A study of head coaches' attitudes regarding academic support services for student athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference

Kenneth M. Dickson
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd

Part of the Higher Education Administration Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.
A STUDY OF HEAD COACHES ATTITUDES REGARDING ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES IN THE NEW JERSEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

by
Kenneth M. Dickson

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Higher Education Administration of The Graduate School at Rowan University
November 2005

Approved by
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date Approved 11/22/2005

©2005 Kenneth M. Dickson
ABSTRACT

Kenneth M. Dickson
A STUDY OF HEAD COACHES ATTITUDES REGARDING ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES IN THE NEW JERSEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
2004/2005
Dr. Burton R. Sisco
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of head coaches in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) regarding the academic support services provided to student athletes. Of related interest was whether the coaches found a need for these services to be provided by the athletic department. Seventy-five head coaches in the NJAC completed the survey to evaluate the attitudes and academic support services. Results showed a statistically significance relationship between years in coaching and attitudes of academic support services. The findings suggested that the head coaches in the NJAC believe that there is a need for academic support services provided through the athletic department.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have made this project such a rich academic experience. First and foremost I would like to thank Danielle Addeo (girlfriend) for all of her love and support as I went through this experience. Completing my master’s has been one of the most mentally challenging experiences of my life. I want to thank her for staying by my side through the thick and the thin. She continued to believe in me even as I doubted myself.

My thesis project has certainly enhanced my educational and leadership experience. Burt Sisco has been an inspiration to me. Where would I be without the countless hours of Burt Sisco and his intense leadership skills? Through his classroom discussions and teachings he enhanced my leadership skills, strategic planning, and adult education. As my thesis advisor, his patience and determination allowed me to excel in the program. He was able to extract the very best of my ability. Next, I want to thank John Cole, Head Baseball Coach at Rowan University. If he had not given me the opportunity to coach with him I would not be where I am today. His dogged persistence of excellence challenged me to be the very best at all endeavors of life. Lastly, I would like to thank the leadership and experience of Joy Solomen. As an intern for the Athletic Director, I learned leadership skills in athletic administration and people skills that will last a lifetime.

I would like to acknowledge a few others before I conclude: My family, Marge and John, Chris, Candy, Joe, Aran, Aidan, and Addison for their support; Keith Smicklo for pushing me to complete the project; Scott Leacott for listening and golf; the baseball team for all the laughs, and passion for winning.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION....................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Problem..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance of the Problem..............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Study.....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assumptions and Limitations...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operational Definition of Terms...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Questions........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of the Study................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The National Collegiate Athletic Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Preparation of Student Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demands Facing Students Competing in College Athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Support for Freshman Student Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Attitudes Toward College Athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits of Athletic Participation.........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affects of Academic Performance...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation Rates of NCAA Institutions......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Support Systems for Student Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division III Academic Support Programs....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary of the Literature Review.........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE</td>
<td>METHODOLOGY.....................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context of the Study.....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population and Sample Selection...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumentation............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedure of Gathering Data................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis for Quantitative Data.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis for Qualitative Data.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>FINDINGS......................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profile of the Sample....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIVE SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Study</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the Findings</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Conclusions</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Application (IRB)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: Consent Form</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: Survey</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D: Letter to Participants</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Years in Coaching</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Institutions Should Provide Academic Support for Student Athletes</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Flexible Tutoring Services</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Athletic Departments and Academic Counselor</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Academic Advising and Athletic Department</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Tutoring Services Provided by Athletic Department</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Career Assistance Provided by Athletic Department</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Academic Workshops Available for Student Athletes</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Freshman Student Athletes Monitored by the Athletic Department</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Athletic Department Required Study Hall</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Freshman Student Athletes Provided with a Special Orientation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Relationship Between Selected Demographics and Academic Support Services</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Selected Demographics and Support Services Provided by Athletic Department</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>TABLE PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Academic Counselor Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Recommended Support Services for Student Athletes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

College athletics has come under much scrutiny recently. In 2003, Maurice Clarett, one of the nation's premier college running backs, was ruled academically ineligible by Ohio State University. This decision came only months after Ohio State won the national championship in college football. The University of Michigan, University of Louisville, and University of Georgia recently have been the target of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) violations. A University of Michigan booster allegedly loaned former basketball players Chris Webber and Robert Traylor over $400,000 dollars. The University of Georgia came under scrutiny after assistant basketball coach, Jim Harrick Jr, allegedly arranged a payment of telephone, hotel bills and fraudulently helped a student athlete achieve high grades at two other institutions (2003, February 27) (Retrieved December 15, 2003 from http://www.espn.com/nbc/news). In the fall of 1995, The University of Louisville faced accusations that a men's basketball player had illegally received a car from a booster. Louisville received two years probation for the NCAA violations (1996, November 20) (Retrieved December 15, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/releases/infractions). Poor grades, illegal recruiting, and the paying of players have led some people to question why athletics is a part of higher education (Taylor, 1995).

The NCAA organizes college athletics into three different categories based on financial need provided to the athletic department by the post-secondary institution.
NCAA Division I and II institutions provide athletic scholarships to prospective student athletes. Institutions determine whether scholarships provided are on a yearly basis or on a four year basis (NCAA, 2003a). NCAA Division III institutions may not provide athletic scholarships to prospective student athletes. Financial aid is provided on a need base only.

In 1983, the National Collegiate Athletic Association increased the requirements for incoming freshman participating in Division I athletics. Proposition 48 was passed by the NCAA in 1983 as a means of stressing the importance of incoming student athlete grades and standardized test scores at Division I institutions. Proposition 48 stated that for a student to be eligible to participate in Division I college athletics, the athlete must score at least a 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or score a 15 on the American College Testing Service (ACT) and have a 2.00 grade point average (GPA) following his/her senior year in high school. Student athletes who do not meet the requirements could still be eligible for a scholarship but would lose one year of athletic eligibility (NCAA, 2003a).

In 1989, Division I incoming freshman athletes standards increased again when the NCAA passed proposition 42. Proposition 42 was an amendment to proposition 48. Proposition 42 stated that students must meet both the minimum score on the SAT and have at least a 2.00 GPA to participate during the first year of enrollment. If the student athlete does not meet the requirements he/she would not be eligible during the first year of enrollment and lose one year of eligibility (NCAA, 2003a).

In 1995, the NCAA passed proposition 16 which changed the eligibility standards of incoming freshman athletes. This amendment placed freshman student athletes into
three categories; non-qualifier, partial-qualifier and a qualifier (NCAA, 2003a). High school seniors must pass a minimum of 14 core curriculum classes to be eligible through the NCAA clearinghouse. The clearinghouse scores are based on a sliding scale. For example, a high school senior with a 2.5 GPA must score at least 820 on his/her Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to be a Division I qualifier (NCAA, 2003a). A non-qualifier has not met either of the requirements by the time of high school graduation. A non-qualifier may not receive an athletic scholarship during his/her first year of college. A partial qualifier has met one of the requirements enumerated by the NCAA clearinghouse. The partial-qualifier may receive scholarship support but may not compete during his/her freshman year. The non-qualifier and partial-qualifier will forfeit their first year of athletic eligibility (NCAA, 2003a). In response, academic support systems have been established at many colleges and universities to aid student athletes during the first year of college.

Student athletes are a unique part of the college and university population whose off the field behaviors can go unnoticed. Student athletes often come to institutions of higher learning with lower academic skills than the general student population (Taylor, 1995). Student athletes at times require special academic support services. There is a strong need to examine the academic support systems provided for student athletes at all NCAA division schools but especially at Division III institutions to help them cope and succeed both academically and athletically.

Statement of the Problem

Division I and II institutions have funds allotted to support special academic services for student athletes. Division I and II institutions have an academic advisor, advisor for
freshman students and many provide tutors for students who are in need of academic support. There are more restrictions placed on Division III athletic departments. The Division III philosophy states that an institution may finance academic and other support services for student athletes provided such services are available to the general population (NCAA, 2003b). In Division III schools, athletes attend similar support programs as their non-athlete counterparts. In compliance with the Division III mission, institutions may not provide academic support for student athletes unless similar support is provided for the entire campus.

The Division III student athlete is expected to engage in similar activities and accumulate the same amount of practice time as Division I and II athletes but is not provided similar academic support by the athletic department. Practice is defined as any gathering, action or teaching involving sports or team-related information having athletic purpose (NCAA, 2003b). Division I athletic teams are restricted to practicing only 20 hours per week. Division III athletes may only practice six days/week but there is no restriction on the amount of time spent practicing. The support the athlete receives is from an academic counselor outside of the athletic department. The academic counselor may not be aware of the needs of the student athlete. Furthermore the academic support staff may not be accessible to the student athletes. Student athletes are required to have highly developed study habits and time management skills to balance a rigorous academic schedule and a tough athletic schedule. These much-needed skills are rarely learned overnight. An academic support staff could implement a program that would allow an athlete to develop the skills needed to improve time management skills, study habits, and succeed academically.
Significance of the Problem

Division III institutions are spending considerable amounts of time and money to keep athletics a part of higher education. For example, 10 schools in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference combined have a working budget of over 14 million dollars (2001, September 21) (Retrieved December 15, 2003 from http://www.startribune.com). In 2003, the NCAA approved the reallocation of $50,000 from planning and development to women and minority internship grants (2002, August 1) (Retrieved December 15, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/governance/division _III). Institutions realize the importance that athletics has on the lives of its student athletes. Athletics teaches many life skills that cannot be learned in a classroom. It is important for Division III institutions to develop an academic support system to keep the student athletes eligible and more importantly to be able to graduate. If athletic departments are spending an exorbitant amount of money on athletic facilities then why are they not spending money on academic counseling?

States are facing budgetary restraints and one of the most effected areas is collegiate athletics. Moreover, the Division III philosophy recognizes the student athlete as similar to the rest of the college student population. Thus, hiring an academic counselor in the athletic department means possibly taking an academic counselor away from the general campus community. Considering the Division III philosophy, are academic leaders going to allot money to support the special needs of the athletes over the non-athletes?

In Division I and II, student athletes can receive athletic scholarships. It is extremely important to keep such student athletes eligible to compete. If student athletes are not eligible to compete they are not eligible to receive scholarship money. Division I and II institutions have invested scholarship money into individual athletes. To ensure the
athlete is successful in the classroom, institutions developed a support system to follow the academic progress. The academic support staff provides guidance throughout an athlete’s career. Division I institutions have an academic coordinator working with freshman student athletes. The coordinator develops programs designed to help the athlete become acclimated to the athletic and academic environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of head coaches in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) regarding the academic support services provided to student athletes. Of related interest was whether the coaches saw a need for these services to be provided by the athletic department. At the time of the study the NJAC consisted of Ramapo College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, William Paterson University, Rutgers Newark University, Rutgers Camden University, The College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton State College, and Kean University.

Assumptions and Limitations

The New Jersey Athletic Conference may benefit from this study. Currently there is no academic support system in place within the conference. The conference has established itself as one of the strongest Division III conferences in the United States. The conference has earned 40 national championships in 17 years. Awareness of academics is especially important at the Division III level. Student athletes are to be considered “students” first and “athletes” second. An academic counselor assigned to the athletic department may help ensure academic success of athletes competing in the NJAC.
The student athlete may also benefit from this study. Division III college athletes need to realize the importance of academic excellence. Some student athletes are not prepared for the amount of time spent at practice or the amount of time needed for academic success. Some student athletes do not realize the importance of academics until it is too late. The student athlete could see a tremendous amount of improvement in his/her academic performance with a well-planned academic support system.

Another group that may benefit from this study is the athletic department staff. Currently, coaches are responsible for making sure that student athletes are regularly attending class. At Rowan University, for example, it is the responsibility of the coaching staff to provide the student athletes with a study hall. There are no mandatory study hall functions within the athletic department. If a student athlete is struggling academically, it is up to the individual student athlete and/or the coach with the help of the university Career and Academic Planning (CAP Center) to develop an academic support program. An academic counselor assigned by the athletic department could follow the progress of student athletes and allow coaches to concentrate on other aspects of the job.

Coaches, as well, need to familiarize themselves with situations occurring among their own athletes. They play a major role in supporting the athlete’s academic standing. Coaches are generally the first line of support a student athlete consults if he/she is struggling academically. Learning how to motivate student athletes in the classroom would help coaches to teach student athletes the importance of education.

The student athlete would also benefit from a well-organized academic support system. College athletes need to understand the importance academics has on the future.
Student athletes must realize they have been given an opportunity to compete at the collegiate level in athletics and receive a top quality education. An academic support system provides the student athletes with the guidance and organizational skills it takes to perform well in college.

Since the researcher is a coach within the NJAC and works with many of the coaches at Rowan University, there may be a number of factors that could have affected the study. As a fellow employee, Rowan University coaches may have been reluctant to reveal their true thoughts and feelings on the matter. The natural reaction may be for the coaches to answer the survey items in a manner that sought to please the researcher. Also, the coaches could have been afraid to answer the survey item candidly for fear the answers may have gotten back to the athletic director. Also, the researcher may have biased the findings of the study because of personal experience as a former Division III student athlete.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following definitions apply to the terms used in the study:

NCAA: The National Collegiate Athletic Association. The NCAA was established in 1906 as the governing body of college athletics. The NCAA enforces rules, sets guidelines that are related to athletic eligibility, recruitment and financial aid.

Student Athletes: Men and women who enrolled in colleges and participated in collegiate athletics within the New Jersey Athletic Conference during the 2003-2004 academic years.

Division I: To qualify as a Division I institution, an NCAA member must have at least seven male athletic teams and seven female athletic teams or at least six men’s
athletic teams and eight women’s athletic teams. Division I institutions may also provide athletic scholarships. In football, there is Division Ia and Division Iaa. Division Ia football teams are required to meet certain attendance standards and have parameters for stadium size. Division Iaa does not have to meet the standards of attendance. Division Iaa football player’s may also receive athletic scholarships.

Division II: Division II institutions must sponsor at least four sports teams for men and four for women, with at least two team sports for each gender and each gender representing a playing season. Division II policies are not as stringent as Division I.

Division III: Division III member institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender and each playing season represented by each gender. Division III institutions may only grant financial aid based on need not athletic ability.

Eligibility: Eligibility refers to an athlete’s qualifications to participate or not to participate in a particular sport. This can be based on academic standards or positive drug test results.

Head Coaches: Head Coach refers to all persons at the time of the study were leading or in charge of a team within the NCAA Division III and/or NJAC. Note-not all of these institutions sanction these sports.

Proposition 48: Proposition 48 was passed by the NCAA in 1983 as a means of stressing the importance of incoming student athlete’s grades and standardized test scores at Division I institutions. Proposition 48 stated that for a student to be eligible to participate in Division I college athletics the athlete must score at least a 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or score a 15 on the American College Testing Service
(ACT) and have an 2.00 grade point average (GPA) following the senior year in high school. Student athletes who did not meet the requirements could still be eligible for a scholarship but would lose one year of athletic eligibility.

Proposition 42: Proposition 42 was passed by the NCAA in 1989. Proposition 42 was an amendment to Proposition 48. Proposition 42 stated that students meet both the minimum score on the SAT and had at least a 2.00 GPA to participate during the first year of enrollment. If the student athlete does not meet the requirements he/she would be ineligible for the first year of enrollment and lose one year of eligibility.

Proposition 16: Proposition 16 is the (1995) NCAA reform policy related to athletic eligibility. This policy provides a student athlete with a sliding scale by which the student must meet eligibility requirements. Proposition 16 divides student athletes into three categories, non-qualifier, partial-qualifier, and qualifier. The sliding scale simply means a lower standardized test score can be offset by a grade point average. Students with a higher standardized test score may have a lower grade point average. A non-qualifier is ineligible for competition during the first year of enrollment. A partial qualifier may practice at the institutions home facilities but may not participate in games and loses one year of eligibility. A qualifier is eligible to participate in Division I college athletics during the first year of enrollment.

Graduation Rates: Graduation rates provide information about two groups of students at a college or university: (1) all undergraduates who are enrolled in full-time program of studies for a degree; (2) student athletes who received aid from the college or university for any period during their entering year. The most current report is from students entering college in 1997. Graduation rates are based on a six-year period.
Graduation rates are based on a comparison of the total number of students who entered the college and the number who graduated within six years.

New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC): At the time of the study included Ramapo College of New Jersey, William Paterson University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Rutgers Newark, The College of New Jersey, Rutgers Camden, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Kean University, and Rowan University. The conference was founded in 1985. The 10 founding members are public institutions in the state of New Jersey and have combined for over 40 national titles in 17 years.

Academic Support System: System devised to help students while attending college. These programs provide career counseling, academic counseling, academic advising, and tutors.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the academic support services provided to student athletes?

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between selected demographics of education level, gender, or years in coaching, and coaches attitudes of academic support services?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between selected demographics of education level, gender, or years in coaching, and attitudes of head
coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?

Research Question 5: What recommendations would NJAC head coaches make regarding academic support services provided to student athletes?

Organization of the Study

Chapter two discusses relevant literature related to academic support, graduation rates, academic preparation of student athletes, and specific support services related to Division III institutions. Chapter three provides a description of the study methodology; including the context of the study, an overview of the population and sample employed in the study, a description of the research design, and data collection procedures and instruments used, as well as a brief summary of how the data were analyzed. An overview of the findings of the study is presented in chapter four. Included are the analysis of the data, presented in tables with accompanying narrative descriptions arranged by the research questions. Chapter five provides a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, along with relevant conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the philosophy of Division III institutions, much of the research in this chapter focuses on Division III student athletes. Previous research on academics and student athletes has primarily focused on Division I institutions. The chapter examines eligibility of student athletes, graduation rates, time demands facing student athletes, academic support for freshman and upper class student athletes, affects on academic performance, and negative and positive effects of athletic participation. Results of typical Division III academic support services are discussed as well.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has divided colleges and universities into three categories, Division I, II, and III. Institutions have been organized according to the financial support provided to athletics by the university. Division I and II institutions may offer athletic scholarships to prospective student athletes. The NCAA restricts the amount of money available per sport. For example, fully funded Division I baseball teams are allotted 12.7 full scholarships. The scholarship money is shared among the entire team. For example, if an institution has 12.7 scholarships for baseball and tuition costs $10,000 then the team would have $127,000 to divide among the returning student athletes and prospective freshman student athletes (NCAA, 2003a).
Division II institutions have similar requirements compared to their Division I counterparts. Division II institutions may offer athletic scholarships but they are less as compared to Division I schools. For example, Division II fully funded baseball teams are allotted 9.5 full scholarships. The academic requirements are similar for incoming freshman. High school seniors must pass a minimum of 14 core curriculum classes to be allotted 9.5 full scholarships. The academic requirements are similar for incoming freshman. High school seniors must pass a minimum of 14 core curriculum classes to be eligible through the NCAA clearinghouse. The clearinghouse scores are based on a sliding scale. For example, a high school senior with a 2.5 G.P.A. must score at least 820 on his/her Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to be a Division I qualifier (NCAA, 2003c). A Division II partial qualifier is a student who does not meet one of the following standards by the time his/her graduates from high school. A non-qualifier does not meet either of the demands set forth by the clearinghouse.

Division III student athletes do not have to meet the criteria established by the NCAA clearinghouse. In Division III, the student athlete only has to meet the minimum requirements of the institution and the athletic conference. If the student athlete has been admitted by the institution than the athlete is deemed eligible for the freshman year (NCAA, 2003b).

Once a student athlete is enrolled in classes, the NCAA, the conference, or the institution determines the eligibility rules. Division I and II athletic eligibility is governed by the NCAA. After the first year of competition a student athlete must pass a minimum of 24 semester hours and achieve a minimum G.P.A. of 1.6. At the completion of a student athletes second season, the student athlete is required to have passed 48
semester hours and carry a minimum 1.8 G.P.A. After completion of the third season, a student athlete must have passed at least 72 semester hours and have achieved a minimum 2.0 GPA. Also, the student athlete must have completed at least 50% of the degree requirements (NCAA, 2003a). A one-time waiver may be granted if a student athlete enrolled in the final term of the baccalaureate program has not met the full-time attendance requirements (NCAA, 2003a).

Division III academic eligibility is based on the requirements established by the NCAA, individual institution, or by the athletic conference. The NCAA has established rules that govern student athlete eligibility. To be eligible for competition the student athlete must be in good academic standing at the college or university. This is to be determined by the individual institution. A student athlete must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 semester hours each semester. The NJAC has established minimum requirements for athletic and academic eligibility. At the end of the first year of competition, a student athlete must have achieved a minimum of 24 credit hours and must have a 1.6 G.P.A. At the end of the second season, a student athlete must pass a minimum of 48 credit hours and have a 1.8 G.P.A. At the conclusion of the third season, a student athlete must attain a minimum of 72 credit hours and have a 2.0 GPA. The NJAC offers a one-time academic waiver for student athletes who have failed to meet one of the requirements (2003, October) (Retrieved December 10, 2003 from http://www.njac.net).

Academic Preparation of Student Athletes

Some athletes are coming to college unprepared for the challenges and demands of being a student athlete. Athletes are entering college with significantly lower combined math and verbal Scholastic Aptitude Test scores (SAT) than non-athletes
Furthermore student athletes are coming to college with significantly lower math scores compared to the general student body. Student athletes also are coming to colleges with a lower overall high school G.P.A than the general population (Stuart, 1985). End-of-first-year football and basketball players had significantly lower scores in standardized measures of reading comprehension and mathematics. Furthermore, women athletes had significantly lower end-of-first-year reading comprehension scores than did women non-athletes (Nora, Pascarella, Truckenmiller, Edison, & Hagedorn, 1999). Student athletes who come to college with lower reading comprehension and math skills may not have a good transition between high school and college.

Demands Facing Students Competing in College Athletics

Practice, reviewing films, training hours, study hours, and other student related activities can be demanding for an athlete. Miller and Wooten (1995), identified several other areas that produce demands of the student athlete’s time; they include maintenance of competitive edge, personal injury, public scrutiny, and schedule adjustments. Perham (1993) further identified six demands or challenges confronting college student athletes: (a) balancing athletic and academic activities; (b) balancing social activities with separation from athletic pursuits; (c) balancing athletic success and/or lack of success; (d) balancing one’s physical health and injuries; (e) balancing several relationships including coaches, parents, family, and friends; and, (f) dealing with the termination of an athletic career. College athletes face the same developmental issues as the general student population but because of their notoriety, these issues can be accentuated. For example, in 2002, Peter Warrick, a standout athlete at Florida State shamed his name when he
accepted clothes at discounted prices. If he had not been a star athlete, the infraction would have gone unnoticed. The demands of competing in college athletics and performing well in the classroom can be overwhelming for student athletes (Bailey & Littleton, 1991).

Some college officials believe student athletes are spending too much time on the practice field and not enough time in their academic major and/or participating in the campus community. According to Myers and Whitner (1986), “The reality for individuals who work with student athletes from an academic or student services prospective is that they are confronted daily with people who are under prepared, unlikely to graduate, priority skewed, and manipulated by the demand of the sport” (p.659). Because of the time demands placed on college athletes the time to grow as an individual is limited. Moreover, athletes will more often socialize with other athletes. Athletes will isolate themselves from the general student body. Also, student athletes are less likely to engage in extra-curricular activities outside of athletics (Cantor & Prentice, 1996). In season student athletes are practicing or competing in games up to 30 hours per week. If student athletes are participating 30 hours per week how much time are they spending outside of the classroom on their academics and other campus activities? Furthermore, student athletes tend to miss class because of the demands of competition. Student athletes constantly missing classes because of athletic events may fall behind in their academic work.

Academic Support for Freshman Student Athletes

Developing an academic support system geared toward freshman student athletes could enhance the quality of the freshman experience. Freshman student athletes
encounter similar issues as their non-athletic counterparts. Adjusting to new living arrangements, class schedule, friends, and a new environment are some of the issues encountered during a college student freshman year (Stone & Strange, 1989). Student athletes face additional problems associated with college athletics. Athletes also must adjust to new coaching style/expectations, travel responsibilities, and the realization of not being the “star” anymore (Broughton, 2001). Moreover, freshman athletes must adjust to the demands of practice time, special living arrangements, and fan reaction. Consequently, freshman student athletes often require a mentor or academic counselor to provide guidance during their first year on campus (Stone & Strange, 1989). Because of the time and energy for practice and competition student athletes should be provided with an additional support system assigned by the athletic department (Bailey & Littleton, 1991).

Negative Attitudes Toward College Athletics

College athletes have been labeled with the “dumb jock” syndrome for many years. In fact, the general college student holds negative attitudes towards college athletes (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991). College athletes have not excelled in the classroom as much as they have excelled in athletics. Pressures associated with competing at a high level can lead student athletes to focus so much on the sport that academics suffer (Adler & Adler, 1991). The higher the level of competition in collegiate athletics the greater the emphasis on winning and the more time devoted towards training and excelling in sports (Blann, 1985).

College athletes choose to participate in athletics because they seek a desire to succeed in athletics. However, some college athletes may lack the similar motivation in
the classroom. According to Covington, Simons, and Van Rheenen (1999), “the maintenance of this academic motivation and achievement is made more difficult because of the demands of their sport” (p.151). Moreover, athletic participation was detrimental to the career and planning of freshman and sophomore athletes (Blann, 1985). Also, student athletes do not develop the academic skills and the self concepts needed to be successful in college (Landers, 1978). Coaches, athletes, and academic advisors need to place precedence on performing well in the classroom.

Benefits of Athletic Participation

Participating in college athletics can be a rewarding experience that only a select few are able to encounter. Ryan (1989) reported that, “participation in college athletics was related to a positive self-report of changes in inter-personal skills and leadership abilities” (p.125). Ryan further reported, “Student athletes were more likely to be satisfied with their college experience than their non-athlete counterparts” (p.126). Nora et al. (1999) “found that participation in intercollegiate athletics positively influenced gains in students’ internal locus of attribution for success during the first year of college” (p. 371). Taylor (1995) reported, “Athletic participation has a positive effect on self esteem” (p.449). Aries and Richards (1999) found that although athletes have a demanding schedule there were “no significant differences between athletes and non-athletes in their reports of total number of extracurricular groups they joined” (p. 40).

College athletics can teach many life skills one may not encounter in the class. Furthermore attributes such as teamwork, failure, and competitiveness are essential throughout ones life. The development of the total student cannot be learned in the classroom alone. The extracurricular and the co-curricular activities contribute to the
development of the whole-person (Kraack, 1985). Astin (1984) stressed the role of involvement in the development of college age students. He defined involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student puts into and devotes to the academic experience" (p.297). Astin also felt that student affairs professionals and other educators needed to provide an environment that fosters learning outside the classroom. College athletics, if run correctly, can be an environment that fosters that type of learning and development. College athletics aims to develop the whole person, to enhance the maturation process of young adults, and to provide a learning environment that fosters teamwork and demands excellence.

Affects of Academic Performance

The academic performance of a student athlete can affect many more people than just the individual athlete. Fitch and Robinson (1998) reported, "poor academic performance may bring anger and disappointment from coaches and fellow team members, a threat from being dropped from the team, and possibly, a media item in the local publication highlighting the student athlete's plight" (p.624). Non-athletes may receive a harsh lecture from their parents for poor academic performance whereas an athlete may be stripped of his/her personal identity for being ruled academically ineligible (Fitch & Robinson, 1998).

Time demands placed on student athletes are also tied to academic performance. Student athletes may spend from three to six hours per day in practice, team meetings, skill sessions, and other sport related activities while non-athletes are enjoying time with their friends, earning extra money, or preparing for their classes (Fitch & Robinson, 1998). It is extremely important for student athletes to develop excellent time
management skills to be able to accept the demands of both their academic work and their athletic work.

Graduation Rates of NCAA Institutions

Although student athletes have a demanding schedule, Division I graduation rates continue to rise (Zimbalist, 1999). In 1983, the NCAA began collecting data on the graduation rates of student athletes. The class of 1996 is represented in the publication of the NCAA graduation report. The graduation rates of student athletes has surpassed the graduation rates of the general student population in Division I athletics. In fact, 62% of all student athletes who enrolled in 1996 graduated compared to 59% of the general student population. The percentage of student athletes graduating is two percentage points higher than the record percentage of graduates last year. This was a landmark event for the NCAA because 1996 was the first year the NCAA instituted proposition 16. Furthermore, African Americans in men’s basketball made a significant improvement. Thirty-five percent of African-Americans graduated in 1995 compared to 41% in 1996. Division I African American football player’s also rose three percentages points (NCAA, 2003d) (Retrieved November 11, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/2003).

Although the NCAA does not publish a comprehensive report for Division III athletes’ data are available for comparison purposes. For example, 54% of student athletes graduated compared to 62% of the general student population. Non-athlete (59%) men graduated more frequently than did their male athlete (51%) counterparts. The women enrolled in Division III institutions demonstrated similar statistics. Non-athlete women graduated at a rate of 65% compared to 57% of women participating in college athletics.
In Division III public institutions graduation rates were discouraging. Only 45% of student athletes graduated compared to 50% by the general student population. The number of white student athletes graduating declined in recent years. African Americans graduated at a rate of 27%, which was well below the national average. Furthermore, the number of women athletes graduating (54%) was higher compared to their male counterparts who graduated at a rate of 49% (NCAA, 2003d) (Retrieved November 11, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/2003).

In Division III, the percentage of private institutions graduation rates were similar to the national average. Overall, 56% of the student athletes graduated within six years compared to 68% of all other students. The number of African Americans (80%) graduating nearly tripled at the private institutions. More than 55% of women in privation institutions graduated (NCAA, 2003d) (Retrieved November 11, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/2003). These data provide an excellent picture of Division III athletics. The athletes in the private institutions are performing well above the national average, whereas the student athletes in the public institutions are not graduating at as high of a rate.

Some student athletes choose to play on the Division III level because they hold the academic life in high regard and want to avoid the distractions associated with participating in Division I athletics (Watt & Moore, 2001). Unfortunately, some student athletes who are partial or non-qualifiers for Division I or II schools, attend a Division III institution or community college because they are the only options.

National Collegiate Athletic Association graduation reports have become a tool for assessing the athletes’ academic progress. The graduation reports provide higher
National Collegiate Athletic Association graduation reports have become a tool for assessing the athletes’ academic progress. The graduation reports provide higher education institutions and the NCAA governing body with raw data that is imperative to the development of student athletes. Furthermore, individual institutions are now able to evaluate the effectiveness of their academic support programs for their athletes.

Watt and Moore (2001) reported the following:

NCAA are required not only to report graduation rates but also to provide academic support to ensure academic success of their student athlete as regulated by the NCAA. Second, participating in a sport can help some athletes persist toward graduation. Third, it appears that both student athletes and non-athletes are graduating at higher rates than their peers at Division I schools. (p.11)

The recent published Division III graduation rates, however contradicts the reports provided by Watt and Moore. In 1998, Division III athletes were graduating at a higher rate that their counterparts in Division I. Currently Division I institutions are graduating student athletes at a higher rate than Division III public institutions. Less than half of the full-time Division III student athletes enrolled in 1996, graduated college. This is 10% less than the average of Division I student athletes (NCAA, 2003d) (Retrieved November 11, 2003 from http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/2003).

Academic Support Systems for Student Athletes

The practice of counseling student athletes preceded the development of counseling programs designed for sports counseling. In 1985, counseling services were outlined in the Association for Counseling Education (Miller & Wooten, 1995). Athletic
counseling began as an attempt to assist student athletes to reach the highest potential academically and athletically (Miller & Wooten, 1995).

A well-organized academic support system can assist student athletes in overcoming obstacles to success. Academic support programs should supplement the academic services provided by the institution. The support program should provide services needed to be successful in the classroom as well as on the athletic field (Bailey & Littleton, 1991). Student athletes face many of the similar academic, emotional, and personal challenges faced by the general student population (Broughton, 2001). Student athletes also encounter typical adolescent development issues and even more serious issues such as psychological and addictive behaviors. A support staff assigned by the athletic department can help to combat these issues. Counseling interventions can address the issues facing student athletes (Hinkle, 1995). As previously discussed these problems range from time management to student developmental issues.

Counselors working with student athletes must be aware of the many issues that are being faced. Fitch and Robinson (1998) developed and implemented a model program for academic counselors. The program was designed for counselors who previously had worked with non-athletes on college campuses. The program involved three primary components: educational seminars, group counseling, and individual counseling. Fitch and Robinson (1998) provide a description of how colleges and universities can establish seminars for student athletes.

The seminars should begin with an explanation of the importance of time management in light of the student athlete role (Fitch & Robinson, 1998). Subsequent seminars should focus on stress reduction, relaxation, communication skills and
enhancing motivation in the classroom. Fitch and Robinson (1998) suggest that counselors meet with student athletes two to three hours per week for direct counseling. Also, they suggested that counselors observe the team members an additional hour per week during practice and team meetings. Another feature suggested by Fitch and Robinson is bi-weekly group counseling sessions, which focus on the current concerns of student athletes. Issues such as dating, retiring from sports, and student athlete identity and self-concepts are subjects for discussion (Fitch & Robinson, 1998).

The responsibilities of an academic counselor are not limited to solely advising the students and developing time management plans. An academic counselor can help a student develop the proper study skills and time management skills. The academic counselor may introduce ideas such as planning sheets or time logs along with some other management techniques (Mackenzie, 1990). This might be the first intervention but student athletes are going to need support in other areas. Broughton (2001) “felt as though the early academic advisors role is described as one who worked with student athletes in orientation and study halls and in addition when needed provided psychological services” (p.4).

The responsibilities of the academic counselor should include educational, developmental and remedial programs. Counselors generally prefer to provide counseling to enhance performance and during times of need. Student athletes need support for example during times of severe injury, not making the first team, or during the end of their careers (Hinkle, 1995). Student athletes encounter other stressors such as financial struggles, parental pressure and grades (Murphy & Archer, 1996). Academic advisers and counselors for athletes provide eligibility monitoring, course selection,
and should be ready to assess the issues facing the college student athlete. A counselor should be prepared of the range of issues he/she may encounter.

A well-developed plan should provide the student athlete with direction and goal achievement along with support. Effective support programs share several similar components. These components are essential to the success of the program. Holistic models of support bring together various program components each student needs (Cordine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). These components include personal development, career development, and academic counseling. The Triad Model is an example of a holistic model which includes specialized advising, a formalized evaluation and assessment of the strategies and programs. The goals of this model are to assist and support the student athlete in academics, athletics and social development (Stier, 1992).

Watt and Moore (2001) outlined several recommendations for academic counselors and student affair personal to help meet the special needs of student athletes. Counselors should first and foremost educate the faculty and the coaching staff about the unique and complex balance of participating in college athletics and excelling in academia. According to Watt and Moore (2001), “it is easier to provide useful assistance to this population when one clearly sees the need and understands the scope of the experience” (p. 15). In Division III, many times the coaching staff are the first to become aware of an academic issue. Coaches must realize that student athletes are students first and athletes second. Furthermore, student affairs professionals should provide a course and/or a seminar to help students focus on pertinent issues and challenges. Counselors should also be flexible in the times they make themselves available to the student athlete.

As previously discussed student athletes are a unique population on a college campus.
should also be flexible in the times they make themselves available to the student athlete.
As previously discussed student athletes are a unique population on a college campus.
Student athletes are rushing out of class to attend practice or games and many times are
unable to meet a counselor during regular school hours. Counselors assigned by the
athletic department should be available nights and weekends to provide student athletes
with the best possible learning environment.

Division III Academic Support Programs

Division III public institutions did see a decline in the 1996 graduation rates.
Less than half of the student athletes enrolled in college in 1996 ever graduated.
However in the most recent study, 63% of student athletes enrolled in Division III public
institutions in 1997 graduated within six years. In Division I, the NCAA approved
legislation requiring all institutions to provide general academic counseling for all of their
recruited athletes. Unfortunately, no such academic support requirement exists for non-
athletic-scholarship-granting Division III institutions. This has created some institutions
to develop a much-needed academic support program for Division III athletes.

The 12 arts and science colleges within State University of New York (SUNY)
system established an academic support system to improve the academic achievements
and the overall development of enrolled student athletes. The program started in 1994,
with the goal of improving academic performance, retention, and graduation rates of all
student athletes. The SUNY institutions were required to inform student athletes of
available careers depending on the academic major. Also targeted was improvement of
the grade point averages of student athletes for competitive admission into graduate
school. The institutions were encouraged to use the counseling services provided to the
general student body and academic counselors provided by the athletic departments (Smith & Herman, 1996).

Currently the SUNY system has developed five ways in which to prepare the student athletes for success in college. The institutions have an academic counselor assigned to the athletic department. Also, the SUNY system has shown a connection between the athletic department and the career and academic planning center. The athletic departments encourage student athletes to meet with career counselors. Student athletes also have follow-up meetings with the career counselors. The follow-up sessions enable the student athletes’ to discuss career plans, academic progress, and possible jobs opportunities. The institutions also established a mandatory study hall three times per week. First semester student athletes and all other student athletes who fell below a 2.30 G. P. A. are required to attend. The SUNY schools developed a series of study-skills workshops for student athletes that were offered during the study hall times. The athletic departments also provided tutoring services convenient to student athletes. The director of the program also strongly recommends a follow-up consultation with the career and academic planning office (Smith & Herman, 1996).

Smith and Herman (1996) found the following:

The student athlete support program developed in the SUNY system was organized into three core ideas. First, it was extremely important that they had full cooperation from the athletic director and the coaches because of the enormous impact they had on their student athletes. Second, it is imperative that the academic counselors have the opportunity to use their talents and skills in an efficient and productive manner. Finally, if the student athlete academic support...
program is going to be successful and improve there must be both evaluation and research done at the local level. There also must be an ongoing literature review on the happenings at other institutions to determine improvements that can be made. (p.5)

In 1996, as a result of the program developed by the SUNY schools the student athletes showed a significant (<.05) improvement on the perception of the academic counselors. Furthermore, the 48% (50 out of 104) of the student athletes felt as though the study halls were beneficial to the success in college (Smith & Herman, 1996).

Summary of the Literature Review

Several issues were examined and researched throughout the chapter. The research focused on Division III student athletes and the academic support services provided. The research further looked at the comparisons between Division I, II and III student athletes, the graduation rates and academic services provided. Also, time demands and the positives and negatives of athletic participation were discussed. An example of a Division III academic support system program model was described in the chapter. The research has presented a investigation of Division I, II and III academic support services and what services could be provided by a college or university athletic department.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the head coach's attitudes of academic support services for student athletes provided by the athletic departments of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC). The member institutions competing in the NJAC are located throughout the state of New Jersey. The institutions in the NJAC are Division III members of the NCAA. The NJAC embraces the philosophy of Division III athletics and principals which protect the student athlete.

The New Jersey Athletic Conference was founded in 1985 when the New Jersey State Athletic Conference, a men's sports conference, merged with their corresponding institutions in the Jersey Athletic Conference, a women's sports conference. The study focused on the 10 institutions within the NJAC. At the time of the study, the 10 institutions included all four year public institutions as follows: Ramapo College of New Jersey, William Paterson University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Rutgers Newark University, The College of New Jersey, Rutgers Camden University, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Kean University, and Rowan University. The NJAC championships were originally offered in 12 sports: men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's volleyball, men's golf, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's swimming and diving, wrestling and football. Today, the NJAC hosts 17 championships: 10 for women (cross country, basketball, field hockey, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, indoor track and field,
outdoor track and field, volleyball) and seven for men (cross country, baseball, basketball, football, soccer, indoor and outdoor track and field). The conference ranks as one of the strongest in NCAA Division III, with member schools capturing 40 national championships over the past 17 years, and numerous final and semifinal round appearances. More than 600 NJAC student-athletes have received All-America honors. In 1999-2000, two NJAC members—The College of New Jersey and Rowan University—scored in the top ten of the prestigious Sears Cup rankings (2003, December) (Retrieved on December 10, 2003 from http://www.njac.net.).

In 1999, the New Jersey Athletic Conference added three new chapters to its history. In May 1999, it hired its first commissioner. In September 1999, the conference amended its constitution to allow affiliate members on a sport-by-sport basis and accepted the State University of New York at Cortland as its first affiliate member for the sport of football. And in October 1999, it revised its constitution and bylaws to merge the men’s and women’s sports divisions into a single decision-making body; to create committees which more directly address the needs and interests of the student-athletes and faculty athletic representatives; and to strengthen the partnership between the office of the president and the department of athletics on each of our member campuses (2003, December) (Retrieved on December 10, 2003 from http://www.njac.net.).

The NJAC requires a minimum GPA of 1.6 after one year of competition. Furthermore, the conference requires an overall GPA of 1.8 after two years of competition and a minimum of 2.0 GPA after the third year of competition. The NJAC allows a one time waiver for academic reasons, which must be signed by the first scheduled contest. A student who has used his/her waiver and is academically ineligible
may not compete in outside competition. A student athlete’s academic waiver may not be transferred and used to satisfy eligibility requirements at another institution.

Population and Sample Selection

The researcher surveyed male and female head coaches within the NJAC. The researcher targeted the total population of the head coaches from football, men’s and women’s soccer, rowing, field hockey, women’s volleyball, cross country, men’s and women’s swimming, diving, tennis, indoor and outdoor track, men’s and women’s basketball, wrestling, baseball, softball, and lacrosse. The head coaches from each institution were chosen because they had the most contact with student athletes. Access to the coaches was made through the U.S. Postal Service. A total of 100 people received the surveys. In order to insure the rights of each subject, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted on February 20, 2004 (Appendix A). The application included a subject survey (Appendix C) and an informed consent (Appendix B). The application was approved March 10, 2004. Subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form before completing the survey.

Instrumentation

A survey titled Academic Support Services for Student Athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (Appendix C) was designed by the researcher. The research suggested issues facing student athletes including, study skills, time management, career development, academic advising, student athlete mentoring, monitoring student athletes eligibility, and a freshman orientation (Cordine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). A survey was developed to determine coaches attitudes of these issues and if they were being met in NJAC institutions. Upon receiving approval from the IRB, the final survey was mailed to
100 head coaches in the NJAC. The survey consisted of three sections. The first section obtained background information of each subject including gender, current sport coached, years in education, highest level of education, years at current institution, coaching experience, and whether an academic counselor is assigned directly to the athletic department and if so, to whom does he/she report. The second section consisted of 15 statements based on a Likert scale designed to determine the degree to which each subject agreed with the statement. The scale was arranged according to 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3- Neutral, 2- Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree. The statements were designed to gauge the attitudes of subjects toward the academic support services provided to student athletes and whether these services should be provided through the athletic department. The third section of the survey asked subjects a series of open-ended questions. The first question asked subjects what type of academic support services should be provided to student athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference. The second question asked subjects about the desirability of an academic counselor assigned to all students or assigned to directly to student athletes.

In an effort to confirm the reliability and validity of the survey, 10 separate assistant coaches at Rowan University participated in a pilot study. The results of the pilot study supported the results found in the current study. According to Watt and Moore (2001) to support student athletes, athletic departments should consider the components of academic advising, performance enhancement efforts, life skill development, and career counseling.
Data Collection

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix A), a letter of consent (Appendix B) along with the survey was mailed to each head coach. The letter consisted of a brief introduction of the researcher, the instrument being used, the rationale behind the study, and an explanation of how the data were going to be used. In the letter, the researcher assured that the answers would be kept confidential and respected the privacy of each subject. The researcher then sent a follow up email to ensure each subject responded to the survey. This allowed the researcher to obtain the appropriate response rate of 75%.

Procedure of Gathering Data

On March 20, 2004, 100 survey packages were mailed to the head coaches in the NJAC. Subjects were given a packet containing a cover letter (Appendix D), a subject consent form (Appendix B), the survey (Appendix C), and self-addressed stamped envelope. Upon opening the packet, subjects were given a letter (Appendix D) stating this researcher’s position as a graduate student seeking help investigating what NJAC athletic departments are doing to help ensure student athletes are performing academically.

To help insure the rate of participation, the Rowan University Athletic Director forwarded a letter via email to the other athletic directors in the conference asking them to encourage coaches to participate in the study.

Confidentiality was stressed in the letter as an essential part of the survey. Subjects were advised that the results of the study would in no way reflect their names or jobs titles, and that the research was being done for a master’s thesis project.
The initial response date was April 3, 2004 and a reminder was sent out by the researcher via email the following week. Several subjects were unable to complete the survey in the allotted time and therefore were given an extra week to finish the survey. Finally, all of the surveys were collected April 10, 2004 and the researcher appreciated their participation in the research. Seventy-five of the one hundred subjects returned the survey information.

Data Analysis for Quantitative Data

The researcher used quantitative data analysis procedures to determine the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the academic support services provided for student athletes by athletic departments. The data were coded using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Program. Using the SPSS, the researcher calculated the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Research question three was analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation to determine if there was a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between the responses to the survey items dealing with coaches attitudes of academics support services and demographic variables of education level, gender, or years in coaching. Research question four was analyzed using the Person product correlation to determine if there was a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between the responses to the survey items dealing with the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department and the demographic variables of education level, gender, or years in coaching.
Data Analysis for Qualitative Data

The data obtained from research question five were analyzed through document analysis. The researcher examined the type of support services New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) head coaches would like to see provided for student athletes. The researcher closely looked at support services such as, academic advising, tutoring, career counseling, monitoring at risk students, time management, and study halls. The qualitative data in the open-ended question were analyzed looking for common themes. The corresponding frequencies and percentages of the themes were then analyzed in Microsoft Excel and presented in table form.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in this study consisted of 75 head coaches in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC). The researcher selected the total population of the head male and female coach's within the NJAC. In a total population study, all subjects and members of the sample are selected as the total population. For purposes of this study 100 surveys were distributed and 75 were returned, based on the availability and cooperation of the subjects for a response rate of 75%.

Table 4.1 represents the number of years coaching experience in the NJAC. The highest percentage (26%) was in the 11-15 years in coaching category followed next by 6-10 years and 21-25 years (16% respectively).
Table 4.1

Years in Coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 describes the gender distribution of the subjects in the survey. Women head coaches represented 39% of the sample while male counterparts represented 61% of the sample.

Table 4.2

Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3

*Level of Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 describes the highest level of education obtained by the subjects in the survey. Overall, 49% or 37 of the head coaches received a bachelor’s degree. Furthermore, 44% or 33 of the subjects obtained a master’s degree. Conversely, 5 or 7% of the head coaches earned a doctoral degree.

**Research Questions**

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the academic support services provided to student athletes?

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide information regarding research question 1. Table 4.4 provides information regarding the attitudes of head coaches and whether institutions should provide academic support services for student athletes. Nearly 90% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that institutions should provide academic support services for student athletes. Overall, only 3% of the subjects strongly disagreed with the statement.
Table 4.4

*Institutions Should Provide Academic Support for Student Athletes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 provides information regarding flexible tutoring services provided to student athletes. Eighty-three percent of the subjects surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that flexible tutoring services should be provided to student athletes. Overall, 3% of the subjects strongly disagreed that flexible tutoring services should be provided to student athletes.

Table 4.5

*Flexible Tutoring Services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?
Table 4.6

*Athletic Departments and Academic Counselor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4.6 through 4.13 provide information regarding research question 2. Table 4.6 provides information regarding an academic counselor assigned by the athletic department that works strictly with student athletes. Eighty-eight percent of the subjects surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that an academic counselor should be provided by the athletic department to work strictly with student athletes. Further, 9% strongly disagreed or disagreed that academic counselors should be provided by the athletic department.

Table 4.7

*Academic Advising and Athletic Department*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 describes NJAC head coaches and the need for academic advising to be provided by the athletic department. Overall, 73% or 55 of the subjects felt as though NJAC athletic departments should provide academic advising for student athletes. This
is in contrast to 18% of the subjects indicating either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.8

Tutoring Services Provided by Athletic Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 provides information regarding tutoring services being provided by the athletic department. Overall, 45 or 60% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Seventeen or 23% of the subjects reported being neutral while 9 or 12% disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.9

Career Assistance Provided by Athletic Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 provides information about the desirability of career assistance being provided by the athletic department. Forty-six or 61% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that student athletes should be provided career assistance by the athletic
department. Seventeen or 23% of the subjects were neutral while 12 or 16% of the subjects strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.10

*Academic Workshops Available for Student Athletes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information concerning workshops available for student athletes is presented in Table 4.10. Overall, 56 or 75% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Nine, or 12%, of the subjects reported being neutral while 10, or 13%, strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Table 4.11

*Freshman Student Athletes Monitored by the Athletic Department*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 provides information about the desirability of freshman student athletes being monitored by the athletic department. Overall, 68 or 90% of the subjects
either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Conversely, 3% strongly disagreed while 7% were neutral.

Table 4.12

*Athletic Department Required Study Hall*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 provides information concerning student athletes being required to attend study hall functions provided by the athletic department. Overall, 36 or 48% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Conversely, 27% of the subjects answered neutral while 19 or 25% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.13

*Freshman Student Athletes Provided with a Special Orientation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 presents information about freshman student athletes and a special orientation provided by the athletic department. Overall, 84% of NJAC head coaches...
believed freshman student athletes should be provided a special orientation. Nine percent of the head coaches disagreed with the statement.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between selected demographics of education level, gender, or years in coaching and coaches attitudes of academic support services?

Table 4.14 depicts the relationship of selected demographics and the coaches attitudes of academic support services. Research question three was analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation to determine if there was a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between the responses of the survey items regarding NJAC head coaches attitudes of academics support services and demographic variables of education level, gender, or years in coaching. The correlation between years in coaching and attitudes of academic support services is statistically significant ($r = .0846, p = .047$) at the $p < .05$ level. The negative correlation between gender and academic advising were found to be significant ($r = -.2572, p = .027$) at a $p < .05$ level.

Table 4.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>$r$ coefficient</th>
<th>$p$-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender-Academic Advising</td>
<td>-.2572</td>
<td>.027*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Coaching - Academic Advising</td>
<td>.0846</td>
<td>.047*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically Significant $p < .05$

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between selected demographics of education level, gender, or years in coaching and attitudes of head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?
Table 4.15 relates to research question 4 and presents a Pearson product correlation between selected demographics and attitudes of head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided by the athletic department. There is a negative correlation between gender and the athletic department providing workshops \((r = -.0582, p = .062)\) at a \(p < .05\) level. There was a positive correlation between gender and career assistance \((r = .0192, p = .087)\) at a \(p < .05\) level. There is a negative correlation between years in coaching and a mentoring program \((r = -.1430, p = .022)\) at a \(p < .05\) level. Furthermore, there was a negative correlation between years in coaching and tutoring services \((r = -.1134, p = .033)\) at a \(p < .05\) level.

Table 4.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>(r) coefficient</th>
<th>(p)- level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender-Workshops</td>
<td>-.0582</td>
<td>.062*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender- Career Assistance</td>
<td>.0192</td>
<td>.087*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Coaching- Mentoring Program</td>
<td>-.1430</td>
<td>.024*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Coaching- Tutoring Services</td>
<td>-.1134</td>
<td>.033*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically Significant \(p< .05\)

Table 4.16

**Academic Counselor Assignment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Counselor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic counselor assigned to all students</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic counselor assigned directly to student athletes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.16 depicts information on the desirability of an academic counselor assigned to work directly to student athletes. Overall, 66 or 88% of the subjects desired to have an academic counselor assigned directly to student athletes. Conversely, 9 or 12% of the subjects preferred student athletes attend a similar academic counselor as the general population.

Research Question 5: What recommendations would NJAC head coaches make regarding academic support services provided to student athletes?

Table 4.17 relates to research question 5 and presents the recommendations of NJAC head coaches regarding academic support for student athletes. Overall, 58 or 77% of the subjects believed academic advising is a support service that should be provided to student athletes. The head coaches further replied that tutoring, career assistance, and workshops should be also provided to student athletes.

Table 4.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Support Services for Student Athletes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the Study

Division III student athletes represent a unique part of the college and university community and are often competing for the love of the sport. Murphy and Archer (1996) identified academic and personal areas of concern for college students including, financial problems, parental conflicts, and grades. But unlike the general student, athletes encounter many challenges arising from the involvement in competitive sport. To support student athletes, a comprehensive counseling program with support services is essential for the athlete’s success (Broughton, 2001). In this study, New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) head coaches were surveyed to determine their attitudes of academic support services provided for student athletes.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to determine the head coaches’ attitudes of academic support services provided to student athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC). It was assumed that student athletes benefit from academic support services. The study further attempted to determine the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the need for academic services provided through the athletic department. Further, the study sought to determine if there was a relationship between selected demographics and the coaches’ attitudes of academic support services. Also, the study sought to determine if there was a relationship between selected demographics and the coaches attitudes
regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic
department.

Methodology

The researcher surveyed male and female head coaches within the NJAC. The
head coaches from each institution were chosen because they have the most contact with
student athletes. Access to the coaches was made through the U.S. Postal Service. A total
of 100 subjects received the surveys. In order to insure the rights of each subject, an
Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted on February 20, 2004
(Appendix A). The application included a subject survey (Appendix C) and an informed
consent (Appendix B). The application was approved March 10, 2004. Subjects were
asked to read and sign the consent form before completing the survey.

A survey titled Academic Support Services for Student Athletes in the New Jersey
Athletic Conference (Appendix C) was designed by the researcher. Upon receiving
approval from the IRB the final survey was mailed to 100 head coaches in the NJAC.
The subjects were asks to answer a three section survey. The first section obtained
background information of each subject including gender, current sport coached, years in
education, highest level of education, years at current institution, coaching experience,
and whether an academic counselor is assigned directly to the athletic department and if
so, to whom does he/she report. The second section of the survey was based on a 5- point
Likert scale. The scale was arranged according to 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3-
Neutral, 2- Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree. The subjects were asked to respond to the
degree in which each subject agreed with the statement. Also, the third section of the
survey asked the subjects two open-ended questions.

49
On March 20, 2004, 100 survey packages were mailed to the head coaches in the NJAC. Subjects were given a packet containing a cover letter (see Appendix D), a subject consent form (Appendix B), the survey (Appendix C), and self-addressed stamped envelope. Upon opening the packet, subjects were given a letter (Appendix D) stating this researcher’s position as a graduate student seeking help investigating what NJAC athletic departments are doing to help ensure student athletes are performing academically. The researcher then sent a follow up email to ensure each subject responded to the survey. This allowed the researcher to obtain the appropriate response rate of 75%.

Data Analysis

The Likert scale data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS descriptive statistics provided frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviation (SD) for the attitudes of head coaches regarding academic support services and attitudes of head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided by the athletic departments. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to determine the relationships between selected demographics of education level, gender, or years in coaching and coaches attitudes of academic support services. Finally, the data obtained from research question five were analyzed through document analysis. The qualitative data in the open-ended questions were analyzed looking for common themes. The corresponding frequencies and percentages of the themes were then analyzed in Microsoft Excel and presented in table form.
Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the academic support services provided to student athletes?

Nearly 90% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) institutions should provide academic support services to student athletes. Furthermore, 83% of the subjects strongly agreed or agreed that flexible tutoring services should be provided to student athletes. The findings suggest strong support among NJAC head coaches for academic support services provided to student athletes.

The findings appear to support the previous research of Broughton (2001) who argued for academic support services and found student athletes face many of the similar academic, emotional, and personal challenges encountered by the general student population (Broughton, 2001). Further, student athletes also encounter typical adolescent development issues and even more serious issues such as psychological and addictive behaviors (Broughton, 2001).

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of NJAC head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?

The findings showed that the head coaches in the NJAC believe that there is a need for academic support services provided through the athletic department. Overall, 86% percent of the head coaches sampled strongly agreed or agreed that an academic counselor should be provided by the athletic department to work strictly with student athletes. Furthermore, the findings report that NJAC head coaches indicated the following to be the most important academic services provided by athletic departments:
academic advising (M 2.11, SD 1.237), flexible tutoring services (M 2.29, SD 1.206),
career assistance (M 2.39, SD 1.138), monitoring freshmen student athletes (M 2.0, SD 2.471),
study hall (M 2.64, SD 1.226), and freshman orientation (M 1.92, SD .882).

The findings are similar to Mackenzie’s (1990) ideas that the role of the academic
advisor is more than advising student athletes. Mackenzie (1990) suggested the
responsibilities of the academic advisor are not limited to solely advising the students and
developing time management plans. Furthermore, the academic adviser may provide
tutoring services, career assistance, eligibility advice, study halls, and orientation
(Mackenzie, 1990).

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between selected
demographics of education level, gender, years in coaching, and coaches attitudes of
academic support services? There was a positive correlation between years in coaching
and academic advising ($r = .0846, p = .047$) at a $p < .05$ level. Further, the correlations
between years in coaching and academic advising ($r = .0846, p = .047$) at a $p < .05$ level,
suggests that as the coaches age they are less likely to agree that academic advising
should be provided by the athletic department.

The academic performance of a student athlete can affect more people than just
the individual athlete. The positive correlation between years in coaching and attitudes of
academic support services are similar to the findings of Fitch and Robinson (1998) who
reported that, “poor academic performance may bring anger and disappointment from
coaches and fellow team members, a threat from being dropped from the team, and
possibly, a media item in the local publication highlighting the student athlete’s plight”
(p.624). Head coaches in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) want the student
athletes to perform well in the classroom and see the need for appropriate academic support services of the athletes.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between selected demographics of education level, gender, years in coaching, and attitudes of head coaches regarding the need for academic support services provided through the athletic department?

There is a negative correlation between years in coaching and a mentoring program \((r = -0.1430, p = 0.022)\) at a \(p < .05\) level. This relationship suggests that as coaches age they are less likely to agree that a mentoring program should be provided by the athletic department. There is a correlation between gender and the athletic department providing workshops \((r = 0.0582, p = 0.062)\) at a \(p < .05\) level. The data suggests that both male and female head coaches in the NJAC believe athletic departments should provide student athletes with academic workshops to enhance their academic performance in the classroom.

Fitch and Robinson (1998) suggested that academic counselors in postsecondary schools should provide programs to meet the needs of all students. However, few programs are designed to meet the special needs of the student athletes. Thus, Fitch and Robinson (1998) advocated having academic counseling seminars that are tailored to meet the special needs of student athletes.

Research Question 5: What recommendations would NJAC head coaches make regarding academic support services provided to student athletes?

The findings showed that the head coaches in the NJAC believe there is a need for academic support services provided through the athletic department. Overall, 58 or 77%
of the subjects believed academic advising is a support service that should be provided to
student athletes. The head coaches further reported that tutoring, career assistance, and
workshops should be also provided to student athletes. This finding supports Perham’s
(1993) suggestion that student athletes should be provided with academic assistance to
understand developmental challenges of college students, much as regular students are
provided through campus advising centers (Perham, 1993).

Further, the findings suggest that the coaches felt there are more demands placed
on student athletes than the non-athlete counterparts. The findings suggest that NJAC
institutions should provide student athletes with specialized tutoring services, academic
advising, and access to a counselor assigned to the athletic department.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings suggest student athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference
(NJAC) should be provided with academic services through the athletic department. The
findings further indicate that coaches believe that flexible tutoring, career assistance, a
mentoring program, mandatory study halls, and a freshman orientation are services that
should be provided to student athletes.

Moreover, 87% of the head coaches rated they would rather have an academic
counselor assigned directly student athletes suggesting that there is a need for academic
support services to be provided by athletic departments in the NJAC. Student athletes are
facing increasing pressures and should be more closely monitored by the athletic
departments.

Also, the findings reveal a correlation between years in coaching and attitudes
towards academic support services. Student athletes may spend from three to six hours
per day in practice, team meetings, skill sessions, and other sport related activities while non-athletes are spending time with friends, earning extra money, or preparing for classes (Fitch & Robinson, 1998). The findings further suggest that experienced head coaches in the NJAC understand the importance of time management and realize the importance of academic support services provided to student athletes by the athletic department.

Finally, NJAC head coaches recommended that athletic departments assign an academic counselor to provide academic advising, tutoring, career assistance, and workshops to student athletes. Further, these findings suggest NJAC head coaches realize student athletes are a unique population and require special academic services to ensure academic and athletic success.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. A larger study involving athletic administrators from multiple New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) colleges and universities should be done. The researcher examined only the head coaches of NJAC colleges and universities. A follow-up study would allow comparisons of the need for academic support for student athletes.

2. It is recommended that an alterative time be selected for subjects to complete the survey instruments. The researcher’s subjects may have been involved in an athletic season during the time of the survey which could have influenced responses to the survey.

3. An action research study that examines current academic support systems is recommended. Currently, there is no system in place at the researcher’s
institution. A study designed to determine what student athletes need in the way of support services to be successful in Division III schools is recommended.

4. A study needs to be conducted in the New Jersey Athletic Conference to determine if academic support models that are being used throughout the conference and what seems to be working.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application
Rowan University Approval
Rowan University
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-
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: A Study of Head Coaches Attitudes Regarding Academic Support Services for Student Athletes

Researcher: ____________________________
Department: Higher Education Administration Location ____________________________
Mailing Address: 725 Southwick CR. (Street)
Somerdale, NJ 08083 (Town/State/Zip)
E-Mail: mikedix25@aol.com Telephone: 609-519-1368

Co-Investigator/s:

Faculty Sponsor (if student)* Burton Sisco
Department Educational Leadership Location:
E-Mail: sisco@aol.com Telephone: 856-256-3717
Step 3: Determine whether the proposed research eligible for an exemption from a full IRB review.

Federal regulations (45 CFR 46) permit the exemption of some types of research from a full IRB review. If your research can be described by one or more of the categories listed below, check the appropriate category(ies), complete questions 1-5, and complete the Assurances on the last page of the application. If your research cannot be described by any of these categories, your research is not exempt, and you must complete the entire "Human Research Review Application."

____ Category 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as: (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies; or (b) research on the effectiveness of, or the comparison among, instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

✓ Category 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that the human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (b) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

(Note: Exemption for survey and interview procedures does not apply to research involving children. Exemption for observation of public behavior does not apply to research involving children except when the investigator does not participate in the activities being observed.)

____ Category 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under Category 2 above if: (a) the human participants are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (b) federal statute requires without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

____ Category 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.

____ Category 5 - Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to these programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

____ Category 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies: (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed; or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(Note: Exemption categories cannot be applied to research involving fetuses, pregnant women, human in vitro fertilization, or prisoners.)
Please answer Questions 1-5 below

1. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH?
   To determine the attitudes of head coaches in New Jersey Athletic Conference regarding academic support for student athletes.

2. DESCRIBE THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INCLUDING WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF SUBJECTS (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NECESSARY):
   The subjects will be surveyed a series of Likert scale questions. The subjects will also be asked to complete two open-ended questions.

3. DESCRIBE THE SUBJECTS WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING (NUMBER, AGE, GENDER, ETC):
   The subjects will be male and female head coaches in the NJAC. They will differ in age and race.

4. DESCRIBE HOW SUBJECTS WILL BE RECRUITED (e.g. ADVERTISEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CLASS, E-MAIL, INTERNET)
   The subjects will be asked to respond through the mail.

5. WHERE WILL THE RESEARCH BE CONDUCTED:
   The research will be conducted at Rowan University.

NOTE: IF THE RESEARCH IS TO BE CONDUCTED IN ANOTHER INSTITUTION (e.g. A SCHOOL, HOSPITAL, AGENCY, etc.) A PERMISSION LETTER FROM AN ADMINISTRATOR ON THE LETTERHEAD OF THAT INSTITUTION MUST BE ATTACHED.

   IF THE RESEARCH IS TO BE CONDUCTED AT ANOTHER UNIVERSITY, A SIGNED COPY OF THE IRB APPROVAL FORM FROM THAT UNIVERSITY MUST BE ATTACHED.

ATTACH THE CONSENT FORM TO THIS APPLICATION. The Consent Form must address all of the elements required for informed consent (SEE INSTRUCTIONS).

NOTE: IF THE ONLY RECORD LINKING THE SUBJECT AND THE RESEARCH WOULD BE THE CONSENT DOCUMENT, AND THE RESEARCH PRESENTS NO MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK OF HARM TO SUBJECTS, YOU MAY USE AN ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE FOR CONSENT. IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM THE IRB TO USE AN ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE, ATTACH A COPY OF THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR RESEARCH INSTRUMENT OR A LETTER WITH THE REQUIRED INFORMATION (see Instructions).

If you are requesting an exemption from a full IRB review, STOP. Complete the last page of this application (“Certifications”), and forward the completed (typed) application to the Office of the Associate Provost for Research, The Graduate School, Memorial Hall.
IF YOU CANNOT CLAIM ONE OF THE EXEMPTIONS LISTED ABOVE, COMPLETE ALL OF THE ABOVE AS WELL AS THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR A FULL IRB REVIEW.

Does your research involve a special population?

- Socioeconomically, educationally, or linguistically disadvantaged racial/ethnic group
- Pregnancy/fetus
- Cognitively impaired
- Elderly
- Terminally ill
- Incarcerated
- ✔ No special population

At what level of risk will the participants in the proposed research be placed?
(Note: "Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the participant's dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk.)

- ✔ Minimal Risk
- More than Minimal Risk
- Uncertain

1. HOW WILL SUBJECTS BE RECRUITED? IF STUDENTS, WILL THEY BE SOLICITED FROM CLASS?

There will be no students involved. The subjects will be recruited through the mail.

2. WHAT RISKS TO SUBJECTS (PHYSIOLOGICAL AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL) ARE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH?

There are no risks involved.

3. IS DECEPTION INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH? IF SO, WHAT IS IT AND WHY WILL IT BE USED?

There is no deception involved.
4. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SUBJECTS AFTER THEIR PARTICIPATION? IF DECEPTION IS USED, IT MUST BE DISCLOSED AFTER PARTICIPATION.
A copy of my completed thesis will be available upon request.

The subjects will not be identified in the paper. The researcher is the only person who will be aware of the subjects names.

6. HOW WILL THE DATA BE RECORDED AND STORED? WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE DATA? ALL DATA MUST BE KEPT BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR A MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS.
The data will be stored in SPSS and recorded in the researcher's master's thesis.
CERTIFICATIONS:
Rowan University maintains a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. This Assurance includes a requirement for all research staff working with human participants to receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors.

Please attach a copy of your “Completion Certificate for Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams” from the National Institutes of Health.

If you need to complete that training, go to the Web Tutorial at http://cme.nci.nih.gov/

**Responsible Researcher:** I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks and will adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board. I will ensure that all research staff working on the proposed project who will have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting this research (including students fulfilling these roles) will complete IRB approved training. I will not initiate this research project until I receive written approval from the IRB. I agree to obtain informed consent of participants in this project if required by the IRB; to report to the IRB any unanticipated effects on participants which become apparent during the course or as a result of experimentation and the actions taken as a result; to cooperate with the IRB in the continuing review of this project; to obtain prior approval from the IRB before amending or altering the scope of the project or implementing changes in the approved consent form; and to maintain documentation of consent forms and progress reports for a minimum of three years after completion of the final report or longer if required by the sponsor or the institution. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature.

Signature of Responsible Researcher: __________________________ Date: ________________

**Faculty Advisor** (if Responsible Researcher is a student): I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature (attach copy of your “Completion Certificate for Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams” from the National Institutes of Health).

Signature of Faculty Advisor: __________________________ Date: ________________
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
DISPOSITION FORM

Kenneth M. Dickson
Principal Investigator
725 Southwick Cc.
Address of Principal Investigator
Somerdale, NJ 08083
City, State, and Zip Code
609-519-1368, mikedix25@aol.com
Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

TITLE OF RESEARCH
Academic Support Systems for Student Athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference

ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITION - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Your claim for exemption for the research study identified above has been reviewed. The action taken is indicated below:

APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION AS CLAIMED: CATEGORY #
Note: Anything that materially changes the exempt status of this study must be presented to the IRB for approval before the changes are implemented. Such modifications should be sent to the IRB Office at the address above.

APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION - BUT NOT AS CLAIMED. Your claim for exemption does not fit the criteria for exemption designated in your proposal. However, the study does meet the criteria for exemption under CATEGORY #{ }.

A determination regarding the exempt status of this study cannot be made at this time. Additional information is required.

Your proposal does not meet the criteria for exemption, and a full review will be provided by the IRB.

EXPEDITED REVIEW: ______ Approved ______ Denied

FULL REVIEW: _______ Approved _______ Approved with modifications _______ Denied

DENIED:

See attached Committee Action Letter for additional comments.

Chair, IRB
Co-Chair, IRB

17
APPENDIX B

Consent Form
Consent Form

I agree to participate in a study entitled “Academic Support Systems for Student Athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference” which is being conducted by Mike Dickson, a graduate student at Rowan University. The purpose of this study is to determine the importance of academic support systems for student athletes. The data collected in this study will be used as part of my Master’s Thesis.

I understand that I will be required to answer questions on a survey. My participation in this study will not exceed 20 minutes.

I understand that my responses will be 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 research project provided that I am identified and my name is not used.

I understand that there are no physical 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 or concerns regarding my participation in this study I may contact Dr. Burton Sisco at (856) 256-4000 ext. 3717 or Mike Dickson via email mikedix25@aol.com or (609) 519-1368.

(Signature of Participant) (Date)

(Signature of Investigator) (Date)
APPENDIX C

Survey
Academic Support Service for Student Athletes

Academic support services for student athletes are services provided by an institution to ensure athletes develop academically. Academic support programs may include but are not limited to academic advising, tutoring, mentoring services, counseling, time management, study skills and other issues facing student athletes. The intent of this survey is to determine the importance of an academic support staff assigned by the athletic departments competing within the New Jersey Athletic Conference.

Please read each sentence carefully and respond to it as accurately as possible. Circle or list the appropriate response.

Part 1: Background Information

1. What is your gender?
   A. Male
   B. Female

2. What sport do you currently coach? ________________

3. What is the age range of athletes you coach? ________________

4. What is your highest level of education obtained?
   A. Bachelor's Degree
   B. Master's Degree
   C. Educational specialist
   D. Doctoral Degree
   E. Other ________________

5. How many years of coaching experience do you have? ___________ yrs.

6. How many years have you been coaching/working at your institution? ___________ yrs.

7. Does your institution have an academic counselor in the athletic department assigned strictly to student athletes?  ____ Yes  ____ No

   a. If yes, give the title.
      ________________

   b. Who is the supervisor? ________________
Part 2: Importance of academic support services in the NJAC.

The following items reflect some of the services provided to student athletes at institutions competing in the New Jersey Athletic Conference. Please read the following questions and respond to them as accurately as possible. The statements are on a scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” please circle the corresponding letter that depicts the degree to which you agree. If you feel neutral or undecided on a statement please circle (N).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disagree

1. The institution should provide academic support services for student athletes. SA A N D SD
2. Institutions competing in the NJAC should provide student athletes with an academic counselor that works strictly with student athletes. SA A N D SD
3. Student athletes should attend academic services provided to the general student body. SA A N D SD
5. Freshman student athletes should be provided with an orientation during the first semester. SA A N D SD
6. Tutoring services should be provided through the athletic department for student athletes. SA A N D SD
7. Flexible tutoring services should be provided to student athletes. SA A N D SD
8. Workshops designed to improve student athletes time management skills should be provided. SA A N D SD
9. Workshops designed to improve student athletes study habits should be provided. SA A N D SD
10. A student athlete mentoring program should exist in your institution. SA A N D SD
11. Coaches should be responsible for monitoring academic progress of student athletes.

12. Upper-class student athletes below a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) should be monitored by the athletic department.

13. All freshman student athletes should have their academics monitored by the athletic department.

14. Student athletes should be required by the athletic department to attend study hall functions.

15. Student athletes should be provided with career assistance through the athletic department.

16. Student athletes should be recognized by the athletic department for academic achievement.

17. Your institution promotes academic success for student athletes.

18. Your institution encourages overall personal growth for student athletes.

Part 3: Opened Questions

Please answer to the best of you ability.

1. If the NJAC passed a bylaw requiring institutions to provide an academic support person for student athletes what type of services would you like he/she to provide?

2. Does having an academic support staff for student athletes improve the overall quality of Division III athletics? Why or Why not?
February 3, 2004

John Cole
Head Baseball Coach
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Rd.
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Dear Coach Cole:

I am a graduate student in the Educational Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the direction of Dr. Burton Sisco as part of my master’s thesis project on academic support systems for student athletes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC).

I am requesting your assistance in collecting data for my master’s thesis. I am interested in determining the importance of academic support systems for student athletes competing in the NJAC. I have enclosed a survey for you to complete and return it to me by March 15, 2004. Please understand that all of the information that you provide is completely confidential and it will only be used as part of the research project.

If you have any questions regarding the survey please feel free to contact Dr. Burton Sisco, my thesis advisor at (856) 256-4000 ex.3717. You may also contact me directly at (609) 519-1368 or via email at mikedix25@aol.com. I have enclosed a self-addressed stamp envelope for you to return the survey. Please have the survey back by March 15, 2004. Once again, thank you for your help in this study.

Sincerely,

Mike Dickson