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Student-athletes and involvement theory

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STUDENT-ATHLETES AND INVOLVEMENT THEORY

by
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study was to better understand the level of involvement student athletes have at Rowan University. The researcher surveyed 99 student athletes at Rowan University during the 2006-2007 academic year. The subjects were administered a survey to measure their level of involvement, as well as their attitudes toward involvement at Rowan University. Surveys were statistically analyzed to determine frequency, percentages, means, standard deviations, and significant correlations between selected demographics and specific involvement activities.

The study provides insight on the relationship between student athletes' academic performance and their level of involvement, as well as insight on relationships between student athlete demographic variables and their level of involvement. The study also provides insight on the attitudes of student athletes' in regard to social involvement, academic involvement, and campus environment. Student athletes' at Rowan University did not feel very strongly about either the importance or satisfaction of social involvement, academic involvement, or campus environment. However, there were significant relationships between student athletes' academic performance and specific involvement activities. There

were also significant relationships found between student athlete demographics and certain involvement activities. This study supports some of the research from the previous literature on involvement theory.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The issue of student athletes and their academic success has been around for many years. Although there has been research on general student involvement on college campuses, there has been limited research on student athletes as a particular demographic group and their involvement on campus in activities beyond athletics. Student-athletes have to balance many different activities in order to be successful in the higher education setting, such as meeting athletic obligations, academics, and other activities during their time in college.

Statement of the Problem

For many years student athletes have been the subject of scorn to those outside the world of academics. There is a perception that student athletes are generally poor students who are only involved in athletics and are not involved in other activities on campus during their college years.

> Walter and Smith (1990) state historically, the public's perception of student athletes has been shaped by the popular press. They are commonly portrayed as intellectual troglodytes, admitted to college without meeting admissions requirements and excused for maintaining academic standards once they enroll. However, these authors maintain that contrary to common belief, students are

much more like other students than they are different. (as cited in Peltier, Laden, & Matranga, 1990, p.1)

There are also mixed emotions about whether more involvement among student athletes impacts their academic performance in a positive or negative way.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate student athletes' involvement on campus outside of athletics to better understand any impact such involvement might have on the students. The study also investigated the impact of student athletes' cumulative grade point average and certain demographics such as gender, age, race and ethnicity, and specific sport played at Rowan University and the impact each had on student athletes' level of involvement. Attempting to further understand student athletes involvement on campus, student athletes' attitudes about involvement was also investigated. The findings in the study may provide insight into the impact student athletes' involvement level on college campuses have on their attitudes and performance.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher assumed that the subjects who completed the survey did so accurately, truthfully, and without bias. Several limiting factors were also present in the study. The study is limited to student-athletes enrolled at Rowan University during the 2006-2007 academic year, and did not look at student-athletes at other institutions. Another limitation of the study was that the researcher was once a student athlete in both college and high school, which could be a source of bias in favor of the student athletes. The fact that the researcher served as the Graduate

Assistant Basketball Coach at Rowan University was also a limitation that could cause bias in the favor of the student athletes, especially those who participated in basketball. Another limitation is that only those who returned the surveys actually participated in the study, so the researcher was unable to obtain the entire Rowan University student athlete population. A final limitation is that the researcher used a convenience sample, so the subject sample did not truly represent the student athlete population at Rowan University.

Operational Definitions

1. Academic Year: The period of formal instruction at Rowan University, from late August / early September through early May; it is divided into two semesters of varying length, one during the fall and one during the spring.
2. Athletics: Refers to sports played by student athletes at Rowan University during the 2006-2007 academic year that are accepted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
3. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA): Defined as the overall GPA for the individual's entire college career at Rowan University.
4. Gender: Whether an individual is a male or a female biologically; does not consider what individuals personal beliefs are about his or her own sexual orientation.
5. Higher Education: The university and college level of undergraduate education at Rowan University's four year undergraduate level.
6. Involvement: The student's involvement and participation in academic, social, and extracurricular activities throughout their college career at Rowan University.

7. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): Refers to the official governing association for intercollegiate athletes in the United States.
8. Rowan University: A public state institution that is categorized by the NCAA as a Division III school located in Glassboro, NJ.
9. Student-Athletes: Individuals who were enrolled during the 2006-2007 academic year at Rowan University and participated in intercollegiate athletics.

Research Questions

1. How involved and what activities are selected student athletes involved in at Rowan University?
2. What are the selected student athletes' attitudes regarding the importance given to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?
3. How satisfied are selected student athletes in regards to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the demographic variables of age, gender, race and ethnicity, specific sport played, and academic performance, and specific involvement activities at Rowan University?

Overview of the Study

Chapter two provides a review of the scholarly literature that is important to the study. The section includes a brief overview of the history of student-athletes in higher education including legislation and rules that have shaped intercollegiate athletics. Also, there is a section that includes information on Astin's Involvement Theory and other theories that relate to involvement. There

are also sections that look at scholarly research that have influenced the outlook of student athletes and academic performance. The final section looks at scholarly research that has been done on the impact of student involvement.

Chapter three describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are included in this description: the context of the study, population and sample selection, the data collection instrument, the pilot test, the data collection process, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter four describes the findings and results of the study. This chapter addresses the research questions posed in the introduction of the study. Narrative, statistical analysis and tables are used to summarize the data in this section.

Chapter five summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study with conclusions and recommendations offered for practice and further study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Higher Education and Student-Athletes

Collegiate athletics and higher education have been integral parts for many years. Collegiate athletics is an enormous and powerful enterprise and has altered the landscape of the American higher education system. There have been many different reforms in higher education that have shaped the face of college athletics including admission standards, academic performance and graduation rates. Reforms dealing with student athletes in higher education have been around since the 1929 report from the Carnegie Foundation. "The reform efforts have correctly identified the major issues of over-commercialization, the compromising of academic integrity, misplaced fiscal priorities, overzealous boosters and alumni, and exploitation of student-athletes" (Gerdy, 2002, p. 33).

One of the biggest and most important reforms that have occurred in regards to student athletes in higher education is Proposition 48. Proposition 48 was passed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association or NCAA in 1985. The proposition required that, in order to participate in athletics at the college level, a student must have a minimum of 700 on the SAT or a 15 on the ACT, a grade point average of 2.0 in at least 11 academic courses including English, mathematics, social sciences, natural or physical science and two years in

additional academic courses such as foreign language, computer science, philosophy or no doctrinal religion (Peltier, Laden, & Matranga, 1990).

The standards were updated on August 1, 1995 with the passing of Proposition 16 by the NCAA. Proposition 16 has two stages. The first stage was passed on August 1, 1995, and required courses increased to 13 and two academic electives were added. The second stage was passed on August 1, 1996 and an academic elective was moved to English. This meant that four years of English is required instead of three. The second stage also instituted a sliding scale combining SAT / ACT scores and a student's grade point average in at least 13 core classes (Putting the 'Student' Back into Student-Athlete, 2005). By 2008, the National Collegiate Athletic Association will raise the academic bar again by increasing the number of core classes a high school athlete must take as well as increasing grade level performance that athletes are expected to receive in those classes (Putting the 'Student' Back into Student-Athlete, 2005).

Another reform that has occurred is a new system that the NCAA began rolling out on February 28, 2005. This system holds colleges and universities that have an "academic progress rate" or APR of 925 or above and have demonstrated a graduation rate of at least 50% are safe from NCAA penalties. The APR is based on points averaged for eligibility and retention of student-athletes at a particular college or university. Colleges and universities that do not receive a grade of 925 or higher will face different penalties such as; losing athletic scholarships, limits on post-season play, or perhaps even restricted NCAA membership (Putting the 'Student' Back into Student-Athlete, 2005). Currently,

all of these reforms are for Division I and Division II level institutions and not at the Division III level, but the issue of athletics in higher education is a major concern at the Division I, II, and III levels.

The NCAA also tracks student athletes' academic success by comparing graduation rates to those of non-athletes to see how student athletes are performing as students. These statistics by the NCAA are for all Division I and Division III institutions to see the difference between institutions who have athletic scholarships and those that do not give any athletic aide. The NCAA believes that there needs to be a balance between athletic performance and academic performance.

Involvement Theory

Astin's Student Involvement Theory (1984), is one of the most important and best known theories in student affairs. Astin describes involvement as participation in the classroom as well as involvement in activities outside of the classroom. The theory of student involvement can be used both by researchers to guide investigations of student development and by college administrators and faculty to help them design more effective learning environments. The theory not only elucidates the considerable findings that have emerged from several decades of research on student development; it also offers educators a tool for designing more effective learning environments. The theory emphasizes active participation of the student in the learning process (Astin, 1984). In education, Astin's theory has formed the backbone of professional student affairs and student support programs, as well as student counseling and personnel work in colleges and

universities all over the United States. Astin asserts that student learning and development outcomes associated with any educational program are directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement (Bateson & Taylor, 2004).

Astin (1984) defines involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). He further clarified that involvement refers to behavior, what a student actually does, rather than the student's feelings or thoughts. Astin defines both the highly involved and uninvolved student. He defines the highly involved student as one who "devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students" (p. 518). He defines the uninvolved student as one who "neglects studies, spends little time on campus, abstains from extracurricular activities, and has infrequent contact with faculty members and other students" (p. 518).

Although Astin could have used other terms, like motivation, to describe the development theory, he chose involvement because it implies more than just a psychological state; it connotes the behavioral manifestation of the state. Astin's involvement theory has its roots in Astin's 1975 longitudinal study of college dropouts. This study sought to identify factors in the college environment that significantly affected the student's persistence in college. Through the study, Astin found that the factors that contributed to the students remaining in college

suggested involvement, while those that contributed to the students dropping out implied a lack of involvement (Astin, 1984).

Astin identifies five postulates that underscore his involvement theory. Postulate one says involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. Postulate two says regardless of the object, involvement occurs along a continuum. Postulate three says involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. Postulate four says the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any education program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in the program. Finally, postulate five says the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (Astin, 1984).

Astin also listed the specific forms of involvement that college students are a part of including place of residence, honors programs, academic involvement, student-faculty interaction, athletic involvement, and involvement in student government. Leaving home to attend college has a significant impact on most college outcomes especially involvement. Living on campus tends to lead to more interaction with faculty, involvement in student government, and participation in social fraternities or sororities. Honors programs seem to have a positive impact on academic involvement but more of a negative impact on social interaction with peers. Academic involvement seems to have a positive impact on all aspects of college life except social interaction with other students. Student-faculty interaction is more strongly related to satisfaction with the entire college

experience than any other type of involvement. Athletic involvement has a positive impact on the institution's academic reputation, the intellectual environment, student friendships, and institutional administration. Involvement in student government shows frequent interaction with peers (Astin, 1984). Astin's involvement theory suggests that the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater the amount of student learning and personal development; it also directs attention away from subject matter and technique and toward the motivation and behavior of the student, which is unlike traditional pedagogical approaches (Astin, 1984).

Although Astin's involvement theory is the best known for understanding student persistence and retention, there are other theories that deal with involvement research. Tinto's (1993) departure theory serves to highlight the value of a classroom experience in which students and teachers can achieve intellectual synergy. Tinto believes that students arrive on college with a certain level of commitment to success and this level of commitment either gets higher or lower depending on how well a student becomes involved at their institution both academically and socially (as cited in Chaves, 2006).

Student Athletes' and Academic Performance

The subject of student-athletes and academic performance has been the topic of conversation in the higher education world for many years and there are many different opinions about the subject. These are different views of student-athletes when it comes to academic performance and some believe that athletic participation can have a positive impact on a student's academic performance,

while others have negative attitudes toward student-athletes when it comes to the area of academic performance.

There have been several studies of student-athletes in the past that have shown positive impacts on academic performance. Buhrmann's (1972) study of students in grades seven, eight, and nine, showed how participation in athletics improved academic success. Through his research, Buhrmann found that athletes who participated in athletics for several years out performed those who only competed in athletics for a few seasons as well as those who did not participate in athletics at any time, (as cited in Stephens & Schaben, 2002). Durbin's (1986) research revealed that participants in sports generally outperformed non-participant classmates academically (as cited in Stegman & Stephens, 2000). Soltz (1986) found statistical significance in the higher grade point averages of athletes compared to non-athletes (as cited in Stephens & Schaben, 2002). National Collegiate Athletic Association research on the 1995-1996 academic year showed that Division I athletes as a whole are graduating at higher rates then students overall. The report shows 60% of athletes, compared with 58% of all students graduated within six years of entering college. They were the highest rates recorded since the graduation of the class that entered in 1984, which was the first one tracked by the NCAA. Male athletes, however, did not perform as well, as female athletes. Moreover, black male athletes, in all intercollegiate sports, are graduating at higher rates than other black male students. Across all sports, except for men's basketball where only 43% of student-athletes earned degrees, graduation rates are among the highest ever for virtually every racial and

demographic group. The colleges where athletes are graduating at higher rates than other students tend to be commuter institutions, historically black colleges and ones with extremely low graduation rates on average for the entire student body as a whole (Suggs, 2002).

Also, there have been several studies of student athletes that have shown negative impacts on academic performance. Cutright (1983) found that during four years of high school, sports participation tended to lower grade point averages of students (as cited in Stegman & Stephens, 2000). A study by Maloney and McCormick (1989) at Clemson University found that college athletes do not perform as well in the classroom as non-athletic peers. The researchers found that student athletes' graduation rates were about 10 percentage points below the rest of the student body. They also found out that student-athletes who participated in big revenue sports performed lower in the classroom then those who participated in other sports, with men's basketball having the worst grades and football not much better (Maloney & McCormick, 1989). Research presented in the book *The Game of Life*, shows that once in college, all athletes tend to under perform academically compared both with their classmates with similar entrance-exam scores, and with what their high school grades and test scores would predict, according to the authors' findings. It was also found that those athletes in higher profile sports do worse than those in lower profile sports (Suggs, 2001). Some say that the most disturbing finding is the documentation that the chasm between athletics and education is widening not only at Division I institutions, but also at virtually every institution sponsoring intercollegiate athletics, including Ivy

League universities and selective liberal arts colleges at the Division III level (Gerdy, 2002).

Involvement Research

There has been considerable research on the idea of involvement and how involvement impacts students' academic performance. Much of the research done on involvement has shown that students who are involved in co-curricular activities perform better than those who are not involved. The 1984 National Institute of Education report stated,

> Involvement in learning suggested that students who are more involved in activities related to their formal education will grow more as individuals, will be more satisfied with their education, will persist in their education to graduation, and will continue their learning after college. (Williford, 1997, p. 2)

There have been numerous studies that have linked academic success to co-curricular participation, that have indicated that educators should encourage students to be involved in interscholastic sports, intramurals, or other co-curricular activities. Gholson (1985) found a positive correlation between student involvement in co curricular activities and success in nonacademic pursuits following high school and college. Jockel (1985) pointed out that achievement in co-curricular activities is a factor that can predict success in life beyond school (as cited in Stephens & Schaben, 2002). School engagement and involvement is closely linked to academic motivation and students' willingness to invest psychologically in their education. Students with high levels of school

engagement tend to be actively involved in their school work and identify with the roles and responsibilities of being a student (Kenny, Bluestein, Haase, Jackson, & Perry, 2006).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for college students collects data about students' activities and attitudes (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006). The survey found several different statistics about student engagement. It found that 40% of all students said their school emphasizes athletic achievement to a great degree, while only 27% said the same for academic excellence. The study also found that students spent more time every week socializing with friends and watching television than studying. It also found that one-fourth of high school seniors who completed the survey worked at paid employment for 20 or more hours per week. The survey also found that more than half of all students spent no time volunteering and almost one-fourth of all the students said their school places very little emphasis on encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds and beliefs (McCarthy & Kuh, 2006).

The 2005 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) has more of a negative look at student involvement. This survey indicates that if more students get involved with their campuses, the more likely they are to succeed does not always hold true. The CCSSE was established in 2001 as a project of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin. The survey asked students how well their campuses perform in five areas that are considered markers of student engagement. The CCSSE found that community college students, who tend to have the greatest odds against

graduating, like minority students and those from lower socio-economic levels, tend to be more involved with their campuses than other schools who are less involved (Does Engagement Mean Success, 2005). Other studies completed on involvement at community colleges show the lack of involvement by students at the community college level. Miller, Pope, and Steinmann (2005), found that both traditional-age and adult community college students are fairly uninvolved on campus, as measured by their use of on-campus computing resources and their participation in athletic events, eating on campus, social clubs, and cultural events. Astin (1984) also talked about how involvement is lower by students at the community college level. Astin pointed out that faculty-student interaction has historically been minimal in community college, which is one potential explanation for low levels of student persistence and retention at institutions at the community college level.

Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) found that students who attended different types of institutions showed different levels of academic involvement, social involvement, and perceptions of college environment. The study also found that female students, minority students, and students who plan on getting a degree beyond a baccalaureate are more involved and have more positive perceptions of the college environment then other students (Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003). In an earlier study done by Kuh and Hu (2001), the researchers found that differences in student involvement by institutional types were mainly due to the differences in students' backgrounds rather than the institutional type that the student attends. An even earlier study done by Pace (1984), using data collected from the *College*

Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) found that students at liberal arts colleges reported higher levels of involvement than students at other types of institutions.

Another study done at a midsized public university in the southeast looked at the students who had varying levels of involvement in clubs and organizations and the affect that had on their psychosocial development. The study found that students with higher levels of involvement in student clubs and organizations reported greater levels of psychosocial development in several areas such as; establishing a clarifying purpose, educational involvement, career planning, life management, and cultural participation. In this study, the relationship between involvement and development was significant after students' first year in college as well as at the end of their senior year in college (Foubert & Grainger, 2006).

Research on student involvement has been conducted internationally such as in Europe. Unlike the liberal education and focus on student development that is a tradition in the United States, European countries tend to follow more of a German model which emphasizes received knowledge in the academic discipline as opposed to the student's overall personal growth. In Europe the universities have represented a self-centered bureaucracy, in which students came and went with little contact between themselves and the university operations. One study in Europe interviewed 30 students at two large state universities in eastern Europe, universities in Croatia and Romania. The interviews revealed that despite enthusiasm for out-of-class activities, the students were somewhat disappointed by the fact that they were rarely attended by their professors or other staff

members of the university. Another study published by the Council of Europe based on a study of 13 European universities documented institutional practices aimed to support student involvement in institutional governance and student feedback. The study concluded that the ensuing attitude is one of general passivity and indifference and maintaining the status quo. This report suggests that, despite the universities' conscious effort to create a framework for a dialogue with their students, the level of student engagement remains low in those 13 European universities (Bateson & Taylor, 2004).

Involvement studies have demonstrated the positive impact that involvement has on a students' academic success, as well as the overall school experience. The construct of school engagement has been a focus of recent attention for its potential in explaining the academic underachievement and the relatively high student drop-out rates in many public urban high schools (Kenny et al., 2006). One study completed at North Carolina State University looked at some of their own statistics and found that at the end of the freshman year, 13% of students were leaving. These were not students who left for academic reasons. A very small percentage of the students transferred and a small percentage left for financial reasons. The bulk of the students left because they never felt a part of the institution or engaged in the institution (Reyes, 1997). An involvement study done annually at Ohio University has shown the positive impact that involvement has on students. This study collects information on student's academic involvement, social involvement and activities, and personal goals and adjustment to college. The study uses a survey which is distributed to all first year students living in

residence halls, and then the survey is given again to these students when they become seniors. The results of the involvement studies have revealed that students are involved in a variety of activities during their four years at Ohio University, and that year-to-year increases in freshman involvement corresponded to year-to-year increases in freshman retention. The studies have also shown a positive relationship with student involvement and academic success. Due to these results, Ohio University has made an effort to encourage their students to get more involved on campus from the start of their freshman year (Williford, 1997).

Summary of the Literature Review

There have been several reforms and different laws that have been implemented at the collegiate level to try to make academic performance more important to student athletes. The reforms in higher education have impacted college's admission standards for student athletes, their academic performance while in college, and graduation rates of student athletes. Some of the reforms that have impacted athletics in higher education are the 1929 Carnegie Foundation report, Proposition 48, Proposition 16, and the APR system that was implemented in 2005.

The idea of involvement by students during the college years can be based on several theories, but the most well known is Astin's Student Involvement Theory. Astin defines involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, p. 518). Some other theories that relate to the topic of student involvement are Tinto's Departure Theory and Kuh's Engagement Theory.

Scholars have looked at student athletes and their academic performance in both positive and negative ways. Some believe that involvement in athletics actually improves a student's academic performance and there has been research done to support this contention. While others believe that involvement in athletics hurts a student's academic performance and there has been research that supports this view as well.

There has been considerable research on the impact of student involvement, especially with the general student body. Although there has been considerable research on student involvement and the impact on students, little research has been done on student athletes as a particular demographic group and how involvement outside of athletics impacts academic performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at Rowan University. Rowan University is a Division III, four year public institution of higher education located in Glassboro, NJ. Rowan University was founded in 1923 beginning as Glassboro Normal School with just 236 students. In 1937, the school changed its name to New Jersey State Teachers College. In 1950 the name was changed again this time to Glassboro State College. Then in 1992 with the 100 million dollar gift by Henry and Betty Rowan, the name was changed to Rowan College. Today, Rowan University is divided into a Graduate School and six academic colleges (Business, Communications, Education, Engineering, Fine and Performing Arts, Liberal Arts, and Sciences) with nearly 10,000 students who represent the Mid-Atlantic States and over 30 foreign countries. Rowan University is considered a medium sized, state supported institution that continues to grow in size and prestige (www.rowan.edu). Rowan University's Mission Statement states that it is a leading public institution. Rowan University combines liberal education with professional preparation from the baccalaureate through the doctorate. Rowan provides a collaborative, learning-centered environment in which highly qualified and diverse faculty, staff, and students integrate teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and community service. Through intellectual, social and cultural

contributions, the university enriches the lives of those in the campus community and surrounding region (www.collegestudentathletes.com).

The athletic program at Rowan University is one of the top Division III programs in the nation with a strong tradition, boasting a total of 11 national championships. Rowan is a member of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC), which makes up all of the Division III state institutions in New Jersey, as well as three affiliate football members; Cortland State University, Western Connecticut State University, and Buffalo State College. Today, Rowan University is composed of 16 athletic programs, nine of which are women's programs and seven of which are men's programs. The nine different women's athletic programs are field hockey, cross country, soccer, volleyball, swimming and diving, basketball, lacrosse, softball, and track and field. The seven different men's athletic programs are football, soccer, cross country, basketball, swimming and diving, baseball, and track and field. All of the intercollegiate athletic programs at Rowan University strive to be successful and compete at the national level year in and year out.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was all intercollegiate athletes in New Jersey. The available population for this study included all male and female student-athletes at Rowan University who participated in intercollegiate athletics during the 2006-2007 academic year. Out of approximately 375 student athletes that represent Rowan University, 124 were selected through convenience sampling to form a stratified sample to complete a survey. This number was

chosen because it represented 33% of all the student athletes at Rowan University, who competed in 16 different intercollegiate sports. A total of 124 student athletes at Rowan University received the survey. In order to ensure the rights of each subject, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application (Appendix A) was submitted on February 8, 2007. The application included a cover letter (Appendix B), consent form (Appendix C), and a copy of the survey (Appendix D). The application was approved by the IRB on March 22, 2007. Subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form before completing the survey.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed a survey titled *Student Athlete and Involvement Theory* (Appendix B). The survey was developed to determine the impact of involvement on a student's academic performance. The instrument was based mostly on the *Ohio University Student Involvement Study* conducted annually by the Office of Institutional Research, Residence Life, and the Vice President for Student Affairs Office, and given to all first year students living in residence halls. The CIRP *Freshman Survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement 2006* and the *2005-2006 College Student Survey* were also used by the researcher as a base for the instrument. Along with background information, the student-athletes involvement level, and attitudes about involvement, and personal academic performance are the factors derived from the research base.

The survey consisted of background information along with academic criteria, and several questions about student's involvement information during the academic year. Information collected in the background section was posted to

determine if there were any significant relationships between student's involvement and demographic variables of gender, age, class, race/ethnicity, and intercollegiate sport played at Rowan University. Also, in the background section was a question about the subject's cumulative grade point average (GPA) at Rowan University to determine academic performance.

The involvement questions were divided into five sections. The first section asked the subjects to check the activities they have participated in during their college career and how many hours per week they participated in each of those activities during the academic year. The second section asked the subjects to mark how many times in a month they participated in the particular involvement activities throughout the academic year. The third section asked about the subjects' living condition and whether they lived on or off campus. The fourth section used a six semantic differential, bipolar adjective scale to determine the relationship with other students and faculty members at Rowan University, and whether the relationship on average was either friendly and supportive, or unfriendly and unsupportive. The final section used a five semantic differential, bipolar adjective scale divided into three areas of involvement: Social, Academic, and Campus Atmosphere, to determine the subjects' attitude towards their campus experience by looking at how important and satisfied the subjects were about different activities.

Pilot Testing

To help ensure face validity and gauge reliability, the instrument was administered to three Rowan University student athletes who participated on the

Rowan University basketball team. The participants were asked to critique the survey for appropriate content and design. All three participants were current students at Rowan and could gauge whether the instrument was easy to follow and understand. No problems were noted on the survey so it was readied for implementation.

Data Collection

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix A), coaches of all 16 intercollegiate athletic teams at Rowan University were contacted. The coaches were asked to distribute the surveys to members of their athletic teams and asked to return the surveys to the researcher. The assistant athletic director of compliance was also contacted to assist the researcher in locating the subjects. The subjects were given a survey (Appendix D) attached to a cover letter (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C) that was signed by the subject. The subjects were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and its use for the researcher's master's degree requirements. The surveys could either be returned to the researcher via the coaches or directly by the individual student athletes. The surveys could also be returned by placing them in the mail box of the Head Men's Basketball Coach at Rowan University, in the athletic department in Esbjornson Gymnasium. Participation in the survey was voluntary and no personal information was collected to ensure subject confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The background information, involvement information, and attitude information from the survey responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software program. Descriptive statistics provided frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for the background information and attitudes of the student athletes surveyed at Rowan University. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to determine any significant relationships between the demographics of gender, age, race/ethnicity, and intercollegiate sport, and the student athlete's level of involvement at Rowan University. In addition, a Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to determine any significant relationships between cumulative grade point average and the student athletes' level of involvement at Rowan University.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in the study consisted of 99 student athletes who participated in one of the 16 intercollegiate sports at Rowan University, in Glassboro, New Jersey during the 2006-2007 academic year. The subjects in the study were recruited through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a selection process based on the availability and willingness of the participants.

For the purpose of the study, 124 surveys were distributed and 99 were returned, based on the availability and cooperation of the participants for a response rate of 80%.

Tables 4.1 through 4.5 represent the male and female frequency and percentage breakdowns, age range, race and ethnicity percentages, intercollegiate sport participated in, and cumulative grade point average range. Table 4.1 displays the distribution of male and female subjects in the study, with 65% of the subject's male and 35% female.

Table 4.1

Gender of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	n=99, M=1.35, SD=.480	
	Frequency	%
Male	64	65
Female	35	35
Total	99	100

Table 4.2 describes the age range of the sample surveyed. The largest numbers were between the age range of 19 to 20 at 57%. The 21 to 22 age range represented the second largest number of subjects at 33%. The 18 and under age range represented the third largest number of subjects at 9%. The 23 and older age range represented the remaining age range making up just 2% of the subjects.

Table 4.2

Age Ranges of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	n=99, *M*=2.27, *SD*=.652 Frequency	%
18 & under	9	9
19 to 20	56	57
21 to 22	32	32
23 & older	2	2
Total	99	100

Table 4.3 represents the racial and ethic distribution of the subjects in the study. The greatest numbers were white / Caucasian with 77% of the subjects. The next largest group represented was African American / Black, representing 15% of the subjects. The remaining 8% of the sample represented Mexican American / Chicano at 1%, Puerto Rican at 2%, other Latino at 2%, and other at 3%.

Table 4.3

Race and Ethnicity of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	n=99, *M*=1.71, *SD*=1.90 Frequency	%
White/Caucasian	76	77
African American/ Black	15	15
Mexican American/ Chicano	1	1
Puerto Rican	2	2
Other Latino	2	2
Other	3	3
Total	99	100

Table 4.4 describes the distribution of the specific intercollegiate sport that the subjects in the study participated. The greatest subjects were from the football team at Rowan University at 27%. The men's soccer team represented the second largest response at 13%. The baseball team represented the third largest response at 12%.The softball team represented the fourth largest response at 11%. The men's basketball team represented the fifth largest response at 10%. The remaining 27% of the sample was distributed across the field hockey team at 8%, the women's soccer team at 7%, the women's basketball team at 4%, the lacrosse team at 3%, the men's track and field team at 2%, the women's track and field team at 2%, and the men's swimming team at 1%.

Table 4.4

Intercollegiate Sport of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

n=99, *M*=7.36, *SD*=4.74

	Frequency	%
Men's Basketball	10	10
Women's Basketball	4	4
Baseball	12	12
Softball	11	11
Men's Soccer	13	13
Women's Soccer	7	7
Men's Track	2	2
Women's Track	2	2
Lacrosse	3	3
Football	26	27
Men's Swim/Div	1	1
Field Hockey	8	8
Total	99	100

Table 4.5 represents the subject's cumulative grade point average. The greatest numbers of subjects were between the GPA ranges of 2.9 to 2.7 at 28%. The GPA ranges of 3.3 to 3.0 represented the second largest subject response at 27%. The GPA ranges of 3.6 to 3.4 represented the third largest subject response at 15%. The remaining 29% sample represented the GPA ranges of 2.3 to 2.2 at 12%, the GPA ranges of 4.0 to 3.7 at 9%, the GPA ranges of 2.6 to 2.4 at 5%, and the GPA ranges of 1.9 and below at 3%.

Table 4.5

Cumulative Grade Point Average of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	n=99, *M*=3.57, *SD*=1.61 Frequency	%
4.0 to 3.7	9	9
3.6 to 3.4	15	15
3.3 to 3.0	27	27
2.9 to 2.7	28	28
2.6 to 2.4	5	5
2.3 to 2.0	12	12
1.9 to 1.7	1	1
1.6 to 1.4	1	1
1.3 & below	1	1
Total	99	100

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How involved and what activities are selected student athletes involved in at Rowan University?

Table 4.6 and 4.7 provides information regarding research question 1. The tables look at how many student athletes participated in individual involvement activities. The tables also look at the average amount of time the student athletes spent participating in each of the involvement activities. Table 4.6 provides information that looks at how many student athletes participated in individual involvement activities and how many hours a week were spent participating in those activities. The activities in which the most student athletes participated in at

Rowan University were intramural athletics with 32 participants and field experience with 30 participants. The activities in which the least student athletes participated in were social fraternities or sororities, student government, college productions or performances, and study abroad programs with zero participants. The activities in which the highest average time spent a week at Rowan University were internship with 30 hours a week and off-campus part-time job with 16.48 hours a week. The activities in which the least average time spent a week at Rowan University were independent study with 1.50 hours a week and residence hall activities with 1.57 hours a week.

Table 4.6

Hours a Week Participating in Involvement Activities

	n	*M*	*SD*
Hours a week spent in intramural athletics	32	2.69	1.31
Hours a week spent in field experience	30	6.17	5.69
Hours a week spent in off-campus part time job	23	16.48	9.39
Hours a week spent in on-campus part time job	19	10.00	5.20
Hours a week spent in volunteer service	14	2.21	1.58
Hours a week spent in professional or department clubs	12	2.00	1.13
Hours a week spent in residence hall activities	7	1.57	1.13
Hours a week spent in leadership programs	7	2.14	1.68
Hours a week spent in social clubs	5	1.60	.548
Hours a week spent in university publication	4	9.00	8.04
Hours a week spent in independent study	4	1.50	.577
Hours a week spent in religious organizations	3	2.67	1.16
Hours a week spent in internship	2	30.00	14.14
Hours a week spent in social fraternities or sororities	0		
Hours a week spent in college productions or performances	0		
Hours a week spent in student government	0		
Hours a week spent in study abroad programs	0		

Table 4.7 provides information that looks at how many student athletes participated in individual involvement activities and how many times a month they spent participating in those activities. The activities in which the most student athletes participated in at Rowan University were "times a month spent working with classmates outside of class" with 82 participants and "times a month spent exercising" with 81 participants. The activities in which the least student athletes participated were "times a month spent tutoring other students" with 21 participants and "times a month spent in religious or spiritual activities" with 25 participants. The activities in which student athletes spent the most time participating in a month at Rowan University were "exercising" with 23 times a month and "working with classmates outside of class" with an average of 6.66 times a month. The activities in which student athletes spent the least time participating in a month at Rowan University were "attending an art exhibit, gallery, play, or dance" with an average of 1.68 times a month and "tutoring other students" with an average of 2.86 times a month.

Table 4.7

Times a Month Participating in Involvement Activities

	n	*M*	*SD*
Times a month spent working with classmates outside of class	82	6.66	6.56
Times a month spent exercising	81	23.00	8.03
Times a month spent discussing grades or assignments with instructor	67	5.43	5.39
Times a month spent discussing ideas with faculty members	30	4.77	6.00
Times a month spent participating in community based projects	29	2.97	3.37
Times a month spent attending art an exhibit, gallery, play or dance	28	1.68	1.02
Times a month spent participating in religious or spiritual activities	25	3.48	4.76
Times a month spent tutoring other students	21	2.86	1.85

Research Question 2: What are the selected student athletes' attitudes regarding the importance given to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?

Tables 4.8 through 4.10 provide information regarding research question 2. Tables 4.8 through 4.10 represent the mean scores and standard deviation of student athlete's attitudes towards the importance of social involvement, academic involvement, and campus atmosphere at Rowan University. Table 4.8 looks at attitudes of student athletes towards the importance of social involvement. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most important social

involvement activity was "getting involved in religious activities" with a mean score of 2.88, while the least important social involvement activity was "interacting with students of different races or cultures" with a mean score of 3.47. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to social involvement was 3.13.

Table 4.8

Attitudes about the Importance of Social Involvement

	n=99	
	M	*SD*
Establishing personal relationships with peers	3.19	1.52
Getting involved in student organizations	3.13	1.12
Getting involved in campus activities	3.19	1.56
Attending cultural events on campus	2.98	1.24
Interacting with students of different races or cultures	3.47	1.68
Getting involved in religious activities	2.88	1.36
Having a job while enrolled	3.09	1.23
Total	3.13	1.39

Table 4.9 looks at attitudes of student athletes towards the importance of academic involvement. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most important academic involvement activity was "social contact with faculty" with a mean score of 3.12, while the least important academic involvement activity was "academic advising" with a mean score of 3.21. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to social involvement was 3.16.

Table 4.9

Attitudes about the Importance of Academic Involvement

n=99

	M	*SD*
Faculty availability outside of class	3.15	1.51
Social contact with faculty	3.12	1.29
Academic advising	3.21	1.59
Total	3.16	1.46

Table 4.10 looks at attitudes of student athletes towards the importance of campus environment. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most important aspect of campus environment was "adequate physical environment of campus" with a mean score of 3.00, while the least important aspect of campus environment was "fitting into the campus community" with a mean score of 3.20. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to campus environment was 3.12.

Table 4.10

Attitudes about the Importance of Campus Environment

n=99

	M	*SD*
Adequate personal security	3.05	1.55
Adequate physical environment on campus	3.00	1.47
Adequate social atmosphere	3.18	1.52
Adequate academic atmosphere	3.18	1.54
Fitting into the campus community	3.20	1.51
Total	3.12	1.52

Research Question 3: How satisfied are selected student athletes in regards to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?

Tables 4.11 through 4.13 provide information regarding research question 3. Tables 4.11 through 4.13 represent the mean scores and standard deviation of student athletes' attitudes towards the satisfaction of social involvement, academic involvement, and campus atmosphere at Rowan University. Table 4.11 looks at attitudes of student athletes towards the satisfaction level of social involvement. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most satisfying aspect of social involvement was "getting involved in religious activities" with a mean score of 2.86, while the least satisfying aspect of social involvement was "interacting with students of different races or cultures" with a mean score of 3.35. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to social involvement was 3.12.

Table 4.11

Attitudes about the Satisfaction of Social Involvement

n=99

	M	*SD*
Establishing personal relationships with peers	3.21	1.41
Getting involved in student organizations	3.05	1.10
Getting involved in campus activities	3.19	1.11
Attending cultural events on campus	2.98	1.21
Interacting with students of different race or culture	3.35	1.30
Getting involved in religious activities	2.86	1.38
Having a job while enrolled	2.96	1.36
Total	3.09	1.27

Table 4.12 provides information on the attitudes of student athletes towards the satisfaction level of academic involvement. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most satisfying aspect of academic involvement was "faculty availability outside of class" with a mean score of 3.02, while the least satisfying aspect of academic involvement was "social contact with faculty and academic advising" with a mean score of 3.10. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to academic involvement was 3.07.

Table 4.12

Attitudes about the Satisfaction of Academic Involvement

n=99

	M	*SD*
Faculty availability outside of class	3.02	1.25
Social contact with faculty	3.10	1.21
Academic advising	3.10	1.34
Total	3.07	1.27

Table 4.13 provides information on the attitudes of student athletes towards the satisfaction level of campus atmosphere. Student athletes at Rowan University felt that the most satisfying aspect of campus atmosphere was "adequate physical environment on campus" with a mean score of 3.19, while the least satisfying aspect of campus atmosphere was "adequate social atmosphere" with a mean score of 3.33. The overall average attitude of student athletes in regards to campus atmosphere was 3.25.

Table 4.13

Attitudes about the Satisfaction of Campus Environment

n=99

	M	*SD*
Adequate personal security	3.21	1.20
Adequate physical environment on campus	3.19	1.26
Adequate social atmosphere	3.33	1.34
Adequate academic atmosphere	3.29	1.24
Fitting into the campus community	3.23	1.38
Total	3.25	1.28

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the demographic variables of age, gender, race and ethnicity, specific sport played, and academic performance, and specific involvement activities at Rowan University?

Tables 4.14 through 4.18 provide information regarding research question 4. They look at the relationships between student athletes' demographics of academic performance, gender, age, race / ethnicity, and intercollegiate sport, and specific involvement activities at Rowan University to see if there were any significant relationships. Table 4.14 investigates the significant relationships between the student athletes' cumulative GPA and their level of involvement at Rowan University to see if there were any significant relationships. Table 4.14 shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week spent at an off-campus part-time job ($r = .433, p = .039$) at a $p < .05$ level. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week they spend participating in an internship ($r = -1.00, p = .001$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week they spend in field experience ($r = .452, p = .012$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and their relationship with other students at Rowan University ($r = -.289, p = .004$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and their relationship with faculty at Rowan University ($r = -.198, p = .050$) at a $p < .05$ level.

Table 4.14

Significant Correlations about Cumulative Grade Point Average and Involvement of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

Activities	*r* coefficient	*p*-level
Hours a week you spend at an off-campus part time job *n*=23	.433	.039
Hours a week you spend at an Internship *n*=2	-1.00	.001
Hours a week you spend at Field Experience *n*=30	.452	.012
Your relationship with other Students at Rowan University *n*=99	-.289	.004
Your relationship with faculty at Rowan University *n*=99	-.198	.050

Table 4.15 provides information that looks at the relationship between student athlete's gender and their level of involvement. Table 4.15 looks at the relationship between the student athlete's gender and hours a week the student athlete spends participating in intramural athletics ($r = -.465, p = .007$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table also shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's gender and hours a week the student athlete spends participating in an internship ($r = -1.00, p = .001$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table also shows a significant correlation between gender and times a month student athlete's exercise ($r = .253$, $p = .023$) at a $p < .05$ level. The table also shows a significant correlation between

gender and times a month student athletes discuss grades or assignment with instructors (r = -.305, p = .012) at a $p < .05$ level.

Table 4.15

Significant Correlations about Gender and Involvement of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

Involvement	r coefficient	p-level
Hours a week you spend in Intramural Athletics n=32	-.465	.007
Hours a week you spend at an Internship n=2	-1.00	.001
Times a month you exercise n=81	.253	.023
Times a month you discuss grades or assignment with instructor n=67	-.305	.012

Table 4.16 provides information that looks at the significant relationships between student athlete's age and their level of involvement at Rowan University. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's age and hours a week the student athlete spends working at an off-campus part time job (r = .470, p = .024) at a $p < .05$ level. The table also shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's age and hours a week the student athlete spends doing field experience (r = .474, p = .008) at a $p < .01$ level.

Table 4.16

Significant Correlations about Age and Involvement of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	r coefficient	*p*-level
Hours a week you spend at an off-campus part time job *n*=23	.470	.024
Hours a week you spend at Field Experience *n*=30	.474	.008

Table 4.17 provides information that looks at the significant relationships between student athlete's race / ethnicity and their level of involvement at Rowan University. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's race / ethnicity and the times a month they spend discussing grades or assignments with instructor ($r = .330, p = .006$) at a $p < .01$ level. The table also shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's race / ethnicity and the times a month they discuss ideas with faculty members ($r = .457, p = .011$) at a $p < .05$ level. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's race / ethnicity and the hours a week they spend participating in residence hall activities ($r = .861, p = .013$) at a $p < .05$ level.

Table 4.17

Significant Correlations about Race / Ethnicity and Involvement of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	r coefficient	*p*-level
Times a month you discuss grades or assignments w/instructors *n*=67	.330	.006
Times a month you discuss ideas with faculty members *n*=30	.457	.011
Hours a week you spend in residence hall *n*=7	.861	.013

Table 4.18 provides information that looks at the significant relationships between student athlete's intercollegiate sport and their level of involvement at Rowan University. The table shows a significant correlation between the student athlete's intercollegiate sport and the times a month they spend discussing grades or assignments with instructor ($r = -1.00, p = .001$) at a $p < .01$ level.

Table 4.18

Significant Correlation about Intercollegiate Sport and Involvement of Student Athlete Survey Subjects

	r coefficient	*p*-level
Hours a week you spend at an internship *n*=2	-1.00	.001

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the involvement level of student athletes at Rowan University during the 2006-2007 academic year. The study was also designed to assess the impact of student athlete's cumulative grade point average and certain demographics such as gender, age range, race and ethnicity, specific intercollegiate sport participated in, and the impact each had on student athlete's level of involvement. The subjects in this study were 99 student athletes at Rowan University during the 2006-2007 academic year.

A survey was developed by the researcher using the *Ohio University Student Involvement Study* as a guide. The survey provided certain demographic factors about the student athletes at Rowan University such as gender, age range, race and ethnicity, specific sport played, and cumulative grade point averages. The survey also provided information on student athletes' level of involvement at Rowan University.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software program was used to analyze the data to investigate the attitudes of the student athletes' toward involvement and campus atmosphere. SPSS was also used to analyze the data to see if there were any significant relationship between the

collected demographic factors describing the student athletes and their level of involvement at Rowan University.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate selected student athletes' involvement on campus outside of athletics to better understand the impact such involvement had on the students. The study investigated student athletes' attitudes about involvement and campus atmosphere. Also, demographic data of the student athletes was examined to see if there were any significant relationships with the involvement factors present in the survey instrument. The findings of the study may provide insight into the impact involvement on college campuses has on student athletes' attitudes and performance.

Methodology

The researcher surveyed student athletes at Rowan University who participated in one of the 16 intercollegiate athletic teams during the 2006-2007 academic year. A total of 99 student athletes participated in the survey. To ensure the rights and privacy of each subject, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted on February 8, 2007 (Appendix A). The application included a survey (Appendix D), a cover letter (Appendix B), and consent form (Appendix C). The application was approved on March 22, 2007. Subjects were administered the survey with the cover letter and consent form attached.

Upon receiving final approval from the IRB, the student athletes were contacted via their coaches and the assistant athletic director of compliance to agree to participate in the survey. The subjects were asked to complete a six

section survey. The first section obtained background information of subjects including gender, age, race / ethnicity, class, specific sport played at Rowan University, and cumulative grade point average at Rowan University. The second section of the survey obtained involvement information of subjects by asking them to check the activities which they participated in and how many hours per week they participated in each of those activities. The third section of the survey obtained involvement information of subjects by asking them how many times a month they have participated in particular involvement activities. The fourth section of the survey obtained the subjects living conditions and whether they lived on or off of campus. The fifth section of the survey obtained information on student's relationship with other students and faculty on campus. The sixth section of the survey obtained information on student's attitude toward their campus experience.

The subjects were given a survey (Appendix D) attached to a cover letter (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C). Repeated contact via coaches, assistant athletic director of compliance, and personal appeals was attempted by the researcher to reach the student athletes who did not respond initially. This resulted in the researcher obtaining a survey response rate of 78%.

Data Analysis

The background information, involvement information, and attitude information from the survey responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software program. SPSS descriptive statistics provided frequencies, percentages, means, and standard

deviations for the background information of the student athletes surveyed at Rowan University. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated using SPSS to determine any significant relationships between the demographic variables of gender, age, race / ethnicity, and intercollegiate sport, and the student athletes' level of involvement at Rowan University. In addition, a Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to determine any significant relationships between cumulative grade point average and the student athletes' level of involvement at Rowan University.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: How involved and what activities are selected student athletes involved in at Rowan University?

The findings showed how many student athletes have participated in individual involvement activities and how often they participated in those particular activities at Rowan University. The estimated time spent by the student athletes participating in the involvement activities were measured both in hours a week and in times a month. Out of the 25 involvement activities identified in the survey there were four activities in which no participation was reported. These activities included social fraternity or sorority, student government, college productions or performances, and the study abroad program. Of the 17 involvement activities that were measured by hours a week in an activity, intramural athletics was listed most at an average of 2.69 hours per week. Of the 8 involvement activities that were measured in times a month, exercise and work

with classmates outside of class was the highest at 23 and 6.66 times per month respectively.

The findings showed that no student athletes reported participating in social fraternities or sororities, student government, college productions or performances, or a study abroad program which are not surprising considering the amount of time that goes into athletics and the other involvement activities mentioned. These findings are consisted with the research by Astin (1984) who found that students who become intensely involved in athletic activities show smaller then average increases in political liberalism and artistic interests. He also found that athletic involvement tends to isolate students from the general student body. And yet, the findings suggest that Rowan student athletes are working with classmates outside of classes, as this actually was reported highest among the involvement activities listed in the survey instrument.

Research Question 2: What are the selected student athletes' attitudes regarding the importance given to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?

The findings showed that the student athletes' attitudes about the importance of social involvement, academic involvement, and campus environment were similar interims of average scores reported. For example, the average scores for importance of social involvement 3.13, academic involvement 3.16, and campus environment 3.12 had a combined average score of nearly 3.14. The student athletes believed that the most important social involvement activity was "getting involved in religious activities" with a score of 2.88. The student

athletes believed that the most important academic involvement activity was "social contact with faculty" with a score of 3.12. The student athletes believed that the most important campus atmosphere activity was "adequate physical environment on campus" with a score of 3.00. These feelings do not support the research by Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) who found that students differed in terms of their academic involvement, social involvement, and perceptions of the college environment. The study also believed that the least important social involvement activity was "interacting with students of different races or cultures" with a score of 3.47. These findings dispute the research by Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) who found that academic and social involvement were directly related to gains by virtue of their relationships with integration.

Research Question 3: How satisfied are selected student athletes in regards to social involvement, academic involvement, and the campus environment at Rowan University?

The findings showed that the student athletes' attitudes about the satisfaction of social involvement, academic involvement, and campus atmosphere were similar in terms of average scores reported. For example, the average scores for the satisfaction of social involvement 3.09, academic involvement 3.07, and campus atmosphere 3.25 had a combined average score of nearly 3.14. The student athletes reported that the most satisfying social involvement activity was "getting involved in religious activities" with a score of 2.86. The student athletes reported that the most satisfying academic involvement activity was "faculty availability outside of class" with a score of 3.02. The

student athletes reported that the most satisfying campus atmosphere was "adequate physical environment on campus" with a score of 3.19. These findings were not supported by any previous research that was found by the researcher.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the demographic variables of age, gender, race and ethnicity, specific sport played, and academic performance, and specific involvement activities at Rowan University?

The findings showed some significant relationships between student athletes' cumulative GPA and their involvement activities. There was a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week spent at an off-campus part-time job ($r = .433, p = .039$) at a $p < .05$ level. There was also a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week spent participating in an internship ($r = -1.00, p = .001$) at a $p < .01$ level. There was a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and hours a week spent in field experience ($r = .452, p = .012$) at a $p < .01$ level. There was a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and their relationship with other students at Rowan University ($r = -.289, p = .004$) at a $p < .01$ level. Finally, there was a significant correlation between the student athlete's grade point average and their relationship with faculty at Rowan University ($r = -.198, p = .050$) at a $p < .05$ level. The findings suggest that student athlete's academic performance is affected by their involvement at Rowan University in certain areas. The findings

also suggest that student athlete's relationship with other students and faculty has an impact on student athlete's academic performance.

The findings support previous research by Astin (1984) who found that student faculty interaction is more strongly related to satisfaction with the entire college experience than any other type of involvement. The findings also support Astin's (1984) conclusions that the greater a student's involvement in college the greater the amount of student learning and personal development. The findings also support the research at Ohio University (1997), which has shown a positive relationship with student involvement and academic success.

Conclusions

There were several different findings that emerged from this study. First, the study showed that student athletes are involved on campus outside of athletics. However, they are not involved in activities that take up a large amount of time such as social fraternities or sororities, student government, college productions or performances, and the study abroad program, since much of their time is already taken up by there participation in athletics. The findings did show, however, that all student athletes are involved in some aspect of the college experience other then athletics.

The second set of findings showed that student athletes did not have very strong feelings when it comes to personal feelings about the importance and satisfaction with social importance, academic importance, and campus atmosphere. Both the importance and satisfaction combined average scores were nearly 3.14, which is about half-way between the five semantic differential,

bipolar adjective scale used to measure the importance and satisfaction of social importance, academic importance, and campus atmosphere.

The third set of findings showed that there is a significant relationship student athletes' academic performance and certain specific involvement activities. There were also several significant relationships between different student athlete demographics and certain specific involvement activities. The findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between student athletes' academic performance, and the involvement activities such as, off-campus part-time job, internship, field experience, relationship with other students, and relationship with faculty. This shows that involvement can have an impact on student athletes' academic performance. The findings also indicated that certain demographics have a relationship with certain involvement activities.

Several of these findings were supported by previous research done by Astin as well as Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea. However, most of the findings were not supported or disputed by previous research due to the fact there has been little research done on student athletes' involvement.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the researcher the following suggestions are presented:

1. Further studies should be conducted with a larger population of intercollegiate student athletes to confirm the findings in this study.

2. A study could be conducted to see if there are any significant relationships between student athletes and non-athletes' level of involvement on campus
3. A study could be conducted at both two and four year institutions to see if there are any significant relationships between student athletes involvement.
4. A study could be conducted with intercollegiate student athletes at both Division I and Division III institutions to see if there are any significant difference between student athletes at Division I and Division III institutions and their levels of involvement.
5. A study could be conducted to see if there are any significant differences between student athletes on athletic scholarship and those who are not on scholarship.
6. A future study using qualitative measures is recommended as a way of probing deeper into the epistemology of student involvement of student athletes.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Disposition Form

Rowan University

RECEIVED FEB 08 2007

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS: Check all appropriate boxes, answer all questions completely, include attachments, and obtain appropriate signatures. Submit an **original and two copies** of the completed application to the Office of the Associate Provost.
NOTE: **Applications must be typed.**
Be sure to make a copy for your files.

FOR IRB USE ONLY:
Protocol Number: IRB-2007-119
Received:_____ Reviewed:_____
Exemption: ✓ Yes ___ No
Category(ies):_____
Approved _____ (date)

Step 1: **Is the proposed research subject to IRB review?**

All research involving human participants conducted by Rowan University faculty and staff is subject to IRB review. Some, but not all, student-conducted studies that involve human participants are considered research and are subject to IRB review. Check the accompanying instructions for more information. Then check with your class instructor for guidance as to whether you must submit your research protocol for IRB review. If you determine that your research meets the above criteria and is not subject to IRB review, **STOP**. You do not need to apply. If you or your instructor have any doubts, apply for an IRB review.

Step 2: **If you have determined that the proposed research is subject to IRB review, complete the identifying information below.**

Project Title:
Student Athletes and Involvement Theory

Researcher: Thomas Francis-Jude Iacovone

Department: Educational Leadership Location Education Hall

Mailing Address: 11 Lail St. (Street)
Woodstown / NJ / 08098 (Town/State/Zip)

E-Mail: iacovo12@students.rowan.edu Telephone: (856)769-1982

Co-Investigator/s: _____

Faculty Sponsor (if student)* Dr. Burton Sisco
Department Educational Leadership Location: Rowan University
E-Mail: sisco@rowan.edu Telephone: (856)256-4500, ext 3717

APPENDIX B

Survey Cover Letter

Dear Student Athlete:

I am a graduate student here at Rowan University working towards a master's degree in Higher Education Administration.

Presently, under the direction of Dr. Burton Sisco, I have been working on a thesis project, "Student Athletes and Involvement Theory." I am asking for your assistance in collecting data for my thesis project, by completing the attached survey. I would really appreciate your assistance and all responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions regarding this thesis project, please feel free to contact me directly at (856) 297-7697 or via email at iacovo12@students.rowan.edu. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Burton Sisco at (856) 256-4500 ext. 3717 or via email at sisco@rowan.edu.

Thank you in advance for you time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Iacovone

APPENDIX C

Survey Consent Form

Consent Form

By signing this form I agree to participate in the study entitled "Student Athletes and Involvement Theory" which is being conducted by Tom Iacovone, a graduate student at Rowan University. The purpose of the study is to investigate if student athlete's level of involvement has an impact on academic performance. The data collected in this study will be used to complete the researchers Master's Thesis.

I understand that I will be required to answer questions on a survey.

I understand that my responses will remain anonymous and that all the data collected in the study will be confidential. I agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for the thesis project provided that I am not identified and my name is not used.

I understand that there are no physiological or psychological risks involved in this study and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If I have any questions regarding this thesis project and the survey, I may contact the researcher Tom Iacovone at (856) 297-7697 or via email at iacovo12@students.rowan.edu, or project advisor Dr. Burton Sisco at (856) 256-4500 ext. 3717 or via email at sisco@rowan.edu.

_____ _____

(Signature of Participant) (Date)

_____ _____

(Signature of Investigator) (Date)

APPENDIX D

Student Athlete Survey

Student-Athlete and Involvement Theory

Background Information

Mark all the apply

What is your age?

[ ] 18 & Under
[ ] 19 to 20
[ ] 21 to 22
[ ] 23 & Older

What is your gender?

[ ] Male
[ ] Female

What class are you in?

[ ] Freshman [ ] Sophomore [ ] Junior [ ] Senior

Are you:

[ ] White / Caucasian
[ ] American Indian / Alaska Native
[ ] Pacific Islander
[ ] Puerto Rican
[ ] Other
[ ] African American / Black
[ ] Asian American / Asian
[ ] Mexican American / Chicano
[ ] Other Latino

What Intercollegiate Sport do you participate in here at Rowan?

[ ] Basketball
[ ] Soccer
[ ] Track and Field
[ ] Football / Field Hockey
[ ] Volleyball
[ ] Baseball / Softball
[ ] Cross Country
[ ] Lacrosse
[ ] Swimming and Diving

What is your Cumulative GPA?

[ ] 4.0 to 3.7 [ ] 3.6 to 3.4 [ ] 3.3 to 3.0
[ ] 2.9 to 2.7 [ ] 2.6 to 2.4 [ ] 2.3 to 2.0
[ ] 1.9 to 1.7 [ ] 1.6 to 1.4 [ ] 1.3 & Below

Please print your major(s) or your expected major(s) below:

_____

Involvement Information

SECTION I

In your experience at Rowan University, have you participated in any of these activities? If so, check "yes" and write in how many hours you participate in the activity each week on average?

	YES	Hours per Week
1. Member of a social fraternity or sorority	[ ]	_____
2. Intramural Athletics	[ ]	_____
3. Student Government	[ ]	_____
4. University Publication	[ ]	_____

	YES	Hours per Week
5. College Productions or Performances (band, theater, etc)	[ ]	_____
6. Professional or Departmental Clubs	[ ]	_____
7. Social Clubs	[ ]	_____
8. Residence Hall Activities	[ ]	_____
9. Religious Organizations	[ ]	_____
10. Volunteer Service	[ ]	_____
11. Leadership Programs	[ ]	_____
12. Off-Campus Part-Time Job	[ ]	_____
13. On-Campus Part-Time Job	[ ]	_____
14. Internship	[ ]	_____
15. Field Experience	[ ]	_____
16. Participated in Independent Study	[ ]	_____
17. Participated in Study Abroad Program	[ ]	_____

SECTION II

In your experience at Rowan University, on average how frequently do you participate monthly in each activity below? (Give total number for each category below)

	How Often
1. Worked with Classmates outside of class.	_____
2. Tutored of taught other students	_____
3. Participated in community-based projects as part of class	_____
4. Attended an art exhibit, gallery, play, or dance	_____
5. Exercised or participated in physical activities	_____
6. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.	_____
7. Discussed ideas with faculty members	_____
8. Participate in religious or spiritual activities	_____

SECTION III

Which of the following best describes where you are living? (Check one)

[ ] Dormitory or other campus housing
[ ] Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance
[ ] Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance

SECTION IV

Mark the box that best represents your relationship with people at Rowan University:

a. Relationships with other students

Unfriendly, Unsupportive				Friendly, Supportive	
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
1	2	3	4	5	6

b. Relationships with faculty members

Unfriendly, Unsupportive				Friendly, Supportive	
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION V

The following questions have two parts. First rate how important each item is to you by circling one of the numbers from 1-5. Second, rate how satisfied you are with each item by circling one of the numbers from 1-5. Use the following scale.

	Importance					**Satisfaction**				
	Very Important				Not at all Important	Very Satisfied				Not at all Satisfied
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Importance					**Satisfaction**				
Social Involvement										
1. Establishing Personal Relationships w/ Peers at Rowan	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Getting Involved in Student Organizations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Getting Involved in Campus Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Attending Cultural Events On Campus	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Interacting with Students of Different Races or Cultures	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Getting Involved in Religious Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Having a Job while Enrolled	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Involvement										
1. Faculty Availability Outside Of Class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Social Contact with Faculty	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Academic Advising	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Campus Atmosphere										
1. Adequate Personal Security	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Adequate Physical Environment on Campus	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Adequate Social Atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Adequate Academic Atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Fitting into Campus Community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVERY & YOU CAN RETURN IT TO TOM IACOVONE IN THE BASKETBALL OFFICE IN ESBY GYM.