. Because of Title

IX issues that, regardless of apparent or not

apparent…my opinion was we were in

compliance. So that's a direct conflict in both

those roles (athletics director and university

administrator)…and I didn't win out on that

one (*laughing*), but that's alright.

Incompatible role expectations also surfaced during the course of the

interview, as the discussion turned toward personnel and the ability of the

athletic director to meet role expectations and maintain oversight when

utilizing personnel in dual-roles (athletics and academics). The response

indicated that having coaches who were also teaching faculty at times

positively or negatively impacted his/her ability to ultimately meet role

expectations:

"If you've got coaches that really love the

classroom and really want to instruct well,

that's a positive. Because now they're

mingling with other faculty, they're with

students - that's great. When they do just the

> opposite, well then it's a negative. When
>
> their teaching takes away from really their
>
> main job, which is coaching, it becomes a
>
> hindrance."

It appeared that the participant viewed teaching faculty/coaches as coaches first. When asked if having personnel that were dedicated to both roles in athletics and academics was ideal, or would s/he prefer one over the other, s/he gave precedence to clearly established role expectations by responding:

> "Well, one way or the other is only better
>
> based on what the expectation is. If the
>
> expectation is simply winning, well then it
>
> would be better if they were just coaches. If
>
> the expectation is successful programs, 'yeah
>
> we love to win, but we want you to have good
>
> instruction in the classroom', well then I'd
>
> rather have both. That's where the
>
> expectation has to be set and the roles vary
>
> based on that expectation."

When asked how s/he interpreted that role expectation at this institution, s/he indicated how behaviors may be superseding policy and further confirming an institutional emphasis on athletics over academics at this institution and replied:

"Well I think it depends on who you talk

to…and that's a little problematic! I think

certain folks, the expectation is a little more

on the winning side; others, it's on the

teaching and less on the competitive side.

And that's a problem!"

When probed about which side s/he feels more pressure at this

institution, s/he responded:

"Oh, from the athletic side…without a doubt!

I almost think that if they were a great coach,

what they did in the classroom, they don't

care…which is a little bit unnerving to me,

but that's the reality of it. Cause really, what

are they being hired to do? What are they

being evaluated on? And really, that's the

coaching side."

To lend further insight into the academic-athletic divide

phenomenon, indications of athletic arms race behaviors and

commercialism appeared to become woven throughout the participant's

response, and particularly when asked about the challenges inside

intercollegiate athletics in general:

"Well, the challenge is always, from a

financial standpoint, there is never enough

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money…How do you make them (student-

athletes) have a better memory of their four or

five years here at your institution? That's

maybe giving them better equipment, better

facilities."

During the course of the discussion related to expectations of the

athletics director, the theme of athletics-arms race behavior surfaced

again as the response included:

"…to have successful programs, you really

need facilities that are up to speed with the

rest of the league. Well, if I don't have that,

it's tough to judge the overall performance

because we're not on a level playing field

with everybody else".

Commercialism was alluded to in the response by the participant

when asked about how his performance as intercollegiate athletics

director is evaluated by the president:

"The president looks at 'alright, are we

moving forward in the athletic department,

are our teams becoming more competitive, are

our resources growing, are we raising more

revenue, is the whole perception of the

program changing…are we just going in the

right direction'."

Commercialism surfaced again during the interview when the participant's

perceptions about intercollegiate athletics director's expectations related to

intercollegiate athletics funding were explored:

"Well, I think it should be the same

everywhere at II, in that if the university, if

one of its priorities is the athletic program, it

needs to be funded as a level that is

competitive with its peers…wherever the

conference schools are. And then any money

generated from outside sources is in addition

to the university money. I think the schools

that are underfunded from the university

standpoint, and try to make it up through

fundraising have even more challenges…if

you want competitive athletics, you need to

support athletics just like you'd support the

academic side if you want kids to graduate

and be known as an educational

institution…this institution funds it low and

hopes for the best."

Initial analysis of this limited data indicated that the research

questions were appropriate for exploring the academic-athletic

divide phenomenon at the NCAA Division II level, and there

appeared to be a theoretical presence of the role strain constructs

woven within the participant's responses.

Results

The results of this pilot study indicated that the proposed study

design appeared viable and an appropriate avenue for leading to answering

the research questions regarding the academic-athletic divide phenomenon.

Furthermore, the interview guide was useful in collecting data which

reflected the constructs of role strain and indicated the role strain theoretical

approach was a possible theory for explaining the research problem. This

limited data revealed that internal and external policies clearly outlined

maintaining academic values, but the behaviors revealed an emphasis on

promoting athletic values, which at times caused strain within

intercollegiate athletics directors.

In answering the first research question, it appeared that

intercollegiate athletics directors perceived their roles primarily as "athletic

administrators" rather than "university administrators". In respect to

research question two, key internal constituents appeared to be presidents

and provosts, while key external constituents appear to be alumni and fans

in general. For research question three, there appeared to be conflicts that

arose for intercollegiate athletics directors and were perhaps confounded within the constructs of role theory.

Recommendations for Modifications

Conducting interviews with multiple intercollegiate athletics directors should provide data for the emergence of specific themes useful in creating an essence that may be credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable. The goals of the full study will be to fully describe the athletics director role, to identify key constituency influences and to further explore the sources of conflicts intercollegiate athletics directors experience within their roles.

Modifications to the researcher's prospectus include abandoning the Dragon Naturally Speaking software for transcription and relying on manual transcription by the researcher. The modified list of requested documents reflects the removal of the NCAA DIVISION II manual and the athletic conference handbook. Modifications to the interview guide include reorganizing the sequential ordering of questions for better flow and the following specific modifications: (1) Adding the question "What were the expectations placed upon you at the time you were hired?"; (2) Adding the question "How much pressure do key constituents place upon you?" immediately after question five in the interview guide; (3) Adding the question "What amount of pressure do you place upon yourself outside of constituency influences?"; (4) Adding the potential probing question "Are capital campaigns, building projects and corporate partnerships an emphasis

across the entire institution?"; and (5) Adding the question "What is the biggest challenge you perceive at the NCAA Division II level of competition for athletics directors?". The researcher believes that pursuing a line of more direct questioning that provides more contextual descriptions of the pressures coming from external constituents will lead to a more complete answering of the research questions, particularly research questions two and three.

The pilot study participant was contacted following the conclusion of the pilot study for feedback and suggestions. When asked by the researcher if there was anything the researcher should perceive as "off limits" to ask about related to this topic, the participant responded "No, I was comfortable sharing my thoughts". When asked about the quality of the interview guide and the clarity of the questioning, s/he indicated "No, there were no problems…I understood what you were asking." When asked about time issues related to interviewing participants s/he suggested to "Try to visit with those guys over the summer when it's slow and they have ample time to sit down and give you a good lengthy interview".