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# The Impact of the Academic Progress Rating on the Retention and Recruiting Strategies of NCAA Division I Football Programs

Joshua Castle

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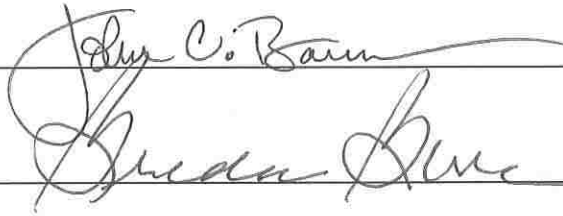
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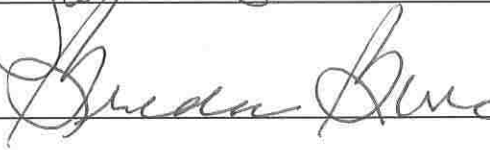
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committee member  
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front matter)

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**THE IMPACT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRESS  
RATING ON THE RETENTION AND RECRUITING  
STRATEGIES OF NCAA DIVISION I FOOTBALL PROGRAMS**

**BY**

**JOSHUA CASTLE**

B.S., Kinesiology, Pennsylvania State University 2000  
M.S., Sport Science, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Sports Administration**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**July, 2010**

## DEDICATION

*To Julie,*

*Thank you for all of your love, sacrifice, and support.*

*Without you, this dissertation or my doctorate would not have been completed.*

*It is as much your accomplishment as it is mine.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Most of all the author would like to thank God. *Philippians 4:13* "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Without God none of this would have been possible.

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**ABSTRACT**

In 2004, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) adopted legislation that it hoped would help increase the graduation rates of student athletes. The Academic Progress Rating (APR), was designed to hold each individual athletic program accountable for keeping student athletes eligible and at the institution until the student athlete graduates. With this reform the NCAA attached land mark discipline measures for non compliance of the APR standards.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that the APR has had on NCAA college football programs. Specifically, this study focused on assessing coaches' and directors of football operations' (DFOs) responses to questions regarding the issues of contention by football coaches and DFOs that lie within the APR legislation and how this legislation has changed their recruiting and retention strategies.

The 234 DFOs and coaches that serve in that position at NCAA Division I institutions were chosen as subjects for this study. They were asked to complete a survey containing questions about how the APR has changed their program's recruiting and

retention strategy. In addition, they were asked how the APR has affected their program's graduation rate, amount of resources they and their athletic department have dedicated to academics, and the amount of transfers they have coming into and leaving their program, due to the APR. These responses were then analyzed to see if there were any differences among BCS automatic bid conferences and non-BCS automatic bid conferences.

The results indicated that there was no significant difference between BCS and non-BCS programs in terms of retention and recruiting strategies due to the APR legislation. However, results did indicate that 45.6% of Division I college football programs changed their recruiting strategy. Of the respondents, 56.3% are slightly less, less, or extremely less likely to recruit prospects that are potential discipline problems. In addition, 64.1% of football programs were slightly less, less, or extremely less likely to recruit academically challenged prospects. While 45.7% of programs said they were slightly less, less or extremely less likely to recruit special admittance prospects.

In terms of retention, 48.6% of football programs indicated that they were slightly more, more, or extremely more likely to retain discipline problems due to the APR. When faced with a student athlete that has convicted a misdemeanor, 17.5% of football programs responded they were slightly more likely or more likely to retain the student athlete.

Other results from this survey showed that 66% of football programs and 75.7% of athletic departments have increased either money or resources to their academic budgets because of the APR legislation. Responses also implied that 61.1% of football programs were slightly more likely, more, or were extremely more likely to monitor class attendance due to the APR legislation. The results also indicated that 83.5% of football



programs feel they have graduated more student athletes since the inception of the APR. Additionally, 28.2% of football programs stated that they have more student athletes transferring out of their program than into the program.

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## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1906, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has had to deal with institutions using players that were not really students (Crowley, 2006). However, the connotation in which that statement is made has changed. In the beginning, the NCAA was attempting to eliminate the use of “tramp athletes” or athletes that would jump from school to school just to play intercollegiate athletics (Crowley, 2006).

Now, the NCAA is trying to make sure that students are academically capable of attaining a college degree and attempting to ensure that these student athletes earn a degree. The NCAA governs the academic standards of prospective and current student athletes in an attempt to ensure that only academically qualified students are competing in intercollegiate athletics (Barnes, 2004). One of the newest attempts by the NCAA to ensure this is called the Academic Progress Rating (APR) (Meyer, 2005). As with previous NCAA academic legislation, the APR has been implemented with great debate as to the validity and fairness of the methodology in which the APR legislation has been imposed.

The NCAA implemented the APR on April 29, 2004 in hopes that the legislation would act as a more significant and precise way of measuring whether student athletes are making progress toward their degrees (Christy, Seifried, & Pastore, 2008). It was part of a new academic reform instituted by the NCAA referred to as the Academic Performance Program (APP). The APP includes disclosure requirements by NCAA member institutions for the APR, an Academic Performance Census (APC), and a Graduation Success Rate (GSR) (NCAA, 2009a). The idea behind the APP legislation was that this

reform would hold teams and institutions more accountable for the graduation of student athletes. The late NCAA President Myles Brand proclaimed that this reform was “critically necessary” to make certain student athletes are successful academically (Blackman, 2008, p. 227). However, anytime there is reform or change within a sports organization there will be resistance to the change (Slack & Parent, 2006). In the case of the APR, there was a difference in opinions over the believed outcomes that the legislation would bring (Sperber, 2005.)

Since the time of its origin, average APR scores have increased (Hosick, 2008), but so has the amount of opposition to this legislation. This opposition is primarily due to the increase in penalties imposed by the NCAA for failing to reach the benchmarks established in the APR by-laws. Brand said that the penalties were designed to change behavior and are not intended to be disciplinary (Hosik, 2008).

Two of the biggest opponents to the APR have been historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), and schools that do not compete in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) Conferences (Christy et al., 2008). The main reason for the opposition is that these schools have been the most affected by the APR legislation. The 2008 APR results had 26 teams in danger of being banned from post-season play if their 2009 APR scores did not improve. All 26 teams belonged to HBCU and non-BCS conferences. “The APP needs critical scrutiny because it appears that a disproportionate level of punishment is being levied against HBCUs and African-American males (Blackman, 2008, p. 228).” Of the 150 college teams facing possible scholarship losses in 2008, only 18 were from BCS schools (Progress Reports, 2008).

One main reason for the disparity between BCS schools and non-BCS schools has been money (Blackman, 2008). One hundred and eighty teams cited insufficient resources as the reason for their poor APR scores (Progress Reports, 2008). Another main reason these institutions cited was the departure of academically ineligible players (Progress Reports, 2008). BCS conference schools generate the most money of the schools that compete in the NCAA. This allows them to funnel revenue generated from athletics into their academic support units, which increases the probability that their student athletes will be successful academically.

The APR has other opponents beyond coaches and athletic department administrators. Some higher education faculty and researchers have been opposed to the APR legislation. Many of these opponents see the APR legislation as merely a counter to the negative public relations that the NCAA was receiving from congressional hearings regarding academic integrity (Mangold et al., 2003). Because of the public relations image restoration effort, many of the APR opponents feel that the APR is not strict enough and does not measure true academic stability at institutions (Sperber, 2005).

Cusack (2007) argued that the APR holds institutions accountable for issues that are beyond their control. Institutions believe that they should not be held accountable for players transferring because they do not get along with teammates, coaches, roommates, or deciding to change majors, etc. If a student athlete decides early in the semester that he/she is going to transfer, there may be limited effort to continue to go to class or study at the institution in which the student athlete is leaving. Sperber (2005) and Wolverton (2006) also believe that the APR legislation will not improve academics at universities, but only encourage more cheating by student athletes, coaches, athletic departments, and

college professors. This same sentiment is held by Penn State football coach Joe Paterno. Paterno believes that if an institution is mandated to graduate 50-60 percent of its student athletes in order to be eligible for a bowl game, then the institution is going to graduate 50-60 percent of its student athletes (Sperber, 2005). When President Brand introduced the APP he proclaimed the new program as “well-thought-out (Blackman, 2008, p. 228).” However, even the most well thought-out plan will have its opponents and the APR is no different.

#### Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that the APR has had on NCAA college football programs. Specifically, this study focused on assessing directors of football operations’ (DFOs) and coaches that serve in a DFO capacity, responses to questions regarding the issues of contention by football coaches and DFOs that lie within the APR legislation and how this legislation has changed their recruiting and retention strategies.

#### Study Rationale

1. The purpose of the APR as stated by the NCAA is to change behavior. The purpose of this study was to show whether institutions have changed their behavior in recruiting academically able student athletes due to the APR legislation or if institutions have found ways to circumvent the rules.
2. One of the main missions of the NCAA is to ensure that there are no unfair competitive advantages among member institutions. If the APR unfairly hinders institutions that do not compete in the BCS conferences, then there is a competitive advantage that needs to be addressed.



3. One of the main objections to the APR by coaches is the fact that their programs are penalized for student athletes that leave the program. Coaches feel as though they can not effectively discipline players that become a nuisance to the program by removing the student from the team without being penalized by the APR. Therefore, some student athletes are not being held accountable for their actions. This study examined whether this is a premise held by a majority of college football coaches and that the amount of transfers coming into the majority of programs is smaller than the amount of student athletes leaving a particular program.

#### Research Questions

- R<sub>1</sub>: Is there a perceived difference in recruiting strategies among college football programs due to the APR?
- R<sub>1A</sub>: Is there a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR?
- R<sub>1B</sub>: Is there a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?
- R<sub>1C</sub>: Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?
- R<sub>1D</sub>: Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual's current position and the APR?

- R<sub>2</sub>: Is there a perceived difference in retention strategies among college football programs due to the APR?
- R<sub>2A</sub>: Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR?
- R<sub>2B</sub>: Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?
- R<sub>2C</sub>: Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?
- R<sub>2D</sub>: Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual's current position and the APR?
- R<sub>3</sub>: Is there a difference in the amount of resources that institutions dedicate to the athletic department for academic efforts before the APR was implemented to after the APR was implemented, due to the APR?
- R<sub>4</sub>: Are programs getting the same number of transfers coming into the program as are leaving?

#### Assumptions

1. The survey instrument was a valid measure of the responses to the questions in this study.
2. Participants responded honestly and accurately to all questions in the survey instrument.
3. Participants' responses were made independently of other participants.

### Limitations

1. Only Division I Football Coaches and DFOs were surveyed.
2. This new survey instrument will have no prior established internal validity beyond a pilot study and evaluation by experts in the field.

### Delimitations

1. The results of this study are indicative of recruiting and retention strategies that were conducted by the institution at the time that the study was conducted.
2. The survey questionnaire was filled out by the Director of Football Operations or a corresponding position and filled out by him/her with the head coaches input.

### Definition of Terms

1. *NCAA Division I*: The top tier of NCAA competition. Schools that compete the majority of the time against other Division I institutions in seven men's and seven women's, or alternatively six men's and eight women's sports. There are requirements for attendance, scheduling and financial aid (Fulks, 2000).
2. *Varsity Athletics*: According to the 2009-2010 NCAA Manual- "The constitution, bylaws and other legislation of this Association, unless otherwise specified therein, shall apply to all teams in sports recognized by the member institution as varsity intercollegiate sports and that involve all-male teams, mixed teams of males and females, and all-female teams. To

be recognized as a varsity sport, the following conditions must be met: (a) The sport shall be one in which the Association conducts championships, except as provided in Bylaw 20.9.3.2.1 or an emerging sport for women per Bylaw 20.02.5; (b) The sport officially shall have been accorded varsity status by the institution's chief executive officer or committee responsible for intercollegiate athletics; (c) The sport is administered by the department of intercollegiate athletics; (d) The eligibility of student-athletes participating in the sport shall be reviewed and certified by a staff member designated by the institution's executive officer or committee responsible for intercollegiate athletics policy; and (e) Qualified participants in the sport shall receive the institution's official varsity awards (NCAA, 2009a).

3. *Academic Progress Rating (APR)*: A calculation that accounts for currently enrolled student athletes receiving institutional financial aid based on athletics ability or, for those institutions or teams that do not offer athletics aid, recruited student-athletes. The rate shall account for the institution's success in retaining and graduating all such student-athletes. In addition, the rate shall account for the academic eligibility of the student athletes including all applicable NCAA, conference and institutional academic eligibility requirements (NCAA, 2009a).
4. *Academic Performance Program (APP)*: NCAA legislation that was put in place to ensure Division I membership is dedicated to providing student athletes with an educational experience in an environment that recognizes

and supports the primacy of the academic mission of its member institutions, while enhancing the ability of student athletes to earn a four-year degree (NCAA, 2009a). The APR, APC, and the GSR all make up the APP.

3. *Academic Performance Census (APC)*: “The APC is an annual compilation of academic performance variables (e.g., credit hours, grade point average) mandated by Division I legislation” (NCAA, 2007a).
4. *Graduation Success Rate (GSR)*: A six- year proportion of those students and student athletes who graduated from the institution versus those who entered the institution. This is different from the Federal Graduation Rates in that the GSR takes into account students that transfer into an institution mid-year (NCAA, 2007a).
5. *Bowl Championship Series (BCS)*: The Sugar Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Orange Bowl, Rose Bowl. These bowls have contracts with the Big-Ten, Pac-10, Big 12, SEC, ACC and the Big East, that dictate that the champions of these conferences play in one of the specific bowls unless they are playing in the NCAA National Championship Game (BCS, 2009).
6. *BCS School*: An institution that competes in the Big-Ten, Pac-10, Big 12, SEC, ACC or the Big East Conferences, and the conference champion receives an automatic bid to either the Sugar Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Orange Bowl, Rose Bowl.
7. *Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)*: institutions founded primarily for the education of African-Americans. There are 105

institutions in the United States with this classification (Department of Interior, 2009)

8. *Core Courses:* A core course is a high school course that must: (a) Be an academic course in one or a combination of these areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, non-doctrinal religion or philosophy; (b) Be four-year college preparatory; (c) Be at or above your high school's regular academic level (no remedial, special education or compensatory courses); and (d) Be completed not later than the high school graduation date of your class [as determined by the first year of enrollment in high school (ninth grade) or the international equivalent] (NCAA, 2007b).
9. *Grade Point Average (GPA):* The NCAA calculates a potential student athlete's grade point average using a 4 point scale: A=4, B=3, C=2, and D=1. An F on a transcript does not earn any points (NCAA, 2007b).
10. *Retention:* A student athlete is considered retained if he/she returns to the institution for the next academic term and is enrolled full time as of the fifth week of classes. Retention does not require the student athlete to return to the team, just the institution (NCAA, 2007b).
11. *Academic Eligibility:* A student athlete is considered to be eligible if he/she meets all of the academic eligibility requirements for the institution, conference, and NCAA after the completion of the term (NCAA, 2007a).
12. *Exhausted Eligibility:* A recruited student athlete has exhausted his/her eligibility for competition in the sport in which athletic related aid was

awarded, if the student athlete: (a) has exhausted his/ her five-year clock; (b) is a partial or non-qualifier who has used three seasons of competition and fails to earn a fourth season of competition by not completing 80 percent of his/her degree program prior to the beginning of their fifth year; (c) a fall sport student athlete who concludes his/her competitive eligibility at the end of the fall term and does not return to the institution subsequent to the fall term; (d) A spring sport student athlete who concludes his/her competitive eligibility at the end of four years (NCAA, 2007a)

13. *Graduation*: A student athlete is considered to have graduated for the purposes of the APR when he/she has completed all graduation requirements and is considered by the institution to have graduated (NCAA, 2007a).
14. *Census Date*: The designated day in an academic term when an institution takes official enrollment counts. This date is determined by the institution and will vary from institution to institution (NCAA, 2007a).
15. *Federal Graduation Rates*: A graduation rate (percent) is based on a comparison of the number (N) of students who entered a college or university and the number of those who graduated within six years (NCAA, 2009b).

## CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the current literature associated with intercollegiate athletics and its role in higher education. Chapter 2 is subdivided into the following areas: (1) The Impact of Athletics in Higher Education; (2) Student Academic Performance; (3) NCAA Legislation to Improve on Student Athlete Graduation Rates; and (4) The NCAA Academic Progress Rating (APR).

### The Impact of Athletics in Higher Education

Since early Greek and Roman times, sports have played an important role within society. Athletics was considered a celebration of the human body and human accomplishment (Scott, 1951). Sporting events coincided with festivals and holidays as a tribute to the gods. Today, sports have an important impact on American society. But in many ways sports have become the primary reason behind the celebrations. The Super Bowl, NCAA National Championship games and tournaments have drawn family, friends, and the general public to gather together to celebrate. Many of these gatherings have their own special rituals and traditions that have continued for decades (Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

The athletes that participate in these spectacles have been elevated to the status of gods in the eyes of the public. They have been elevated above the rest of society by the media and marketing campaigns. Athletics have a tremendous impact on people's lives. They influence our society in multiple ways and levels: culturally, socially, educationally and economically (Coakley, 2004).

Culturally, the impact of sport can be illustrated by the clothes we wear, the foods we eat, and the clichés we use. Socially, the effect of athletics can be seen by the gender,



racial, and political issues that have been entrenched into athletic competition.

Educationally, sports in some cases are seen as a valuable teaching tool. Economically, sports can have a tremendous impact on communities (Goff, 2000; Howard & Crompton, 2004). College sport has grown into a multibillion-dollar industry (Howard & Crompton, 2004).

All of these influences can be seen in a variety of spectrums from youth football and Little League Baseball, to interscholastic sports into intercollegiate athletics through to the Olympics and professional sporting events. There is no escaping the impact of sports in our society. Coakley (2004) stated that sports are much more than a reflection of society. They are so engrained into the fabric of society that society reflects and reacts to what happens in the sporting world.

Since the late 1800's, sports have been a part of the higher education system in the United States (Caughron, 2001; Crowley, 2006; Ridpath, 2008). Athletic scholarships from colleges and universities have given countless individuals opportunities for continued education. Intercollegiate athletics have played a major role in universities for decades. They are an essential part of collegiate life (Toma & Cross, 1996).

Athletics have a noted value to current students, alumni, and the general public. For all of them a sense of pride, community, and school spirit is produced by a connection to their universities' sports teams (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). For students, sporting events provide a venue for one of the main social functions at universities. Alumni gain from the notoriety that comes from the accomplishments of these sport teams. Spectators from outside the community pour thousands of dollars into local economies, which in some cases is the main revenue source for many merchants.

As intercollegiate athletics has grown in popularity, so has the money that is involved with college sports (Zimbalist, 1999). In his book *Beer and Circus*, Sperber (2000) discussed how institutions classified as research one, meaning their primary purpose is to develop research, use intercollegiate athletics as a way to attract more students to their institutions. Thus, generating more money to pay administrators and distinguished faculty members, not to teach but to conduct research.

This premise has created a great debate between college academics and the role that college athletics should play in higher education. The commercialization of college athletics has led many researchers to attack the current system and call for a reform (Sperber, 1990; Sperber, 2000; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Dudererstadt, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). The call for reform of intercollegiate athletics comes from a variety of places, including; The Knight Commission, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) and the Drake Group. The Drake Group and the COIA are a collection of university faculty members and the Knight Commission is a group of university presidents. While these efforts for reform are ongoing, most of the overall efforts have failed to curb the commercialism and academic problems faced everyday in college sport (Ridpath, 2008).

One of the main recommendations by the Knight Commission is to end the “Athletic Arms Race” (Knight Commission, 2001, p. 27). In a report to the Knight Commission, Frank (2004) stated that alumni will donate monies to a university no matter what their athletic success is. Successful athletic teams draw the attention of potential donors; the donors contribute the funds directly to the athletic team, thus diminishing the contributions to the general fund of the university. Frank (2004) also

elaborated on the effect of a Winner-Take-All Market, which he believes is occurring at the university level. A Winner-Take-All Market or an “Arms Race” in the university setting can be illustrated by this example. University X invests one million dollars into their football program in order to receive five million dollars for a bowl appearance contract. University X makes four million dollars from the investment. University Y sees the success and profit of University X and decides to invest two million dollars into its football program, thus making a three million dollar profit. University X then in-turn decides to reinvest three million dollars into its football program thus making a two million dollar profit. This trend continues and the diminished returns reduce the profitability of having a football team. What needs to be remembered in this scenario is that numerous universities are participating in this trend.

There are over one hundred universities competing for a limited number of bowl games or NCAA Basketball Tournament bids. This large pool of universities combined with the “Lake Wobegon Effect” leads to more universities losing money than making money on athletic programs (Frank, 2004, p. 15). The “Lake Wobegon Effect” is the psychological term for the phenomena where everyone thinks that they are above average drivers or that they are above average in looks when asked (Frank, 2004, p. 15). In a similar effect, because universities believe they have above average athletic programs, they spend more money on their athletic programs to ensure success.

As the stakes have risen in college athletics, so has the pressure to win. Many times the money that institutions receive from athletic success is put back into the athletic department in an attempt to attract more and better athletes to the institution. By having a better athletic team, the university hopes to attract more students to the general body

(Sperber, 2000). This in-turn provides the university with the much needed money for the general university fund (Sperber, 2000). In addition, this causes the universities to blur their official and operative goals and these goals sometimes do not align with one another. Official goals are the goals that an institution markets to the public, while operative goals are goals that deal with the actual internal goals of the organization (Slack & Parent, 2006). This misalignment results in a competing values framework between making money and gaining prestige for the university or providing a top notch education to students so that they can succeed in life and enhance our society. When institutions have a goal of making money and gaining prestige, they often turn to athletics as a marketing tool.

#### *Athletics as a Marketing Tool*

The positive affects from athletic success drawing more media and sponsor attention to universities is difficult to ignore. Bremmer and Kesselring (1993) stated “A curiosity of higher education is that its primary form of media exposure (and advertising) derives from a distinctly nonacademic enterprise--intercollegiate sports” (p. 410). With an increase in athletic success, studies have shown an increase in media attention. Since media attention on athletic programs is essentially free marketing for the university, it must be seen as a positive influence on the university. Examples of this affect can be seen as far back as 1870, when Harry Barnard, President of Columbia University, stated after a crew team victory that the team did more to make Columbia known than any of their predecessors (Leifer, 1995).

Alan and Peters (1982) determined that the decision of first-year students at DePaul University was positively influenced by the success of the men’s basketball team.

They concluded that a key marketing strategy to attract students to the university should include the men's basketball team.

In 1995, Northwestern University had an undefeated football team and earned a trip to the Rose Bowl. National news articles about Northwestern University increased by 185% that year (Honan, 1996). Southern Methodist University in 1987 and 1988 had 133 national stories devoted to their football program (Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994). After being placed on probation by the NCAA that number fell to a mere five to eight stories per year over the next couple of years. This study showed the opposite effect; unsuccessful athletic programs can actually hinder an institution's exposure.

In many ways, athletics is the main source of marketing for Division I institutions. Athletics produces free marketing to thousands of prospective students through newspaper and television coverage of university sporting events. A university would be hard pressed to find a more efficient and effective way of spreading its name and identity to the masses. Many administrators have made the realization that a winning team can provide an effective means of advertising their institution and securing much needed additional funding (Davies, 1994).

#### *The Relationship between Athletics and Freshmen Applications*

The impact of intercollegiate athletic success and increasing freshmen applications is an important argument for the support of athletic programs and is widely contested. This is illustrated by the numerous studies conducted on the matter. Some studies have shown minimal or no significant effects, while others have shown a correlation between the two factors. There are many variables that could account for increases and decreases in freshmen applications. It is hard to pinpoint one deciding

factor and say that it has a lone impact on enrollment (Frank, 2004). However, there are studies that have investigated this correlation and shown a positive effect on freshmen applications. These studies concentrate on Division I institutions, in particular football and men's basketball.

The correlation between football success and an increase in freshmen applications has been given an identifying name among admissions officers. "The Flutie Spike" refers to a phenomenon that happened at Boston College in 1984 (Honan, 1996, p. 34). Doug Flutie capped a dramatic comeback with a touchdown in the last play of the game to lift Boston College over Miami. This incident produced a large increase in freshmen applications the following fall. Applications went from just over 14,000 in 1984 to over 16,000 in 1985 (Honan, 1996).

Borland, Goff and Pulsinelli (1992) found at Western Kentucky University that an improvement from .500 to .750 in basketball winning percentage saw an increase of about 430 applications. Georgia Southern had a five hundred student enrollment increase after adding football as a varsity sport. One hundred students can be accounted for as incoming student-athletes, but that does not explain the additional four hundred students.

Chressanthis and Grimes (1993) found that winning in football translated into increased enrollment demand at Mississippi State University. The study also concluded the reverse to be true. When Mississippi State University was placed under NCAA sanctions, thus lowering football winning percentage, a decrease in freshmen applications was produced.

Another example of athletic success translating into increased applications to a university occurred in 1995. The University of Connecticut won the Women's Basketball

National Championship and their men's basketball team made it to the quarter-finals of the NCAA Tournament, a study indicated that twenty-two percent of all the people aged sixteen and over said they would like to apply for admission because of the success of the basketball programs. That fall applications to the University of Connecticut increased by 4.2 percent (Honan 1996).

With all the benefits and financial incentives that athletics can offer universities, many outsiders and faculty members question, what are the student athletes getting in return? The question becomes whether the student athletes are being exploited and what are the institutions of higher education and the NCAA doing to ensure that student athletes are not being taken advantage of. While the NCAA and its member institutions are showing that in some instances the graduation of student athletes is higher than the graduation of the general student body (Lawry, 2005), the question of academic integrity still remains.

#### Student Athletes Academic Performance

The exploitation of student athletes by institutions of the NCAA has long been debated and criticized. Many critics believe that major intercollegiate athletic programs at the Division I level are destroying the undergraduate educational system (Sperber, 2000, Mangold, Bean & Adams, 2003) and that these universities are not fulfilling their obligation of providing quality educational opportunities to student athletes (Ferris, Finster, & McDonald, 2004). The research surrounding this issue is extremely contradictory. For every article that supports the notion that institutions are not fulfilling their obligation, there is an equally powerful piece of research that shows they are or that researchers are comparing apples to oranges, and not apples to apples.

However, due to increased media and public perception that institutions are exploiting student athletes, the NCAA, over the past three years, has instituted stricter by-laws on member institutions to improve on the graduation rates for student athletes (Meyer, 2005). These stricter by-laws make it increasingly important for colleges and universities to identify barriers to academic achievement in order to improve on graduation rates. The NCAA has promised unprecedented sanctions for institutions that fail in fulfilling their obligation to their student athletes and society (Meyer, 2005). In order for institutions of higher education to avoid these sanctions and fulfill their obligations, it is important for each individual university to understand the barriers that prevent their student athletes from obtaining academic success.

#### *Characterizing Athletic Success*

There is a perception for many student athletes that intercollegiate athletics is merely a stepping-stone to their professional careers. Sperber (2000) believed that some institutions foster this belief and use the dreams of young naïve student athletes to take advantage of them. This sentiment could have stemmed from a study conducted by Adler and Adler (1985). In that study, it was believed that student athletes enter college with every intention of earning a college degree. Student athletes entered college with optimistic and idealistic attitudes and goals about their academic career in college. This optimism and idealism progressively was relinquished as the student athletes advanced through their years at the university. The athletes indicated that their athletic careers became barriers to their academic pursuits.

The idea that athletics is a barrier to academic achievement would be supported by Maloney and McCormick (1992), who suggested that athletes perform worse in-season



than out-of-season. This could be due to the demanding training and practice routines that athletes have.

The amount of time that student athletes give to athletics is much more than non-athletes give to their extra-curricular activities (Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006). As a result of this, many of the athletes become disengaged with their expectations and goals for their academic careers. This disengagement of academic goals and dreams by student athletes resulted in sub-standard grades or simply meeting the bare minimum of academic standards, in order to pursue their own or the institution's alternative athletic careers. However, it should be noted that Maloney and McCormick (1992) found that students involved in revenue generating sports on average do worse than non-revenue generating student athletes and that student athletes that participated in non-revenue generating sports performed academically the same as non-athletes.

Lally and Kerr (2005) determined the opposite effect occurred; student athletes became more focused on their academic career as they went through college. Their results indicated that student athletes entered college with no or limited knowledge as to their own academic career objectives. This was due mostly to their self-identity as an athlete. As the student athlete's career evolved, some of them discarded their sports career ambitions and allowed their student identity to become more apparent. The lack of career planning maturity was then a barrier that prevented the student-athletes from having the focus that is needed to achieve academic success in their first and most vital years of college. It could be as student athletes see the possibility of their professional athletic careers fade that they become more focused on their alternative academic dreams.

It is also possible that they are like every other college student and really not know what they want as a career or how to get to that career.

People that self identify as athletes have an athlete identity, which means they focus their lives and attention around athletics (Beamon & Bell, 2006). The athlete identity and expectation of athletic success beyond intercollegiate athletics was considered to be a major barrier for academic success among minority student athletes (Beamon & Bell, 2006). In their study, minority student athletes that came from a low socioeconomic background often see athletics as the most viable means of economic success. This focus and belief is instilled in individuals at a young age and fosters a belief of ensured success despite the odds. The overall identification as athletes therefore places athletic success over academic success. The only reason to pursue academics is to maintain eligibility, which the researchers also found to be reinforced by athletes' parents. The authors further found that the more parents pushed for academic success, then the more academically successful the student athlete. However, it was also found the more likely the parents were to stress academic success; the parents were also more likely to stress athletic success. The emphasis to place athletics above academics was still present.

The idea of athletic success and identity being barriers to academic success is not isolated to the collegiate ranks. These perpetuated beliefs often first arise in the scholastic arena and then transfer to college. The lack of focus in high school then condemns the athlete to mediocrity or worse in college. This philosophy is discussed in the next section.

### *High School Academic Achievement*

Many researchers believe that one of the main barriers for student athletes not achieving academic success is the student athletes' lack of preparedness academically for the rigors of higher education. Sperber, in his book *Beer and Circus* (2000), discussed how he feels that big-time college athletics is crippling undergraduate education. He classifies student athletes as vocational workers paying their way through college through a non-academic means. Sperber (2000) says that this is a result of universities' officials being forced to admit non-qualified student athletes into institutions of higher education. Because poorly qualified student athletes are being allowed into these institutions they are forcing the institutions and their faculty to lower their expectation of students and offer courses that are defined as "jock classes" where there are little expectations (Sperber, 2000, p. 83). Sperber (2000) discussed how big time athletics and the "circus" around them is designed to attract students to the university, keep them entertained while they attend, and get them to donate money to the university after they leave (Sperber, 2000, p. 96). Sperber (2000) also discussed how institutions keep the status quo by forcing athletes into majors that keep them eligible to participate in intercollegiate competitions even though it might not be the student athletes' best interest. This aspect can lead into the academic disengagement discussed in an earlier section.

Previously Maloney and McCormick (1992) had presented similar findings. Their research indicated that college athletes do not perform as well in the classroom as their non-athlete peers. Their findings showed that student athletes came into college with inferior high school preparation and scored on average 150 points lower on their SAT

scores. Because of this deficit, graduation rates for student athletes were about 10% lower than the general student population. The authors suggested that a strong academic background in high school is critical to academic achievement in college. Essentially, good grades in high school lead to good grades within the college environment.

Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006), analyzed the current educational practices of athletes and compared it to the educational practices of non-athletes. In particular, the authors discussed the engagement in effective educational practices. Previous research has suggested that student athletes are under-prepared for the academic demands of higher education and receive preferential treatment. The researchers concluded that student engagement in academics was a function of both individual effort and institutional practices and procedures to make educationally purposeful activities. On average, student athletes are as engaged in purposeful educational activities as their non-athlete peers. This study suggests that in general there are few differences between athletes and non-athletes academically. However, athletes did report that their institutions provided more academic and social support than they do non-athletes. This is supported by the fact that student athletes (62%) at many institutions have a higher graduation rate than non-athletes (60%) (NCAA, 2004). These differences could be due to the tutoring and academic support that student athletes at some institutions receive.

Wolniak, Pierson, and Pascarella (2001) showed that the differences in academic support and tutoring could eliminate athletic participation as a barrier. The researchers accounted for numerous variables that could also be considered barriers to college academic achievement. One of the variables included pre-college cognitive test scores,

and pre-college academic motivation, the results of their study indicted that student athletes made net gains in learning similar to their non-athlete counterparts.

### *Social Influences*

There are a great many social variables that could effect and be considered barriers to academic achievement. These social variables however, never really stand alone, but it is the interaction with each of the other variables that make them pragmatic. Storch, Storch, Killiany, and Roberti (2005) studied these variables. The purpose of their research was to identify differences between athletes and non-athletes in psychosocial maladjustments. Prior research had indicated that athletes have higher levels of alcohol use, symptoms of depression, social anxiety, and less social support than their non-athlete counterparts. These attributes often are in direct or indirect conflict with achieving academic success. There are numerous stressors associated with student athletes moving into more elite intercollegiate levels of competition. Athletes in some situations go from being elite in high school to becoming average or below average athletically in college. Combine that with moving away from friends and family and often times elite athletes have difficulties in adjusting. These difficulties in athletics often matriculate into their academic sphere and affect their ability to be successful. Student athletes often times see their inadequacies on the playing field and attempt to rectify the situation by devoting more time to their athletic endeavors, sacrificing study time in its place. Female athletes reported significantly higher differences in social anxiety, symptoms of depression and social support than their male counterparts and both sexes of non-athletes. Intercollegiate athletes also reported a greater need for counseling regarding time management, stress,

burnout, fear of failure, anxiety, depression and performance related issues (Storch et al, 2005).

Wolniak, Pierson, and Pascarella (2001), addressed numerous variables that could also be considered barriers to college academic achievement. These variables included: pre-college cognitive test scores, race, age, socio-economic status, pre-college academic motivation, in addition to various academic and non-academic experiences during college. The results of their study indicated that student athletes made net gains in learning similar to their non-athlete counterparts. The results also indicated that affiliation in a Greek organization conflicted more than athletics in regards to academic achievement. Membership in both groups (student athlete and Greek organizations) was found to be a major barrier to academic success during the sophomore year of college. The desire for athletes to be involved with Greek organizations could stem from the psychosocial maladjustments discussed by Storch et al (2005).

Race was also considered to be one of the social barriers that can limit the academic achievement of student athletes. With a great number of student athletes in football and men's basketball being from a minority background this is an important issue to address. Beamon, and Bell (2006), in their study looked at color and culture as potential barriers for academic success. Minority student athletes that come from a low socioeconomic background often see athletics as the most viable means of economic success. This focus and belief is instilled in individuals at a young age and fosters a belief of ensured success despite the odds. This belief is often reinforced through media images, role models, and parents, which encourages them to become athletes. The overall

identification as athletes therefore places athletic success over academic success. It was the belief for many of the study's subjects that the only reason to pursue academics is to maintain eligibility, which the researches also found to be reinforced by the athletes' parents (Beamon & Bell, 2006). Due to these low expectations, black student athletes faced more difficulties in front of academic review boards and are more likely to be suspended instead of given second chances. Beamon and Bell (2006), further found that the more parents pushed academic success the more academically successful the student athlete. However it was also found the more likely the parents were to stress academic success, the more likely the parents were also to stress athletic success. The emphasis to place academics above athletics was still not present. One thing that was found by the authors was that the more likely the parents were to attend a student athlete's game the better the student performed academically.

Many of these social influences can cause student athletes to transfer from one institution to another, in addition to directing their focus on a specific element of their lives, sports or academics. That also leads into the question of whether programs are getting the same number of transfers coming into the program as are leaving.

#### NCAA Legislation to Improve on Student Athlete Graduation Rates

The NCAA has been concerned about eligibility and graduation of student athletes since the organization's inception (Crowley, 2006; Ridpath, 2008). Initially, intercollegiate athletics was governed and implemented by students at the universities that they attended. However, faculty and administration soon realized that institutional oversight was needed in regards to intercollegiate athletics (Ridpath, 2008). The student

groups that were in control of intercollegiate athletics, in the post-Civil War era, hired players and allowed them to compete as non-students (Gorn & Goldstein, 1993). The wide use of “ringers” and “tramp athletes” by most colleges during this time left many to wonder who was in control of intercollegiate athletics (Crowley, 2006, p. 4). Most of these ringers and tramp athletes were football and baseball players. As more and more colleges and universities used these tramp athletes and these practices became the norm, faculty members started to assert their displeasure with the current system (Barnes, 2004; Crowley, 2006). In the 1890’s Harvard, Wisconsin, Michigan and other institutions’ faculty committees sought to discontinue the sport of football (Crowley, 2006).

After the Civil War, football became a major college sport that captured the attention of the nation (Crowley, 2006). The game was extremely violent with numerous deaths resulting from the sport. In 1905, there were 18 fatalities and 149 serious injuries, which outraged numerous opponents to the game (Falla, 1981). That year, President Theodore Roosevelt gave university presidents a choice: reform football or abolish it. In 1906 the Western Conference met in Chicago and discussed possible changes to football and the athletic programs. Their suggestions included a one year residency before being able to participate; satisfactory academic performance by players; coaches to be institutional staff members and not professionals that were paid at regular faculty salaries; cost reductions and cheap fees for student admission (Crowley, 2006). “The meeting was directed toward developing a strong faculty control over athletic programs” (Crowley, 2006, p. 5). These reformers made some progress in curbing recruiting and subsidization abuses in college athletics, but the problem still persisted (Falla, 1981). Later in 1906, a larger group of institutions met in New York. The desire for institutional control over



athletics, and increased pressure by President Roosevelt to govern the sport of college football, eventually lead to the formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, which was changed the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) four years later (Scott, 1951). The “Association’s father was football and its mother was higher education” (Hawes, 1999, p.1).

Since its beginning, the NCAA has implemented multiple by-laws to attempt to ensure that the exploitation of student athletes and academic corruption does not occur. However enforcement of these rules was left to the individual institution for 50 years in what is known as “Home Rule” (Crowley, 2006 p. 15). The initial goal of this idea was total faculty control. While the NCAA and its member institutions had rules dealing with amateurism, recruiting players and offering inducements, the NCAA was not responsible for enforcing those rules. It was left to individual institutions to enforce the rules (Falla, 1981).

In 1922, the NCAA approved a 10-point code. This code reiterated to the NCAA member institutions the principles of amateurism, the freshmen rule, a prohibition of graduate students and migrant player participation, the importance of not gambling and absolute faculty control of athletics (Falla, 1981). Four years later the Carnegie Foundation published a report on the state of intercollegiate athletics. In the study, it was concluded that faculty control failed all too frequently in managing intercollegiate athletics (Crowley, 2006) and found them to be in a state of disarray (Barnes, 2004). “Home-rule” was not working because rules were not universal and rules did not always align with the academic purposes and missions of the universities (Barnes, 2004, p. 20).

The report also concluded that commercialism and negligent attitudes toward education was at the root of the problem. These defects stemmed from heavy burdens of time on student athletes to study and isolation from the regular student body (Crowley, 2006). “Students who are on scholarship must practice, train, and play in order to receive their scholarship benefits” (Barnes, 2004, p. 21). Student athletes then had to decide which area of their lives they wanted to emphasize, school or athletics (Barnes, 2004). As college sports and the NCAA grew there was a definite need for the NCAA to take on more of an enforcement role and it did.

In 1940 the NCAA convention gave the Executive Committee the power to investigate and adjudicate (Falla, 1981). The Executive Committee of the NCAA consisted of a group of university presidents that essentially oversaw the NCAA. While enforcement was not included, it opened the door for the NCAA to start to monitor compliance issues of institutions. After World War II the echo of old principles reemerged. The “Sanity Code” refocused the association on amateurism, recruitment, institutional control, and academic standards for athletes (Crowley, 2006, p. 30). The Sanity Code was different from the previous legislation. It provided the executive committee with the power to interpret the constitution and enforce the bylaws of the organization. However the only penalty that institutions faced for violations was expulsion from membership, which also required two-thirds vote from the convention delegates (Hawes, 1991).

Because of the harsh penalty and the almost impossibility of expulsion the Sanity Codes were repealed in 1951. Later that year the NCAA approved a new code which

covered many of the same concerns regarding curriculum matters, academic progress, financial assistance, eligibility and adherence to the rules (Crowley, 2006). The new code also established the Subcommittee on Infractions (Falla, 1981).

Again a call for reform came in the early 1950's, this time it was from the American Council on Education (ACE) (Crowley, 2006). ACE is a group of faculty that is guided by institutional presidents. Their goals were to: relieve external pressures on athletics, protect institutional control, develop strong enforcement measures, and suggest standards of practice (Byers & Hammer, 1995). Part of the actions that ACE wanted to implement to reach these goals was admission standards for athletes and non-athletes to be the same (Byers & Hammer, 1995). ACE's efforts met with little avail and the committee faded (Crowley, 2006).

As the NCAA grew in terms of members and power, Walter Byers, the newly elected President of the NCAA focused on enforcement (Crowley, 2006). Television revenues for college athletics began to grow and a rift in the NCAA led to the classification of colleges and universities into divisions (Crowley, 2006).

The first attempts of the NCAA to control academic integrity would now be considered to be minimal at best. A study in 1962 conducted by the NCAA examined the academic records of 40,900 student athletes from 80 member institutions. The results from this study were developed into an expectancy table to predict academic success (Barnes, 2004). In 1965, this developed into the NCAA's first freshmen eligibility rule and the 1.60 Rule was adopted. The premise behind this legislation was to curb the admission of student athletes with questionable academic credentials (Crowley, 2006).

With this rule, any incoming freshmen must be predicted to obtain at least a 1.60 grade point average on a 4.00 scale (GPA) over his/her college career. The prediction was based on high school rank, and/or GPA and standardized testing (either ACT or SAT). It was hoped that this formula would make the student athlete population comparable to the general student body (Byers & Hammer, 1995). The rule, however, was not without opposition. Harvard, Yale and Pennsylvania refused to apply the rule and were barred from postseason competition. Other opponents believed that a C- average was too low of a standard, while others schools, particularly HBCUs, believed that the standardized test showed a bias against economically disadvantaged students (Crowley, 2006).

The 1.60 rule was replaced in 1973 by the 2.00 Rule. The 2.00 Rule stated that any incoming freshmen must have a high school GPA of at least 2.00. Some felt that this was actually a regression from the 1.60 Rule because the 1.60 actually predicted that the student athlete was capable of doing at least “C” work, where as the 2.00 Rule did not really predict anything (Pickle, 2008). Then NCAA Executive Director, Walter Byers was quoted as saying, “Losing the 1.60 rule was one of the most painful experiences in the 22 years I had then served” (Byers & Hammer, 1995, p. 165-166). The 2.00 essentially created an open enrollment policy for students to participate in intercollegiate athletics (Petr, 1988). The 2.00 Rule also brought about opposition from ACE, who once again called for reform and rehabilitation of college athletics in 1974 (Barnes, 2004; Crowley, 2006). Because of the 2.00 Rule and the basic ineffectiveness of the rule, a movement began to change the education landscape of college athletics. This movement eventually led to a stronger freshmen eligibility policy, “Prop 48” (Pickle, 2008).

The reform movement developed from the public gaining knowledge of poor student athlete graduation rates and athletic cheating scandals (Sperber, 1990). From 1974-1983 the NCAA committee on infractions handed out punishments on eleven different cases (Crowley, 2006). It was the belief that these infractions occurred because some student athletes were not academically prepared for higher education. A majority of these cases involved football and basketball programs (Crowley, 2006).

Proposition 48 was one of the most controversial by-laws in the history of the organization. Even during its inception at the 1983 NCAA convention, debates raged (Pickle, 2008).

Proposition 48 had three criteria for freshmen eligibility: The student athletes must have 2.0 GPA, must have 11 core courses, and must have scored a 700 on the SAT (Sellers, 1992). This last factor was the main debate point. Many leaders at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) felt that the SAT score standard discriminated against economically challenged minorities. This debate continued after Proposition 48 was passed, but this time in the courts of law. The NCAA “has been praised, vilified and taken before congress- all because what the legislation represented and how it evolved” (Pickle, 2008, p. 34). The controversy over this legislation lasted for two decades (Byers & Hammer, 1995; Crowley, 2006).

After the inception of Proposition 48, the NCAA did see an increase in graduation rates at member institutions. However, the NCAA’s Special Committee on Academic Research found that Proposition 48 did have an adverse impact on minorities (Hishinuma, 1999; Hishinuma & Fremstad, 1997; Crowley, 2006).

The advent of Proposition 48 did not solve all of the NCAA's academic integrity problems and the call for reform still echoed on many college campuses. In 1985, the "Integrity Convention" had eight reform policies proposed (Crowley, 2006, p. 68). Among them was an annual academic report that would cover entrance requirements, high school GPA reports for football and men's basketball players, and information regarding eligibility and graduation rates for recruited student athletes and the general student body (Crowley, 2006). These measures passed and two years later the "death penalty" was issued to Southern Methodist University (SMU) in part due to academic integrity issues, recruiting violations and extra benefits (Crowley, 2006, p. 68).

With the issuance of the "death penalty" to SMU, credibility was added to the Association's standards and goals (Crowley, 2006, p. 68). However, five years later the NCAA and its member institutions would face another problem. In 1990, Dexter Manley, a former football star at Oklahoma State University testified before Congress that he was able to get into college even though he was illiterate (Ferris, 2004). Because of the congressional hearing the House and the Senate passed the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, which mandated colleges and universities to report graduation statistics to the Secretary of Education (Ferris, 2004). As a part of this, the NCAA instituted the Mandatory Academic Support for Student Athletes bylaw in 1991 (Meyer, 2005). This by-law mandated that Division I institutions have counseling and tutoring services for all student athletes.

The congressional hearings created the call for reform once again. Many of the same groups criticized the NCAA including the Carnegie Foundation, ACE and some

new organizations like the Knight Commission and the Mellon Foundation (Crowley, 2006).

The Knight Commission in 1991 issued a report that called for the reform of intercollegiate athletics in three areas: Presidential Control; Financial Responsibility; and Academic Integrity. The Knight Commission made specific recommendation in each one of these areas.

The Knight Commission had numerous suggestions for presidential control. The commission felt that trustees should explicitly endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in athletics governance, delegate authority over finances, affirm the president's authority for personnel and annually review athletics program. They also felt that presidents should oversee and act to control conferences in addition to controlling the NCAA. In addition to these recommendations, presidents should be committed to gender equity and controlling their institutions involvement with commercial television (Knight Commission, 1993).

In terms of academic integrity, the commission suggested restricting special admittances for athletes, monitoring progress toward degrees, and that graduation rates should be a criterion for NCAA certification (Knight Commission, 1993). Specifically, the commission made a number of policy recommendations which included:

The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements: By 1995, initial eligibility should be based on a 2.00 average in 15 units of high school academic work and a combined score of 700 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT; High school student-athletes should be ineligible for reimbursed campus visits (or signing a letter of intent)

until they show reasonable promise of being able to meet degree requirements; Junior college transfers who did not, on graduating from high school, meet proposition 48 requirements, should “sit out” a year of competition after transfer; The NCAA should study the feasibility of requiring the range of academic abilities of incoming athletes to approximate the range of abilities of the entire freshman class; The letter of intent should serve the student as well as the athletics department; Athletics scholarships should be offered for a five-year period; Athletics eligibility should depend on progress toward a degree; Graduation rates of athletes should be a criterion for NCAA certification (Knight Commission, 1993, p. 11).

The report received positive public reception and some of the suggestions were implemented by the NCAA (Crowley, 2006).

In 1992, Proposition 16 was voted into existence and was later implemented in 1995. Proposition 16 was similar to Proposition 48. Proposition 16 changed the core course requirement from 11 to 13 classes. It also changed the SAT and the GPA requirements. The system went to a sliding scale. The higher a student athletes' GPA was, the lower the SAT requirement. The scale worked the other way as well. The higher the student athletes' SAT score was, the lower the GPA requirements (Pickle, 2008). In addition, Proposition 16 also eliminated the term of partial qualifier for NCAA Division I member institutions. Proposition 16 again brought back the debate over the discrimination of minorities for using standardized testing to determine eligibility (Hishinuma, 1999; Hishinuma & Fremstad, 1997).



Another part of the academic reform initiatives proposed by the NCAA in 1992 was the 25/50/75 Rule (Meyer, 2005). Later the NCAA would change this to the 40/60/80 Rule. To be eligible to represent an NCAA institution in intercollegiate athletic competition, a student athlete must be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies, be in good academic standing and maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree (NCAA, 2007). The terms "good academic standing" and "progress toward degree" are interpreted by each individual member institution (NCAA, 2009a, p. 148). The academic officials that determine the meaning and application of such terms for the general student body are also responsible for determining this for all student athletes as well. This is subject to the controlling regulations of the institution; the conference the institution is a member of, and any applicable NCAA legislation (NCAA, 2007). The NCAA has set provisions that dictate how member institutions calculate progress toward degree. These provisions are highlighted in NCAA Bylaw 14.4.3.1.7 (2009a, p. 150), which states:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-

degree requirements if:(1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;(2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward degree previously sought; and (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.(d) A student-athlete who has designated a specific degree program with an identified major may not use a course to fulfill the credit-hour requirement for meeting progress toward degree even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program, if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major.

Part of the legislation that helps to govern the previous bylaw is the 40/60/80 rule. The 40/60/80 Rule may have the biggest impact on the student athletes' ability in maintaining playing eligibility and act as a student within the general student body (Meyer, 2005). The rule is very simple. In order to stay eligible for competition, a student athlete must have 40% progress toward a specific degree by the beginning of their third year, 60% by the beginning by their fourth year and 80% by the beginning of their fifth year (NCAA, 2009a; Meyer, 2005; Sperber, 2005; Cusack, 2007). Originally, this bylaw was passed in 1992, using the percentages 25/50/75 but was changed in 1996 (Meyer, 2005).

In 2001, the Knight Commission issued a new report. This time the new proposals were met with less-than-enthusiastic response (Crowley, 2006). The

commission suggested a coalition of presidential control directed toward academic reform, in addition to de-escalation of the athletics arms race and deemphasizing the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics (Knight Commission, 2001).

The Commission's 2001 recommendations regarding academic reform included five proposals: First, the commission wanted student athletes to have the same admission processes, academic support, choice of major, progress toward degree requirements as other students. The second part of the commission's recommendations included an improvement on graduation rates and that scholarships should be awarded to student athletes until they graduate. The commission also called for a reduction in playing season, so that student athletes can have an opportunity to complete their degrees and improve the quality of their collegiate experience. The final recommendation that the commission made in regards to academics was requesting the National Basketball Association and the National Football League create a minor league system so that those student athletes not serious about higher education can have an alternative route to their professional careers (Knight Commission, 2001).

As mentioned previously, the 2001 Knight Commission Report received less than favorable reviews. Other groups that called for reform like ACE and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities felt as though the commissions report was too "simply stated" (Crowley, 2006). The NCAA felt as though the suggestions were an extension of the 1991 report and that the NCAA was meeting the original goals and principles of the commission (Brown, 2001). Another group voicing its displeasure was the Faculty Athletic Representatives Association (FARA). FARA felt that faculty must

be at the center of reform because academics are the center of their existence (Hartman & Goldfield, 2001).

The academic reform initiatives taken by the NCAA seem to be working. Over the past five years, graduation rates for student athletes have been on the rise. The NCAA reported improvements in 24 of the 35 sports that are measured by the NCAA (Wolverton, 2006). Overall, the male graduation rates rose from 67.6% for students that began school in 1995 to 71.5% for male students that began school in 2000 (Graduation, 2007). Female student athletes also saw an increase in graduation rates. The graduation rate female student athletes beginning their college careers in 1995 graduation was 84.9%. This increased for female student athletes that began in 2000 to 87.3% (Graduation, 2007). Overall 77% of NCAA Division I student athletes are graduating within six years (Wolverton, 2006). These numbers are more spectacular considering the general student body that started school in 2000 only graduated at 62% (Sander, 2007).

While overall graduation rates have improved, graduation rates for scholarship football players have remained relatively constant. The Federal Graduation rates for football programs that compete at the NCAA Division I level have averaged 52% since 1984 (NCAA, 2009b). Since the inception of the sliding scale in 1995, graduation rates for Division I football program have averaged 54% and have not fallen below 52% (NCAA, 2009b). The 2001-2002 cohort most recently achieved the highest graduation rate in 12 years at 56% (NCAA, 2009b).

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Table 2-1

*Federal Graduation Rates for Division I Football*

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Cohort Year	% Graduated
1983-1984	47
1984-1985	48
1985-1986	53
1986-1987	55
1987-1988	56
1988-1989	56
1989-1990	52
1990-1991	50
1991-1992	51
1992-1993	48
1993-1994	48
1994-1995	53
1995-1996	52
1996-1997	54

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Table 2-1 (continued)

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Cohort Year	% Graduated
1997-1998	55
1998-1999	54
1999-2000	54
2000-2001	55
2001-2002	56
2002-2003	55

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*Note.* Cohort year represents the student athletes freshmen year. Adapted From “Federal Graduation Rates Data Archive,” *The NCAA*, <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?ContentID=7721>

Even with all of the success that these new reforms have had there is still a cost. The 40/60/80 Rule negatively impacts a student athlete ability to act as a normal student in the general student body. The rule does not allow student athletes to change majors and stay eligible to play their sport or forces student athletes to choose a major before they are ready (Wolverton, 2007). A student athlete wanting to change majors may not have the percentage required to compete if they choose to change to an unrelated major from that in which they were previously enrolled (Meyer, 2005; Sperber, 2005; Cusack, 2007). The NCAA does have a waiver process, but it is difficult to understand how or why waivers are granted. According to Wolverton (2007), 20% of student athletes are not able to major in the degree of their choice. The rule has also raised concerns that some

student athletes are cheating their way to eligibility or being forced into easy majors by the institution or athletic program so that the student athletes stay eligible to compete in intercollegiate competition (Wolverton, 2006).

To further address the issue of academic progress, the NCAA allocated \$17.5 million for academic support services at member institutions. Among other things, the money was used to provide degree completion funding for those student athletes that exhausted their eligibility and were within one year of finishing their degree (Meyer, 2005).

The most current NCAA legislation efforts that affect graduation rates are Proposal 2003-26, and the Academic Progress Rating (APR). The APR will be discussed in the next section. Proposal 2003-26 is another extension of “Prop 48.” It changed the core course requirement from 14 to 16 starting in 2008 (Pickle, 2008). The core course requirement was changed from 13 to 14 in 2002 with Proposal 22B.

#### The NCAA Academic Progress Rating (APR)

The NCAA implemented the Academic Progress Rating (APR) in 2003. The APR provides insight into a team’s academic success each semester by looking at current academic progress of every student-athlete. The goal of the NCAA is that the APR will provide a “real-time” measure of academic progress (Crowley, 2006, p. 167). The APR includes athletic eligibility, student retention, and graduation rates as factors in the rate calculation and provides a much clearer picture of the current academic culture in each sport and at each institution. Each Division I varsity sports team receives an APR score.

An APR of 925 (out of 1,000) equals roughly a 60 percent Graduation Success Rate (“Inside the APR”, 2006; “Poor-grade Penalties”, 2007).

Institutions and teams can receive penalties or praise from the NCAA based on their APR. High-performing teams receive public recognition from the NCAA. Teams that score below 925 and have a student-athlete who failed academically and left school can lose scholarships. Teams can lose up to ten percent of their scholarships each year for poor academic performance under the immediate penalty structure. Teams with APR scores below 925 face additional sanctions under the historical penalty structure. This penalty structure follows:

- First-year sanction is a public warning letter for poor performance.
- Second-year sanctions include restrictions on scholarships, recruiting and practice time.
- Third-year sanctions result in loss of postseason competition for the team.
- Four consecutive years of poor academic performance results in restricted membership status for an institution. This means the school will not be considered a Division I college or university (NCAA, 2009a).

If an institution fails to report its APR then it cannot compete in NCAA post-season play for that year (NCAA, 2009a). These sanctions will be the first in NCAA history tied directly to student athletes’ academic performance (“Poor-grade”, 2007).

The APR is calculated as such: Each student athlete is worth two points a semester. If the athlete stays at the university then the sport gets one point for the athlete. If the athlete is eligible at the end of the term then the university gets one point for the athlete. So if a student athlete stays at an institution and is academically eligible then the



sport gets two points. An 0-for-2 student-athlete is one who is neither academically eligible nor remains with the institution. An 0-for-2 player might be one who transfers, leaves the institution for personal reasons or leaves to turn pro and would not have been academically eligible had he or she returned (“Explaining”, 2005, p. 7c). Obviously, these are the types of situations the academic-reform structure is most meant to address since they are the most damaging to a team's APR.

While teams cannot always control the reasons student-athletes leave, the contemporaneous penalty holds them accountable for at least making sure student-athletes are academically eligible during their college tenures.

To illustrate the calculating procedure let us examine a college basketball team with 13 scholarships. The maximum amount of points that the team could earn is 52 (13 players multiplied by two points multiplied by two terms). If the team loses a total of four points, then the APR score drops to 923 ( $48/52=.923$ ) (“Explaining”, 2005). This number is then averaged over a six year period to develop the institution's APR for that year.

Not all student athletes are counted in the APR calculations. The process for a student athlete inclusion into the APR cohorts has changed since its inception. The current standards for student athletes to be included in the APR cohort are that they have received financial aid based on athletic ability and are enrolled full time as of the institution's fifth week or official census date, whichever is earlier (NCAA, 2007a). There are two exceptions to this rule. The first exception for student athletes not to be included into the cohort are those student athletes that have graduated and have exhausted their athletic eligibility even if they meet the before mentioned criteria. The second

exception involves student athletes that are enrolled beyond five years or ten semesters of full-time enrollment. These student athletes are not included in the APR calculations (NCAA, 2007a). If an institution does not offer financial aid based on athletic ability, such as institutions that compete in the Ivy League or Patriot League, then the APR cohort is comprised of only recruited student athletes who are listed on the team's roster on the first date of competition and those student athletes that have exhausted eligibility and returned to the institution for a fifth-year to complete their baccalaureate degree (NCAA, 2007a). A recruited student athlete as defined by the NCAA is a prospective student athlete that was (a) provided an official visit; or (b) a coach arranged an off-campus encounter with the prospect or legal guardians; or (c) a coach initiated telephone contact with the prospect or legal guardian on more than one occasion; (d) or a prospect that was issued a National Letter of Intent (NCAA, 2009a).

Sports can also earn APR points for student athletes who leave the institution without graduating and later return to the institution and graduate. The point is awarded to the team's APR in the academic year the former student graduates (NCAA, 2007a). This is commonly referred to as a bonus point. A bonus point can be very beneficial to a team in that the point only goes in the numerator in the calculation (1/0). In some cases this can have a significant impact on a team's overall APR score for a single year.

The 2009 APR results indicated that the legislation was improving graduation rates. The APR for all Division I athletics was up three points from the previous year and showed that the number of student athletes earning an "0-2" was on the decline (Hosick, 2009). However two teams were also assessed postseason bans; Centenary's men's basketball team and Tennessee-Chattanooga's football team (Schad, 2009). In addition to

having the first post season bans, 2009 also saw the first BCS schools lose scholarships for having low APR scores. The University of Mississippi and the University of Minnesota both lost scholarships. The University of Mississippi attributed the low APR score to a change in the head coach, which in-turn caused a number of players to transfer from the University of Mississippi (Schad, 2009).

One of the main reasons for the increase in the overall APR average was an increase in the APR retention points. The 2009 results saw an increase of nearly six points for all NCAA institutions (Hosick, 2009).

Since the APR Legislation is relatively new there are only a limited number of studies pertaining to it. Christy, Seifried and Pastore (2008), surveyed athletic directors, senior women administrators, faculty athletic representatives and head coaches about the impact the APR would have. After the data were analyzed, 64% of the participants felt that the APR would have a positive impact on college athletics and 32% felt that the APR legislation would have little or no impact on college athletics. They were only able to get one response from a football coach, which limits the understanding of the perception of football coaches.

Another study analyzed the retention of student athletes. Le Crom, Warren, Clark, Marolla and Gerber (2009), found among student athletes that competed from 2001-2005 at eight different schools that 7.3% of student athletes were not retained the following year.

“A summary of the overall findings indicated; a) scholarship support alone was not significantly related to retention; b) gender was a significant predictor of retention with female student athletes

having higher rates of retention than their male counterparts; c) sport type was a significant predictor of retention with individual sport student athletes having higher rates of retention than team sport student athletes; d) scholarship support, gender and sport type were all significant predictors of retention” (Le Crom et al., 2009, p. 20).

In their conclusion Le Crom et. al (2009) also discussed how it is harder to retain student athletes that compete in revenue generating team sports because students dream of playing professional sports and in some cases there is an extensive amount of money to be made by those who can make a living as a professional athlete in addition to heightened media attention, fame and glamour. While this is the case, the APR does provide an exemption for student athletes that sign a professional contract (Dawn Martinez, personal communication, March 10, 2008).

Another recent study regarding the APR was conducted to analyze the advantage the BCS has over non-BCS schools in the APR. Bouchet and Scott (2009), looked at the penalized versus non-penalized schools under the APR legislation. Their results indicated that non-BCS schools were penalized more than BCS schools over a three year period.

The purpose of this chapter was to review the current literature associated with intercollegiate athletics and its role in higher education. It was intended provide information regarding the APR and the issues and events that led to its inception. Chapter 2 was subdivided into the following areas: (1) The Impact of Athletics in Higher

Education; (2) Student Academic Performance; (3) NCAA Legislation to Improve on Student Athlete Graduation Rates; and (4) The NCAA Academic Progress Rating (APR).

### CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain the data for this study, the use of human subjects was necessary. This required the review and approval of the University of New Mexico (UNM) human subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB). The research protocol, instrument, informed consent, and departmental approval were submitted to the UNM IRB. That approval was granted.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that the APR has had on NCAA college football programs. Specifically, this study focused on assessing directors of football operations' (DFOs) and coaches that serve in a DFO capacity, responses to questions regarding the issues of contention by football coaches and DFOs that lie within the APR legislation and how this legislation has changed their recruiting and retention strategies. Additionally, this study analyzed the change in resources dedicated to academic advising of college football players before and after the APR legislation was enacted.

This study assessed differences in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR; the differences in recruiting strategies among college football programs due to the APR; changes in retention strategies for all Division I football programs due to the APR; and differences in the amount of resources that institutions dedicate to the athletic department for academic efforts before the APR was implemented to after the APR was implemented.

A questionnaire was developed for use in this study and was administered to DFOs or the corresponding coach that serves in that capacity at NCAA Division I Institutions. The questionnaire was used to obtain all of the data for this study.

The data for this study were gathered during February and March of 2010. The study population consisted of DFOs or coaches that currently hold such positions at NCAA Division I institutions. Upon completion of the instrument by the DFO or coach, the researcher collected the instrument, and entered the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package version 15 for analysis.

#### Census

The researcher included the entire population of active DFOs and coaches that act in that capacity at NCAA Division I institutions, for this study. Not all Division I institutions have DFOs so where there is no DFO, a coach is generally assigned those responsibilities in addition to their regular coaching duties. In order to accomplish this, contact information from the 2009 American Football Coaches Association Directory was used. The directory has addresses and contact names for all 234 Division I institutions. The researcher is a part of this organization and therefore has access and authorization to use this resource. Additionally, permission was received from the DFO National Committee to ensure that there were no objections to using this information to conduct the study.

#### Research Instrument

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed specifically for this study and contained four sections. Items for the survey were developed by the researcher after discussing the APR legislation with various coaches, NCAA compliance officers, and college athletic administrators. In addition, these items were also examined by graduate students in a sports administration program and their feedback was used.

The first section of the survey included an explanation of the study, a subsection for obtaining the participant's informed consent, and directions for the survey. The second section gathered information regarding certain demographic characteristics of the population. The information gathered in the second section included:

- Age range
- Gender
- Level of education
- Race/ethnicity: Which followed the categories used by the U.S. census
- How long the individual worked in college football
- How long the individual has been in their current position
- Type of college or university in regards to BCS, non-BCS and/or HBCU
- Conference affiliation

Some of the data gathered in this section were used to describe the study response group. Race categories followed the ethnic categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Age range categories were ten years apart with the exception of the first category. It is believed that there could only be a handful of DFOs in this category. Age range, length of time in college football, length of time in current position, school type, and conference affiliation were requested to provide independent variables for comparison of data, in order to answer the research questions in this study.

The third section of the instrument contained questions regarding the discipline strategies of the program after the inception of the APR legislation. Using responses from a seven point Likert type scale, which ranged from *extremely less likely* to *extremely more likely*, subjects were asked five general questions on the retention of players with



discipline/behavioral problems. In addition to the seven points on the Likert type scale, a “Don’t Know” response was an option. In addition to the Likert type scale questions there were several questions regarding transfers coming into the program and leaving the program, the graduation of student athletes, and the dedication of resources to academics by the program and the athletic department. These questions had pre-determined responses from which to choose.

The fourth section of the survey had questions that dealt with recruiting strategy changes due to APR legislation that was passed by the NCAA. These four questions were also administered using a seven point Likert type scale which again ranged from *extremely less likely* to *extremely more likely*. Also included in the Likert type scale was a “Don’t Know” option. In addition to the questions using the Likert type scale, there was one yes or no question regarding changes in the overall recruiting strategy of the program.

In order to establish content validity and construct validity for this instrument, the following measures were taken:

- A pilot study of the instrument for feedback and psychometric evaluation was conducted.
- Questions were reviewed by a panel of experts including:
  - Three professors of Sports Management Program at the University of New Mexico.
  - A Faculty Athletic Representative, and former member of the NCAA Research Committee.

The panel of experts was asked to review the survey and give an evaluation of the sections validity. This included:

- Understanding the question, wording, terminology, meaning and clarity.
- The extent to which the questions were relevant to the study's purpose.

The panel asked the researcher to include a "Don't Know" answer to all of the Likert type questions. The researcher accepted the changes and adjusted the survey. A sample of the survey can be found in Appendix A. A seven point scale was utilized to widen the range of scores in an attempt to maximize the potential of finding relationships between the variables (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

#### Pilot Study

To further enhance the validity of the survey instrument, a pilot study was performed in accordance with the UNM IRB guidelines. The survey instrument, cover letter and follow-up questions were in the IRB's consideration for approval.

The survey instruments were distributed to football coaches at a NCAA Division I institution. The coaches were asked to read the cover letter and complete the survey, then provide feedback regarding wording and content of the instrument after it was completed. The following questions were utilized:

- Are the questions in the survey easy to understand?
- Do the questions in the survey use appropriate terminology?
- Do you feel like there are any questions that need to be asked that are not included in the survey?
- Do you feel like there are any questions that are inappropriate?
- Do you feel like any questions contain material that is too sensitive?

After the pilot data and the results of the follow-up questions were collected, the data were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics. The follow-up questions were analyzed

for clarity and terminology within the instrument. The following adjustments to the instrument were made based of the responses to the follow-up questions:

- A “No Change” was added to all of the Likert Type Questions
- Changed the term “Special Admit” to Special Admittance.

The DFO that was included in the pilot was excluded in the overall study results.

#### Procedures

The final version of the survey instrument was distributed to NCAA Division I DFOs and coaches during February of 2010. Utilizing the 2009 American Football Coaches Association Directory, the instruments were mailed to all 234 NCAA Division I institutions and addressed to the DFO. A description and purpose of the study was included in the cover letter. Also included in the mailing was a statement of confidentiality and consent form, contact information, and specific directions for the instrument and for the subject upon completion of the survey. An example of the letter can be found in Appendix B.

Upon completion of the instrument, the respondent was instructed to enclose the survey in the provided blank envelope. The blank envelope was then to be placed into the self addressed stamped envelope and mailed back to the researcher.

Once the researcher received the envelope, he opened the self addressed envelope and removed the unidentifiable envelope from the return packet. The self addressed envelope was then shredded. The unidentifiable envelope remained sealed until four weeks had passed from the initial mailing of the survey or all 234 responses were collected. This aided in the anonymity of responses.

In order to increase the likelihood of responses, the researcher sent out reminder cards one week, and two weeks after the initial mailing. The reminder cards asked the DFO or coach to complete the survey and return it in a timely manner.

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 15. The researcher entered the data four weeks after the initial mailing. All analyses were made with a pre-set alpha level of .05. In order to have a 95% confidence level the study needed 140 of the 234 subjects to respond in order to avoid sampling bias (Gay et al., 2006).

To answer research question one, (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies among college football programs due to the APR?”), descriptive statistics were employed utilizing question numbers one through five in section three of the survey. Each of the questions were analyzed separately to see if there was an overall change in any portion of recruiting strategies among college football programs.

Sub-questions R<sub>1A</sub>: and R<sub>1B</sub> were analyzed utilizing *t*-tests to determine if there was a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS schools and non-BCS/HBCUs. The independent variables were taken from section one, questions six and seven, and included if the school belonged to Football Championship Series (FCS) or a Football Bowl Series (FBS). In addition, respondents were asked to indicate if they belonged to a BCS conference or were an HBCU. These two factors were compared to questions one through five of section three. Each of the questions in section three were analyzed separately.

For the analysis of sub-question R<sub>1C</sub>, (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?”), four 2 X

4 factorial analysis of variance (FANOVA) were conducted. The factors included conference and school type in addition to the number of years working in college football and were compared with questions one through four in section three.

Four 2 X 4 FANOVA were also used to analyze sub question R<sub>1D</sub>, (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual’s current position and the APR?”). The comparison factors included conference the schools belong to, BCS or non-BCS, and school type, HBCU or non-HBCU, in addition to the number of years the DFO has been working in their current position or in college football and were compared with questions one through four in section three.

The second research question, R<sub>2</sub>, was analyzed utilizing the same methods as research question one. The main research question, (“Is there a difference in retention strategies among college football programs due to the APR?”), was answered utilizing descriptive statistics from question one in section two.

Research question R<sub>2A</sub>, (“Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR?”), was analyzed through *t*-tests. Question numbers six and seven served as the independent variable and were compared with questions one through five of section two of the survey.

Research question R<sub>2B</sub>, (“Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?”), followed the same procedure as research question R<sub>2A</sub>. This time however, HBCUs were compared as indicated in question six of section one in the survey and were compared with questions one through five of section two of the survey.

For the analysis of sub-question R<sub>2C</sub>, (“Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?”), five two by four FANOVA were conducted. The factors included conference and school type in addition to the number of years working in college football as derived from the first section.

Five two by four FANOVA were used to analyze sub question R<sub>2D</sub>, (“Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual’s current position and the APR?”). The factors included conference and school type in addition to the number of years working in their current position from section one of the survey and compared with questions one through five in section two.

Research question R<sub>3</sub>, (“Is there a difference in the amount of resources that institutions dedicated to the athletic departments for academic efforts before the APR was implemented to after the APR was implemented?”), was answered through the use of descriptive statistics taken from questions eight and nine in section two of the instrument.

Research question R<sub>4</sub>, (“Are programs getting the same number of transfers entering into the program as are leaving?”), was answered utilizing descriptive statistics from question six in section two of the survey.

## CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

An attempt was made to include the entire population of active DFOs and coaches that serve in that capacity at NCAA Division I football programs. Not all Division I football programs have DFOs so in programs where no one is specifically designated as a DFO, an assistant coach is generally assigned those responsibilities in addition to their regular coaching duties. The DFO that was included in the pilot was excluded in the overall study results.

A total of 234 surveys were sent out to DFOs and coaches, 103 were returned. This resulted in a response rate of 44%. All of the returned instruments were used in the study. However, some respondents did not complete all of the items. When an item was not completed, the item was excluded from the analysis for that question.

The first section of the instrument provided the respondent with the details and purpose of the study. The second section of the instrument gathered demographic information about the subjects and provided some of the independent variables that were utilized when analyzing the questions for this study. Of the 103 DFOs and coaches that completed the survey, 92 (89.3%) were white, seven (6.8%) were black or African American, three (2.9%) indicated that they were two or more races and one (one percent) was Native American. There were 61 (59.2%) responses that indicated they possess a graduate degree and 39 (37.9%) possess a bachelor's degree. In terms of age, 34 (33%) were aged from 25-34 years old, 26 (25.2%) were 35-44 years old, and 29 (28.2%) were aged from 45-54 years old.

Of the responses, 40 (38.8%) have spent at least 15 years working in college football. An additional 15 (14.6%) have worked in college football for 11-15 years, while

28 (27.2%) have been in the business for 5-10 years. Twenty (19.4%) of the subjects reported they have been working in college football for four years or less. When looking at how long the subjects have been working in their current position, 34 (33%) have been in their current job two years or less. Thirty three (32%) of the DFOs have been working in the same place for three to five years. Additionally, 15 (14.6%) of the DFOs have been in the same position for six to ten years and 15 (14.6%) have been in the same position for ten plus years. Table 4-1 displays the demographic information for the DFOs/coaches that responded to the survey.

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Table 4-1

*DFO and Coach Demographic Information*

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<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Yrs in Football</u>	<u>Yrs in Position</u>
White 89.3%	Bachelors 37.9%	4 Yrs of less 19.4%	2 Yrs of less 33%
Black 6.8%	Graduate 59.2%	5-10 Yrs 27.2%	3-5 Yrs 32%
Native American 1%	Other 2.9%	11-15 Yrs 14.6%	6-10 Yrs 14.6%
Two or More Races 2.9%		15+ Yrs 38.8%	10+ Yrs 14.6%

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*Note. "Other" under the education response included either a high school diploma response or another response from the survey.*

The responses to the survey by the conference that the institution competes with in football varied substantially. There was only one conference that did not have any survey



responses, the Southwest Athletic Conference. Seven respondents failed to indicate a conference affiliation. It could be that these were programs that competed as independents or the subjects were concerned that listing a conference would cause them to be identified as participants in the study. Table 4-2 shows the breakdown of responses to the survey by conference.

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Table 4-2

*Survey Response by Conference*

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Conference	Responses
Atlantic Coastal Conference (ACC)*	6
Southern Conference	5
Big XII Conference*	4
Big South Conference	4
Conference USA	9
Patriot League	5
Big East Conference*	1
Northeast Conference	3
Colonial Athletic Association	6
Mid-American Conference (MAC)	6
Pioneer League	4

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Table 4-2 (*continued*).

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Conference	Responses
Missouri Valley Conference	4
Southeastern Conference (SEC)*	6
Sun Belt Conference	2
Southland Conference	3
Pacific Ten Conference (Pac-10)*	6
Mountain West Conference	5
Big Sky Conference	3
Big Ten Conference*	5
Ohio Valley Conference	2
Independent	1
Western Athletic Conference (WAC)	2
Great West Conference	1
The Ivy League	2
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	1

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*Note.* There were seven responses that did not indicate a conference or that they competed as an independent. There were no responses from institutions that participate in the Southwest Athletic Conference. \*Denotes BCS automatic bid conferences

In terms of the breakdown between Football Championship Series (FCS) and Football Bowl Series (FBS), there were 59 responses from FBS schools and 44 responses from FCS schools. There were 28 responses from BCS schools or schools that compete in conferences that receive automatic bids to BCS bowls and 75 responses from non-BCS schools. There was only one response that indicated that they were from a HBCU. Because of this, research questions R<sub>1B</sub>: (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?”) and R<sub>2B</sub>: (“Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?”), were eliminated from the study.

### Recruiting Strategy Results

Items in section four of the instrument dealt with the recruiting strategies of Division I football programs and how they have changed since the APR legislation. Since the goal of the APR is to increase student athletes’ graduation rates, it would seem that programs would be more apt to recruit prospects that would have an increased chance of remaining eligible and graduate. According to the responses, 47 (45.6%) indicated that their football programs changed their recruiting strategies due to the APR legislation. When looking at each of the recruiting questions separately, there were some similarities. Of the responses, 41 (39.8%) indicated that the APR has not changed their policy in recruiting prospects that are potential discipline problems and 31 (30.1%) were only slightly less likely to recruit players with potential discipline problems. Additionally, 19

(18.4%) of the respondents indicated that they were less likely to recruit prospects with potential discipline problems, while eight (7.8%) stated they were extremely less likely.

When analyzing whether programs are more or less likely to recruit prospects that are academically challenged, 31 (30.1%) indicated no change occurred due to the APR. Of the responses 44 (42.7%) showed that respondents were slightly less likely to recruit academically challenged prospects, while 15 (14.6%) were less likely. Only seven (6.8%) of respondents indicated that programs were extremely less likely to recruit academically challenged prospects.

Another indication of a football program's likelihood to recruit academically challenged prospects is the program's willingness to recruit special admittance students. The results of the survey indicate that 51 (49.5%) of respondents have not changed their recruiting policy for special admittance prospects. What we do not know is how many special admittance prospects that the programs took before the APR legislation. However, 28 (27.2%) respondents indicated that they were slightly less likely to recruit a prospect that required special admittance to the institution. Fourteen (13.6%) of the responses indicated that they were less likely and five (4.9%) indicated that they were extremely less likely to recruit special admittance prospects.

In regards to recruiting junior college transfers, the results indicated that 57 (55.3%) of colleges have not changed their recruiting strategy due to the APR. Of the responses, 20 (19.4%) stated that they were slightly less likely to recruit prospects from junior colleges because of the APR, while 14 (13.6%) said they were less likely. There were five (4.9%) responses that indicated they were extremely less likely to recruit players from junior colleges due to the APR. There were a combined 6 (5.8%) responses

that indicated they were slightly more likely or more likely to recruit junior college prospects due to the APR.

When comparing the recruiting strategies between BCS and non-BCS schools to answer research question R<sub>1A</sub>: (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR?”), the *t*-test results indicated that there were no significant differences in recruiting strategies among any of the factors. Table 4-3 shows the means and the standard deviations for each of the recruiting items listed in the survey. In addition to analyzing the data for differences between BCS and non-BCS programs, the researcher also processed the data to see if there were any differences between FCS and FBS programs. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in recruiting strategy changes due to the APR between FCS and FBS football programs.

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Table 4-3

*Recruiting Strategy Changes Between BCS and non-BCS Schools*

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Recruiting Question		BCS	Non-BCS
Change in Recruiting Strategy	Mean	.50	.44
	Std. Deviation	.509	.500
Recruiting from Junior Colleges	Mean	3.50	3.52
	Std. Deviation	.839	1.212

Table 4-3(continued)

Recruiting Question		BCS	Non-BCS
Recruiting Special Admittances	Mean	3.43	3.40
	Std. Deviation	.790	1.174
Recruiting Academically Challenged	Mean	3.18	3.20
	Std. Deviation	.863	1.208
Recruiting Discipline Problems	Mean	3.21	3.16
	Std. Deviation	1.031	1.151

Research question, R<sub>1C</sub>: (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?”), was analyzed using a 2 X 4 FANOVA. The results of the analysis indicated no significant difference when comparing the years that a DFO/coach has worked college football and conference classification to the recruiting questions. Table 4-4 shows the *F*-value along with the significance for each of the questions included in the survey.

Table 4-4

*Differences in Recruiting Strategy Compared to BCS and Years in College Football*

Recruiting Question	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Change in Recruiting Strategy	.558	.788
Recruiting from Junior Colleges	.622	.737
Recruiting Special Admittances	.939	.480
Recruiting Academically Challenged	.681	.687
Recruiting Discipline Problems	.399	.900

*Note.*  $p < .05$

Research question R<sub>1D</sub>: (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual’s current position and the APR?”), also used a 2 X 4 FANOVA. This analysis also indicated that there was no significant difference between BCS and non-BCS programs with relation to how long the DFO/coach has been in their current position. Table 4-5 shows the *F*-value along with the significance for each of the questions included in the instrument.

Table 4-5

*Differences in Recruiting Strategy Compared to BCS and Years in Current Position*

Recruiting Question	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Change in Recruiting Strategy	1.883	.064
Recruiting from Junior Colleges	.247	.986
Recruiting Special Admittances	.825	.595
Recruiting Academically Challenged	.893	.535
Recruiting Discipline Problems	1.922	.058

*Note. p < .05*

Retention Strategy Results

Section three of the instrument dealt with the retention strategies of Division I football programs. Athletic programs receive an APR point for student athletes that stay at the institution, thus making it extremely important for programs to keep the student athlete at the institution and on the roster. When analyzing the data regarding retention strategies of college football programs as it relates to the APR, 39 (37.9%) of the respondents said they did not change their strategy. When analyzing retention strategies for student athletes that became discipline problems 22 (21.4%) and 22 (21.4%) said they were slightly more likely or were more likely to retain those student athletes. Six (5.8%)



of the respondents felt their football programs were extremely more likely to retain chronic discipline problems, while nine (8.7%) stated that they were slightly less likely to retain a chronic discipline problem.

A chronic discipline problem might be considered a student athlete that continuously has eligibility issues. Skipping class can lead to eligibility issues and is indicative of student athletes with discipline problems. Of the responses, 63 (61.1%) implied that they would be slightly more likely, were more likely or were extremely more likely to monitor class attendance due to the APR legislation. Additionally, 37 (35.9%) of respondents reported that there was no change in their football programs monitoring class attendance by their student athletes.

However, when analyzing if teams were more likely to retain student athletes that chronically missed classes, 42 (40.8%) reported that there was no change in their retention strategy. Of the responses, 17 (16.5%) felt their football programs were slightly more likely to retain a student athlete and 17 (16.5%) indicated they were more likely to retain an athlete that chronically missed classes. Only seven (6.8%) said they were extremely more likely to retain a student athlete that chronically skipped classes. The number of responses that were slightly less likely or less likely to retain a student athlete that was chronically skipping class was 17 (16.6%).

When dealing with a student athlete that was convicted of a misdemeanor, 62 (60.2%) of the respondents felt their football programs did not change their retention strategy as it relates to the APR. While ten (9.7%) of the respondents indicated that they were slightly more likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a misdemeanor

and eight (7.8%) were more likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a misdemeanor.

When changing the severity of the act from a misdemeanor to a felony, similar results were indicated. Of the responses, 61 (59.2%) indicated that there was no change in the retention strategy of the football program as it relates to the APR. Only six (5.8%) of the respondents indicated that they were slightly more, more, or extremely more likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a felony. Additionally, 18 (17.5%) of the respondents said they felt that their programs were extremely less likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a felony because of the APR.

When comparing the responses regarding retention strategies between BCS and non-BCS schools in order to answer R<sub>2A</sub>: (“Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and non-BCS conference schools due to the APR?”), the *t*-test results indicated that there were no significant differences in the retention strategies of college football programs due to the APR, among any of the factors included in the instrument. Table 4-6 shows the means and the standard deviations for each of the recruiting questions listed in the survey. In addition to analyzing the data for differences between BCS and non-BCS programs, the researcher also analyzed the data to see if there were any differences between FCS and FBS programs. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in retention strategy changes due to the APR between FCS and FBS football programs.

Table 4-6

*Retention Strategy Changes Between BCS and non-BCS Schools*

Recruiting Question		BCS	Non-BCS
Retaining a Discipline Problem	Mean	4.75	4.81
	Std. Deviation	1.110	1.353
Monitoring Class Attendance	Mean	5.25	5.35
	Std. Deviation	1.143	1.268
Retaining for Missing Class	Mean	4.43	4.57
	Std. Deviation	1.230	1.425
Retention after a Misdemeanor	Mean	4.11	4.08
	Std. Deviation	1.166	1.393
Retention after a felony	Mean	3.25	3.56
	Std. Deviation	1.295	1.638

Research question, R<sub>2C</sub>: (“Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in college football and the APR?”), was analyzed using a 2 X 4 FANOVA. The results of the analysis indicated no significant difference when comparing the years that a DFO/coach has worked in college football and conference

classification to the recruiting questions. Table 4-7 shows the  $F$ -value along with the significance for each of the questions included in the instrument.

Table 4-7

*Differences in Retention Strategy Compared to BCS and Years in College Football*

Recruiting Question	$F$	$p$
Retaining a Discipline Problem	.477	.847
Monitoring Class Attendance	.508	.827
Retaining for Missing Class	.622	.736
Retention after a Misdemeanor	.606	.750
Retention after a Felony	.627	.623

*Note.*  $p < .05$

Research question R<sub>2D</sub>: (“Is there a difference in retention strategies in reference to the number of years working in an individual’s current position and the APR?”), also utilized a 2 X 4 FANOVA. This analysis for this research question also indicated that there was no significant difference between BCS and non-BCS programs with relation to how long the DFO/coach has been in their current position. Table 4-8 shows the  $F$ -value along with the significance for each of the questions included in the survey.

Table 4-8

*Differences in Retention Strategy Compared to BCS and Years in Current Position*

Recruiting Question	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Retaining a Discipline Problem	1.403	.198
Monitoring Class Attendance	.271	.981
Retaining for Missing Class	1.281	.25
Retention after a Misdemeanor	1.170	.33
Retention after a Felony	1.376	.10

*Note. p < .05*

Other Results

According to the results of this survey, the APR seems to be enhancing graduation rates in Division I football programs. Of the responses, 86 (83.5%) indicated that these football programs are graduating more student athletes. Ten respondents did not answer the question but in some cases disclosed no change in their graduation rates. This could be due to the amount of resources that programs and institutions are dedicating to academics because of the APR. Research question R<sub>3</sub>: (“Is there a difference in the amount of resources that institutions dedicate to the athletic department for academic efforts before the APR was implemented to after the APR was implemented, due to the

APR?") addressed this issue. Responses indicated that 68 (66%) of the football programs and 78 (75.7%) of the athletic departments have increased either money or resources to their academic budgets because of the APR legislation.

The last research question of this survey was related to the retention component of the APR, R<sub>4</sub>: ("Are programs getting the same number of transfers coming into the program as are leaving?"). The results indicated that 29 (28.2%) of the teams have more student athletes transferring out of the program to other institutions. While 34 (33%) of the teams reported the opposite, these programs had more student athletes transferring into their programs from other institutions. Additionally, 34 (33%) of the respondents reported their programs had an equal amount of transfers coming into the football program as were transferring out of the football program.

## CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

### Survey Response

In order to have achieved a 95% confidence level, the study needed 140 of the 234 subjects, or roughly 60%, to respond to avoid sampling bias (Gay et al., 2006). The response rate for this study was 44%. While the higher the response rate the better, it is not clear how high a response rate needs to be when conducting a mail survey (Baruch, 1999). Mail surveys have seen a decline in response rate over the years (Baruch, 1999; Brennan & Charbonneau, 2009). There is no strategy for determining a response rating that involves a specific percentage of a limited population (Suter, 1998). When the response is lower it is the obligation of the researcher to completely report the possible sample bias and allow the reader to decide for themselves the impact it has had on the study (Gay et al., 2006). Baruch (1999), stated that a higher response rate does not always indicate whether or not sampling bias has occurred.

Previous studies on the APR yielded less than a 44% response rating from football coaches. Christy, Seifried and Pastore (2008), only had one football coach respond to their study regarding the impact that the APR might have on college athletics, thus, limiting their results and findings to sports other than football.

Football coaches and DFOs are a highly secretive population. This may stem from being in the public eye and being scrutinized by the media in a variety of ways. This scrutiny and the nature of the industry has led Division I college football coaches and DFOs to be reluctant in providing detailed information regarding their programs. Because of this, there may have been a fear by some DFOs or coaches that the information would not remain confidential, even though every precaution was taken by

the researcher. The one factor that possibly made the response rate as high as it was for this study is the fact that the researcher is considered to belong to this group, as he is a football operations assistant and has a large amount of contacts within the industry of NCAA college football.

One occurrence that was perplexing regarding the response rate was the lack of participation by HBCUs. Only one respondent indicated that their institution was classified as a HBCU. The two biggest opponents to the APR have been HBCUs and schools that do not compete in BCS Conferences (Christy et al., 2008). It would have seemed that HBCUs would have had a higher response rating than they did. The lack of response forced the researcher to remove R<sub>1B</sub>, (“Is there a difference in recruiting strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?”), and R<sub>2B</sub>: (“Is there a difference in retention strategies between BCS conference schools and HBCU schools due to the APR?”), from the study. The researcher cannot account for any rationale for why HBCUs would not have responded or disclosed that the institution belonged in this classification.

#### Changes in Recruiting Strategy

With the APR legislation focused on assisting programs with graduating student athletes, it would only make sense that Division I college football programs would look to recruit more academically qualified student athletes and fewer student athletes that are potential discipline problems. What was of interest in the results was the number of football programs that did not change their recruiting strategy, 54.4%. However, 45.6% of Division I college football programs indicated that they changed their recruiting strategy. What is even more surprising is that more BCS football programs changed their



recruiting strategy than did non-BCS football programs. When analyzing overall recruiting strategies, 50% of BCS football programs changed their recruiting strategies while only 44% of non-BCS football programs changed their recruiting strategy due to the APR. What could have impacted the results are the Ivy League and Patriot League responses. There is a possibility that these programs already recruited academically qualified student athletes, thus they did not have to change their recruiting strategies.

There are other possibilities as to why football programs have not changed their recruiting strategies. One is that, some football programs were and are not in any danger of facing sanctions or have no problem in achieving and averaging a 925 APR score. If a program has not had any problems reaching the 925 APR score, then there is no reason for them to change their recruiting strategies. These programs are not faced with any sanctions nor are receiving any public scrutiny for their APR score.

Another possibility is not as flattering to colleges or their football programs. There is always a possibility that some college football programs and/or compliance offices have found a loop hole in the APR legislation. The corruption in college athletics is well documented. To think that one or more of the football programs have not changed their recruiting strategies because they have found a loophole is very conceivable. When a new policy is implemented, change is expected. Often organizations are resistant to the change (Slack & Parent, 2006). The possibility that some college football programs are resistant to this change is without question. But when a policy change is implemented with penalties that could cripple a program, it would seem that the change would occur in greater amounts.

What is encouraging about the results in the changes of recruiting strategies by college football programs is that 56.3% of programs are slightly less, less, or extremely less likely to recruit student athletes that are potential discipline problems. This makes prospective student athletes that are entering college more accountable for their own actions, if they wish to participate in college football. Even more encouraging is the fact that programs are 64.1% slightly less, less, or extremely less likely to recruit academically challenged student athletes. In addition, the amount of special admittance student athletes being recruited should also be declining. Of the responses, 45.7% indicated they were slightly less, less or extremely less likely to recruit special admittance student athletes. Having more academically qualified student athletes should help increase the graduation rate of Division I college football players.

When recruiting junior college transfers, the results indicated that 55.3% of colleges have not changed their recruiting strategy due to the APR. While there were some football programs that indicated they were less likely to recruit from junior colleges, six percent indicated they were more likely to recruit from junior colleges. The thought behind this premise may be that students who are coming out of junior colleges are somewhat older and may have experienced more independence, thus making them more mature and focused on their academic endeavors. However, often Division I college football coaches recruit junior college players because they are a quick fix to personnel issues on the field. When a position on the field is a weakness, football coaches will recruit junior college players that can come in right away and start. These players are often brought in from junior colleges because they already have experienced playing

against tougher competition at the junior college level than in high school, thus making them more desirable to Division I college football coaches.

### Changes in Retention Strategy

While there may be positive changes from the APR in regards to recruiting more disciplined and academically qualified student athletes, the opposite maybe true when it comes to retention and the APR. The results indicated there were no differences between BCS and non-BCS schools in retention strategies based on the APR. However, there were changes indicated by respondents among college football programs' retention strategies overall due to the APR. Of the responses, 42.8% felt their programs were slightly more or more likely to retain student athletes that have become discipline problems. Add in another 5.8% of responses that felt their programs were extremely more likely to retain a discipline problem and almost half the teams felt as though the APR forces them to keep student athletes on their teams even though those student athletes may not be abiding by team or institutional policies. What was interesting about these data was that nine percent of football programs responded that they were slightly less likely to retain these types of student athletes. It could be that these programs identify these discipline problems early in the student athletes career and remove these players from the team before they can become a bigger problem.

One of the most common forms of discipline problems that football teams face is having their student athletes attend classes. Class attendance can greatly affect a student athlete's ability to remain eligible by both NCAA and institutional standards. Of the responses, 39.8% stated that they were slightly more, more or extremely more likely to retain a student athlete that chronically skips class. Of interest in the results to this

question were the number of responses that stated they were slightly less likely or less likely to retain a student athlete that was a chronically skipping class, 16.6%. Again, what might be happening in these cases are programs identify discipline issues early in a student athlete's college career and remove the student athlete before a bigger problem occurs. Programs could be systematically calculating when is the best time to remove a student athlete from their program without being extensively penalized on their overall APR score.

When expanding the discipline issue beyond team or institutional policies, teams in large have not changed their retention strategies. Roughly 60% of college football DFOs indicated they have not changed retention strategies due to the APR legislation, when it comes to student athletes that have convicted misdemeanors or felonies. What is not known from this study is exactly what the football programs' strategies were before the APR legislation. The responses indicated that 17.5% of football programs were slightly more likely or more likely to retain a student athlete that has convicted a misdemeanor. The question then arises, are these football programs being held hostage by the APR legislation to keep student athletes that are a distraction or detriment to the culture of the program? Often when these incidents occur, the media scrutiny and public outcry for the student athlete to be removed from the team can cost a head coach and staff members their jobs.

However, when raising the level of the crime that a student athlete was convicted of to a felony, only six percent of football programs said that they were slightly more, more or extremely more likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a felony. While 17.5% of DFOs/coaches responded that their football programs were extremely

less likely to retain a student athlete that was convicted of a felony. This could be due to a couple of factors. One factor could be the public relations nightmare that a program takes when retaining a student athlete that has been convicted of a felony. Another consideration is that football programs could be considering that a student athlete who was convicted of a felony would have a hard time remaining eligible while going through this type of legal problem. College football programs might dismiss an eligible student athlete from the team before he becomes an ineligible student athlete thus only losing one APR point instead of having a “0-2” student athlete ( the term used when an ineligible athletes leaves the institution), which in turn can jeopardize the team’s total APR score. What we do not know however, is how this relates to the programs policy before the APR was implemented. We do not know if a student athlete that was convicted of a felony before the APR was implemented would have been retained or dismissed by the program.

With all of these programs indicating that they are in some way more likely to retain student athletes that have become a discipline problem, the question becomes if the APR mitigates the NCAA policy of a renewable scholarship? NCAA policy requires that scholarships are awarded on a renewable annual basis. If a program does not renew a student athlete’s scholarship, the likelihood that the student athlete will remain at with the program or at the institution without a scholarship decreases significantly.

#### More Money and Resources Dedicated to Academics

The results of this study indicated that both college football programs and athletic departments as a whole have dedicated more money and resources to ensuring their student athletes have a chance to succeed academically. The results indicated 66% of

football programs and 75.7% of athletic departments, respectfully, have increased either money or resources to their academic budgets because of the APR legislation. This shows that college football programs, athletic departments, and institutions are taking the NCAA's APR legislation seriously.

One area where more monies and resources are being dedicated to in terms of academics is the monitoring of class attendance by student athletes. Responses showed that 61.1% of teams implied that they were slightly more likely, were more likely, or were extremely more likely to monitor class attendance due to the APR legislation. What we don't know from this study is to what extent football programs are monitoring classes. Are football programs monitoring more classes, in terms of all their student athletes or are they monitoring more of the academically challenged or special needs student athletes' class attendance? Have college football programs changed their standards in which they require student athletes to be monitored? For instance, if a student athlete with a 2.35 grade point average was not being monitored before, is he being monitored now due to the APR legislation?

Another way athletic departments may be dedicating more money and resources to academics is with athletic department academic centers. Many athletic departments have built or are building elaborate buildings to house their academic sections. These academic centers are where only student athletes can go to meet with advisors, tutors and learning specialists in state of the art computer labs. However, one must consider that academic success has not been shown to necessarily benefit from more money (Bouchet & Scott, 2009).

### *The Athletic Arms Race*

With all of the money being spent on student athletes' academic pursuits, there are some that believe this spending is just an extension of the athletic financial arms race that the Knight Commission is trying to stop among college athletic departments. Some institutions have paid millions of dollars to build these success centers, not only to improve student athletes' probability of succeeding academically, but also to attract and sign top level prospects to their athletic programs. The "arms race" may have gone from building extensive stadiums and extravagant training facilities to lure top prospects to building elaborate academic centers in hopes of convincing prospects and their parents that the institution is committed to providing a top level education to the student. Because of the recruiting benefits, any institution that has not built an athletic academic center is going to be at a severe disadvantage in recruiting top level prospects to their athletic programs.

### Increased Graduation Rates

There is a strong possibility that increased spending on academics, in addition to the development of the APR legislation, is benefiting student athletes' ability to graduate. The hiring of more tutors and learning specialists does benefit schools (Bouchet & Scott, 2009). The results of this study indicated that 83.5% of respondents feel they have graduated more student athletes since the inception of the APR. The question then becomes whether or not impeding the athletic arms race is more beneficial to the overall goals of higher education and the critics of big-time college athletics.

The results of this study may be reflected in the graduation rates and improved APR scores reported by the NCAA. However, while dramatic increases were noted in

both baseball and men's basketball, football APR rates continue to be a concern.

Currently, eligibility rate increases in football are not following eligibility improvements in most other sports (Christianson, 2009).

### Transfers

One of the main issues of contention among college football coaches in regards to the APR retention point is that of transfers. A program that loses a student athlete that transfers to another institution can cost a program a retention point, even though the student athlete may graduate on time from the new institution. The NCAA has made adjustments in the APR legislation since its inception regarding transfers. These adjustments have resulted in a retention point increase among programs, and can be attributed to an adjustment in the APR calculation that allows student athletes earning a 2.6 grade point average and meeting other academic requirements to transfer without programs losing the retention point (Christianson, 2009). It was initially thought by the NCAA that athletic programs gain as many transfers as they lose (NCAA, 2007a). The results from this study indicated that only 33% of football programs transfer in as many student athletes as transfer out. 28.2% of football programs stated that they have more student athletes transferring out of their program than into the program. Whether or not these student athletes met the requirements for the exception is beyond the scope of this study.

### Recommendations For Future Studies

The need for future studies on the APR and its impact on athletic programs is clear. This study focused on the impact the APR legislation has had on college football recruiting and retention strategies. There is a need to analyze the impact that the APR



legislation has had on other intercollegiate athletic sports. There is a possibility that other sports have not felt the same impact from the APR legislation that football has. It is conceivable that other intercollegiate sports have felt the impact of the APR more heavily, since they typically have smaller rosters, thus each point has a greater impact on the programs' APR score. Future studies could compare the impact of the APR legislation from sport to sport. There is a possibility that APR legislation needs to have more exceptions from one sport to another.

It is recommended that future studies addressing the APR and football should focus on the following questions:

- Since there was no finding upon contrast, it is possible that the utilization of the Likert type scale inherently restricted the range of scores. Future research could use a different type of scale to analyze for contrast to see if there is a difference.
- How many football programs monitored classroom attendance before the APR was enacted to after the APR implemented?
- What are the standards for monitoring class attendance now that the APR has been implemented?
- Have college football programs required more study hall hours by their student athletes and what were the standards for requiring study hall before the APR was implemented and what are the standards now?
- What percentage of college football transfers is meeting the 2.6 grade point average exception requirement?

Another factor that needs to be incorporated in future studies is a player's on the field ability. A student athlete that contributes more to the team on the field is going to be retained longer than a student athlete that has a limited role with the team. Likewise, a prospect that a football program feels can contribute a lot to a team is more likely to be recruited regardless of discipline or academic potential than one who might be considered marginal. Incorporating playing ability into a study could prove difficult in terms of college football programs willingness to participate in the study.

Finally, there needs to be research exploring the lack of minorities serving in a DFOs capacity. With 89.3% of respondents self reporting their race as white/Caucasian, and only 10.7% being of a minority descent, the need for exploring this issue is necessary. The NCAA has faced public and private scrutiny for the lack of minority head coaches in Division I FBS college football. The lack of minorities serving as DFOs is as equally troubling and intriguing.

### Conclusion

Overall the results of this study have shown that the NCAA's APR legislation has made college football programs rethink their recruiting and retention strategies. The APR has made Division I programs attempt to recruit more academically qualified prospects that have a decreased risk of becoming discipline problems. This may have resulted in the improved graduation rates of their programs. However, there has been a price for this victory. Football programs also have been forced to retain discipline problems on their rosters. Having a number of discipline problems on a team can effect the culture of the program and inturn the programs overall athletic success. It is the opinion of this researcher that there needs to be some type of exception for the APR retention point

when student athletes become counterproductive to the university's and program's mission.

## University of New Mexico APR Survey

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### Section I – Purpose

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Joshua Castle, (Football Operations Assistant at the University of New Mexico (UNM) and AFCA Member) and the Sports Administration Program at the UNM. The results of this study will contribute to the formulation of a doctoral dissertation and expand the body of research regarding the NCAA's attempt to improve on the academic performance of student athletes.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact that the APR has had on NCAA college football coaches through a quantitative method. Specifically this study will focus on the issues of contention by coaches within the APR legislation and how this legislation has changed recruiting and retention strategies.

There is no risk of harm to you. The length of time required for the completion of this survey is about five (5) minutes. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and the results of individual surveys will be confidential. You may withdraw from this survey at any time with no penalty to you. This survey collects no personal identifying data. Respondents will remain completely anonymous.

### Section II – Your Demographic Information

1. What is your age range?

- A. 18-24 \_\_\_\_\_ B. 25-34 \_\_\_\_\_ C. 35-44 \_\_\_\_\_ D. 45-54 \_\_\_\_\_ E. 55-64 \_\_\_\_\_  
F. 65+ \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your highest level of education?

1. High School Graduate \_\_\_\_\_
2. Some College \_\_\_\_\_
3. Bachelors' Degree \_\_\_\_\_
4. Graduate Degree \_\_\_\_\_
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your race/ethnicity?

- A. American Indian and Alaska Native \_\_\_\_\_ B. Black or African American \_\_\_\_\_  
C. White \_\_\_\_\_ D. Asian \_\_\_\_\_ E. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_  
F. Other \_\_\_\_\_ G. Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_\_ H. Two or more races \_\_\_\_\_

4. How long have you worked in college football? (Include years as a graduate assistant)  
 A. 4 years or less \_\_\_\_\_ B. 5-10 years \_\_\_\_\_ C. 11-15 years \_\_\_\_\_ D. +15 Years \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been in your current position?  
 A. 2 years or less \_\_\_\_\_ B. 3-5 years \_\_\_\_\_ C. 6-10 years \_\_\_\_\_ D. +10 Years \_\_\_\_\_
6. What type of college or university do you work at? (Check All that Apply)  
 A. Football Bowl Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. Football Championship Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_  
 C. BCS Conference \_\_\_\_\_  
 D. Non-BCS Conference \_\_\_\_\_  
 E. Historically Black College or University \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please list your conference affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

### Section III – Changes in Retention

Directions:

- This section contains questions that will be used to determine how you see retention for your team has changed due to the APR.
- Please circle one number that best represents your responses.

<b>Extremely Less Likely</b>	<b>Less Likely</b>	<b>Slightly Less Likely</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Slightly More Likely</b>	<b>More Likely</b>	<b>Extremely More Likely</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

1. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization been more or less likely to retain a player who has become a discipline problem?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
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2. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization been more or less likely to monitor class attendance by your student athletes?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
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3. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization been more or less likely to retain a student athlete that chronically misses classes?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
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4. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization been more or less likely to retain a student athlete that is convicted of a misdemeanor?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
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5. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization been more or less likely to retain a student athlete that is convicted of a felony?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8

6. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization had (Circle one):

- A. More student athletes transfer out of your program than transfer into your program.
- B. More student athletes transfer into your program than transfer out of your program.
- C. Have had an equal number of student athlete transfer into your program as have transferred out of your program.

7. Since the inception of the APR, has your organization graduated more or less student athletes? (Circle One)

**More    Less**

8. Since the inception of the APR has your program (football) dedicated more money or resources to academics?

**Yes    No**

9. Since the inception of the APR has your athletic department dedicated more money or resources to academics?

**Yes    No**

#### **Section IV – Changes in Recruiting**

Directions:

- This section contains questions that will be used to determine how you see retention for your team has changed due to the APR.
- Please circle one number that best represents your responses.

<b>Extremely Less Likely</b>	<b>Less Likely</b>	<b>Slightly Less Likely</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Slightly More Likely</b>	<b>More Likely</b>	<b>Extremely More Likely</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

1. Since the inception of the APR, has your program been more or less likely to recruit a player who is potentially a discipline problem?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8

2. Since the inception of the APR, has your program been more or less likely to recruit an academically challenged prospect?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8

3. Since the inception of the APR, has your program been more or less likely to recruit special admittance student athletes?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8

4. Since the inception of the APR, has your program been more or less likely to recruit prospective student athletes from junior colleges?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8

5. Since the inception of the APR, has your program changed its recruiting strategy? (Circle One)

Yes                      No

Thank you for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this questionnaire, please feel free to contact Joshua Castle. Mr. Castle can be reached at (505) 925-5708 and he can also be reached at the University of New Mexico Football Offices, University of New Mexico.

## Appendix B

### Introduction Letter to the DFO

Director of Football Operations  
Football Offices  
University of  
XXXXX, XX 00000

February, 2010

Dear Colleague:

My name is Joshua Castle and I am currently the football operations assistant at the University of New Mexico (UNM). I am also in the process of finishing my Ph.D in sports administration at UNM. For my doctoral dissertation I have chosen to study the impact of the Academic Progress Rating (APR) on college football recruiting and retention. As you are aware, this is a subject that impacts us all and there are points of debate within the legislation. It is my hope that some of these points will be addressed in the results of this study.

Enclosed you will find the survey, a letter of informed consent, a blank envelope, and a self-addressed envelope. The survey is completely anonymous and will only take roughly five minutes to fill out. Please fill out the survey and upon completion, place it in the blank envelope. Then place the blank envelope in the self-addressed envelope to be mailed back to me.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may quit the survey at anytime. This study and survey have been approved by UNM's Institutional Review Board for Research. The survey has been sent to every NCAA Division I football program. In order for the results to be valid, I need at least a 60% response rating. Please help me by taking a few minutes of your time and completing the survey. The results from this study will be used in the formation of my doctoral dissertation and possibly a journal article. This study has the support of the AFCA Directors of Football Operations National Committee. The results will also be made available at the 2011 AFCA Convention-DFO General Assembly.

After reviewing this letter and the survey, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly at 724-464-7126 or at 505-925-5708. You can also contact Gavin Bevis, Director of Football Operations at UNM. I have Coach Bevis's full support in this study. Thank you for your time and consideration. I eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joshua Castle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joshua Castle  
Football Operations Assistant  
Sports Administration Doctoral Candidate  
University of New Mexico



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