Factors affecting academic performance in selected Division III student-athletes

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FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
SELECTED DIVISION III STUDENT-ATHLETES

by
Jaime A. Dickerson

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Masters of Arts in Higher Education Administration
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 8, 2008

Approved by
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date Approved May 8, 2008

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ABSTRACT

Jaime A. Dickerson
FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED DIVISION III STUDENT-ATHLETES 2007/2008
Dr. Burton Sisco
Masters of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to better understand selected NCAA Division III student-athletes and the factors that impact their academic performance. Of particular interest were Rowan University student-athletes. One hundred thirty-three athletes at a Division III institution completed a survey to evaluate what factors they reported impacted them academically. The survey addressed in-season versus out-of-season, athletes' attitudes, coaches' attitudes, and teachers' attitudes. It also dealt with demographic factors. The findings of the study showed that demographics play a role in academic performance. The study also found several correlations related to sport played and factors impacting academic performance.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped me in this process. I would not have been able to do it without their support. First, I would like to thank my family for supporting me and guiding me through it all. They have supported me in everything I have done in my life and graduate school was no exception. They have been there to hold me up when I am ready to fall.

I would also like to thank my boyfriend for being so supportive in the two years that I have been away. It has not been easy for him, but he has helped in anyway he could. He has been understanding and helpful in proof reading some of my copies.

I would like to thank the Athletic Trainers here at Rowan University. Mr. Whedon and Colleen Grugan have been wonderful throughout my stay here at Rowan. If not for the opportunity to be a Graduate Assistant, I would not have gotten my Masters degree and written this thesis. I have learned a lot while working with them and cannot express my thanks enough.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Burt Sisco for his guidance and understanding. He has been patient when I am not and understanding when I am not. Thank you for being there if I just needed to talk or if I was ready to quit.

I cannot thank these people enough for helping me get through my Master’s program and writing this thesis.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The academic performance of student athletes commands much attention in the media today. There is considerable research on football and basketball players particularly focused on academic performance and graduation rates. Student athletes are expected to perform both on the playing field and in the classroom and it is important to find out how well they are doing in both venues. If researchers could better understand why some athletes do better academically than others, then those student athletes who struggle could be helped more effectively.

Statement of the Problem

According to the NCAA many student athletes continue to struggle academically especially male basketball players (Students first, 1999). Many do not graduate and obtain a degree. Much of the research has focused principally on basketball players and associated graduation rates. For example, the University of Cincinnati did not have a high graduation rate for the basketball program. Coach Huggins only recruited talent and not necessarily hard working students. Nancy Zimpher was hired as the new President and promised to raise the academic standards. The basketball program was not meeting these standards; therefore Zimpher eventually fired Huggins because he was not following the new school standards while recruiting (Wolverton, 2005).

Research needs to be done on a broad range of collegiate sports, because of the differences and expectations of each sport. For example, collegiate swimming has a long season starting in September and ending in February. If the team is successful and goes
onto the NCAA tournament this lengthens the season into March. Collegiate soccer, however, starts in August and finishes in November or December, depending on playoffs and the NCAA tournament. Thus, the length of a playing season could have an impact on academic performance.

Research also needs to consider the many factors that impact an athlete's academic performance. There are so many different reasons that a student-athlete may or may not do well in classes. For example, teachers and coaches attitudes may affect an student-athlete's performance in the classroom. If a coach is interested in the athlete's progress and/or makes it one of his/her policies that it is mandatory to attend classes then the athlete will be more willing to attend his/her classes. The same goes for the teacher's attitudes. Teachers may not like having student-athletes in their classes because the athlete may not always be in attendance because of game commitments; this attitude may impact how a student-athlete performs in the class.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand selected NCAA Division III student-athletes and the factors that impact their academic performance. Of particular interest were Rowan University student-athletes. The factors of interest to the researcher included demographics, the sport played, how much time is put into this sport, the student-athlete's major, in-season vs. out-of-season, the student-athlete's attitudes toward school, student-athletes' perceived faculty attitudes, and the student-athletes' perceived coaches attitudes.
Significance of the Study

A lack of research at the Division III level on academic performance of student athletes and the factors impacting gave rise to the need of this study. The results of this study may provide information that is needed in order to better serve the academic needs of athletes.

Assumptions and Limitations

There are several assumptions guiding the study. One is that the student athletes completing the survey answered truthfully. Another assumption is that the subjects understood the meaning of all survey items.

One limitation of the study is the population, which consisted of student-athletes at one NCAA Division III institution. The convenience sampling was due to the fact that the researcher was interested in how this particular institution’s student-athletes performed academically. Student athletes’ responses and researcher perspectives about student athletes may have presented potential bias in the findings.

Operational Definitions

1. Academic Performance: How a student athlete at Rowan University performed academically based on their GPA.

2. Coaches’ Attitudes: Selected Rowan student-athletes perception of the coaches’ attitudes.

3. Factors: Demographics, sport played, academic major, coaches’ attitudes, teachers’ attitudes, and the student-athletes’ attitudes.

4. In Season: The traditional season, in which a sport is played at Rowan University.
5. Out-of-Season: The season, in which the team does not traditionally play at Rowan University. Can be interchanged with off-season.

6. Student Athletes: Varsity athletes that are students at Rowan University participating in one of the 16 varsity sports during the 2007-2008 school year.

7. Teachers' Attitudes: Selected Rowan student-athletes perception of the teachers' attitudes.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of selected Rowan University athletes regarding the factors of in-season versus out-of-season, athletic identity, coaches' attitudes, and teachers' attitudes?

2. Is there a significant difference between the demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, and class rank and athletes' attitudes?

3. Is there a significant difference between the sport played and athlete's attitudes?

4. Is there a significant difference between the sport played and coaches' and teachers' attitudes?

Overview of the Report

Chapter two discusses the relevant literature on the topic. This chapter discusses academic performance, graduation rates in colleges and universities as regulated by the NCAA, and also studies that were done primarily at the high school level.

Chapter three presents the methodology and procedures used in the study. Topics included in this section are: the context of the study, the population and sample selection,
the data collection instruments, the data collection procedure, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter four presents the results of the study. The chapter provides findings arranged according to the research questions in chapter one. Narrative and statistical analysis are used to summarize the data in this chapter.

Chapter five summarizes the study and discusses the findings in relation to relevant literature on the topic. This chapter also includes a treatment of the conclusions and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of the National Collegiate Athletic Association

In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt decided that the public was right and rule changes were needed in the sport of football. The changes were enacted on December 28, 1905, the same year the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was founded. The IAAUS started with 62 members. In 1910, the name changed to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), where it remained a rule-making body (NCAA History, n.d.).

In 1921, the first NCAA Championship was held (National Collegiate Track & Field Championships). After this championship, the association continued to grow and to add more championships and more committees were formed (NCAA History, n.d.).

In 1972, freshmen were allowed to compete. Up until then, freshmen were not eligible to play varsity sports. The NCAA found it necessary to have the freshmen become acclimated to college for a year before competing. It was not until football and basketball started to attract national television programming and revenue were they able to play (Students first, 1999).

In 1973, the NCAA was divided into three competitive branches, Divisions I, II and III. This occurred at the association's first convention (NCAA History, n.d.). The different divisions have regulations that the institutions must follow. For example, each division has a minimum number of sports that must be offered at each institution.
Another regulation is game attendance; Division I and II have crowd attendance regulations that have to be met or penalties are imposed that could lead to a reduction in division status.

In 1980, the association began administering women’s athletics, and at the 75th convention the association came up with a governance plan that would include representation and services needed (NCAA History, n.d.). This act took place because of Title IX of 1972. Title IX prohibits gender discrimination in educational settings. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education governs this amendment. In December of 1979, the OCR developed an Intercollegiate Athletics Policy (Gender Equity, n.d.). Title IX requires that men and women be offered equitable sports, the sports do not have to be the same, but an equal opportunity to play (NCAA frequently asked questions, n.d.). Title IX also requires equal treatment in: equipment and supplies, scheduling of games and practice times, travel and daily allowance, access to tutoring, coaching, locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities, medical and training facilities and services, housing and dining facilities and services, publicity and promotions, support services, and recruitment of student-athletes (NCAA frequently asked question, n.d.).

Today the association consists of about 350 employees based in Indianapolis, Indiana and is headed by President is Dr. Myles Brand (NCAA History, n.d.). Dr. Brand assumed the presidency in January 2003. Previously Dr. Brand was the President of Indiana University from 1994 to 2002 and before that was President of University of Oregon from 1989 to 1994 (Myles Brand Biography, n.d.).
NCAA Academic Standards

The NCAA has used grade point average (GPA), a set of core courses and results from standardized tests to predict collegiate academic success of student athletes since the mid-1980s. Having these eligibility standards has been very successful. Graduation rates have increased in student athletes faster than the whole student body. Also, African-American male graduation rates have increased as well. However, the NCAA still had places that were of concern. For example, African-American basketball players in selected Division I schools have not performed well academically and have not graduated for the college or university. Thus, the NCAA adopted the concept of academic reform (History of academic reform, n.d.).

In 2002, the NCAA adopted new requirements for high-school athletes. To be eligible to participate, high school students now must complete 14 core courses in English, History, Sciences, and Mathematics with a minimum 2.0 GPA. Some Division I schools require 15 core courses (History of academic reform, n.d.).

Along with the eligibility requirements for high school students, college freshmen now must complete 24 hours of course work with at least a 1.8 GPA. After two years, the athlete should have completed 40% of the requirements for a degree, after three years he/she should have 60% completed, and after four years he/she should have 80% completed (History of academic reform, n.d.).

The NCAA uses the Academic Progress Rate (APR) to examine academic success per team. The total points earned by the team is its APR. The cutoff is 925 points, which is equivalent to a 50% graduation rate. If teams do not meet this cutoff on more than one occasion, they will be penalized. Penalties could include losing scholarships, recruiting
restrictions, lack of access to postseason competition, and restricted membership (History of academic reform, n.d.).

However, these requirements do not apply to Division III institutions. Eligibility for financial aid, practice, and competition is governed by institutional, conference, and other NCAA regulations (NCAA backgrounder on academic reform, n.d.). Division III institutions are governed mostly through the Division III committee. For example, the committee regulates practices for the Division, meaning, teams can only practice when the committee allows.

Differences in NCAA Divisions I, II, and III

Division I institutions must sponsor seven sports for men and seven sports for women with two team sports for each gender. These schools must play 100% of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents. Men and women’s basketball have to play all but two of the Division I teams. Men’s basketball must play one third of their total games at the home arena. For football, there are subdivisions: football bowl (formerly I-A) or football championship (formerly I-AA). The Bowl subdivision has to meet attendance requirements (average 15,000 people per home event). This requirement must be met once every two years. The championship subdivision does not have attendance requirements. These schools must meet minimum financial aid requirements for their programs, plus there is a maximum for each sport that the school cannot exceed (What’s the difference between divisions I, II & III, n.d.).

Division II institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, with two team sports for each gender. Football must play 50% of their games against Division II opponents or against Division I bowl or championship subdivisions.
For sports other than football and basketball there are no scheduling requirements. Unlike Division I, there are no attendance requirements for football. There are also no requirements for home arena games for basketball. Similar to Division I, each Division II sport has a financial aid maximum that the school cannot exceed. Division II athletics departments are financed through the institution’s budget (What’s the difference between divisions I, II & III, n.d.).

Division III institutions also have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five sports for women with two team sports for each gender. Division III athletes do not receive any financial aid related to their athletic ability. The athletic departments are staffed like any other department at a particular institution. The focus of Division III schools is on the athletes, not on the spectators. The experience is for the athlete to compete in a particular sport without being pressured because of spectators and revenues. (What’s the difference between divisions I, II & III, n.d.).

Academic Performance

Student athletes are different from other students because they have dual roles to fulfill; one is the role of student and the other is of an athlete. Being a student athlete presents challenges since there are academic and NCAA eligibility requirements to maintain (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). Blinde and Greendorfer (1992) propose four difficulties that student athletes have to deal: role conflict, role strain, value alienation, and exploitation. The researchers describe role conflict as meeting the expectation of both roles (athlete & student), role strain is the distress that others (parents, guardians, coaches, etc.) put on the student athlete to meet not only the athletes’ own expectations but also those of others (1992). Value alienation is described as the struggle
of integrating both sports-related and personal values (1992). Finally, exploitation is when an athlete puts athletic responsibilities ahead of student or personal responsibilities (1992).

Carodine, Almond, and Gratto (2001), discuss services that should be available for student athletes. Orientation is the first service discussed by the researchers who assert that student athletes should have orientation with the rest of the incoming freshman. The next service is career and life skills development, in which institutions have a responsibility to student athletes for life after athletic competition is completed. Career planning and placement is also a part of the institutions responsibility. According to Carodine et al., many institutions use Etzel, Barrow, and Pinkney’s (1994) model for career planning and placement. The model consists of the five highest needs pertaining to career development. The five needs are: understanding career interests, understanding career-related skills, planning a career or vocation, understanding career-related personality, and understanding career-related values.

Another service is Challenging Athletic Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/life skills (Carodine et al., 2001). The NCAA and the Division IA Athletic Directors Association designed CHAMPS. The purpose is to facilitate a high-quality athletic experience, promote academic development, and promote success of the student athlete. This program must include: academic commitment, athletic commitment, personal development commitment, and career development commitment. One of the last services must be a joint effort in which the faculty advisors and the athletic academic support staff must work together. This service provides academic advising and monitoring eligibility. These two must work together because the faculty advisors do not
know the NCAA regulations that the athletes must follow. The last service discussed is academic support services. These services include tutoring, mentor programs, and services for students with disabilities (Carodine et al., 2001).

McKerrow and Daly (1990) believe that the assumption of most people is that the student-athlete equation is an impossible dream. However, this statement is not true. McKerrow and Daly state that most of the student-athletes advance at the same rate towards a degree as compared to a non-athlete. They mention that athletes have a different college experience than other students because of a “societal fascination.” This has to do with the student athlete becoming a public figure open to scrutiny; private matters are often reported in a newspaper, or magazine. Moreover, McKerrow and Daly point out that there is always a student who is doing just as bad or just as good in school as a student athlete. They cite the student athlete who has a 1.45 academic average and only 48 credits after four semesters is often over-generalized since there are non-athletes with the same academic record. The problem is that universities need to treat all students the same, regardless of the circumstances. The university cannot keep the athlete and let the non-athlete go and vice versa (McKerrow & Daly, 1990).

Another important misconception that McKerrow and Daly (1990) discuss is that student athletes only take summer classes to get better grades to maintain eligibility for competition. In fact, most student athletes take summer classes so that they can achieve the credit requirements to graduate on time. This is the case with at least 75% of the student athletes at University of Maine (McKerrow & Daly, 1990).

Peters (2000) conducted a study at Winston College to examine the relationship between athletic participation and academic success measured through grade point
averages. The researcher also obtained the perceptions of “key members of the academic community” in regards to the relationship between athletic participation and student success factors. These perceptions were then examined to better understand the relationship between athletic participation and academic performance.

The sample consisted of student athletes participating in any of the 27 men and women’s programs offered at Winston College. The study was conducted between the 1993-1994 and 1997-1998 academic years. During this period, the average total student athlete population was 660 per year (Peters, 2000).

Peters (2000) first research question is “What is the relationship between athletic participation at Winston College and selected student athletes’ academic performance?” After using the athletes’ GPAs, Peters concluded that there was no statistically significant relationship between GPAs and athletic participation in any of the women’s sports. These included: tennis, softball, cross-country, field hockey, soccer, volleyball, lacrosse, track, and crew. He also concluded that there was no statistically significant relationship between GPAs and athletic participation in all but one of the men’s sports. The teams that had no significant relationships were: cross-country, tennis, track, lacrosse, baseball, soccer, and crew. Football was the only team where there was a significant relationship.

White (2006) conducted a study to “provide information to teachers, administrators, and coaches as to the necessity and importance of athletics and academics for the complete fulfillment of the student” (p.11). The second research objective was to verify a significant difference in the athletes academic performance in-season and out-of-season.
The sample consisted of 25 male and 25 female student-athletes at a Cross Creek High School. The gender distribution is close to equally divided. Students’ permanent records were obtained and information was recorded onto a student information sheet. The information used was: dates which the student-athletes participated in a sport, the number of absences both in and out-of-season, grade point average both in and out-of-season, and the number of discipline referrals received both in and out-of-season. White also surveyed teachers at Cross Creek. The survey included questions in reference to student athletes, athletes vs. non-athletes, and athletic involvement of student at Cross Creek. This survey helped White determine if teachers believed that the number of disciplinary referrals, attendance rates, and grade point average were affected by in-season participation (White, 2006).

The grade point averages for the female athletes were slightly higher in-season compared to out-of-season. The same results were found for the males. The female athletes GPAs were higher in comparison to the male GPAs. The overall GPA for both male and female for in-season was 86.5 and for out-of-season was 85.0 (White, 2006).

Funk (1991) discusses a Colorado State University study. This study was conducted from 1970 to 1980 and looked at the relationship between sports participation and academic progress. The academic progress of both male and female athletes was tracked and compared to non-athletes. The study concluded that athletes GPAs were lower than non-athletes (2.56 & 2.74 respectively). It also found that athletes in revenue producing sports were the least successful with respect to academic performance.

Funk (1991) concludes that graduation rates have usually received the most publicity to determine the academic success of athletic programs. He also believes that
many athletes look at school as an avenue to exploit athletic ability. Because of this attitude towards higher education, student-athletes' attendance may prevent academics from being the top priority. Athletic scholarships can be a cause of this attitude, with a scholarship, the athlete is attending the institution in order to play sports, not necessarily to focus on academics. Funk also found that in a UCLA study freshmen athletes were surprised to find out that some professors and fellow students looked down upon them because they were athletes, instead of having teachers, fellow students, and the community worshipping them because they were athletes.

Davis and Berger (1967) conducted a study on academic achievement of varsity athletes at Texas Tech University. The purpose of this study was to determine whether college football and basketball athletes achieve as much academically in college as non-athletes. The population for this study was 175 male student-athletes who completed two years of school at Texas Tech University. The researchers used predicted GPAs and the athletes actual GPAs. They concluded that football and basketball athletes achieved as much academically as non-athletes.

Stuart (1983) conducted a study that described student-athletes and their collegiate academic deficiencies. Stuart hypothesizes that there will be no difference between football players and non-athlete males academically. The subjects were selected by matching- through entry data, race and academic intentions- non-athletes with athletes recruited to play football.

Stuart (1983) collected data through the students’ transcripts after two years of school was completed. Course load was measured by the number of semester credit hours the student accumulated prior to the beginning of the third year. English grades were
measured by taking the mean score of both completed courses, if only one course was taken, then the single score was used. Finally, courses dropped and repeated were the number of dropped and repeated courses in the first two years.

Stuart (1983) reported no difference in academic performance between football players and non-athletes. The mean GPA for the football players was 2.13 and the non-athletes’ was 2.15. The mean English grades for the football players were 2.17 and the non-athletes’ was 2.38. The mean credit hours taken for the football players were 47.18 and the non-athletes’ was 45.28. Finally, the courses dropped for the football players were 1.81 and the non-athletes’ was 1.48 and the courses repeated for the football players was 0.95 and the non-athletes’ were 0.67. Stuart concluded that a group of Division I-A football players performed just as well as the non-athletes academically.

Stuart’s (1983) recommendations were that this study should be done again only with more athletes and a longer period of time. Research should also be done on the relationship between academic programs and academic success. Benefits of athletic participation should be researched. Finally, steps should be taken to inform others of the influence intercollegiate athletics has on academics.

Wade (1992) also conducted a study at Iowa State University, however, this study looked to investigate and describe student-athletes’ preparation for and performance in college. Wade’s research questions dealt with the differences between athletes and non-athletes in academic success in college and the differences in academic performance. The researcher hypothesized that there would be no difference in academic success and no difference in academic performance either. Academic success was measured by graduation success and the number of terms necessary to fulfill graduation requirements.
Academic performance was measured by cumulative credit hours and cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Wade (1992) collected his research through official transcripts. Wade’s conclusions are as follows: The non-athlete outperformed the athlete in both aspects of academic success, however there was no significant difference in the academic performance aspect. Revenue-producing sports graduated at lower rates and took two extra terms to complete graduation requirements compared to non-revenue-producing sports. Graduation rates were higher for females than males and it took the males at least one more term to complete the graduation requirements. Female athletes recorded almost 10 more credit hours than males and also had a higher GPA than the males.

Wade’s (1992) recommendations were to do more research on revenue-producing sports and poor academics. He also recommended looking at the effectiveness of academic support. He believes that if this study is conducted again it should involve more athletes and more institutions and the benefits of athletic participation should also be researched.

Morgan (2005) conducted a study in which the purpose of the study was to identify variables which would predict academic performance. It also included time spent on intercollegiate sports as a predictor of academic performance and investigated the challenges encountered by athletes as a result of dual-roles. The research question for this study was to identify challenges of student-athletes as a result of their dual-roles as students and athletes.

Morgan’s (2005) subjects consisted of student athletes at Louisiana State for fall semester 2003 and spring semester 2004. The population pool was taken out of admission
folders and consisted of 469 student-athletes. Morgan collected his data through informal questionnaires, *Non-Cognitive Questionnaire Revised*, and an interview. Questionnaires were handed out at team meetings. The interviews were conducted on selected athletes in order to obtain information on challenges encountered. The Registrar also provided information for each student that participated. The information the provided was: academic classification level, race, gender, sport, high school GPA, ACT test scores, and cumulative college GPA.

Morgan (2005) concluded from the interviews that time restraints, financial concerns, and feeling fatigued were challenges facing athletes that affected their academic performance. He also concluded that many of the athletes came from low-income families and also that the revenue-producing sports may contribute to the role conflict because of the strict schedule which in the end leaves the athlete with time constraints.

JacAngelo (2003) conducted a study on high school students to determine the effect of athletic participation on several indicators of academic performance. These indicators included: cumulative average daily attendance, final cumulative GPA, and grade 8 and 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test scores. JacAngelo’s research questions were: the relationship between athletic participation and cumulative average daily attendance of high-school athletes and non-athletes; and the relationship between interscholastic athletic participation and educational performance of high-school athletes and non-athletes based on GPA.

JacAngelo’s (2003) subjects consisted of 10 senior high schools from the Miami Dade County Public Schools system. There was a total of 100 athletes selected from each
school and a total of 100 non-athletes selected from each school. He collected his data through the Miami Dade County Schools’ Integrated Student Information System (ISIS). He found that the mean cumulative average daily attendance for student-athletes was 5.86 and for non-athletes it was 11.52. Also, the mean cumulative GPA for athletes was 2.74 and for the non-athletes it was 1.95. JacAngelo concluded that significant relationship exists between athletic participation and academic performance at the high school level. He also concluded that there was a positive effect on daily attendance when participating in sports. His last conclusion was that there was a significant difference between athletes’ GPAs and non-athletes’ GPAs. JacAngelo’s two recommendations for further study were to research the benefits from extracurricular activities at the high school level and also to research why students choose not to participate if it can be a benefit towards academic performance.

Friedman (2004) conducted a study to better understand the impact of team climate on the academic performance of Division I men’s basketball. Friedman’s research question was to find out if there was a relationship between team climate and academic performance. The study consisted of 37 NCAA Division I-A institutions.

Friedman (2004) collected her data through surveys and interviews. Sixty-nine student-athletes completed the surveys and the interviews were conducted face-to-face at two schools. A total of 13 student-athletes were interviewed. Friedman found that the student-athletes believed that it was important for all teammates to receive a degree, but that the coaches and some teammates did not agree. The majority of the athletes surveyed also believed that skipping class was unacceptable, and coaches and other teammates
agreed with this. The individuals completing the survey believed that the coaches and teammates had different beliefs than them.

Friedman concluded that at one of the schools where she conducted the interviews, she found that individuals reported that they and their teammates thought alike pertaining to school. However, the other school the responses were less favorable. She also found that athletes in five out of the nine schools surveyed believed that their coaches had positive attitudes towards academics. Friedman’s two main research recommendations were that new strategies for increasing research participation are needed and that web-based technology should be used to better the research.

Graduation Rates

As stated in a *New York Times* article in 1999, student athletes fail to graduate in alarming numbers. Graduation rates are low in men’s basketball in most colleges. The article notes that basketball graduation rates are declining while graduation rates in athletics as a whole are rising.

According to Drape (2005), so disturbing are the numbers that the real story has been kept quiet. He mentions that if the NCAA’s academic reform plan had been in place for the 2005 basketball tournament, many of the teams would have been penalized. To be exact, 42 out of the 50 teams graduated fewer than 50% of their players. The penalties would have ranged from loss of scholarships to being banned from postseason play. Drape writes that Louisiana State and Minnesota (both teams in the NCAA tournament) failed to graduate any players who entered between 1994 and 1997 in six years. Many other schools had trouble graduating players also. Illinois only graduated 47% of its players in the same time period. There were only two schools in the tournament that
graduated every one of its players in the same time period; Bucknell and Utah State (Drape; 2005).

With the academic reform plan, the NCAA judges athletic programs over four year periods. If there are continuous academic deficiencies, the penalties can range from a loss of 2 to 13 scholarships to a ban on postseason play (Drape, 2005).

In 2003, Marcus stated that student athletes are actually graduating at a higher rate than non-athletes, 62% to 59% respectively. These numbers are based on a six-year graduation rate. He also mentions that African-American athletes are graduating at lower rates than Caucasian athletes. Only 48% of African-American athletes leave college with a degree (Marcus, 2003).

Schurr and Wittig (1993) conducted a survey to examine the impact of athletics on graduation rates. The study tested both athletes and non-athletes. The students tested were either athletes, students that had been to at least two basketball games, and students who had never gone to a basketball game. There was only a 10% difference in students that were involved with athletics and those that were not involved at all. The authors discuss how this could be a good tool for school administrators to use when thinking about student retention and designing admission programs that will attract the kind of student that is likely to stay and graduate (Schurr & Wittig, 1993).

Shulman and Bowen (2001) in the book The Game of Life found that the graduation rates for male athletes were similar if not higher than the non-athletes graduation rates. In a study conducted at selected schools on athletic graduation rates, the class entering in 1951 graduated 19 percentage points higher than non-athletes (82 & 63 respectively). In the class entering in 1989 graduated only 3-percentage point higher than
non-athletes (89 & 86 respectively). This change in graduation rates is due to athletes slightly rising and the non-athlete population increasing considerably. The authors also found that the graduation rates for female athletes were similar to the male graduation rates. The class entering in 1976 and 1989 at the same selected schools graduated at higher rates than non-athletes. Also, women athletes who entered college in 1976 were more likely than their peers to obtain advanced degrees. However, this was not true for the male athletes.

Shulman and Bowen (2001) also found that examining grades shows that academic standing compared to non-athletes has decreased significantly in recent years. The authors also found that academic “underperformance” in college has roots in high school academic performance.

Kelo (2005) conducted a study, which looked at the characteristics of student-athletes academic support programs offered at the NCAA Division I level. Kelo’s research question referred to the relationship between academic support and graduation rates. Kelo’s subjects consisted of directors of athletic academic support systems at the Division I level.

Kelo (2005) mailed questionnaires to her subjects and graduation rates data was received from the NCAA. Kelo found that student-athletes graduation rates were higher than non-athletes. Also, she found that when the academic support services received funding from the athletic departments, there were higher graduation rates. She also found that student-athletes that attended private schools graduated higher than those who attended public schools.
Kelo concluded that schools with negative outcomes had some or all of the following: low number of full-time employees in support services, not using study halls for at-risk athletes, provided typing services, and/or employees who felt their job was threatened because of academic performance. She also found that schools with positive outcomes had some or all of the following: athletes reported academic progress to coach, used study halls for non-scholarship athletes and for at-risk athletes, there were a required number of study hall hours, and understood the importance of setting required study hall hours.

**African-American Male Athletes**

It is a known fact that the African-American college student is slowly declining. Many studies have been done on the African-American athlete, including motivation, academically driven male athletes, retention of male athletes, factors that affect academic performance, and experiences of academically at-risk African-American male athletes.

Carey (2000) conducted a study that focused on the role that achievement motivations play in academic performance of African American male football players. Carey’s research questions pertain to education expectations and values of this particular group; how perceptions, beliefs, and values of education are formed; and the relationships of expectations and values to academic achievement. Twenty participated in this study, all of them African American scholarship receiving football players. This sample was divided into two groups. The one group consisted of students at the high end of the team GPA and the second group consisted of students at the low end of the team GPA. Carey conducted interviews with these football players.
Pertaining to the value aspect, Carey (2000) found the following: receiving a degree was very important to all the athletes; many appeared to have a genuine desire to do well in school; the content of the curriculum was moderately valued; many of the athletes did well just to prove to others that it could be done; the most significant influence on educational values came from the parent-child relationship; societal messages also influence educational values; most of the athletes valued only those classes in which they were interested and/or performed well in; and as the students matured there was an increase in the level of value.

Pertaining to the expectations aspect, Carey (2000) found the following: the students had a moderate expectation for doing well in educational endeavors; many strongly believed that they would receive a degree; also many expressed high expectation for future success; the most influence on expectation was past experiences and perceptions; many reported that the level of interest impacted how well they were expected to perform; also the competitive spirit helps the student face obstacles allowing them to be able to succeed; lastly as time passes and graduation got close students’ confidence rose.

Carey (2000) concluded that expectations and values have a strong relation to academic performance. He also gave the recommendations that a larger sample should be used if further research is conducted. He also believes that a longitudinal study be conducted that follows African American football players and other African American male athletes and compare the two groups.

Martin (2005) conducted a study that looked at non-cognitive variable that positively affect academic achievement among African American males student-athletes.
Martin’s research questions included: the academic expectations of African American male student athletes; factors that contribute to educational value and academic beliefs; and the relationship between academic expectations and academic performance. Martin’s sample consisted of 32 to 40 African American male student athletes. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data. After the initial interview, Martin followed up with a phone call.

Martin (2005) found six thematic categories. The first is the role of self and supportive others in academic success. The following were common answers: parents always had high academic expectations; it is about pride and hard work; teammates have been very supportive; healthy relationships with professors were reported; and the academic support center inspired many athletes. The second is the purposeful engagement outside of the classroom. The following were common answers: leadership and involvement started in high school; many athletes wanted a bond with the university; any many also valued their relationships with non-athletes. The third thematic category is challenges of being a student. The following were common answers: there was no support from the coaches; had to prove that I am worthy; and it is all about time management. The fourth category is positive images of self and distinct identities. The following were common answers: I am a threat to society- meaning the dismal statistics drives them to succeed; women respect me for what I represent- have pride, do not disrespect; teammates have a flawed view of success; and masculinity means having character- man of integrity. The fifth thematic category is turning point and critical decision-making. The following are common answers: that is when I lost confidence- there were periods of self-doubt and indecisiveness; what I looked for (academics and
athletics)- many athletes picked a school because of the academic reputation; and want to
play in the league. The final category is acquisition of wisdom through learning. The
following are common answers: do not believe the hype- coaches can give false dreams;
do not let bad associations affect success level; and the athletes felt they needed to take
control of their college experience- control of their own destinies.

Martin (2005) concluded that parents, professors, teammates, and academic
advisors played a significant role in academic achievement. One of the researchers
recommendations was to look at academically driven African American females and
compare males with females.

Taplette (2005) conducted a study that investigated academic motivation in
African American college male basketball and football players. The research questions
pertain to the internal and external factors that affect academic success in the classroom
and the connection between these factors and graduation.

Taplette’s (2005) sample consisted of African American males who graduated
within 10 years of starting their academic career. There were 10 basketball players and 10
football players. Taplette used surveys and interviews to collect his data.

Taplette (2005) found three common themes during his data collection. The first
theme is relationships are vital. Many of the athletes interviewed reported that family is
paramount and that the relationships with the coaches are disappointing. The second
theme is your attitude describes you. Not only can an individual’s attitude have an affects
on academic performance but surrounding attitudes can have an affect also. The final
theme is what is my goal? Many of the athletes interviewed picked school because of
athletics and not academics.
Taplette (2005) concluded that when there were positive relationships the athlete was confident and he/she expected to perform well in school. If there were negative relationships, the athlete motivated himself/herself to be successful in spite of those relationships. He also concluded that many of the athletes believed they would succeed in life because of their athletic ability and determination and not necessarily academics.

Gragg (2004) conducted a study that looked to identify the factors that affected academic persistence and graduation rates of African American male student athletes who play football at Southeastern Conference institutions. The research question was to find the main factors that positively affect academic performance. Gragg’s subjects were African American males who received financial aid related to athletic ability and graduated between 1993 and 2003. Gragg conducted interviews to collect his data.

Gragg (2004) concluded that family members and/or significant others were very influential when it came to attending college. He found that high school coaches were also very influential, teammates were an influence, and self-motivation also played a role in attending college. Gragg’s recommendations for further research were: one should study the African Americans who did not graduate and find out the factors for academic failure; the current study should be done on Caucasian football players and identify any similarities; and do the current study on non-revenue-producing sports.

In a study conducted by Benson (1996), the experience of schooling of academically at-risk African American football players at a Division I revenue-producing institution was evaluated. The researcher’s questions were as follows: experiences when the athlete felt academically inadequate or incompetent; experiences when the athlete felt intelligent and capable, either in the classroom or out of the classroom; and academic
identities. Benson’s subjects were all African American football scholarship recipients at a Division I school. These students had to be at least a fifth semester sophomore, junior, or senior, and were identified as being on the teams’ academically at-risk list (compiled by the head coach).

Benson (1996) collected data through interviewing the athletes. She found that “athletes’ accounts showed that in many respects they felt very much like sailors in ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ who cast upon the ocean surrounded by nothing but water, find no substantial water from which to drink” (p. 200). She also found that athletes had little to encourage them and felt like they were expected to just get by. Athletes who had positive academic experiences with parents, peers, advisors, coaches, tutors, and teachers, led to good academic performances. Benson also found that if the athletes were invited to participate in experiences that challenged, they did well academically. One of Benson’s recommendations for further research was to continue studying athletes’ perceptions to help redesign policies and services.

In-Season vs. Out-of-Season

Parker (1972) conducted a study involving 20 high school athletes, in Pleasantville, New Jersey. The study stretched over three marking periods; pre-basketball, during basketball, and right after the last regularly scheduled game. The averages for the three marking periods were all very close, the lowest being 74% and the highest being 76%. Parker found that 12 students improved their academic average, 10 athletes decreased during at least one of the marking periods, and only one athlete had no change at all during any of the marking periods. There was no significant difference
shown in this study, meaning that there is not enough evidence to say whether students do better in season or out of season.

Westman (1990) conducted a study with 20 athletes from Cherokee (Marlton, NJ), Lenape (Medford, NJ), and Shawnee (Medford, NJ) high schools. Westman used grade point averages (G.P.A) to compare in season versus out-of-season academic performance. The fall season was considered first and second marking periods. The winter season was considered third and fourth marking periods. Finally, the spring season was considered fifth and sixth marking periods. The two marking periods, which were considered in season, were averaged and then compared to the other marking periods, which were considered off-season. Westman found no significant differences with the overall mean for in season, 2.82 and the overall mean for out-of-season, 2.81.

Alten (1988) conducted a study involving football players at a major northeastern Division I institution. Participation in this study was completely voluntary. Alten used fall semester GPA versus the spring semester GPA, number of credits completed, and number of credits dropped, failed, or incomplete. He also used a survey to factor in the football players personal opinions. Alten found that most factors of academic performances seem to favor the spring semester over the fall (Alten, 1988).

Alten’s survey instrument was not an adequate instrument for this type of study. The survey consisted of six questions pertaining to year in school, easiest time to concentrate on classes, studying time, better student during which semester, and when the subjects took their tougher courses. This instrument was a very weak instrument and should have included more demographic information.
Bryant and Clifton (1990) conducted a study on comparison of student-athletes’ grades in-season vs. out-of-season at Trenton State College. This study was done through action research. The hypothesis for this study was as follows: no significant difference between student-athletes’ in-season and out-of-season grade point averages will be found. The researchers obtained the GPAs of football, soccer, and softball athletes. There were no winter sports included because there was no clear-cut in-season and out-of-season since the sports run over both semesters. Also, the researchers did not use track and field and cross-country because the athletes who competed in one of the sports most likely competed in both of them, the same with field hockey and lacrosse. Bryant and Clifton found that the mean GPA in-season was 2.499 and the mean GPA for out-of-season was 2.46, noting was no significant difference. They also found that the mean credit hours taken in-season was less than the mean credit hours taken out-of-season.

Dickerson (2007) conducted a pilot study at Rowan University in NJ. The purpose of this study was to better understand the NCAA Division III student athlete and the impact of participation on in-season and out-of-season academic performance. Dickerson’s research questions were: how selected division III baseball and softball players perform academically in-season vs. out-of-season, and also what the athletes report impact their academic performance.

Dickerson (2007) used surveys to collect data. She also used GPAs to compare in-season vs. out-of-season academic performance. The sample consisted of a total of 54 subjects- 33 baseball players and 21 softball players. The researcher found that there was no significant difference between the baseball and softball players academic performance in-season vs. out-of-season.
Dickerson (2007) recommended further research should use larger populations and follow-up analysis. There should also be some changes to the instrument. Dickerson recommends that the NCAA establish guidelines for Division III institutions to fund and coordinate academic service programs for student athletes.

Factors Affecting Academic Performance

In 2006, Creasy conducted a study surveying 209 student-athletes at the University of Texas at Austin. Creasy was looking at goals and the difference between men and women when adopting learning goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. According to Creasy, “the regression analyses failed to support the hypotheses of the study…” (p. 88). He did find however that athletes that planned to play professionally did adopt the performance-approach goals more than someone who did not plan to play professionally. He also found that student-athletes that placed a great emphasis on the athlete role were less likely to adopt a learning goal orientation and a performance-approach goal orientation in academics. Another finding was that if a student-athlete who highly identifies as an athlete will identify less in the academic role. Probably the most important finding is this: a performance-approach goal was used more frequently than the performance-avoidance orientation. This is important because the best athletes in their sport picked this goal, which shows that the performance-approach goal may be the best goal in competitive athletics.

Marx (2006) conducted a study at the University of Arkansas in 2006. The study looked at the application of Tinto’s model of student integration to college athletes. Marx selected 236 athletes at a Southeastern Conference member institution. Of the 236, only 103 returned the survey, resulting in a 43% response rate. Marx used a survey as the
instrumentation; this survey was adapted from Tinto’s model. There were three versions of Tinto’s model that was used in this study: traditional model, athletic specific model, and a combined model consisting of the traditional and athletic. Marx concluded that no one model was superior to the other models because each indicated a significant effect for institutional commitment.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals an increasing concern of the NCAA with the graduation rates and academic performance of student athletes; however, the NCAA is approaching this concern by instituting academic reform policies. Along with this reform, many institutions must be willing to help student athletes perform well both on the field of play and in the classroom. Offering student athletes the student services needed may help the athletes with academic performance. However, this is not always feasible. Division III schools do not have the funding to offer these services nor does the NCAA require special support services for student athletes at the Division III institutions.

Most of the literature reviewed in this chapter discusses Division I institutions and the student athletes at these institutions. The literature also reviews some of the services offered at the Division I, II, and III levels. It is understood that some student athletes struggle to graduate on time at Division I institutions, however, the gap is in the other two divisions (II and III). More research needs to be done at the Division II and III levels.

There are many studies that concluded that student athletes’ academic performance is lower than non-athletes’ and student athletes graduate at a lower rate than non-athletes. There are some studies that conclude that student athletes actually graduate at high rates than non-athletes. The majority of the studies on in-season vs. out-of-season
grade point averages came to the conclusion that there really was no significant difference in the grades.

There were not many studies found on the factors that impact student athletes’ academic performance. There should be more research done to find out what those factors are. If these factors are determined, more needed services may become available for student athletes.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, in Glassboro, NJ. This school is a state institution and receives a portion of its funding through the state government. Rowan University is a NCAA Division III institution, as per NCAA regulations. Therefore, this school does not offer any special academic services for athletes; also it cannot offer any athlete a grant or scholarship because of athletic ability.

Rowan University was established in 1923 as a normal school, providing training for elementary teachers in southern New Jersey. In 1946, Rowan’s second president, Dr. Edgar Bunce, created a junior college to better serve the World War II veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill. In 1958, the name was changed from New Jersey State Teachers College at Glassboro to Glassboro State College. Rowan University was the host site for a summit conference between President Lyndon Johnson and Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin in 1967. Rowan’s baseball team won the NCAA Division III National Championship in 1978, which enabled the university to establish the athletic program. In July of 1992, Henry and Betty Rowan donated $100 million to the institution and the school subsequently changed its name to Rowan College of New Jersey. In 1997 the college achieved university status and the name changed to Rowan University (From normal to extraordinary, n.d.).

Rowan University sponsors 16 varsity sports. There are nine women’s sports, including: basketball, cross-country, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming
and diving, track and field, and volleyball. There are seven men's sports, including: baseball, basketball, cross-country, football, soccer, swimming and diving, and track and field.

Rowan University is a member of The New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC). The conference is comprised of 10 teams: Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Rutgers University- Camden campus, Rutgers University- Newark campus, The College of New Jersey, and William Patterson University. There are also three affiliate schools that compete within NJAC but only in the sport of football. The institutions are: Cortland State University, Western Connecticut State University, and Buffalo State University.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was all varsity athletes at Rowan University during the 2007-2008 school year. The total amount of athletes is 447, 40% of these athletes were used totaling 170 athletes. The researcher obtained the rosters of all the teams to obtain the total number of athletes per team. The researcher then calculated 40% of each team to total the amount of athletes to be surveyed from each team. The researcher used a striated random sample. The total surveys distributed to each team is as follows: football-38, men's soccer-13, women's soccer-10, field hockey-11, volleyball-4, men's cross country-5, women's cross country-4, men's basketball-6, women's basketball-6, men's swimming and diving-10, women's swimming and diving-8, softball-10, baseball-14, men's track and field-15, women's track and field-6, and women's lacrosse-10.
Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a survey based upon the work of Marx (2006), Creasy (2006), and Morgan (2005). The survey (Appendix B) consists of 30 statements based upon factors influencing academic performance. These factors include: demographics, sport played, academic major, coaches' and teachers' perceived attitudes, in-season vs. out-of-season, time management, and athletes' attitudes. The instrument is organized into two sections. The first section consists of questions pertaining to gender, race, class rank, sport played, academic major, and GPA. This information was used to help answer the second research question. The second section consists of statements pertaining to the six factors studied in this study. There are about five or six statements for each factor. The statements use a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey was piloted on athletes that were not used in the sample for readability and validity. Upon completion of the pilot, a few statements were reworded to be clearer and easier to read. The instrument was moderately reliable (.541), which was determined by Cronbach’s Alpha model. The survey may have been more reliable if the factors were not grouped together. A faculty member that is an expert in the field of research read the survey for readability and validity.

Data Collection Procedures

After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Rowan University approved the study (Appendix A), permission was granted from each coach to allow his or her student-athletes to participate in the study. Working in accordance with the Compliance Officer at Rowan University the researcher was able to use the help of the coaches in getting the athletes to complete the surveys. The student-athletes completed the survey and returned
them to their coaches who in turn returned them to the researcher. There was no identifying information on the survey therefore confidentiality was maintained.

Data Analysis

The independent variables consisted of the factors of demographics, sport, time, academic major, in-season vs. out-of-season, attitudes toward school, coaches' perceived attitudes, and faculties' perceived attitudes. The dependent variable was academic performance. This variable was assessed through GPA and also the responses to the survey items. Variations in demographics of the athletes' academic performance were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were analyzed using frequency tables, and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution & descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviations) to examine the data in regards to the profile of the sample and the first research questions. Data were also analyzed using Pearson’s correlation model to answer the last three research questions.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

The subjects for this study were selected from the 16 varsity sports at Rowan University during the 2007-2008 academic year. Of the 170 surveys distributed, 133 completed surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 78%. The total surveys returned from each team are as follows: football-25, men’s soccer-11, women’s soccer-9, field hockey-2, volleyball-4, men’s cross country-2, women’s cross country-2, men’s basketball-6, women’s basketball-6, men’s swimming and diving-10, women’s swimming and diving-11, softball-10, baseball-13, men’s track and field-7, women’s track and field-5, and women’s lacrosse-10. The sample consisted of 59 females (44%) and 74 males (56%) (Table 4.1). Table 4.2 shows the class rankings as follows: 36 freshmen, 42 sophomores, 26 juniors, 26 seniors, and 3 super seniors (5th or 6th year students).

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N = 133</th>
<th>SD = .449</th>
<th>M = 1.56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Rank</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Senior</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of selected Rowan University athletes regarding the factors of in-season versus out-of-season, athletic identity, coaches’ attitudes, and teachers’ attitudes?

Table 4.3 shows the statements that deal with in-season versus out-of-season. A total of 53% of the athletes either agreed or strongly agreed that they perform better academically and 60% agreed or strongly agreed that they manage their time better during the in-season versus the out-of-season. When asked about athletic identity 45 percent of the athletes felt that they are athletes more than students and 32% agreed or strongly agreed that people see them more as an athlete than a student. However, a total of 52% agreed or strongly agreed that they consider themselves a student first. Table 4.4 shows the results of these questions.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-Season versus Out-of-Season</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform better academically in-season versus out-of-season</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage time better in-season versus out-of-season</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take tougher classes during the season rather than out-of-season

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athletic Identity</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people see me more as an athlete than a student.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself more of an athlete than a student</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows the answers to the statements pertaining to coaches’ attitudes on the survey. Regarding coaches’ perceived perceptions of academics a total of 80% agreed or strongly agreed that their coaches are aware of their academic work and a total of 79% agreed or strongly agreed that academic quality is a priority of their head coach. A total of 81% agreed or strongly agreed that their coach thinks it is important for the athletes to graduate. Where only 60% agreed or strongly agreed that the coach is willing to discuss academic progress with them.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaches’ Attitudes</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coaches are more important to me than my teachers.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My head coach is aware of my academic work.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic quality is a priority of my head coach</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to my coach that I graduate.  

\[ n = 131 \quad SD = 0.800 \quad M = 4.34 \]

My head coach discusses my academic progress with me.  

\[ n = 131 \quad SD = 0.916 \quad M = 3.82 \]

Table 4.6 shows the answers to the statements pertaining to teachers’ attitudes. A total of 69% agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers/professors are interested in them passing the class. A total of 56% agreed or disagreed that their teachers/professors are concerned about the athletes’ academic development. A total of 63% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their teachers expect lower academic performance because they are athletes. The majority of the athletes, a total of 51% disagreed or strongly disagreed that teachers treat them as more of an athlete than a student.

Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Attitudes</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to my teachers that I pass my classes.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 131 SD = 0.849 M = 3.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers on this campus treat athletes better than other students.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 131 SD = 0.913 M = 2.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are willing to meet with me outside of class when I need help.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 131 SD = 0.772 M = 3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The college’s teachers expect lower academic performance from athletes than other students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 131 SD = 0.835 M = 2.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are concerned about my academic development.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 131 SD = 0.898 M = 3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are aware of my academic progress.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between the demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, and class rank and athletes' attitudes?

Table 4.7 shows the correlation between ethnicity and the athletes’ attitudes.

There was a moderate, positive relationship \( (r = .314, p = .000) \) at the 0.01 level between ethnicity and starting college over again and still participating in athletics at Rowan.

There was also a moderate, positive relationship \( (r = .212, p = .015) \) at the 0.05 level between ethnicity and recommending Rowan’s athletic program to future athletes. The relationship between ethnicity and coaches being more important to the athlete than their teachers was a moderate, positive relationship \( (r = .241, p = .006) \) at the 0.01 level. The relationship between ethnicity and head coaches being aware of the athletes’ academic work was a weak, positive relationship \( (r = .193, p = .027) \) at the 0.05 level. There was a moderate, positive relationship \( (r = .260, p = .003) \) at the 0.01 level between ethnicity and academic quality being a priority of head coaches. There was a weak, positive relationship \( (r = .188, p = .031) \) at the 0.05 level between ethnicity and head coaches discuss academic progress with their athletes.

Table 4.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>( r ) coefficient</th>
<th>( p ) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I had to start all over again, I would</td>
<td>( .314^{**} )</td>
<td>( .000 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participate in athletics at this college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this athletic program</td>
<td>( .212^{**} )</td>
<td>( .015 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to future athletes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My coaches are more important to me than my teachers. \( r = -0.241, p = 0.006 \)

My head coach is aware of my academic work. \( r = -0.193, p = 0.027 \)

Academic quality is a priority of my head coach. \( r = -0.260, p = 0.003 \)

My head coach discusses my academic progress with me. \( r = -0.188, p = 0.031 \)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.8 shows the correlation between gender and athletes' attitudes. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.182, p = 0.036) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and performing better academically while in-season versus out-of-season. There was a moderate, negative relationship \( (r = -0.245, p = 0.004) \) at the 0.01 level between gender and managing time better while in-season versus out-of-season. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.182, p = 0.037) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and being pleased with the overall college experience. There was a moderate, negative relationship \( (r = -0.291, p = 0.001) \) at the 0.01 level between gender and recommending Rowan's athletic program to future athletes. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.207, p = 0.018) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and meeting with an advisor on what classes to take each semester. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.172, p = 0.049) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and choosing this college if the athlete had to start all over again. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.225, p = 0.010) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and the head coach being aware of the athlete's academic work. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.221, p = 0.011) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and academic quality being a priority of the head coach. There was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -0.215, p = 0.014) \) at the 0.05 level between gender and coaches thinking it is important to graduate.
There was a moderate, negative relationship \((r = -.257, p = .003)\) at the 0.01 level between gender and the head coach discussing academic progress with the athlete.

Table 4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>(r) coefficient</th>
<th>(p) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I perform better academically while in-season versus out-of-season.</td>
<td>-.182*</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I manage my time better during the season versus out-of-season.</td>
<td>-.245**</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased with my overall college experience.</td>
<td>-.182*</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this athletic program to future athletes.</td>
<td>-.291**</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I meet with my advisor in my major on what classes to take each semester.</td>
<td>-.207*</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would chose this college if I had to start all over again.</td>
<td>-.172*</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My head coach is aware of my academic work.</td>
<td>-.225**</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic quality is a priority of my head coach.</td>
<td>-.221*</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to my coach that I graduate</td>
<td>-.215*</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My head coach discusses my academic progress with me.</td>
<td>-.257**</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.9 shows the correlation between class rank and athletes' attitudes. The relationship between class rank and college providing enough resources for the athlete to succeed academically was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -.190, p = .029)\) at the 0.05 level. The relationship between class rank and coaches being more important to the athlete than teachers was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -.205, p = .019)\) at the 0.05 level. The relationship between class rank and academic quality being a priority of the head coach was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -.180, p = .040)\) at the 0.05 level. The relationship between class rank and the coach thinking it is important to graduate was a
weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.234, p = 0.007)\) at the 0.01 level. The relationship between class rank and the head coaches discuss academic progress with the athletes was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.180, p = 0.040)\) at the 0.05 level.

Table 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Rank Correlations</th>
<th>(r) coefficient</th>
<th>(p) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My college provides enough resources for me to succeed academically.</td>
<td>-0.190*</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coaches are more important to me than my teachers.</td>
<td>-0.205*</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic quality is a priority of my head coach.</td>
<td>-0.180*</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to my coach that I graduate.</td>
<td>-0.234**</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My head coach discusses my academic progress with me.</td>
<td>-0.180*</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference between the sport played and athlete’s attitudes?

Table 4.10 shows the correlation between sport played and athletes’ attitudes. There was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.196, p = 0.024)\) at the 0.05 level between sport played and having goals related to classes. There was a moderate, negative relationship \((r = -0.305, p = 0.000)\) at the 0.01 level between sport played and spending more time thinking about classes than anything else. There was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.197, p = 0.023)\) at the 0.05 level between sport played and considering oneself a student first.

Table 4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Played and Attitudes</th>
<th>(r) coefficient</th>
<th>(p) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have many goals related to my classes.</td>
<td>-0.196*</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spend more time thinking about my</td>
<td>-0.305**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference between the sport played and coaches' and teachers' attitudes?

Table 4.11 shows the correlation between sport played and coaches' attitudes and teachers' attitudes. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.202, p = 0.020$) at the 0.01 level between sport played and coaches thinking it is important for the athletes to graduate. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.185, p = 0.034$) at the 0.05 level between sport played and teachers at Rowan treating athletes better than other students. There was a weak, positive relationship ($r = 0.188, p = 0.031$) at the 0.01 level between sport played and teachers being concerned about the athletes' academic development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$r$ coefficient</th>
<th>$p$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to my coach that I graduate.</td>
<td>-0.202*</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers on this campus treat athletes better than other students.</td>
<td>-0.185*</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are concerned about my academic development.</td>
<td>0.188*</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Student-athletes are a unique group. The academic performance of student athletes commands much attention in the media today. There is considerable research on football and basketball players particularly focused on academic performance and graduation rates. Student athletes are expected to perform both on the playing field and in the classroom and it is important to find out how well they are doing in both venues. If researchers could better understand why some athletes do better academically than others, then those student athletes who struggle could be helped more effectively. This study investigated the factors affecting academic performance of Division III student-athletes at Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ). The factors studied included demographics, athletes' attitudes, coaches' attitudes, teachers' attitudes and in-season versus out-of-season.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand selected NCAA Division III student-athletes and the factors that impact their academic performance. Of particular interest were Rowan University student-athletes. The factors investigated included selected demographics, the sport played, how much time is put into this sport, the student-athlete's major, in-season vs. out-of-season, the student-athlete's attitudes toward school, student-athletes' perceived faculty attitudes, and the student-athletes' perceived coaches attitudes.
Methodology

A stratified random sample was selected of all Division III student-athletes at Rowan University. The subjects were both male and female reporting various class ranks. Access to the student-athletes was made through the coaches on campus. A total of 170 student-athletes were selected to participate in the study.

A survey titled "Survey on Factors Impacting Academic Performance" (Appendix B) was based upon 4 previous studies. After receiving IRB approval, the survey was given to each coach to distribute to his/her athletes. The survey consisted of two sections. The first section asked for background information and sport information. The second section was based on a 5-point Likert scale. The subjects were asked to circle the corresponding letter to the degree to which they agreed with the statements. The letters "SA" represented strongly agree, "A" represented agree, "N" represented neutral, "D" represented disagree, and "SD" represented strongly disagree constituted the scale.

During the week of February 25th, the researcher handed out the surveys to the coaches who collected the completed surveys and put them in the researchers’ mailbox. With the help of the coaches, the researcher was able to obtain a response rate of 78%.

Data Analysis

The independent variables were the factors of demographics, sport, time, academic major, in-season vs. out-of-season, attitudes toward school, coaches’ perceived attitudes, and faculties’ perceived attitudes. The dependent variable focused on academic performance. This variable was assessed through GPA and also the responses to the survey items. Variations in demographics of the athletes’ academic performance were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Data were
analyzed using frequency tables, and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution &
descriptive statistics) to examine the data in regards to the profile of the sample and the
first research question. Data were also analyzed using Pearson's correlation model to
answer the last three research questions.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of selected Rowan University athletes
regarding the factors of in-season versus out-of-season, athletic identity, coaches’
attitudes, and teachers’ attitudes?

The researcher found that the athletes reported that they felt they were able to
manage their time and perform better academically during the season rather than out-of-
season. This is in disagreement with Alten's (1998) study, which found that football
players favored the off-season.

The current study also found that the athletes' felt that their coaches are involved
and care about their academic performance. This was opposite of the researchers
hypothesis for this question. The researcher felt that the athletes would not agree that
their coaches are involved. The researcher also found that the athletes felt as though their
teachers were involved and cared about their progress academically.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between the demographic
variables of gender, ethnicity, and class rank and attitudes?

The first factor analyzed was ethnicity. There were six significant correlations
between attitude statements and ethnicity. There was a moderate, positive relationship (r=
.314, p = .000) at the 0.01 level between ethnicity and starting college over again and still
participating in athletics at Rowan. This suggests that those students of a similar ethnicity
would choose this college’s athletic program again. The second correlation was between ethnicity and recommending Rowan’s athletic program to future athletes with a moderate, positive relationship ($r = .212, p = .015$) at the 0.05 level. Similar to the previous statement, this correlation suggests that athletes of similar ethnicities would recommend the athletic program to the future athletes. There was also a moderate, positive relationship ($r = .241, p = .006$) at the 0.01 level between ethnicity and coaches being more important to the athlete than their teachers. This suggests that coaches are more important to athletes of a certain ethnic background. The relationship between ethnicity and head coaches being aware of the athletes’ academic work showed a weak, positive relationship ($r = .193, p = .027$) at the 0.05 level. This suggests that in accordance with the previous statement athletes feel the coaches are aware of their academic performance.

The fifth correlation was a moderate, positive relationship ($r = .260, p = .003$) at the 0.01 level between ethnicity and academic quality being a priority of head coaches. Again, this statement suggests that athletes of a certain ethnic background feel that academic quality is a priority of the head coaches. The final correlation was between ethnicity and head coaches discuss academic progress with the athletes, which showed a weak, positive relationship ($r = .188, p = .031$) at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the athletes of a certain ethnic background feel the coaches are willing to discuss their academic progress. Thus, the athletes of a certain ethnic background feel that the coaches are involved and concerned about their academic performance. This relates to Martin (2005) who found that African-American student-athletes reported that there was no support from the coaches.
The second factor analyzed was gender. There were 10 significant correlations between attitude statements and gender. The first correlation was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.182, p = 0.036$) at the 0.05 level between gender and performing better academically while in-season versus out-of-season. This suggests that either male or females feel as though they perform better in-season rather than out-of-season. The next correlation was between gender and managing time better while in-season versus out-of-season with a moderate, negative relationship ($r = -0.245, p = 0.004$) at the 0.01 level. This suggests that both male and females feel that they manage their time better in-season rather than out-of-season. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.182, p = 0.037$) at the 0.05 level between gender and being pleased with the overall college experience. This suggests that both genders are pleased with their overall college experience. There was a moderate, negative relationship ($r = -0.291, p = 0.001$) at the 0.01 level between gender and recommending Rowan’s athletic program to future athletes. This suggests that either the males or the females would recommend the athletic program to future students. The fifth correlation was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.207, p = 0.018$) at the 0.05 level between gender and meeting with an advisor on what classes to take each semester. This suggests that one of the genders meets regularly with their advisors to schedule classes. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.172, p = 0.049$) at the 0.05 level between gender and choosing the university if the athlete had to start all over again. This suggests that either males or females feel that they would choose Rowan again if they had to start college all over again. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.225, p = 0.010$) at the 0.05 level between gender and the head coach being aware of the athlete’s academic work. This suggests the either female athletes or male athletes feel that their coaches are aware of the
athletes’ academic work. The eighth correlation was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.221, p = 0.011$) at the 0.05 level between gender and academic quality being a priority of the head coach. This suggests that either males or females felt that the coaches think that academic quality is a priority. There was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.215, p = 0.014$) at the 0.05 level between gender and coaches thinking it is important to graduate. This suggests that either males or females felt that the coaches want them to graduate and believe this outcome is important. The final correlation was a moderate, negative relationship ($r = -0.257, p = 0.003$) at the 0.01 level between gender and the head coach discussing academic progress with the athlete. This suggests that either males or females felt as though the coaches discuss academic progress with the athletes. These correlations together suggest that either males or females felt that the coaches are involved and are pleased with their college experience. Moreover, it also shows that either males or females feel that they perform better academically during in-season rather than out-of-season.

The final factor analyzed was class rank. There were five significant correlations between attitudes and class rank. The first correlation was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.190, p = 0.029$) at the 0.05 level between class rank and college providing enough resources for the athlete to succeed academically. This suggests that certain class ranks (freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, or super senior) felt as though the college does not provide enough resources for the student-athletes to succeed academically. The relationship between class rank and coaches being more important to the athlete than teachers was a weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.205, p = 0.019$) at the 0.05 level. This suggests that certain class ranks feel as though the coaches are more important to them
than their teachers. The relationship between class rank and academic quality being a priority of the head coach showed a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -.180, p = .040) \) at the 0.05 level. This correlation suggests that certain class ranks felt that academic quality is a priority of the coaches. The relationship between class rank and the coach thinking it is important to graduate showed a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -.234, p = .007) \) at the 0.01 level. This suggests that certain class ranks believe that the coaches think it is important for the athletes to graduate. The final correlation was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -.180, p = .040) \) at the 0.05 level between class rank and the head coaches discuss academic progress with the athletes. This suggests that certain class ranks feel as though the coaches discuss academic progress with them. These correlations together suggest that certain class ranks feel that the coaches are actively involved in their athletes’ academic performance.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference between the sport played and athlete’s attitudes?

There were three significant correlations between sport played and the athletes’ attitudes. The first correlation was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -.196, p = .024) \) at the 0.05 level between sport played and having goals related to classes. This suggests that some of the athletes of certain sports do have goals related to classes. There was a moderate, negative relationship \( (r = -.305, p = .000) \) at the 0.01 level between sport played and spending more time thinking about classes than anything else. This suggests that some athletes of certain sports think more about classes and may prioritize academics over sports. The final correlation was a weak, negative relationship \( (r = -.197, p = .023) \) at the 0.05 level between sport played and considering oneself a student first. This suggests
that some athletes of certain sports consider themselves a student first and then an athlete. These findings relate to JacAngelo’s (2003) study which found that there was a significant relationship between athletic participation and academic performance at the high school level.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant between the sport played and coaches’ and teachers’ attitudes?

There were three correlations between sport played and coaches’ and teachers’ attitudes. The first correlation was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.202, p = 0.020)\) at the 0.01 level between sport played and coaches thinking it is important for the athletes to graduate. This suggests that athletes of a certain sport feel their coach thinks it is important for them to graduate. This finding is in disagreement with Friedman (2004) who found that the coaches did not think it was important for the athletes to graduate. There was a weak, negative relationship \((r = -0.185, p = 0.034)\) at the 0.05 level between sport played and teachers at Rowan treating athletes better than other students. This suggests that athletes of certain sports feel that teachers may treat athletes better than other students. The final correlation was a weak, positive relationship \((r = 0.188, s = 0.031)\) at the 0.01 level between sport played and teachers being concerned about the athletes’ academic development. This suggests that athletes of certain sports feel that their teachers are concerned about the athletes’ academic development.

Conclusions

The study suggests that coaches’ involvement in academics impacts the athletes’ academic performance. One reason that some of the coaches are so involved in academics is eligibility. If an athlete does not receive the proper grades, he/she can become
ineligible and cannot compete. Coaches are going to be very concerned about the starters and valuable players. The study also suggests that the athletes believed their coaches thought very highly of them. An alternate explanation could be because of the eligibility factor, but it could signal that coaches do believe in their athletes. Moreover, this could indicate that coaches understand that the athletes are students first and athletes second.

The study also suggests that athletes felt as though they perform better academically during the in-season versus the out-of-season. This finding is in contrast to the research of Bryant and Clifton (1990), Dickerson (2007), Parker (1972), and Westman (1990) who found that there was no significant difference between in-season academic performance and out-of-season academic performance. The study also suggests that athletes’ manage their time better in-season versus out-of-season. A potential explanation is that the athletes’ time constraints during the in-season are such that they must practice time management skills. Many athletes have practice everyday at a specified time; therefore, they must schedule time to do their schoolwork. Another explanation in why the athletes’ felt they performed better during the in-season could be because they want to maintain eligibility. To many athletes, playing a sport is very important and if they are ineligible they cannot fulfill that role.

The next factor that stood out in this study was teachers’ involvement in academic performance. Teachers’ attitudes towards the athletes’ impacts the athletes’ academic performance. Many of the athletes’ did not feel that their teachers treated them any differently because they were athletes. This could be because the teachers’ roles are to teach and that is the teachers’ main objective. This outcome is positive since the athletes’ will not feel any less of a student, but equal to their classmates. The study also suggests
that teachers do take an active role in athletes’ academic performance. A potential explanation could be that the teachers have compassion for the student-athletes’ wants and needs. The teachers want students to succeed and therefore will help whether they are an athlete or not.

The study suggests that ethnicity, gender, and class rank impacted academic performance. The first factor, ethnicity, did impact academic performance. According to the literature (Marcus 2003), African-American males do not graduate at the same rate as Caucasian males. Findings in the study suggest that different ethnicities perform differently. Coaches should be aware of this and understand the differences. Also, the athletic support staff needs to know the needs of the different ethnicities. One of the strongest relationships with ethnicity was the coaches’ attitudes which can impact different ethnicities in different ways. Thus, coaches must be cognizant of the role attitudes can play in motivating athletes from all ethnicities.

The second factor, gender, impacted academic performance. One of the stronger relationships was meeting with an advisor to schedule classes. This suggests that the athletic staff needs to be aware of the differences between males and females and the different needs of both genders. This is not to say that one gender needs more support than the other, but may require different attention. Student-athletes vary from the general student body and so do male and female athletes, especially in relation to academics.

The final factor, class rank, impacted academic performance among the student athletes. Class rank had many relationships with coaches’ attitudes. This finding suggests that coaches may treat the class levels differently. Coaches may spend more attention with freshman because they are new and spend less time with the seniors who are very
familiar with the routines of college life. It is worthwhile to note that some students may need ongoing attention throughout their athletic eligibility so coaches need to offer ongoing support as needed.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are made for practice:

1. Coaches need to be more involved in their athletes’ academic performance.
2. Study halls should be implemented to help the student-athletes manage their time better and have a specified time to do academic work.
3. Division III institutions should implement academic services available strictly to student-athletes.
4. Workshops for student-athletes on academic performance, focusing on time management, resources available on campus, and study skills should be implemented at the Division III level such as in the case at Division I and II institutions.
5. Training for coaches on understanding the differences between males and females and the different needs and associated with each gender.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are made for future research:

1. The survey should be rearranged so that the factors are not grouped together on the survey. This may enhance reliability of the instrument.
2. A larger study involving more Division III student-athletes. The study should include either more schools or a study of all three Divisions.
3. A study why the factors impact the student-athletes using interviews and/or focus groups in addition to a survey.
4. A longitudinal study in order to identify how academic needs change as student-athletes mature and engage in their majors.
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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
January 2, 2008

Jaime Dickerson
31 Franklin Ave.
RD#2
Berlin, NJ 08009

Dear Jaime Dickerson:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your project:

IRB application number: 2008-071

Project Title: Factoring Impacting Academic Performance in Selected Division III Student-Athletes

In accordance with federal law, this approval is effective for one calendar year from the date of this letter. If your research project extends beyond that date or if you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Please retain copies of consent forms for this research for three years after completion of the research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to the Associate Provost for Research (856-256-4053).

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-4167).

Sincerely,

Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Sisco, Burton, Educational Leadership, Education Hall

Office of the Associate Provost for Research
Memorial Hall
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701
856-256-4053
856-256-4425 fax
APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument
SURVEY ON FACTORS IMPACTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If at any time you choose not to participate in this study, you can withdraw. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. By completing this survey, you state that you are 18 years or older and willing to participate in this study, and understand the completion of this survey constitutes informed consent.

Student Background Information

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Please only circle one answer unless directed otherwise.

1. Gender: Female Male

2. What is your race?
   a.) African American
   b.) American Indian
   c.) Asian/Pacific Islander
   d.) Hispanic
   e.) Middle Eastern
   f.) White
   g.) Multi-racial
   h.) Other (___________)

3. What year are you academically?
   a.) Freshman
   b.) Sophomore
   c.) Junior
   d.) Senior
   e.) Super Senior

4. What year are you on the playing field/court?
   a.) Freshman
   b.) Sophomore
   c.) Junior
   d.) Senior

5. What sport do you play?
   a.) Football
   b.) Soccer
   c.) Field hockey
   d.) Cross-country
   e.) Track and Field
   f.) Volleyball
   g.) Swimming/Diving
   h.) Basketball
   i.) Softball
   j.) Lacrosse
   k.) Baseball

6. How many hours do you spend on each item every Monday- Friday?
   Studying/doing homework
   Participating in sport*
   a  b  c  d  e
   0-3 4-7 8-11 12-15 16+
   0-3 4-7 8-11 12-15 16+
   *Include only practice time and actual competition time.

7. What is your major?

8. What is your current GPA?
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each following statement.

SD = Strongly Disagree  D = Disagree  N = Neutral  A = Agree  SA = Strongly Agree

SA
1. I feel that I perform better academically while in-season versus out-of-season.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

2. I feel that I manage my time better during the season versus out-of-season.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

3. I prefer to take my tougher classes during the off-season rather than in-season.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

4. I have more friends from my classes than from my sport.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

5. I spend more time thinking about my classes than my sport.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

6. Other people see me more as an athlete than a student.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

7. I consider myself more of an athlete than a student.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

8. Doing badly in my classes makes me feel worse than doing badly in my sport.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

9. My classes are more important to me than my sport.
   SD  D  N  A
   1  2  3  4  5

10. I have many goals related to my classes.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

11. I spend more time thinking about my classes than anything else.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

12. I consider myself a student first.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

13. My college provides enough resources for me to succeed academically.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

14. If I had to start all over again, I would participate in athletics at this college.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

15. I am pleased with my overall college experience.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

16. I would recommend this athletic program to future athletes.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5

17. I meet with an advisor in my major on what classes to take each semester.
    SD  D  N  A
    1  2  3  4  5
18. I would choose this college if I had to start all over again. 1 2 3 4 5

19. My coaches are more important to me than my teachers. 1 2 3 4 5

20. My head coach is aware of my academic work. 1 2 3 4 5

21. Academic quality is a priority of my head coach. 1 2 3 4 5

22. It is important to my coach that I graduate. 1 2 3 4 5

23. My head coach discusses my academic progress with me. 1 2 3 4 5

24. It is important to my teachers that I pass my classes. 1 2 3 4 5

25. Teachers on this campus treat athletes better than other students. 1 2 3 4 5

26. My teachers are willing to meet with me outside of class when I need help. 1 2 3 4 5

27. The college’s teachers expect lower academic performance from athletes than other students. 1 2 3 4 5

28. My teachers are concerned about my academic development. 1 2 3 4 5

29. My teachers are aware of my academic progress. 1 2 3 4 5

30. Overall, teachers on this campus treat me as an athlete rather than a student. 1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return to:

Jaime Dickerson
Athletic Training
201 Mullica Hill Rd
Glassboro, NJ 08028
(609) 828-5458
jaimedickerson06@yahoo.com

If you are interested in the results of the study please feel free to contact me.