AN INVESTIGATION OF NEED FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR COLLEGIATE ATHLETES
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Abstract

The purpose of this review of literature was to demonstrate a need for academic support programs for collegiate athletes participating in high-revenue sports. The literature reviewed included studies utilizing mainly quantitative research methods involving sample sizes ranging from several hundred to over 1000 participants. Some studies provided a proximity error, only collecting data on athletes in a certain university or program, yielding data which could not be generalized to all student-athletes. A couple of the studies had smaller sample sizes (4-25 student athletes) and were qualitative in nature. Qualitative research reviewed included case studies, focus groups, and interviews. Overall most studies had random samples, but a few of them utilized volunteer participants, which skew results with bias. The researchers suggested African-American male collegiate athletes and athletes participating in high-revenue sports tend to suffer from academic underachievement more than the rest of the collegiate athlete population and the student body as a whole (Aries et al., 2004; Lapchick 1987). A review of the literature suggested universities and colleges should have academic support programs available for at-risk student athletes, especially those participating in high-revenue sports and sports which require significant demands on a student athlete’s time. Academic support programs should involve developing time management skills as well as providing advising and counseling for student athletes to assist them with identifying with their academic role. Further research is needed to investigate current academic support received by African-American and high-revenue sport collegiate athletes in order to determine how these services can be improved or made more accessible.

Chapter I: Introduction

Academic support for student athletes varies from college to college. Some colleges provide extensive academic support and others provide none. Recent studies have suggested
athletes performs as well or better than traditional students, which may lead some administrators to believe academic support is not necessary for student athletes. As a result, colleges may cut existing programs or fail to build programs currently existent.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many studies look into the academic achievement of student athletes at both the collegiate and high school level. Studies involving student athlete samples encompassing a wide range of sports suggest that student athletes perform as well academically as nonstudent athletes (Aries, McCarthy, Salovey, & Banaji, 2004; Beamon & Bell, 2006; Lapchick, 1987). These studies fail to show, however, if the academic success correlates to academic support programs put into place by universities. Studies often use variables for predicting college performance such as ACT, SAT, high school rank, and high school grade point average (GPA). Academic performance predictors are compared to college academic achievement. Data from studies on academic achievement for collegiate athletes can be misleading when factors such as college preparedness, academic motivation, ethnicity, revenue potential of sport, stereotypes, and academic support programs are not considered. General studies have shown student athletes are able to perform as well as or better than traditional students are, but studies breaking down athletes by specific factors reveal that African-American athletes and athletes of high-revenue/high profile sports significantly underperform academically and need support.

Collegiate athletes, especially those participating in high-revenue sports, report time demands as a significant barrier to academic success. Data collected at both the middle school and high school levels demonstrate interscholastic athletic programs improve academic performance in students, with a common theme that athletic time commitments equal academic time commitments at this level. High school and middle school students also do not experience
as strong a push to reach the professional level at their young age. Female collegiate athletes do not face the same professional pressure as male student athletes, as female athletes do not reach the professional level as commonly as male athletes. African-American collegiate athletes and other athletes in high-revenue sports are more likely to be recruited despite marginal academic performance if they have exceptional athletic ability. As a result, some athletes are admitted into universities unable to perform academically at the collegiate level. Studies providing evidence for athletes performing well academically generally do not address the amount of support athletes receive from their administration (academic advisors, study halls, etc), and thus pose difficulties in establishing a need for academic support programs in universities.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate a need for academic support programs for collegiate athletes participating in high-revenue sports.

**Research Question**

1. What are the effects of academic support programs on the academic achievement of collegiate athletes in high-revenue sports?

**Theoretical Framework**

This study will provide a theoretical model for establishing whether high academic achievement in student athletes participating in high-revenue sports correlates with academic support programs. This study seeks to help universities decide whether or not they need to incorporate or improve programs that promote academic achievement in student athletes.

**Definition of Terms**

2. Academic achievement: college grade point average (GPA) and graduation rates (Eitzen & Purdy, 1986).

3. Academic support: Services and staffing vary from institution to institution providing academic monitoring, general academic advising, tutoring, study halls, direct course scheduling, career counseling, personal counseling, remedial reading, test assessment, group counseling, and preadmission identification of high risk student athletes (Figler, 1987).

4. High-revenue sports: Include men’s basketball and football, but can vary depending on the university. (Harrison, Comeaux, & Plecha, 2006; Snyder, 1996; Zaugg, 1998). High-revenue sports bring in the most money for the university or college compared to other sports the colleges provide.

5. Athletic motivation: “The persistent need or desire to persevere, excel, or succeed in physical tasks” (Snyder, 1996, p. 656).


**Chapter II: Review of Literature**

Past research suggests athletics can be beneficial for students when time commitment equals academic commitment, which generally occurs at middle school and high school levels. In the collegiate setting, however, pressures placed on student athletes cause them to focus more time and energy on athletics, sacrificing academic achievement in some cases. Male African-American collegiate athletes, as well as other athletes participating in high-revenue sports, face the most pressure to be dominantly athletically motivated, and experience the greatest probability of underperforming academically. High-revenue collegiate sports have a history of recruiting
athletes with exceptional athletic ability despite marginal high school academic performance. The marginal students recruited are often times underprepared for college and do not succeed academically, causing low college graduation rates and GPAs (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, & Banaji, 2004; Parham, 1993). Determining whether or not student athletes participating in high-profile sports are currently receiving academic support and how the support they receive affects academic achievement would benefit athletic directors and other college administrators.

**Effect of Athletics at the High School and Middle School Level**

*Academic achievement and behavior.*

*Positive impact of athletics.*

The pressure to succeed athletically is not nearly as prominent at the high school and middle school level. At the high school and middle school levels, athletics have an overwhelmingly positive impact on student athletes. A study involving 134 high school students (52 athletes and 82 non-athletes) in grades 10-12 (ages 15-19) reported no significant differences between athletes and non-athletes for both midterm and final grades, except for science courses in which the athletes scored significantly higher than the non-athlete group (Zaugg, 1998). The researcher also found no significant difference between athletes and non-athletes for discipline visits or demerit points, except that athletes had significantly fewer absences. The research supports earlier findings indicating participation in athletics does not deter academic achievement, and in some cases even improves grades. This study also provides evidence that high school student athletes have fewer behavior problems than non-athletes do. However, the data show only 6% fewer behavior incidences, which is not statistically significant in this study (Zaugg, 1998). Stewart (2006) used data collected from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, a nationally representative longitudinal study of eighth grade students in public
and private schools, which created a sample size of 986 African-American students. After analyzing the data, the researcher determined that extracurricular involvement, such as sports participation, significantly and directly related to academic success in these students (Stewart, 2006). High school student athletes not only performed well academically, but also behaved as well, or better, than their non-athlete peers behaved.

*Negative impact of athletics.*

Although many academic benefits relate to participation in high school athletics, some psychosocial detriments exist. Boys can achieve status through participation and achievement in high school athletics. Those who excel in sports gain recognition from their peers and move upward in their social structures. Coaches often push boys to fulfill, “masculine themes including distinctions between boys and men, physical size and strength, avoidance of feminine activities and values, and emotional self-control (Klein, 2006, p. 56). Male high school athletes struggle to maintain the hyper-masculinity expected of them, creating a social burden. Athletics can contribute to a sense of male domination and male hierarchy in high schools, creating pressure on boys to focus on masculinity. This masculine pressure can affect academic motivation and college preparedness, which may contribute to academic underachievement at the collegiate level.

*Equal time commitments.*

Athletic time commitments at the high school level equal academic time commitments. Zaugg (1998) analyzed how much time each student athlete spends on academics and athletics, and found that the mean weekly time commitment for athletics equaled the time commitment for academic courses. This study was conducted in a small community with a strong history of parental support and values encouraging academic and athletic success, causing difficulties in
generalizing the results to the rest of the population. When student athletes are able to balance academic time equally with athletic time, academic success is possible.

**Middle school level.**

At the middle school level, athletic participation also contributes to academic success. 136 eighth grade students (73 student athletes) during the 1998-1999 academic year at an urban middle-school in Omaha, NE participated in a study analyzing athletic participation and academic achievement (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). The students filled out a survey indicating their level of athletic participation and the researchers collected data from school records and academic reports. Stephens and Shaben (2002) found athletes had significantly higher GPAs than non-athletes did. Both male and female student athletes had high GPAs than non-athletes of the same sex. The researchers also identified level of sports participation and found as interscholastic sports participation increases, GPAs increase. Stephens and Shaben (2002) note the two students who participated in five sports had GPAs near the top of their class. The researchers suggest involvement in interscholastic sports enhances the academic performance of students.

Researchers speculate participation in athletics helps students build discipline, set goals, organize time, and develop self-confidence, helping them to succeed in the classroom as well (Stephens & Shaben, 2002). In the middle school setting, where time commitments and pressures are not as great as those faced by collegiate athletes, academic success is enhanced by sports participation.

**Academic Achievement of Student Athletes vs. Non-athletes**

**Student athlete population as a whole.**

The effect of athletic participation on academic performance at the collegiate level has been an area of debate for many years. As long as pre-college variables are accounted for, such as demographics, high school GPAs, and SAT scores, minimal differences in academic
achievement exist between student athletes and non-athletes (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, & Banaji, 2004; Lapchick, 1987). When considering the student body as a whole, athletes perform as well or better than traditional students. Higher graduation rates may occur because student athletes usually operate under institutional controls (minimum academic standards, mandatory study halls, and specialized academic advising). Rishe (2003) collected data from 252 Division I schools and found average graduation rates for student athletes overall exceed graduation rates for all undergraduates. Studies showing little difference in academic achievement between non-athletes and student athletes tend to look at the athlete population as a whole, including all sports, giving the overall impression athletes do as well as non-athletes (Lapchick, 1987).

When researchers identify sub-populations of student-athletes, results differ from one sport to another or even one gender to another. In one study, researchers examined the differences in entering academic profiles for high commitment collegiate student athletes to other non-athlete students. The researchers conducted five waves of the study, with the sample size varying from 423-1061 students at an Ivy League university and 267-377 students at a small liberal arts college (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, & Banaji, 2004). The researchers found high commitment athletes tend to enter college with lower SAT scores than non-athletes. Incoming athletes also have lower self-assessments of their academic skills and report more challenges to academic performances (Aries et al., 2004). The majority of incoming high commitment athletes have below average academic profiles, which many researchers fail to acknowledge when suggesting athletes perform as well as non-athletes with similar profiles. The researchers found high commitment student athletes, athletes participating in high-revenue sports, perform only as well as student athletes entering with similar academic profiles. In other words, the study does not show that student athletes perform as well as the rest of the student body as a whole, but
instead perform as well as the students who had similar academic profiles upon entrance, which tended to be low. Even if athletes are on par with non-athletes entering at the same below average level, the fact remains student athletes are still below average.

**Isolating specific populations of student athletes.**

Differences in academic achievement exist when athletes are separated by specific identifiers, such as ethnicity and revenue potential of sport. Researchers found that high school GPA was the best predictor of college GPA (Harrison, Comeaux, & Plecha, 2006). African-American student athletes enter college with lower GPAs than their white teammates and on average perform more poorly academically throughout their college careers (Harrison *et al.*, 2006). Most educational problems occur with football and male basketball athletes (Harrison *et al.*, 2006; Lapchick, 1987; Snyder, 1996; Zaugg, 1998). High-revenue sports teams tend to recruit exceptional athletes despite low academic predictors (Rishe, 2003). As a result, many high-revenue student athletes enter college underprepared and struggle academically. In addition to entering college with low academic profiles, graduation rates for student athletes of certain subpopulations are low (Parham, 1993). Athletes in high profile, high-revenue sports are particularly susceptible to low academic performance.

**Athletes in High profile, Revenue- Generating Sports.**

**Low graduation rates.**

Revenue and profile levels associated with sports correlate with variable academic achievement in student athletes. Collegiate athletes participating in high-profile sports and high-revenue producing sports tend to underperform academically (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, & Banaji, 2004; Gaston-Gayles, 2005; Lapchick, 1987; Rishe, 2003). Florida’s nine public universities were surveyed and only 27% of basketball players and 35% of football players
graduated in six years, compared to 47% of non-athletes (Lapchick, 1987). The researcher also reported 20-30% illiteracy for high school football and basketball players in the research sample. An earlier study completed at the University of Florida revealed only 11% of basketball players graduated in a student body where 70% completed their degree (Lapchick, 1987). The researcher suggests the demands and pressures of the revenue sports reduce the potential for human growth in these athletes. Rishe (2003) compared the graduation rates of athletes and non-athletes at 252 Division I schools. The researcher found that the graduation rates of revenue athletes were lower than graduation rates of non-revenue athletes. Non-revenue sports, such as track and field and cross country, do not produce money for the schools and athletes participating in non-revenue sports do not face the same pressures as athletes in high-revenue sports. Lower graduation rates have been associated with low performance on college predictors including high school GPA and SAT scores. Some athletes in high-revenue collegiate sports have never been academically motivated and use college as a stepping-stone to the professional level.

**Motivation of athletes in high-revenue sports.**

High-revenue sports recruit marginal students with impressive athletic skill. Eitzen and Purdy (1986) purposely isolate football and basketball students in their study because “these sports are the revenue-producers where marginal students are most likely to be found” (p. 21). Non-revenue sports generally do not recruit students unless academic requirements have been met. Rishe (2003) suggests that non-revenue athletes come to college with better academic preparation and have fewer financial pressures to turn professional in their sport of choice, allowing them to graduate at a higher frequency. The researcher also adds that student athletes on sports teams with the greatest expectations to succeed athletically often have to compromise academic success to meet athletic demands.
In terms of athletic versus academic motivation, Gaston-Gayles’ (2005) study surveyed the motivation of 236 student athletes from eight varsity sports at a Midwest Division I university with the Student Athletes’ Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ). The study revealed athletes on revenue sports teams displayed higher student athletic motivation relative to academic motivation. Researchers Sandstedt, Cox, Martens, Ward, Webber, and Ivey (2004) developed a Student-Athlete Career Situation Inventory (SACSI) to more validly and reliably track athlete motivation and career orientation. The researchers measure a factor they call the Career versus Sports Identity factor, which identifies a student’s, “propensity to see himself or herself as a student seeking academic and career achievement as opposed to athletic achievement” (Sandstedt et al., 2004, p. 90). Higher athletic motivation often causes student athletes to sacrifice academic performance and the development of a reliable and valid inventory measuring motivational would help identify at-risk athletes who may require additional support.

Identification with athlete role over student role.

High-revenue sport collegiate athletes are pressured to identify with their athletic role over their academic role. As athletics become a priority for student athletes in high profile sports, academic performance declines. Aries et al. (2004) surveyed students at two highly selective Northeastern schools and found differences in cognitive skills between males in revenue-producing sports and non-athletes at the freshmen level, which increased over the course of college. The researchers found male football and basketball players reported reading fewer texts or assigned readings than male non-athletes (Aries et al., 2004). The sample size used by Aries et al. (2004) was considerably large, but only applies to athletes attending highly selective schools.
Singer (2008) conducted a qualitative case study involving in-depth interviewing of four African-American male athletes who were participants in a high-revenue college football program at a large Midwestern university. The researcher found the athletes viewed the term ‘student athlete’ as an “inappropriate label and inaccurate description of who they are especially given that the inordinate amount of time that they were expected to devote to football served as a detriment to their overall educational development” (Singer, 2008, p. 402). Coaches and other stakeholder groups of the intercollegiate athletics expect athletes to identify primarily with their athletic role. The author also suggests that the current structure of revenue college sports makes them more about business and less about fun, recreation, and education. Singer’s (2008) study provides important first hand accounts from collegiate athletes of a revenue sport (football), but also note his sample size is incredibly small and provides qualitative data about the participants that cannot be generalized to the whole population.

Gaston-Gayles and Hu (2009) analyzed data from the Basic Academic Skills Study (BASS) of 410 college freshmen, measuring student experiences. The researchers found student athletes in high profile sports reported interacting less often with students other than teammates. Athletes in high profile sports tend to spend more time with their teammates versus other students because so much of their time and energy is directed towards their athletic role instead of their academic role.

African-American Student Athletes

Influence of culture on African-American student athletes.

Beginning at an early age, African-American children are pushed towards athletic achievement through culture and stereotypes and inordinate economic inequality. African-American males are faced with over-identification with athletic achievement which harms their
academic achievement. African-American males are overrepresented in the sports world because culture and stereotypes push them towards athletic achievement (Beaman & Bell, 2006). Many African-American male student athletes value their sport as the most viable means to economic success and tend to give most of their effort, concentration, and hope to their sport, leaving little for their academic pursuits. African-American male athletes tend to have the persistent goal of achieving the professional level of their sport, despite unfavorable odds. Beaman and Bell (2006) suggest the focus on athletic career motivation is due to early socialization of African-American males. Early on in life, African-American males are encouraged to become athletes because this is considered to be their most viable means of economic success (Beaman & Bell, 2006).

As the emphasis on athletics increases, poor academic performance increases as well. Parham (1993) states graduation rates are “unacceptably low” for African-American student athletes (p. 421). Lapchick (1987) cites a study in which 31% of African-American athletes graduated after six years of college, and only 14% after four years, compared to 53% of white athletes after six years of college. In many schools, stereotypes exist against African-American student athletes, resulting in low academic expectations (Beaman & Bell, 2006). African-American children are pushed toward athletic motivation at an early age and they underperform academically long before reaching the college level. African-American student athletes unable to reach the professional level have difficulty transitioning to the workforce because most of their energy has gone towards athletics instead of academics.

**Underprepared for college academically.**

African-American male athletes focus on athletic achievement and strive to reach the professional level, causing them to put minimal effort towards academic achievement throughout their entire educational experience. African-American male athletes participating in revenue
producing sports enter college underprepared and less likely to achieve academically (Gaston-Gayles, 2005). Eitzen and Purdy (1986) analyzed university records of all 2088 entering freshmen student athletes at Colorado State University from 1970-1979. The researchers focused on four predictors of college performance (SAT score, ACT score, high school GPA, and high school class rank) and on actual academic performance (GPA and graduation rate). White student athletes outperformed black student athletes on all college performance predictors, demonstrating white college athletes were better prepared for college. The researchers established that the differences were statistically significant for SAT scores, high school GPA, and class standing.

Eitzen and Purdy (1986) also discovered white athletes achieved significantly higher GPAs than black student athletes (2.51 versus 2.06) and white student athletes had higher graduation rates (35% compared to 21%). The researchers suggest black student athletes recruited to participate in intercollegiate athletics are less likely to succeed in the classroom compared to white student athletes. This study also compared the graduation rates of black student athletes and black students of the general student population. Black student athletes had a graduation rate of 21% compared to 41% for blacks in the general student population. The data suggests that black athletes are recruited for their athletic ability and their academic skills are more marginal than black students who are not athletes.

**African-Americans in high-revenue sports.**

The majority of African-American athletes are recruited for high-revenue/profile sports with increased pressures for athletic achievement. Snyder (1996) constructed a survey examining academic motivation among Anglo and African-American university student athletes and the athletic professionalism at their schools. The researcher sampled 327 students and reported
72.5% of the black athletes in the study were in revenue generating sports, and only 40% of white athletes were in revenue generating sports (Snyder, 1996). The author reports African-American student athletes were much more attracted to pursuing professional sports than Anglo American athletes. When presented with the hypothetical question of finishing their bachelor’s degree, or taking advantage of an opportunity to play at the professional level, black student athletes chose the professional route at a much higher rate than white student athletes (Snyder, 1996). The researcher’s findings supported previous research about post college expectations of African-American athletes and their hopes of turning professional.

Singer’s (2008) qualitative case study of four African-American collegiate football players found psychosocial detriments to be greater than psychosocial benefits for the athletes. The black student athlete’s football-related responsibilities detracted from taking advantage of educational experiences, so much so three of the four athletes would not allow themselves to be referred to as ‘student athletes’ and instead insisting on terms like ‘athlete-student’ and ‘scholarship-athlete’ (Singer, 2008, p. 403). Pressure to succeed athletically, in order to promote success for the high-revenue sport they were recruited to, creates a barrier for African-American students when relating to their roles as students over athletes. African-American athletes are recruited, even as marginal students, for high profile sports because they have been socialized to be high athletic achievers.

**College Preparedness of Recruited Athletes**

In an effort to build successful sports teams, colleges recruit high school athletes. Recruited members sometimes have admissions advantages and can enter college with less impressive transcripts than non-athletes attempting to be admitted (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, &Banaji, 2004). Athletes with lower academic profiles admitted into highly selective universities
struggle academically given their lower academic skill level upon entry (Aries et al., 2004; Parham, 1993). Eitzen and Purdy (1986) report “coaches and school administrators have broken rules and ethics for admission and eligibility by using fraudulent transcripts, altering admissions tests scores, granting grades for phantom courses, and counseling athletes to take courses that retain their eligibility but do not move them toward graduation” (p. 15). The researchers determined that both white and black athletes in their study were underprepared for college, but the black-athletes more so than the white. For example, the researchers’ analysis determined the average high school GPA for black student athletes and white student athletes respectively were 2.41 and 2.91 on a 4 point scale, compared to the general student population having an average GPA of 3.31 (Eitzen & Purdy, 1986). Referring back to differences with revenue sport athletes, Eitzen and Purdy (1986) reported average GPAs for black and white football student athletes were even lower at 2.21 and 2.68 respectively.

Colleges allow marginal students to be admitted to advance their high-revenue sports programs. Figler (1987) reports that Division I schools are more likely to recruit academically unqualified or marginal students because they have larger budgets and their sports teams’ performances are closely monitored by the public, increasing pressure to succeed athletically. The researcher also reports athletes being admitted into college to support revenue-oriented, high-profile sports without meeting institutional standards. Rishe’s (2003) study of 252 Division I schools found a strong correlation between high school preparation for college (SAT scores) and graduation rates. The data analysis showed athletes participating in football and men’s basketball come to college less prepared to succeed academically, and have lower college graduation rates (Rishe, 2003). Marginal students recruited for athletic achievement struggle
academically in the collegiate environment, especially when time demands of athletic programs detract from academics.

**Time Commitments**

**Time demands costly for even academically motivated athletes.**

Middle school athletes do not face large time commitments for their athletic pursuits, and athletic participation has been shown to increase academic performance. At the high school level, athletic time commitments have been shown to equal academic time commitments, allowing students to participate in athletics without experiencing a negative impact on academic achievement. At the collegiate level, however, even athletes with an appropriate balance of academic and athletic motivation have difficulty finding the necessary amount of time to succeed in both. Although recruiting marginal students for revenue sports accounts for some of the poor academic performance of student athletes, a study involving students in a United Kingdom (UK) university found students struggled academically despite meeting rigorous academic requirements (McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). This English university only admits students based on academic achievements, and no other entry is possible (i.e., athletic ability). The poor academic performance cannot be blamed on admission of marginal students. McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) discovered time commitments and physical exhaustion were the most frequently reported barriers to academic achievement at the UK University. McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis’ (2004) conducted their research through individual interviews and focus group discussions. The sample size was small, but provided valuable qualitative data. One UK student athlete reported on his own poor exam performance, “It’s not that I didn’t understand it, it was because I spent so much time playing sport, but my sport is my priority” (McKenna & Dunstan-
Lewis, 2004, p. 188). Student athletes spend a lot of time and energy on athletic related tasks, and have difficulty finding time to devote to academic endeavors.

Time demands of athletic programs force students to sacrifice attention to academics. Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, and Banaji’s (2004) study involved a series of questionnaires distributed to students at two highly selective Northeastern schools, one an Ivy League university and the other a small liberal arts college. The researchers’ questionnaire focused on each student’s individual collegiate experience. The initial survey was completed at orientation involving 1,395 students at the Ivy League university and 422 students at the college (Aries et al., 2004). The questionnaires were also distributed at the end of each academic year, and the fifth and final questionnaire only involved 521 students from the Ivy League university and 353 students from the college (Aries et al., 2004). Student athletes completing the questionnaire reported significant difficulty in finding time to study and earn good grades (Aries et al., 2004). In the end, most athletes in the study graduated with comparable grades to non-athletes who had similar qualifications, but the athletes reported a greater struggle to find time to study and achieve academically.

In addition to time demands, student athletes also report being physically exhausted when they do have time to devote to academics, lessening the quality of academic performance (Singer, 2008; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). Student athletes must attempt to succeed academically with time constraints and physical demands most traditional students do not face. Time demands and physical exhaustion create both a need for academic support and an obstacle for receiving academic support.
Time commitments increase with pressure for athletic achievement.

Athletes participating in high-revenue sports face additional pressure to succeed athletically, as their sports are generally publicized to bring in revenue for the college or university. Student athletes face pressures of time commitment for training for and executing athletic performance with a public audience, with the general expectation that the public desires success (Figler, 1987). Athletes put forth a lot of time and energy into their individual sports to live up to the pressures to succeed. Athletes of high-revenue sports overwhelmingly referred to time demands as the largest barrier to academic success. Singer’s (2008) case study revealed that the interviewed African-American football players at a major college also struggled with time demands. One student athlete stated, “We put more time into football than we actually do in school” (Singer, 2008, p. 404). Another student athlete discussed the ‘20-hour rule’ (NCAA mandates a maximum of twenty hours for football practices and football-related activities per week for each athlete, and no more than four hours per day) and insists this rule is not taken seriously (Singer, 2008). After conducting the interviews, the researcher determined coaching staff commonly violate the NCAA’s 20-hour rule. The student athletes in the study felt they were constantly being put into positions where a choice had to be made between devoting time to football or other educational experiences. Again, note the sample size for this study included only four African-American football student athletes from the same university and the finding cannot be generalized to other sports programs or athletes. Time commitments and physical demands student athletes experience create barriers to fulfilling academic roles.
**Student Role vs. Athletic Role**

**Balancing roles.**

Student athletes have both academic and athletic roles to play. Both roles are time consuming and create difficulties for individuals trying to balance athletic and academic demands. Student athletes must find ways to maximize their participation and knowledge on both an academic and athletic level (Parham, 1993). Parham suggests difficulties in balancing both academic and athletic roles effectively for a well-balanced and committed student athlete, let alone a student athlete who has poor or inadequate academic preparation. As mentioned earlier, many incoming athletes have below average academic profiles. Parham (1993) proposes student athletes give athletic pursuits more attention when a decision has to be made about how much time to spend on athletics and academics.

**Pressure for athletic success creates an imbalance.**

Pressure to achieve athletic success can influence academic success. High school athletes, as previously mentioned, do not suffer from extensive outside pressures to succeed, but at the college level athletics are a source of income for universities, which increases the pressure to succeed. In addition, pressures increase at the collegiate level for athletes attempting to reach the professional level, which is another source of stress high school athletes do not face. One study collected data from 252 Division I schools, including schools from all three classes (I-A, I-AA, I-AAA), and examined the impact of a school’s athletic success on graduation rates for student athletes and non-athlete undergraduates (Rishe, 2003). The researcher found that the overall graduation rates for student athletes were not impacted by the school’s athletic success, however, when looking at specific genders and ethnicities deficiencies existed (Rishe, 2003). For example, the collective graduation rate for non-athlete undergraduates at Division I-A schools was 57.25%
compared to the student-athlete graduation rate of 57.34%, but white and black male athletes had graduation rates of 56.45% and 42.72% respectively (Rishe, 2003). The author attributes this difference to male athletes facing greater present and long-term pressures to succeed athletically than female athletes. Rishe (2003) states, “This burden to succeed most likely impacts the intensity and time dedicated to athletic training preparation, leaving much less time to focus on academics” (p. 414).

Greater commitment to the athletic role and less to academics is associated with lower GPAs in college (Aries, McCarthy, Salover, & Banaji, 2004). Rishe (2003) found undergraduates and student athletes have higher graduation rates at schools with major athletic programs, which he attributes to superior academic resources. He does note, however, that non-athlete students outperform student athletes in terms of graduation rates at schools with major athletic programs, but the reverse is true for the schools surveyed without major athletic programs (Rishe, 2003). This finding suggests that schools with major athletic programs (high-revenue programs) negatively affect student athlete graduation rates, which can be attributed to time demands and pressures placed upon them for athletic success.

**Pursuing the professional level.**

An alarming number of male collegiate athletes are focused on reaching the professional level, despite the small percentage of student-athletes who become professional athletes. Men generally have greater opportunities to pursue an athletic career beyond college and face more pressure from the media and financially for athletic success than women (Rishe, 2003). Women are better able to balance academic and athletic roles, as women do not face the same pressures as men do with athletic motivation (Rishe, 2003; Snyder, 1996). Snyder (1996) surveyed 327 Anglo and African-American male student athletes from five campuses of a university system.
The researcher’s survey examined both the academic motivation and professionalism at the schools. The participants were presented with situations in which their responses could be either academically or athletically inclined in terms of motivation (Snyder, 1996). African-American student athletes displayed a higher probability of taking a job offer, perhaps professional, in their sport rather than returning to their university for an additional semester earning a bachelor’s degree. The researcher also found that Division III schools place a higher priority on academics than athletics for their athletes, whereas Division I schools focus more on athletics and admit outstanding athletes who do not meet academic standards. Snyder (1996) speculates the issue of student athlete academic motivation to be a function of university standards and admissions rather than the ethnicity of the athletes involved.

Gaston-Gayles (2005) found non-white athletes had higher career athletic motivation and student athletic motivation than academic motivation, and their grades and graduation rates were lower than white athletes who did not place as much emphasis on career athletic motivation and student athletic motivation. Parham (1993) suggests too many student athletes focus almost exclusively on their dreams of becoming a professional athlete and neglect their academic roles, despite the fact that a large percentage of student athletes simply never reach the professional level. The more pressure a program or university places on an athlete to succeed athletically and strive for the professional level, the higher the risk for academic underperformance.

**Relationships with Academia**

**Negative stereotypes.**

Student athletes often struggle with the negative stereotypes placed upon them. Student athletes are commonly thought of as ‘dumb-jocks’ (Figler 1987; Harrison, Stone, Shapiro, Yee, Boyd, & Rullan, 2009; Parham, 1993). Some of these stereotypes begin at the high school level,
where male athletes are pressured by hyper-masculine themes (Klein, 2006). The pressure high school boys face to achieve athletically over academically creates an image of them being unintelligent despite their academic achievements. These stereotypes follow athletes to the collegiate level. At the collegiate level, negative stereotypes are projected from faculty, traditional students, and administrative personnel (Harrison et al., 2009). African-American students deal with the stereotype of blacks having superior physical ability but inferior mental acuity (Eitzen & Purdy, 1986).

A study was conducted involving eighty-eight college athletes from two large state universities participating in test sessions with different prompts (Harrison, Stone, Shapiro, Yee, Boyd, & Rullan, 2009). Some athletes were asked to identify themselves as athletes prior to taking the test, others had the option of identifying themselves as scholar-athletes, and the last group was not asked to identify themselves at all. The study showed that female student athletes taking the test performed the worst when prompted to identify themselves as scholar-athletes prior to taking the test. The researchers speculated the poor performance of females when their athletic and academic identities were linked suggests the “female athletes were attempting to defeat the potential for a negative characterization, but that the threat of confirming the negative academic stereotype about college athletes impeded their ability to do so” (Harrison et al., 2009, p. 87). Interestingly, male college athletes were not negatively impacted by priming their athletic identity prior to taking the test. Male college athletes actually performed significantly better when primed to identify themselves as athletes prior to taking the exam than those not primed at all or primed to identify themselves as scholar-athletes. Harrison et al. (2009) speculate males performed better when primed to identify themselves as athletes because males take more pride in being college athletes than females. Figler (1987) suggests student athletes struggle with role
conflict and self-concept and would benefit from academic advising. Negative stereotypes create difficulties for student athletes trying to form relationships with faculty and staff.

**Student athletes’ interactions with faculty.**

Collegiate student athlete interaction with faculty has been shown to have an impact on academic achievement. A positive impact on GPA has been shown with faculty-student athlete interactions when faculty provide intellectual challenge and stimulation, encourage graduate school, provide respect, and help student athletes achieve professional goals (Harrison, Comeaux, & Plecha, 2006). The nature of these interactions provides varying degrees of impact on academic achievement, mostly positive (Harrison et al., 2006). Interaction with faculty and participation in academic related activities has been related significantly and positively to learning and communication skills (Gayles & Hu, 2009). Students-athletes often report a disconnect between themselves and faculty. McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis’ (2004) qualitative study found UK student athletes desired a greater connection with academia. One student reported, “I would love to see someone on a regular basis who has knowledge of my sport and my academic studies; who has at least some experience of what I’m trying to achieve” (McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis, 2004, p. 188). The athlete also admitted he fails to communicate with his instructors when he has to miss lectures for events and his instructors have developed a negative opinion of him, not understanding his absence. Greater communication between student athletes and traditional students, faculty, and administrators increases understanding and promotes positive relationships. The responsibility of improving communication not only falls on the athlete, but on the faculty, traditional students, and administrators as well. Communication is a two-way street.
Identified Tools for Improving Academic Performance

**Varying levels of academic support between schools.**

Schools with athletic programs requiring large time demands on athletes need to provide academic support and assistance especially for athletes with lower academic credentials (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery, & Banaji, 2004). Academic support for student athletes currently exists at some colleges, but the support is not consistent from one school to the next. Colleges and universities offer services like counseling, tutoring, remedial courses, study tables, and study-skills training in an attempt to improve first-year academic performance of “high-risk” groups like student athletes (Figler, 1987; Harney, Thomas, Brigham, & Sanders, 1986). Some programs promote interactions with students and activities unrelated to an athlete’s sport. Gaston-Gayles & Hu (2009) found that student athlete interactions with students other than athletes enhanced their educational experiences and positively impacted academic achievement. Helping student athletes participate in academic related activities to the extent the athletes are involved in athletic activities helps students to balance their lives and increase their learning.

Study tables are required by some schools for incoming freshmen and older athletes experiencing academic difficulties (Harney et al., 1986). Study tables demand mandatory attendance and are closely monitored, giving them an averse effect. Many students try to get out of or avoid study tables (Harney et al., 1986). The prevalence of study tables in universities is not well documented because they are classified under a variety of different titles and embedded into other programs.

The Freshman Athlete Scholastic Training Program (FAST) was developed as an alternative to study tables (Harney et al., 1986). FAST focuses on class attendance, note taking, and completing assignments on time. Two experiments were conducted by the researchers to
determine the effectiveness of the program. The first study was conducted from 1982-1983 involving twenty four freshmen student athletes from the football program at Washington State University, a Division I school (Harney et al., 1986). The football players were presented with the opportunity to participate in the FAST program in place of attending study tables. The researchers found the athletes in the program achieved a better overall GPA average than their teammates participating in the study table that had similar college preparedness indicators (Harney et al., 1986). The second study conducted involved thirty one freshman student athletes (21 men and 10 women) recruited from a variety of men’s and women’s athletic programs at Washington State University (Harney et al., 1986). The student athletes in the FAST program performed significantly better than the student-athletes not participating in the program (Harney et al., 1986). Reducing study-table time for student athletes compliant with the FAST program proved a successful motivator.

Concluding their research, Harney et al., (1986) cite the Student Improvement Program (SIP) as the only program involving extensive training procedures that has been able to document a consistent impact on freshman GPA similar to what they found with the FAST program. SIP places much more emphasis on study-skills development, and stresses the importance of monthly planning and self-monitoring (Harney et al., 1986).

Goal setting.

Goal setting programs have been suggested as helpful tools to promote academic success with students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) (Kaylor & Flores, 2007). A study involving high school athletes introduced goal setting through a Possible Selves program found students were able to set more specific and attainable goals after completing the program (Kaylor & Flores, 2007). These students were also better able to identify possible barriers to the
goals set and identify steps for avoiding those barriers. This study unfortunately was of short
duration, failed to confirm the long-term effects of the Possible Selves program, and only
investigated effects on high school student athletes. Gayston-Gayles (2005) cited a study that
found goal setting, understanding racism, and community service to be significant predictors of
academic success for African-American athletes. Research is lacking in specific programs
promoting goal setting, but goal setting has been found helpful through academic advising.

**Academic advising.**

Academic advising can be beneficial for athletes but is absent in many schools. Figler
(1987) believes student athletes can benefit from a service which recognizes the pressures and
experiences that make student athletes different from other students. The time and emotional
commitment student athletes make to their sport leads many student athletes to require
counseling of some nature. Many student athletes make an extreme commitment to athletics and
require outside help to refocus them toward a future that is unlikely to include sports as a
primary focus. Figler’s (1987) analysis of the availability of advising/counseling support
programs for athletes across universities shows these services are lacking and inconsistent. Less
than half of the universities surveyed (114 Division I institutions) reported having any kind of
academic or psychological support services for student athletes, and thirty-five percent reported
having only one staff member to serve this function (Figler, 1987). This study, however, is dated
and the results cannot be considered definitive.

Relating specifically to African-American student athletes, Martin, Harrison, Stone and
Lawrence (2010) conducted a qualitative study in which twenty-seven African-American male
student from four academically rigorous universities in the Pac-Ten conference were interviewed
to gain an in-depth perspective on their academic achievements. Most of these athletes
participated in high-revenue sports. Several main themes regarding academic success emerged from the interviews including a perceived need to prove themselves to their classmates and professors, the need to overcome stereotypes, the importance of time-management, and the prevalence of pride and hard work (Martin et al., 2010). The authors commented on the importance of giving African-American student athletes a “voice” to be heard in order to help them overcome stereotypes and increase their motivation (Martin et al., 2010). The researchers noted that generally negative stereotypes have a negative impact on African-American student athlete motivation, but the academically successful student athletes they interviewed were able to channel the negative stereotypes into positive motivation to overcome stereotypes (Martin et al., 2010). The African-American student athletes reported finding comfort and support in having African-American advisors, administrators and coaches available to them (Martin et al., 2010). The researchers recommend institutions employ African-American advisors for African-American student athletes to identify with in order to aide them in overcoming stereotypes and channeling motivation into academic success (Martin et al., 2010).

**Career counseling for student athletes.**

Academic counseling can help student athletes prepare for the transition from sport to career related roles. Student athletes struggle with their transition from the role of athlete to non-athlete, partially because of unrealistic life expectations. Sandstedt, Cox, Martens, Ward, Webber, and Ivey (2004) cite a study in which 48% of a sample of 122 basketball and football players expected to play professional sports following their college careers, when in reality 2% of all collegiate athletes advance to the professional level (Sandstedt et al., 2004). The researchers’ goal was to develop a reliable and valid instrument that measures the career situation of student athletes. Sandstedt et al. (2004) developed a Student Athlete Career Situation
Inventory (SACSI). The researchers administered the survey to 204 student athletes from a large Midwestern Division I university. The participants were volunteers, which may have skewed the results, as the volunteers may have been more motivated than other student athletes were. The participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 24. The researchers used three different inventories, the actual SACSI and two inventories related to athletic experiences and perceived academic gains. The results provided support for the reliability and validity of the SACSI (Sandstedt et al., 2004). The validity was established through factor analysis and criterion-related validity. The SACSI can be a valuable tool for athletic department administrators attempting to create and implement programs facilitating student athlete career development. This study was conducted with athletes that were all from the same university, causing difficulties in generalizing the results to all university student athletes.

Another study, surveying 326 undergraduates (104 general students, 121 fine arts students, 101 student-athletes) at a Midwestern university identified lower career maturity attitudes for student-athletes in comparison to the general student population and fine arts students (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010). The researchers also found that student athletes more readily commit to a personal decision based on what others believe without first testing it or an individual fit, which they attribute to a history of athletes’ decisions being made for them by coaches (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010). These individuals would benefit from counseling to develop their individual decision making skills and expand their perceived identity beyond their athletic role (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010).

As a follow up to the study cited by Sandstedt et al. (2004), Linnemeyer & Brown (2010) discovered only 27% of the student athletes surveyed reported high to very high probability of advancing to the professional ranks. The researchers suggest that, “career programming for
student athletes is successfully addressing the importance of exploring possible career options and maintaining the flexibility to refine and adapt career choices according to personal values and environmental conditions,” (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010, p. 626). Student athletes who are pushed toward athletic achievement benefit from assistance in transitioning from an athlete role to a career role, which can be accomplished through career counseling.

**Chapter III: Results and Analysis Relative to the Problem**

**Factors Impeding Academic Success**

Researchers have identified several factors hindering academic success for high-revenue sport athletes, especially for African-American athletes. The most prevalent factor affecting high-revenue student athletes is significant athletic time commitments, as this factor affects student-athletes regardless of their academic profiles upon college entrance. At the high school level, time commitments between athletics and academics are equal and students are able to participate in athletics without experiencing negative impacts on their academic performance (Zaugg, 1998). At the collegiate level, however, time commitments exceed academic commitments and athletes struggle to find time to devote to academic endeavors (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery & Banaji, 2004; Figler, 1987; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004; Singer, 2008). McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis’ (2004) study isolates the time commitment factor from poor college preparedness by studying student athletes who have met rigorous academic requirements to attend their university. These students entered the university with high academic achievement, but struggled at the collegiate level complaining of not having enough time to devote to academics because of athletic time commitments (McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004).
Student athletes tend to favor athletic pursuits when a decision has to be made about how much time to spend on athletics and academics (Parham, 1993).

Student athletes often choose athletic pursuits over academic pursuits because of the high outside pressures placed on them to succeed and identify with their athletic role over their academic role, which is another major factor impeding academic success. Athletes participating in high-revenue sports face higher pressures to succeed and consequently devote more time to athletics (Figler, 1987, Parham, 1993; Rishe, 2003; Singer, 2008). African-American student athletes generally represent a large portion of academically underperforming student athletes because they are mainly recruited to high-revenue sports, where time commitments and pressures are greater than in non-revenue sports (Gaston-Gayles, 2005; Singer 2008; Snyder, 1996). These extreme pressures are not felt at the high school and middle school levels, where academic performance benefits from athletic participation, because these student athletes are not participating in high-revenue sports and do not have to worry about professional recruiting (Stephens & Shaben, 2002; Zaugg, 1998). At the collegiate level male athletes, especially African-American male athletes and male athletes participating in high-revenue sports face greater pressures to succeed because their sports bring in revenue for the university and are followed more closely by stakeholders (Rishe, 2003, Snyder 1996). Lapchick (1987) suggests the pressure and time demands on the athletes reduces their potential for human growth as they demonstrate lower literacy levels, poor academic performance and are less likely to participate in activities outside of athletics. Male athletes of high-revenue sports also experience a greater push to pursue their sports to the professional level than female athletes, which places additional time constraints and pressures that hinder academic success (Gaston-Gayles, 2005; Rishe, 2003, Snyder 1996).
Lack of college preparedness presents another main factor inhibiting academic achievement for student-athletes of high-revenue sports. Student-athletes for high-revenue sport programs are often recruited based on exceptional athletic ability, even with dismal academic performance measures (Aries, McCarthy, Salovery & Banaji, 2004; Eitzen & Purdy, 1986; Figler 1987; Parham 1993). African-American male athletes are socialized for athletic success from an early age and tend to put less effort into academics throughout their entire academic career (Snyder, 1996). Consequently, African-American athletes tend to get recruited to high-revenue sports programs for their exceptional athletic ability and are unprepared for collegiate academics (Eitzen & Purdy, 1986; Singer, 2008; Snyder, 1996). Both white and black high-revenue sport male collegiate athletes tend to come to college less prepared to succeed academically, struggle with their college course loads, and have lower college graduation rates (Aries et al., 2004; Rishe, 2003). Division I schools are most likely to recruit marginal students as student athletes (Figler, 1987; Rishe, 2003). Division I schools and other high-revenue sport college programs that recruit marginal academic students for their athletic abilities have an increase in student athletes requiring academic support.

Interventions for Academic Success

Researchers have identified several methods for increasing academic success in student athletes, especially for those participating in high-revenue sports. Significant time constraints placed upon student athletes by their athletic participation has been reported as a major barrier to academic success. Currently academic support programs vary greatly throughout universities, but researchers have found programs that help develop time management skills improve academic performance (Harney, Thomas, Brigham, & Sanders, 1986; Martin, Harrison, Stone & Lawrence, 2010). Some of the programs that encourage time management skills include study tables, the
FAST program, SIP, and academic advising programs (Harney et al., 1986, Martin et al., 2010). Time management skills provide athletes with tools to devote more time to academics despite the excessive athletic time commitments associated with high-revenue sport programs. Currently there is an alarming lack of research into the prevalence and effectiveness of specific academic support programs. Research has indicated there is an obvious need for time management skills for student athletes in high-revenue collegiate sport programs, but does not indicate which programs are most effective, or even what programs are currently in place.

Academic advising and career counseling have been identified as useful interventions to promote academic success in student athletes of high-revenue sports. Academic advising can help build positive faculty-student athlete relationships, encourage athletes to identify with their student roles, and channel motivation towards academic success (Figler, 1987; Harrison, Comeaux, & Plecha, 2006; Martin, Harrison, Stone and Lawrence, 2010; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). GPA increases have been correlated with positive student athlete-faculty interactions, in which faculty members challenged, encouraged, and respected student athletes (Harrison et al., 2006). African-American student athletes, who face more negative stereotypes than white athletes, benefit significantly from academic advising especially when their academic advisors are of African-American decent (Martin et al., 2010). Academic advising with African-American advisors provides comfort and support to African-American student athletes helping them overcome stereotypes, identify with faculty members, and channel motivation into academic success (Martin et al., 2010). Although studies have identified a positive impact of academic advising for student athletes, the prevalence of academic advising is not well documented. In addition, academic advising is a broad concept which is not well defined across college campuses.
As previously stated, high-revenue sport student athletes tend to identify more with their athletic role than their academic role and face more pressures to succeed athletically and pursue professional athletic careers. Career counseling has been suggested as an effective tool to help student athletes balance their focus to academic and career pursuits (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010, Sandstedt, 2004). Similar to academic advising, career counseling has been suggested as a necessary intervention for student athletes who are excessively athletically oriented, but research does not illustrate the effectiveness or prevalence of this intervention.

Lack of Efficacy and Prevalence Studies

One possible explanation for a lack of studies regarding the prevalence of academic support programs in universities is that there is currently no standard set across all universities. Programs vary extensively from one university to another, and even within a university. It would be difficult to discover the prevalence of a particular program because there are so many variations and labels for these programs. Studies regarding the effectiveness of academic support programs are lacking, which may be attributed to the difficulty of isolating the effect of academic support programs from other factors impacting student success. It would be nearly impossible to set up a controlled study to determine whether or not a student’s successes and failures were solely due to the presence or lack of academic support programs.

Chapter IV: Recommendations and Conclusion

In the collegiate setting student athletes face outside pressures beyond those of traditional students including college unpreparedness, time commitments, student versus athletic role confusion, and relationships with academia. Male African-American collegiate athletes, as well as other athletes participating in high-revenue sports, face the most pressure to be athletically motivated, and suffer the greatest negative impact on academic achievement. High-revenue
collegiate sports have a history of recruiting athletes with exceptional athletic ability despite marginal high school academic performance. Athletic directors and college administrators would benefit from determining whether or not student athletes participating in high-profile sports are currently receiving academic support and how the support they receive affects academic achievement.

**Recommendations**

Schools with high-revenue athletic programs that make large demands on an athlete’s time should provide support and assistance for athletes with lower academic achievement. Administrators should implement programs that introduce high-revenue sport athletes to time management skills in order to cope with athletic time constraints. Universities should invest in well-trained career counselors and take time to pair athletes with academic advisors who will promote academic success. Academic advisors and learning specialists can help student athletes increase their confidence in academic related tasks. Athletic administrators can enhance the services provided to student athletes by creating ways for them to interact with students and faculty members outside of athletics. Helping student athletes participate in academic related activities to the extent the athletes are involved in athletic activities helps students to balance their lives and increase their learning.

**Areas for Further Research**

Most of the studies conducted in this area are of a quantitative nature. Quantitative research can be helpful for some aspects of researching this question because quantitative studies allow researchers to gain objective data from large sample sizes. These studies should be randomized and involve collegiate athletes from more than one institution. Quantitative studies,
however, tend to limit the depth of understanding gained in research. Understanding the full extent of why an athlete underachieves academically is difficult to do using only quantitative data. For example, student-athletes might do well in some institutions, but it is hard to determine if this success correlates with academic support programs, or if it is because they take easy course loads with professors who will cut them breaks. This particular problem requires an understanding of the relationships of student-athletes and to what extent those relationships affect their academic success. A qualitative study in which a researcher studies the process instead of just the outcomes would help shed light on the proper academic support to provide to student athletes. The observations a qualitative researcher makes in the field can provide more information than simply looking at a GPA. Qualitative studies can include case studies, focus groups and interviews. These studies should involve a variety of test subjects from different sports, schools, and backgrounds.

The literature reviewed does a good job of portraying academic deficiencies in certain subgroups of collegiate athletes, but the research does not clearly indicate whether or not academic support programs are in place for the identified struggling athletes and whether or not student-athletes take advantage of them. Some studies identify the effectiveness of different academic support programs, but they do not identify where these programs are in place and how many athletes take advantage of them. Methods for improving academic success in student athletes have been shown to be effective, but further studies are needed to cater to different academic abilities throughout the athlete population, not just freshmen. The research has identified African-American collegiate athletes and high-revenue sport collegiate athletes as academic underachievers, but does not identify how much academic support these athletes receive. Both quantitative and qualitative studies are needed that investigate academic support
received by African-American collegiate athletes and high-revenue sport collegiate athletes, and how this support affects their academic performance. It would also be helpful to conduct further research on the correlation of factors between pre-college athletes and college athletes, especially regarding the effects of stereotypes and masculine attitudes. Another helpful study would involve comparing existing high school academic support to collegiate academic support programs.

Further research is needed to confirm the efficacy of goal setting programs for student athletes at the collegiate level so administrators can determine if they want to incorporate goal setting into their academic support programs, as most research in this area is related to high school student athletes.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Time demands of athletics and pressures to succeed athletically can cause students to sacrifice attention to academics. Programs have been studied and shown to improve academic achievement in student athletes, but some studies suggest no significant difference in academic achievement for collegiate athletes when compared to non-athletes (Aries, McCarthy, Salovey, & Banaji, 2004; Beamon, & Bell 2006; Lapchick, 1987). The question is raised as to whether or not academic support programs are even needed for student athletes. Studies claiming no difference in academic achievement often times include all sports and do not differentiate between individual sports, and the studies also do not mention what educational support the athletes have received. Most educational problems are found in athletes participating in high-revenue sports and athletes of African-American decent (Aries *et al*, 2004; Lapchick, 1987). A review of literature suggests time constraints and pressures placed on African-American athletes and other athletes participating in high-revenue sports jeopardize academic achievement, and create a need
for academic support programs. High-revenue sport programs often times recruit student athletes with marginal academic abilities, putting them in a collegiate setting they are unprepared for. If universities allow marginal academic students to be recruited for their athletic abilities, than universities need to have academic support programs in place to help these individuals succeed academically. Furthermore, if administrators allow coaches to require extreme time commitments of their student athletes, then academic support programs should be available teaching athletes time management skills to promote academic success. Further research is needed to identify correlations between specific academic support programs and their impact on academic achievement of student athletes as well as the level of academic support provided by universities and to what extent student athletes take advantages of those support programs.
References


