The Relationships of Life Stressors and Perceptions About Tutorial Services in Student-Athletes

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THE RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE STRESSORS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TUTORIAL SERVICES
IN STUDENT-ATHLETES

By

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ABSTRACT

Many college athletes continue to demonstrate low levels of motivation and achievement in the classroom (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999). Institutions of higher learning do not seem to be able to devise effective strategies that would resolve this situation. Collegiate athletes present a “motivational contradiction,” in that many are motivated to succeed in the athletic domain yet, seem to lack the motivation to learn and achieve at high levels in the classroom. Perhaps this is due to the arrival of many athletes at college campuses in a state of low readiness for academic challenge. Mitchell and Piatrowka’s (1974) research indicates that under-prepared students are likely to have deficits in motivation and are more likely to be distracted in their academic tasks than their successful peers. Although all students should be beneficiaries of academic support, campus athletes may comprise a group of clients that are in particular need of such assistance.

The role of a collegiate student-athlete entails a variety of expectations as well as special challenges (Ervin, Saunders, Gillis, & Hoprabo, 1985; Parham, 1993). As the term suggests, student-athletes are expected to fulfill a dual role, that of student as well as athlete (Adler & Adler, 1987; Parham, 1993). Many athletes entering collegiate sport are academically and socially unprepared (Bruno, Holland, & Ward, 1988; Staurt 1985).

If proper services are not provided to guide them, many succumb to a multitude of powerful stressors on the playing field, in the classroom, and in their social lives (Felston & Wilcox, 1993). Results of this thesis research should be helpful to those who counsel and advise student-athletes.

Therefore one purpose of this study was is to provide information, which should help clarify the perceived intensity, frequency and nature of stressors encountered by university student-athletes.

A second purpose of equal importance was to determine perceptions of the effectiveness held by the study’s athlete participants about the university provided support services designed to help the manage their stressors. Results of this research indicate that athletes at Florida State University view support services as comprehensive and helpful. The staff members who provide services are perceived as being well prepared.
Results from this study indicated that GPA was not found to correlate with student-athlete’s overall perception of effectiveness about the academic services. The study also discovered that there was no statistically significant correlation between high school GPA and perceptions about effectiveness of academic support services and only a slight low and negative correlation between high school GPA and amount of study hall hours attended per week. Contrary to what was predicted there was no difference in perceptions between race, sport, gender, and revenue and non-revenue sports. Finally, contrary to what was predicted, regardless of gender, stress appraisal was not significantly correlated with amount of study hall hours or perceptions about the services.

Studies such as this one should be conducted every few years to make sure that the service effectiveness is being maintained.

Finally, the last purpose of this study is to make recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since colleges and universities are increasingly dependent upon the success of their sports teams for reasons of fund raising, public relations, alumni support, and recognition, it may be assumed that student-athlete needs would be of considerate concern to college and university administrators (Nelson, 1982; Shapiro, 1984). However, many college athletes continue to demonstrate low levels of motivation and achievement in the classroom (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999). Unfortunately, institutions of higher learning do not seem to be able to devise effective strategies that would resolve this situation. Collegiate athletes present a “motivational contradiction,” in that many are motivated to succeed in the athletic domain yet, seem to lack the motivation to learn and achieve at high levels in the classroom. Perhaps this is due to the arrival of many athletes at college campuses in a state of low readiness for academic challenge. Mitchell and Piatrowka’s (1974) research indicates that under-prepared students are likely to have deficits in motivation and are more likely to be distracted in their academic tasks than their successful peers. Although all students should be beneficiaries of academic support, campus athletes may comprise a group of clients that are in particular need of such assistance.

The role of a collegiate student-athlete entails a variety of expectations as well as special challenges (Ervin, Saunders, Gillis, & Hogrebre, 1985; Parham, 1993). As the term suggests, student-athletes are expected to fulfill a dual role, that of student as well as athlete (Adler & Adler, 1987; Parham, 1993). Many athletes entering collegiate sport are academically and socially unprepared (Bruno, Holland, & Ward, 1988; Staurt 1985).

If proper services are not provided to guide them, many succumb to a multitude of powerful stressors on the playing field, in the classroom, and in their social lives (Felston & Wilcox, 1993). Support services must be in place and frequently updated to enable collegiate athletes to effectively achieve success both on and off the playing field, (Bruno et al., 1988). Ferrante, (1986), Ogilive, and Howe (1986) have argued that athletes are people first, thus suggesting that coaches, advisors/counselors, and sport psychologists who work closely with
them should be at least as concerned with the student-athlete's psychological well being as they are with the quality of their sport performance. Moreover, college athletes are likely to be in the throes of adolescence, a challenging and often turbulent developmental stage that in and of itself frequently requires professional assistance. All collegiate students, athletes and non-athletes alike, would benefit from support services.

Some research has been published on graduation rates of athletes, their multiple roles on campus, their perceptions of academic advisement, concerns about racial issues, and faculty perceptions about the sources and types of pressures with which student-athletes must cope (Adler & Adler, 1987; Anshel, 1990; Blann, 1985; Ervin et al., 1985; Felston & Wilcox, 1993; Parham, 1993; Sellers, 1992; Sowa & Gressard, 1983; Weber, Sherman, & Tegano 1990). Most of this research has focused on the so-called revenue sports or utilized athletes enrolled in relatively small institutions of higher learning. In other words, sampling in many of the previously conducted studies has been problematic. Bruno et al. (1988) examined the issue of effective support services for student-athletes. They noted that to be effective in aiding student-athletes, academic support programs require precise assessment, monitoring, and diagnosis of the entering students’ knowledge base.

In other studies academic support groups were formed in order to benefit the learning experience of the collegiate athlete. Universities developed a program that organized groups, these groups were known as group counseling. However, it should be noted that these were programs developed to enhance the individuals’ academic and not personal or social success. Benefits of group counseling programs have been documented; an increase in GPA and student satisfaction resulted when enrolled in-group counseling, (Cooker & Caffey, 1984; Hudesman, Auramides, Loveday, Waber, Wendell, 1985; Nelson, 1983).

**Relationship among selected dimensions of collegiate student-athletes’ experiences: An introduction**

Figure 1 depicts the relationships among (1) student-athletes (2) life stressors, academic, athletic, social, and personal (3) perceived needs (4) available support (academic, athletic, social, and counseling), and (5) perceptions held by athletes about the effectiveness of these services.
Figure 1. Relationships among selected dimensions of collegiate student-athletes experiences
Note: Italicized items will not be addressed.
Although it is likely to apply to athletes in many colleges and universities in the United States, it is used here to specifically represent the relationship and perceptions of athletes at Florida State University. Athletics account for a substantial portion of Florida State University’s annual budget and by addressing the needs of the student-athlete both student and university are likely to benefit. In this thesis research only relationships among academic and athletic aspects were examined. Therefore, counseling services and social support will not be addressed.

**Life Stressors**

The demands that student-athletes experience make them especially vulnerable to mental and physical distress, (Etzel, Ferrante, & Pinkney, 1991). Distress refers to reactions to stimuli perceived as harmful, or to performance demands that the athlete believes he/she is unprepared to satisfy (Martens, Burton, Vealy, 1990). Student-athletes face a multiple role conflict, i.e., meeting the demands of the academic and the sport environment at the same time. In addition to performing at a high level of skill they must perform with the understanding that physical injury is a likely consequence of their efforts. Thus the athlete’s self-perceptions are readily susceptible to fluctuation (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993; Etzel, Ferrante, & Pinkney, 1991; Parham, 1993). The ways in which student-athletes respond to such demands are largely dependent on their own individual behavioral style and personality (Felsten & Wilcox, 1993).

Adler and Adler (1997) studied the role of student-athletes and the role conflicts in which they were engaged. They found student-athletes in their study have several role expectations that resulted in conflicts. Initially 47% of the entering athletes revealed high academic aspirations by requesting to be placed in the colleges of business or engineering. However these expectations soon dissipated, as the various pressures became evident to the athletes (i.e., classes were dropped and majors were changed). Accordingly, the athletes’ poor academic achievements resulted in feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty.

The aim of this proposed study is to solicit record and describe student-athlete perceptions about the effectiveness of the services provided to student-athletes. In addition the study will identify and examine sport and education-related conflicts, dilemmas and distress in this sample.
Academic Support Services at Florida State University

The Athletic Academic department at Florida State University (FSU) was initiated to enhance the academic achievements of student-athletes. The professional staff at FSU includes directors, advisors, learning specialists, mentors (graduate assistants), and tutors who are all available to the athlete. Student academic success is encouraged through competent academic counseling, study skills development, individualized assessment and support, and a wide array of tutorial services (services.seminoles.ocsn.com).

Perceptions of Student-athletes

Student-athletes enter the collegiate world with various backgrounds. They differ with regard to socioeconomic status, race, religion, geographic region from which they come, and history of academic achievements. Therefore, they bring with them different expectations for success and ways of achieving them. Life’s exigencies are varied and often unpredictable, yet athletes who have led balanced lives and who have been able to enjoy sport competition without permitting it to dominate and control their lives are able to respond to these challenges efficiently. It is also important that student-athletes find ways of not allowing their lack of success to compromise their efforts in other areas (Parham, 1993). By providing them services that satisfy their different learning styles, different cultural or educational background and different modes of coping with stressors, athletes may be led to profit from a wholesome higher educational experience.

Justification

Results of this thesis research should be helpful to those who counsel and advise student-athletes. Information generated by this research should also help clarify the perceived intensity, frequency and nature of stressors encountered by university student-athletes. The current study is based on a previous study conducted at the University of Chapel Hill North Carolina (UNC-CH), (Lewis, 1996). Lewis’ (1996) study focused on two variables, (1) the perceptions held by student-athletes about the Academics Center at UNC-CH relative to its usefulness and its effectiveness, and (2) perceptions about the future needs of student-athletes at UNC-CH held by employees of the academic support services. It may be concluded on the
basis of the results from this study that the services are beneficial regardless of sport, gender, GPA, and year in school. However, Lewis’s study is characterized by sampling problems that undermine the usefulness of the results: (1) no members of the men’s basketball team are represented, (2) no members of the women’s soccer team are represented, and (3) only those student-athletes who attended a meeting held by Lewis in order to explain her study were involved. Therefore the current research attempts to minimize such shortcomings.

Florida State University’s academic support services were utilized in this study. The effectiveness of the program at FSU is indicated by data published by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for Division I State Schools in 1995-1996 (60%). A graduation rate of 65% for student-athletes at FSU was reported which indicates its’ effectiveness.

**Definition of Terms**

For purposes of the research the following terms are operationally defined as follows:

1. **Student-athlete-** An individual, who is enrolled as a full-time student, taking at least 12 hours of course work in addition to being on the official varsity roster of one of the sports teams of FSU.
2. **Perceived Needs-** The athlete’s perceptions of services (academic, athletic, social or personal) that should be provided.
3. **Life Stressors-** Events reported as causing stress responses in (athletic, academic, social and personal) the student-athlete.
4. **Athlete’s Perception of Current Support Service-** The thoughts and opinions student-athletes’ have about the current support services provided by the university.
5. **Athletic Academic Department-** Unit within the Athletic Department whose mandate is to provide guidance, tutoring, and mentoring for academic matters.
6. **Stress-** A human response to problematic environmental stimuli.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Following is an overview and discussion of related literature that examines a somewhat problematic topic, the student-athlete experience. The review is divided into 6 sections: First, literature dealing with academic eligibility is presented. Next, sport participation and self-perception, then graduation rates, following this is racial issues, and then mentors. And finally, the topic of services provided will be reviewed.

Academic Eligibility

There has been a great deal of concern that the academic integrity of many universities might be comprised by the actions of their athletic programs. In an attempt to improve student-athletes’ academic achievements, the NCAA has established criteria for eligibility to participate in competition, and in the past twenty years strict academic guidelines have been implemented (Sellers, 1992; Sperber, 1990).

Guidelines known as Proposition 48 were introduced in 1983, and implemented by the NCAA in 1986. In order for students to be eligible to play collegiate sports they must satisfy four criteria: graduation from high school with a 2.0 GPA or higher, a 700 or higher on the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT), a score of 17 on the Achievement Comprehensive Test (ACT), and completion of 13 core classes, (NCAA.org, 2002; Hishinuma, 1999; Ervin, Saunders, Gillis, Hogrebre, 1985).

Prior to the 1983, all that was required of an incoming freshman was graduation from high school and a minimum GPA of a 2.0. (Hishinuma, 1999; Sellers, 1992). When proposition 48 went into effect in 1986, many coaches, administrators, and athletes were opposed to it (Sperber, 1990).

Advocates for proposition 48 argued that “tougher” admission requirements would put the “student” back into the association’s “student-athlete” status (Sperber, 1990). However, much criticism from numerous institutions, coaches and educators has also surfaced. What is believed to be the most serious criticism was generated by black educators (Sellers, 1992) who felt that the SAT was culturally biased against poor blacks and whites.
They argued that since many more black athletes’ score below 700 on the SAT than do whites, this requirement would seriously affect the number of black athletes involved in collegiate sport (Ervin et al., 1985). A study conducted by the NCAA revealed that if these provisions had been implemented earlier, 54% of black male athletes and 48% of black female athletes that graduated in 1984 would have been ineligible (Sellers, 1992). A study conducted by Sellers (1992) has shown that black athletes continue to score lower than their white student counterparts because they come to college unprepared.

Six years after Proposition 48 came into being, the NCAA passed Proposal 42. This represents the NCAA’s latest attempt to emphasize the importance it places on academic standards. The difference between the amended proposal and Proposition 48 is that now partial qualifiers can no longer receive an athletic scholarship for their freshman year. The athletes that show desire to attend a college or a university, and qualify for NCAA eligibility have to pay their own tuition and fees (Sellers, 1992).

Over the past 10 years some changes have been made pertaining to GPA and test scores. The NCAA clearinghouse which determines an athlete’s eligibility, has implemented a “sliding scale”, which consists of a predetermined GPA and acceptable test scores. The idea behind this sliding scales is the higher the student-athletes GPA the lower their test score may be; with a GPA of 2.0 or higher the student-athlete must have a score of at least 820 on their SAT, yet with a decrease in GPA there must be an increase in their test scores. The higher the GPA the lower the test score may be, and vice versa. Athletes, educators, and coaches have all agreed that this sliding scale is more favorable for the “poor black and poor white athlete” (Sperber, 1990).

Hishinuma (1999) claimed that students who are most affected by the NCAA regulations are those who suffer from learning disabilities because the regulations limit their choice of secondary schools (Hishinuma, 1999). Low SAT, ACT and GPA scores are restrictive in terms of college acceptance.

Not all colleges and universities have support services adequate to deal with students with learning disabilities. This suggests the importance of screening students coming into colleges and universities in order to determine their preparedness for this level of education.
Saunders and Dwinell (1985) addressed the problem of inaccurate assessments and subsequent academic failure of student-athletes that in turn lead to decreased motivation and less evidence of proactive approaches to learning problems. In a study they conducted, an intervention program was developed at the University of Georgia to aid those students who were admitted to college, but were academically unprepared. Students in the program reported that weekly assessments encouraged them to take meaningful action to improve academic performance. The counselors in this study also reported that early monitoring led to interventions that allowed them to easily target those students with deficiencies.

The guidelines of the NCAA clearinghouse and the academic, athletic, social and personal support services currently provided at universities supply student-athletes with improved opportunity to reach academic potential. Once at the university level, student athletes utilize support services to better adjust to the demands of higher education.

**Sport Participation and Self-Perceptions**

There has been much debate on the relationship between participation in collegiate sport and the normal college student life experience. Some studies have established a positive link between student participation and athlete self-concept. Ibrahim and Morrison (1976) supported this association by reporting a positive correlation between these two variables. However, Coakley, (1982); Eitzen, and Sage (1982) found no difference in self-perception between athletes and non-athletes.

Curry, Rehm, and Bernuth (1997) wanted to determine if there are differences in self-perception of NCAA Division I athletes and university non-athletes in global self-worth, and twelve specific domains: creativity, intelligence, scholastic competence, job competence, athletic competence, appearance, social acceptance, close friendships, parental relationships, humor, and mortality. One of the most interesting findings from this study is the lack of differences in a majority of the self-concept dimensions between athletes and non-athletes perceptions of themselves. Results of the Curry et al., (1997) study may therefore decrease some of the popular negative connotations created by the media in regard to sport participation. Despite its limitations the results may not be generalizable to athletes at other intuitions because of different demographics, the fact that some sports are revenue others non-revenue sports, the size of the institution, as well as the importance of sport on a
particular campus. Therefore, findings in the Curry, et al., (1997) study suggest that at least in reference to self-concept, the sport experience does not contribute any differently than non-sport collegiate experiences.

**Graduation Rates**

Of major concern to all institutions of higher education is graduation rate of all students. Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufangel (1985) found that male and female athletes, from all sports, had slightly lower entrance characteristics than did non-athletes. In 1981 the NCAA and ACT published results that conflicted with those of Purdy et al., (1985). They reported that athletes might enter college with lower characteristics however once in college previous academic success does not dictate future success. Male athletes’ graduation rates were shown to be higher than non-athletes. However, this study was hampered with a myriad of methodological problems, a small misrepresentative sample of institutions within the NCAA, and the failure to distinguish the 46 schools by their divisional affiliations within the NCAA.

As a result two case studies were carried out to examine the relationship between sport participation and college/university graduation rate. Shapiro (1984) examined the graduation rates of athletes and non-athletes between 1950 and 1980, and found that 50% of the athletes were admitted to school based upon special consideration, compared to 3% of the non-athletes. Those who enter college or university unprepared are at greater risk for not graduating than those who are well prepared. Special consideration students do not meet the university requirements for admission; these students often suffer learning disabilities or require special needs. Based on these statistics one might assume that athletes might not perform academically as well as their non-athlete counterparts, yet this was not the case. The results of this study also demonstrated that graduation rates for athletes declined across all sports in the past thirty years. The most plausible explanation for this drop is the increase in popularity of collegiate sports (Shapiro, 1984). With the increase in pressure upon student-athletes, attention shifts from academics to athletic performance. Furthermore, across all sports, black athletes have been found to have respectively a lower graduation rates than their white teammates, 60% vs. 63%, (NCAA, 2002). These differences could be a result of poor preparation for college, or even the possibility of racism within the institution (Shapiro, 1984).
Henschen and Fry (1984) also studied the relationship between intercollegiate athletic participation and graduation. Results of their study indicate the graduation rates of student-athletes to be higher than non-athletes. This may be accounted for by the fact that athletes receive academic support in the form of tutors, counseling, preferential class scheduling, etc. This may enable them to achieve acceptable levels.

**Racial Issues**

Another issue of concern that campus athletic administrators focus upon is race. Sellers (1992) examined this variable in terms of its being a predictor of college GPA in student-athletes in revenue producing sports. What he reported is consistent with previously published findings; black student-athletes who came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and enter college less academically prepared than their white counterparts. However they did not differ in motivation or effort towards academics (Center, 1988; Ervin et al., 1985; Purdy et al. 1985; Walter, Smith, Hoey, & Wilhelm, 1987). Academic support services would benefit from the knowledge that different factors contribute to academic success of black and white student-athletes (i.e. SES, and previous academic history). Therefore any intervention program must be aware of these race differences in predictors of academic success.

Another issue that merits attention is the perceptions held by black intercollegiate athletes. Anshel (1990) explored the feelings of black male intercollegiate (Division I) football athletes about racial issues of personal concern as a sport participant. The findings of this study indicate that it is necessary for the instructional staff, academic support personnel and coaches to demonstrate sensitivity when attempting to meet the psychological needs of black team members. To fulfill black team members’ needs it is important to understand the upbringing, the cultural values, and cultural differences among the races.

The demands of collegiate athletics surpass many of our expectations. With the pressure of achieving athletic and academic excess many student-athletes must cope with other real world issues, racial conflicts. To better meet student-athlete’s need’s service providers must be sensitive to the possibilities of additional problems related to race.
Mentors

Mentors are academic role models who have demonstrated the ability to teach students and provide guidance in areas of academic developmental and studying skills. Studies have shown the positive influence mentors may exert upon recipients of their efforts (Henschen, & Fry, 1984; Kram, 1988; McCurdy, 1983). Borman and Colson (1984) stated that mentoring could facilitate interpersonal skills development, and increase workplace knowledge among collegians. Perna, Zaichkowsky, and Bocknek (1996) reviewed related literature and concluded that athletes and non-athletes were no different from each other with respect to vocational plan, identity, and intimacy scores. Second, they hypothesized higher incidences of mentors among athletes than non-athletes. What was discovered is that both athletes and non-athletes benefit from mentors however; athletes look to coaches and academic advisors for guidance whereas non-athletes seek guidance from professors and employers. Finally, what may be concluded from this study is that athletes who received mentoring had higher intimacy scores, which are characteristic of a larger comfort with constructive emotional expression and self-disclosure. This study helped to establish the positive relationship between mentors and perception of success among athletes and non-athletes.

Services provided

Today universities attempt to meet the demands for student-athletes services by increasing the number of employed faculty and staff who act as advisors and counselors, (Boswell, 1992; Bruno et al., 1988). Organizations such as the National Association of Academic Athletic Advisors (NAAAA) have also been created providing opportunities to exchange ideas and discuss improvements that might benefit academic advising programs across the nation, (Hurley, Cunningham, 1984).

In 1982, the University of North Dakota's Academic Advising Committee examined methods to improve undergraduate academic advising. To this end the qualifications of faculty members working with student-athletes were examined. After the study was conducted a handbook was developed to assist advisors in their job responsibilities (Schubert & Munski, 1985). Following publication of the handbook in the spring of 1985,
questionnaires were sent to academic/athletic advisors and counselors of 274 NCAA Division I institutions sponsoring men's basketball (Monaghan, 1987). The results indicated that athletic advisors and counselors were under intense pressure; several indicated that they counsel up to 200 students each, with little if any support and lack of power to change the current situation (Monaghan 1987). A short coming of this study, however was that the advisors provided services to predominately males in only revenue producing sports.

Sherman, Weber, and Tegano (1986) identified factors that facilitate as well as hinder academic assistance designed to increase graduation rates. They also sought to assess the quality of such services in selected higher educational institutions as well as poll opinions on two NCAA policies thought to have an effect on academic success. The results indicated that academic assistance programs might indeed influence the graduation rates of student-athletes. They also found that a strong academic assistance program might also reduce stress in athletes. With a decrease in stress, student-athletes may increase their performance both in the classroom and on the playing field (Henschen, Fry, Shapiro, 1984; Parham, 1993).

Another reported investigation employed a case study approach with the objective of determining whether academic athletic support programs truly benefit the educational attainment of student-athletes. Whitner and Randall (1986) found that the Athletic Educational Program that was developed at a large state university had a positive effect on student-athletes as measured through self-report. "There is a reason to believe that U.S. college athletes should be involved in programs that increase their academic and social integration into college life, especially during their freshman year”, (Adelman 1990). Dudley, Johnson and Johnson (1997) also investigated a university’s academic programs’ effectiveness. The program was designed to enable freshman athletes to have success in the classroom and communicate with their peers. The study addressed three main concerns: (1) the degree student-athletes interact and work cooperatively to complete academic assignments, (2) the degree the supportive learning environment created for freshman student athletes in the program, and (3) the question of whether or not participation in the program promoted student athlete's task orientation, academic self-esteem, and mutual friendships. The results of the study indicated that participants received academic and personal support from both the program staff and their peers. Therefore academic support
and peers contributes to academic success. The cooperative experiences did seem to effect the student’s task orientation, academic self-esteem, and their achievement motivation. The significance of this study is that it helps to provide possible guidelines for existing programs and can be utilized to implement new academic-athletic support programs. It also establishes that group study session’s help student-athletes succeed not only academically but also socially. It must also be noted that whether or not tutorial services are effective depends upon the individual athletes’ motivation. A service plan will not prove to be effective if the individual utilizing the service is only motivated on the playing field and not in the classroom, (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999).

Summary

In view of the substantial demands placed on collegiate athletics it is imperative that colleges and universities respond in supportive fashion. The challenges that campus athletes typically face fall into four categories: academic, athletic, personal, and social. Many athletes come to college academically unprepared, which may be the basis for stress generalized to other areas of their lives. Several conclusions generated by the above literature overview are possible; (1) A precise balance between academic and athletic pursuits in terms of time and energy invested by collegiate athletes remains elusive, (2) Many university academic support services are unable to meet the needs of student-athletes, (3) Mentored collegiate student-athletes have been shown to achieve academically at higher levels than their unmentored counterparts posses flexibility in the ways in which they render services, and lastly (4) Racial and cultural differences among student-athletes require that mentors and other support staff personnel posses flexibility in the ways in which they render services.

The above literature review and its conclusion prompt further inquiry into student-athlete perceived conflicts, and their potential resolutions by ways of university services. Thus the following three pronged purpose of this thesis research:

1. to determine student-athlete perceptions about the effectiveness relative to the current tutorial services they receive at Florida State University.
2. to determine athlete’s perceptions about stress modifications as facilitated by the academic support services
3. to generate recommendations for future studies.
Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

There will be a significant, positive correlation between student-athletes’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the support services provided by the university and their GPA.

Hypothesis 2:

There will be a moderate and inverse correlation between student-athlete’s high school GPA and perceptions about the effectiveness of university provided tutorial services.

Hypothesis 3:

There will be a moderate and negative correlation between high school GPA and frequency of use of university support services (i.e., hour’s per-week receiving academic services).

Hypothesis 4:

African American, male athletes, participating in revenue producing sports will perceive support services as more effective than Caucasian, females, participating in non-revenue producing sports.

Hypothesis 5:

Academic and athletic stress appraisal will be moderately and negatively relate to the use of academic services and their perceptions.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

Four hundred and sixty seven male and female athletes from FSU participate in competitive sports. The current sample consisted of members of varsity athletic teams who took part in the tutorial program provided by the university’s Athletic Department. One hundred and fifty three student-athletes currently utilize campus tutorial services. The sample of athletes for the current study was comprised of 65 (70%) males 27 (30%) females; 51 (55%) African American, 34(37%) Caucasian, 3 (3.2%) Hispanic; and 54(58%) revenue, 37(41%) non-revenue. The sample in the present study consisted of athletes who voluntarily completed and returned the two questionnaires. The sport distribution of the sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Football</th>
<th>Basketball</th>
<th>Baseball</th>
<th>Softball</th>
<th>Swim/Diving</th>
<th>Soccer</th>
<th>Tennis</th>
<th>C. Country</th>
<th>Golf</th>
<th>Volleyball</th>
<th>Track</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumentation

Student-athletes’ perceptions of the current services offered were evaluated by two paper and pencil instruments: Student-athlete’s Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Tutorial Services Survey, and Life Stressors Survey.

Student-athlete’s Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Tutorial Services Survey (Lewis, 1996; Appendix B).

The student athletes’ survey, developed by Boswell (1992) and later modified by Lewis (1996), was used to record the athletes’ perceptions of the services provided to them by Florida State University. It shares high face validity. Lewis (1996) modification addressed the perceptions of student-athletes at UNC-CH whereas Boswell (1992) initially addressed both student-athlete and faculty perceptions of the Academic Athletic services. Boswell
(1992) employed a sample of only 100 students, whereas Lewis (1996) used 393 student-athletes out of a possible 645. Lewis’ questionnaire consisted of 18 items and used a 6-point Likert-type format. Response options ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) and 6 (“not applicable”). The instrument consists of 5 distinct dimensions: (1) importance, (2) competency, (3) welfare of student-athletes, (4) availability of academic advising to student-athletes, and (5) integrity of the Academic Center. The first dimension, importance, consists of 3 questions with a score range of 3-15, and example of one of these questions is, “do you feel that as a student-athlete you should meet with your academic advisor at least once a week?” The second dimension, competency consisted of 11 questions; for example, “do you feel the academic/athletic staff is knowledgeable of the academic requirements and regulations of the university?” and the academic advisors are helpful during pre-registration” with a score range of 11—55. The third dimension, welfare of student-athletes, consists of 1 question, “the primary concern of the Academic Athletic Department’s personnel (advisors, administration, GA, and Tutors) is that student-athletes merely pass their courses” with a range of 1-5. The fourth dimension, availability of academic advising to student-athletes, consists of 2 items with a score range of 2-10. The last dimension, integrity of the Academic Center consists of 4 questions; one of them being: “through the Academic Athletic Department, I am able to secure tutorial help when I need it,” with a score range of 4-20. The higher the score, the more effective each dimension is. In addition to these items, several items deemed important were added to the questionnaire. These items were added because the researcher felt that the survey did not address all areas of interest.

The second section of the questionnaire was comprised of three dimensions, effectiveness of the support services helping student-athlete, perceived effectiveness of academic success, and perceived athletic success (see Appendix B). These items are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale with a response rating from 1 (“not effective”) to 5 (“very effective”). The first section consisted of 4 questions with a score range of 4-20. Example of one of these questions in this dimension is, “to what degree are the academic advisors effective in advising you with your academic concerns?” The second section, perceptions of academic effectiveness, consisted 3 questions with a score range of 3-15. An example of one of these questions is, “has the effectiveness of the program increased your academic
success?” The last section, perceptions of athletic effectiveness consisted of 2 questions with a score range of 2-10. An example is “do you feel that you are supported by the team/coach/staff?”

**Life Stressors Survey (Student Athlete’s Life Event Scale) (Johnson, 2002, Appendix C).**

This survey addresses four dimensions of life stressors (academic, athletic, social, and personal). Since the current study focuses on academic and athletic pursuits, a modified survey was used that consisted of twenty questions. The first 18 responses were recorded on a 5-item Likert scale, from 1 (“not at all stressful”) to 5 (“extremely stressful”) and the last two questions were answered with either a “yes” or “no” response format. The survey consisted of questions that address the academic stress, athletic stress, and questions that deal with both dimensions. The first dimension, academic stress consisted of 7 questions such as “the amount of test/assignments that are expected of you” and “choosing a major.” The score range is 7-35. The second dimension, athletic stress, consisted of 7 questions such as, “dealing with stereotypes of being an athlete,” and “lack of playing time.” This dimension had a range score of 7-35. The third dimension addressing both domains consisted of 4 questions with a score range of 4-20. The higher the score the more stressful is the perception of student-athlete’s academic and athletic stress.

The internal consistency (alpha) coefficient for academic and athletic stress appraisals were 0.77 and 0.79 respectively (Johnson, 2002). Construct validity was evidenced by comparing female to male athletes on the four domains. Female athletes were found to have higher personal, academic, and athletic stress than the male athletes.

Alpha reliability coefficients for all the scales employed in this study were computed on the current sample. These are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

The alpha coefficients for 4 of the dimensions being tested on the first instrument were low, this however could be due in part to limited amount of questions in each of these dimensions; (Importance =0.45, Welfare one item, Availability = 0.54, and Perceptions of athletic effectiveness =. 52). Yet the remaining 4 dimensions yielded higher alpha reliability coefficients, Effectiveness = .6616, Perceptions of academic effectiveness = .6616, Integrity = .66 and Competence 0.82.
The reliability of the second instrument for academic stress, athletic stress, and stress in both areas ranged between 0.52 -0.71. These are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2

Reliability Analysis for the Student-athlete’s Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Tutorial Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Academic Effectiveness</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Athletic Effectiveness</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Reliability Analysis of Life Stressors Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Stress</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Stress</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress in both dimensions</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was received from the human subjects committee at FSU, as well as the athletic department, and its academic athletic support services program. The researcher provided to academic advisors copies of the packet consisting of a cover letter (Appendix A), the Student-athlete’s Perception Survey (effectiveness of the current services-Appendix B), and a Life Stressors Survey (Appendix C).

To distribute the study’s instruments among the student-athletes the researcher contacted the Academic Athletic Department to determine an appropriate time to meet with its academic advisors. The advisors were asked to provide packets containing the two questionnaires to their student-athletes for whom they would be responsible in the presence
of the researcher. Personal visitations with prospective participants were made by the researcher in order to stimulate compliance. The student-athletes in turn were asked to complete the instruments immediately after receiving them. Responses were collected, and the cover letters removed.

**Statistical Analysis**

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5 postulate relationships among student-athlete’s perceptions of the effectiveness of the current services, and current GPA, previous high school GPA, stress in academic and athletic domains, and the number of study hall hours per week. These hypothesized relationships were examined by use of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). A PPMC was also used to estimate relations between stress appraisal, perceptions of effectiveness and study hall hours.

The fourth hypothesis, which predicted differences in perceptions about the effectiveness of the tutorial and academic current services at FSU were, subjected to a gender, race, and revenue factorial MANOVAs rather than a comprehensive MANOVA due to limited sample size. The MANOVAs were followed by t-test post-hoc procedure, to determine possible significant differences when effects yielded a p < .05.
The findings related to the studies hypotheses are presented in this chapter. Each hypothesis and the statistical analyses corresponding to it are introduced.

The first hypothesis stated that there will be a significant positive correlation between student-athletes’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the support services provided by the University and college GPA. To test this hypothesis Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) were computed between perceptions of the services (i.e., importance, competence, welfare, integrity, and availability) and college GPA. In addition a PPMC, were computed between the three dimensions (i.e., effectiveness, perceptions of athletic effectiveness, and perceptions of academic effectiveness) and college GPA. These correlations are presented in Table 4.

The Correlations were all weak. Three of the 8 correlations were significant (p< .05), though weak (r= .22-.27) these were the correlations between GPA and competence, availability, and perceptions of academic effectiveness.

Table 4

*PPMC between Student-athlete’s expectations about the services and their perceptions of their effectiveness and college GPA.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>CGPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of academic effectiveness</td>
<td>.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of athletic effectiveness</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p< 0.05 ** p< .01
The second hypothesis stated that student-athlete’s high school GPA will be moderately and inversely related to their perception of the effectiveness of the current services. Utilizing the PPMC tested this hypothesis. None of the PPMCs between high school GPA and student-athlete’s perceptions was significantly different from zero. Table 5 displays the results of the PPMC between student-athlete’s high school GPA and their perception of the effectiveness of the current services.

Table 5

*PPMC between student-athlete’s high school GPA and their perception of the effectiveness of the current services.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Effectiveness</th>
<th>High School GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of academic effectiveness</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of athletic effectiveness</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be a moderate and negative correlation between previous academic achievement in high school and the use of the academic support services. The correlation ($r = -0.27$), though significant was negative but weak, thus not verifying this hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis postulated that athletes of African-American origin, male, participating in revenue producing sports will perceive the support services as more effective than Caucasian, female, participating in non-revenue producing sports. To test this hypothesis a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) has been employed. Because of limitations in sample size, the MANOVAs were performed separately for revenue vs. non-revenue, race (African-American vs. Caucasian), and gender (male vs. female). The dependent variables were: effectiveness, perception of academic effectiveness, and perception of athletic effectiveness. The MANOVAs results for revenue vs. non-revenue are presented in Table 6.
Table 6

**MANOVA results for general effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness by revenue vs. non-revenue sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Wilk’s Lambda</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multivariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue vs. Non-revenue</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Univariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue vs. Non-revenue</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of academic</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of athletic</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings indicate that athletes participating in revenue sports are similar to athletes participating in non-revenue sports in their perceptions of the services provided to them. All athletes perceived athletic/academic services as somewhat above moderate in effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness (mean scores ranged between 3.23- 3.55 on a 5-point scale).

Similar MANOVA was performed with race (African-American vs. Caucasian) as an independent variable. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Continued

**MANOVA results for general effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness by race.**
MANOVA results for general effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness by race.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Wilk’s Lambda</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multivariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Univariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of academic effectiveness</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of athletic effectiveness</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MANOVA multivariate procedure has indicated that African-Americans and Caucasians do not differ in their perceptions of the programs effectiveness. The univariate analysis indicated that African Americans have a small tendency to rate the dimension, perceptions of athletic effectiveness slightly higher than Caucasian athletes (M= 3.56 vs. M=3.22), but not the perceptions of academic effectiveness and perceptions of athletic effectiveness dimensions. Both perceive the services as above moderate in all three dimensions, effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness.

Finally, a MANOVA was performed for gender as a between subjects factor. The findings are presented in Table 8.
Table 8

*MANOVA results for general effectiveness, perceptions of academic effectiveness, and perceptions of athletic effectiveness by gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Wilk’s Lambda</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multivariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Univariate test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Effectiveness</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of academic effectiveness</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of athletic effectiveness</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MANOVA has indicated that male and females do not differ in their perceptions of the programs effectiveness. The univariate analysis indicated that females were higher than males on the dimensions of overall effectiveness (M= 3.78 vs. M =3.53 respectively), importance, (M= 3.76 vs. M = 3.51) and competence, (M= 3.62 vs. M =3.54). In addition females perceived integrity higher than males (M= 3.72 vs. M = 3.49 respectively). However, both males and females do perceive the services as being effective in all the dimensions being analyzed.
Hypothesis five predicted that academic and athletic stress appraisals were expected to be moderately and negatively correlated with perceptions of academic services. To test the fifth hypothesis PPMCs were computed. The correlations are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

PPMC between stress and perceptions of academic services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Academic Services</th>
<th>Perceptions of academic effectiveness</th>
<th>Perceptions of athletic effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Stress</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Stress</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined stress</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Of the 9 correlations, only one between academic stress and perceptions of athletic effectiveness was significant at the p < .05 level, though very weak. The other correlations were not different for zero. Thus the fifth hypothesis could not be verified.

Lastly a PPMC was computed between the three dimensions of stress and use of academic services. Results are listed in Table 10.

Table 10

PPMC between stress and use of academic services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Study Hall Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Stress</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Stress</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined stress</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

The results of this correlation were not significant thus implying that hypothesis five to be incorrect.
Perceptions of Florida State University athletes relative to their academic achievements and perceptions about the nature and frequency of their personal stressors were evaluated. Also assessed were athlete’s perceptions about Florida State University readiness to assist campus athletes’ in their pursuit of academic success as well as decrease their life stressors. More specifically, the purpose of this thesis research was threefold: (1) to determine student-athlete’s perceptions of the effectiveness relative to the current services they receive at Florida State University (2) to determine athlete’s about stress modifications as facilitated by the academic support services, and (3) to generate recommendations for future studies.

Student-athlete GPA at the collegiate level has been decreasing over the past few decades (Greer, & Moore, 1986; Henschel, & Fry, 1984; Lewis, 1996). Many variables may contribute to this trend. For instance, the increased popularity of collegiate athletic programs may encourage athletes to focus more on athletic rather than academic commitments. Non-existent or poorly funded and implemented support services may be another factor. Perhaps most influential of all may be the opportunity for student-athletes to leave college early to enter professional sports, (Shapiro, 1984) thereby obviating their need to earn a degree. According to previous studies, student-athletes in the United States continue to fall behind the general student body population in terms of overall GPA, (Purdy et al., 1982, Shapiro, 1984, Sellers, 1992). They tend not to excel academically in comparison to their non student-athlete counterparts. In addition, across all sports, African American athletes have been found to have slightly lower graduation rates than their Caucasian counterparts, (60% vs. 63%, NCAA, 2002). According to Mitchell and Piatrowska (1974), student-athletes face a motivational contradiction. Many aspire to achieve at high levels on the playing field yet lack that same motivation in the classroom. Thus, challenge for colleges and universities to provide appropriate academic support services for student-athletes becomes more difficult as
pressures and demands on athletes to perform optimally on the field of play increases, (Shapiro, 1984).

This study stemmed from one overarching questions. Although FSU student-athletes graduate at a rate that exceeds the national mean, as well as their non-athletic counterparts how do athletes perceive the tutorial services? Do they consider the services to be effective in helping athletes reach their optimal level of achievement under appropriately reduced levels of stress? What follows is a discussion of this study’s results in terms of its hypothesis as well as reported by others in the published literature.

The first hypothesis stated that there would be a significant positive correlation between student-athletes’ perceptions about the effectiveness of athletic academic services and GPA. It was anticipated that the higher the student-athlete’s GPA, the more positive would be their perceptions about services rendered. The rational for this prediction was based upon evidence by Kram (1988), and Dudley, Johnson, and Johnson, (1997), indicating that mentoring facilitates personal, as well as vocational development. Therefore it was assumed that individuals with high GPA’s would strive to maintain their level of academic success by utilizing the services. This would enable them to successfully pursue influences towards their educational goals.

The current study’s finding indicates that GPA was not found to correlate with student-athlete’s overall perception of the effectiveness of academic services. On the other hand, perceptions about the competency and the availability of the staff, as well as athlete perceptions of academic success were shown to correlate slightly with GPA. This suggests that athletes with high university GPA’s might conclude that their advisors and support staff members are competent, and that this competence contributes to the maintenance of their academic success. Therefore, regardless of their academic achievement the athletes perceive personal benefit from the support services.

The second and third hypotheses address the issue of student-athlete’s high school GPA in relation to achievement and effort at the university level. The second hypothesis stated that there would be an inverse relationship between high school GPA and perception of the effectiveness of the current services, i.e., the lower the high school GPA, the more positive would be their perceptions about the services, and the higher their high school GPA,
the lower their perceptions would be. The third hypothesis stated that there would be a moderate and negative correlation between previous academic achievement in high school and use of the academic support services (i.e., hour’s per-week receiving academic services).

These two hypotheses were prompted by the extensive amount of literature that indicates that student-athletes are often academically unprepared when entering college or university. Educators and advisors have failed these student-athletes by allowing them to graduate from high school while being academically unprepared for college level work, (Picco, 1978; Sowa & Gressard, 1983). Other studies indicate that underprepared college students are likely to have deficits in motivation and are more easily distracted from academic tasks, (Mitchell & Piatrowska, 1974).

With regard to hypothesis two, student-athletes who are less academically prepared might view the support services as a way to “start over”. Thus they would avail themselves of all possible services and thereby direct their attention to academic as well as athletic endeavors. This line of reasoning helps support hypothesis two, that predicts a negative correlation between high school GPA and perceptions about support services. Testing of hypotheses two and three revealed: (1) no statistically significant correlation between high school GPA and perceptions about effectiveness of academic support services; and (2) only a slightly low and negative correlation between high school GPA and amount of study hall attended hours each week. These findings may be due to the fact that individuals, regardless of previous academic achievements, come to college with the idea that it is a place for a fresh start. Therefore, previous GPA is not necessarily indicative of future success. Thus, regardless of their high school GPA, they allow the support staff would to have an opportunity to prove the worth of its services.

The literature also suggested the existence of a meaningful correlation between high school GPA and number of study hall hours achieved by the athletes (Saunders, & Dwinell, 1985). However, only a weak negative correlation was observed. Individuals with a low high school GPA may or may not sustain the same level of academic achievements while at the university. Possible reasons for such an outcome may be relate to the excellence and efficiency of the support staff and tutorial programs. The University of Georgia conducted a study where student-athletes at risk were placed in an advising program that resulted in an
improvement in academic success, (Saunders & Dwinell, 1985). In order that student-athletes excel at the collegiate level it is vital that early assessment of their academic strengths and weaknesses be made. Early assessment can help the support staff to determine what services will be beneficial, and what strengths these individuals possess. This would enhance student-athletes’ progress and facilitate their personal level of academic success (Lamberston, 1998). Stuart (1985), in her research found similar results. She observed that adequate college performance may be achieved despite weak high school preparation if a well equipped and effective academic support staff were in place. Lamberston (1998) and Stuart’s (1985) findings do however contradict earlier studies that stated prior achievements are a precursor to future success, (Bruno et al., 1988).

Hypotheses four predicted that male athletes of African American origin, participating in revenue producing sports would perceive the support services as being more effective than Caucasian, females, participating in non-revenue producing sports. Previous studies have asserted that male athletes have a lower GPA, and therefore have higher utilization rates than their female counterparts (Ervin et. al., 1985; Picco, 1978; Sellers, 1992). Another study reported by Monaghan (1987) found that advisors tend to devote an inordinate amount of their time to male student-athletes participating in revenue producing sports. In addition, males participating in revenue sports come to college comparatively less academically prepared and tend to have lower GPA’s. Sub-groups of student-athletes were found to have greater academic difficulty; this sub-group was comprised of male student-athletes black student-athletes, and participants in major sports (Picco 1978; Purdy et al., 1985). Hypothesis four was predicated upon these findings.

Results from this study are contrary to those reported elsewhere. No difference in service perceptions were assigned to sport and race. Based on the results of the present study it may be concluded that FSU has satisfied the expectations of the student-athletes and the services are therefore perceived as moderately effective in alleviating stress in both academic and athletic areas. The current program publishes a mission statement wherein it is asserted that men and women are equally viewed as individuals’ first, students second, and only then as athletes, (Services. Seminoles.ocsn.com). The university’s mission statement proclaims that counselors represent the institution’s commitment to the personal and academic growth
of the student-athlete’s. Evidently the mission statement is fulfilled, or at least this is the perception held by participants of this study.

The last hypothesis asserted that academic and athletic stress appraisal would be moderately and negatively related to the use of academic services and the perceptions about the effectiveness of those services. However, the current study revealed that regardless of gender, stress appraisal was not significantly correlated with amount of study hall hours or perceptions about the services. Also, despite the student-athletes’ stress level, there was no relationship to their perceptions of the effectiveness of the services.

Student-athletes were asked to respond to questions that assessed their stress levels pertaining to academics and athletics. It was found that during the competitive season there is a comparatively heightened level of stress in both areas. Given this information it could possibly be assumed that athletes’ level of stress out of season is fairly stable. Therefore, heightened levels of stress would not affect their assessments of the services during season. Student-athletes must find effective ways to balance time between academic as well as athletic demands. Stress related to finding that balance is heightened during season, (Parham, 1993). A possible explanation for a lack of reported differences between male and female athletes in the use of the services is that student-athletes embrace study hall hours as a way to help find that balance, rather than trying to deal with the stress without the academic and athletic support services.

In addition, a few of the student-athletes provided feedback about their opinions of the services during personal interviews. A female Caucasian who is a member of the track team commented that though she feels the services are effective and meet her expectations, certain elements needed to be altered. This athlete felt the program needed to give student-athletes more freedom and have less of a parental role in their college experiences. A female, Caucasian, swimmer discussed that though she was satisfied with her individual use of the services she felt that “football players” received more attention from the advisors than other student-athletes. A male football player commented that being a student-athlete at a division one school is very demanding. The tutors have helped him to achieve success in his classes. Yet this same individual commented that he does realize his non-athletic counterparts might not receive services that are this beneficial. Another athlete, male, Caucasian, football player
commented that he feels that the tutors are effective, however he question the abilities of some of the advisors. This short answer response enables us to have more insight into the true student-athlete experience. Studies such as this one that utilize surveys relay information however that information can be somewhat limited to numerical values.

Based on the overall findings of the current study it is recommended that future studies be conducted. The information gathered from the current study is beneficial and crucial to understanding the collegiate experience of a student-athlete, however there is certainly room for improvement. One might opt to follow up surveys with one on one interview with student-athletes.

**Concluding Remarks**

Results of this study are compatible with those reported by the NCAA in their published findings, (NCAA News, 1981: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org), 2003). Participants in the present study reported perceptions about the support services that are similar to those elicited from athletes at the University of Chapel Hill-NC, University of Georgia, University of Toledo and a majority of schools in the Mid-American Conference. The general perception held by these athletes is that support programs at their universities are effective. Athletes who participated in this study believed that there is little need for improvement in support services. They feel that staff members are prepared to address the needs of the student-athletes. However, the athletes feel that staff members should strive keep their skills current, and communicate openly with student-athletes. Lastly, studies such as this one should be conducted every few years to make sure that the service effectiveness is being maintained.

**Limitations**

Results of this study are limited to student-athletes at Florida State University and may not be generalizable to other institutions.

Another limitation of this thesis research is that the proposed sample may not comprise equal numbers of participants from the various sports teams.
April 1, 2003

Dear Student-Athlete,

I am currently a graduate student working on my Masters in the field of sport psychology. As part of my requirements I must do research on some related field. With your assistance I would like to have a better understanding of your perceptions of the tutorial services provided to you by the university. I have a two brief surveys that will address your perception of the services provided to you, and a life stressors survey. All surveys will remain confidential. Once you agree to participate the cover letter with your name will be removed and only your answers will be examined. This research will attempt to help both you the student-athlete and Florida State Universities tutorial programs.

I appreciate your time and cooperation with this experiment,

Stephanie Thorburn
Graduate student of Sport Psychology

I give my permission to use my information in your research
APPENDIX B

STUDENT-ATHLETE’S PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TUTORIAL SERVICES SURVEY

General Demographic Information:

1. Sport: ______________________________

2. Gender: ____________

3. Race: ________

4. Year in School: 1\textsuperscript{st} _____ 2\textsuperscript{nd} _____ 3\textsuperscript{rd} _____ 4\textsuperscript{th} _____ 5\textsuperscript{th} _____

5. Cumulative GPA in High School ____           in college___________

6. Do you use the Academic Athletic Support Services that are available to you?
   If yes, how many hours a week?

7. If no, do you only attend because of mandatory study hall hours?
   Or
   If no, and not for previous reason explain.

Section I

This section of the survey measures how student-athletes think and feel about the Academic Athletic Support Program for Student-Athletes at Florida State University. Please circle the response to each statement, which best describes or is closest to your feelings about the statement. **NOTE:** When reading these questions approach them with the idea of what the program **SHOULD** do for you.

1. **Do you feel that as a student-athlete you should meet with your academic advisor at least once a week?**

   1 Strongly Disagree  2 Disagree    3 Undecided   4 Agree     5 Strongly Agree   N/A Not applicable

2. A positive learning environment, which meets the demands of being a student-athlete.
3. The academic/athletic staff helps resolve conflicts between course requirements and athletic responsibilities.

4. Do you feel the academic/athletic staff is knowledgeable of the academic requirements and regulations of the University?

5. The academic advisors are helpful during pre-registration period.

6. The academics advisors are helpful during drop/add period.

7. The academic advisors give helpful academic advice.

8. The primary concern of the Academic Athletic Department’s personnel (advisors, administration, GA, and tutors), is that student-athletes merely pass their courses.

9. The services of the Academic Athletic Department are readily available to me.

10. I find that the Academic Athletic Department counselors are available when I need them.
11. Through the Academic Athletic Department, I am able to secure tutorial help when I need it.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

12. I am aware that the Academic Athletic Department has policies governing the use of tutors.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

13. Academic Athletic Department’s tutors abide by the honor code in helping me with my work.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

14. The services of the Academic Athletic Department have been helpful to me.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

15. The counselors at the Academic Athletic Department and my coaching staff communicate well with each other.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

16. I felt that the standards of the Academic Athletic Department and my coaching staff coincide closely.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

17. The career planning and placement provided by the Academic Athletic Department are useful.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable

18. The Academic Athletic Department’s Freshman Orientation program was effective for me.
1. Are the academic advisors effective in advising you with your academic concerns?
Not effective       Very Effective
1         2             3                       4                  5

2. Are the tutors that are provided effective in helping to assist you in academic matters?
Not effective       Very Effective
1         2             3                       4                  5

This section of the survey measures how student-athletes think and feel about the Academic Athletic Support Program for Student-Athletes at Florida State University. Please circle the response to each statement, which best describes or is closest to your feelings about the statement.

Effectiveness in helping you as a student-athlete

To what degree

19. The Academic Athletic Department’s personnel is knowledgeable to the National Collegiate Associations rules and regulations pertaining to academic eligibility for student-athletes.

20. Overall, I feel the Academic Athletic Department is beneficial to me as a student-athlete at FSU.

21. I feel that the tutors/graduate assistants are qualified to assist me in my studies.

22. I feel that coming to study will benefit me in my academic achievements
3. Are the mentors effective in assisting you to manage your time, keep on task, and remain organized?
   Not effective        Very Effective
   1                   2                   3                   4                   5

4. Is the center facility an effective place for you to learn?
   Not effective        Very Effective
   1                   2                   3                   4                   5

Perceived Academic and Athletic Success
1. As a student-athlete do you feel that you are achieving your academic potential?
   Not at all                                                                             Very Much
   1                    2                    3                     4                              5

2. Has the effectiveness of the program increased your academic success?
   Not at all                                                                             Very Much
   1                    2                    3                     4                              5

3. Do you feel that your current GPA is representative of your academic achievements?
   Not at all                                                                             Very Much
   1                    2                    3                     4                              5

4. Do you perceive you athletic performance is at its best?
   Not at all                                                                             Very Much
   1                    2                    3                     4                              5

5. Do you feel that you are supported by the team/coach/staff?
   Not at all                                                                             Very Much
   1                    2                    3                     4                              5

If you have any additional comments about the program, it’s effectiveness and you perceptions.
APPENDIX C

STUDENT ATHLETE’S LIFE EVENT SCALE

Date:________

Demographics: Please fill in or circle

Age:________     Gender: M  F

Sport:_______     Classification: Fr.  So.  Jr.  Sr.

Directions: Part One

Student-athletes are college students with their own set of unique stressors. In your opinion as a student-athlete, please rate each of the stressors below with respect to how they effect you personally. “Not at all stressful” means that the stressor has no effect, and “extremely stressful” means that the stressor has a significant effect.

1. The amount of relaxation time you currently have.
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
   1               2                   3                   4                   5

2. The amount of test/assignments that are expected of you.
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
   1               2                   3                   4                   5

3. The emotion or fear of failing
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
   1               2                   3                   4                   5

4. Dealing with conflict between your athletic and academic roles.
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
   1               2                   3                   4                   5

5. Choosing a major
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
   1               2                   3                   4                   5

6. Worrying about grades
   Not at all stressful                  Extremely stressful
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dealing with stereotypes of being an athlete.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Conflicts with professors or teachers.</td>
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<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Amount of study time.</td>
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<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Faculty’s attitude towards athletes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Purpose for playing the sport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Your relationship with your assistant coach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Lack of playing time.</td>
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<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Academic probation/ineligibility.</td>
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<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Major change in playing status on team.</td>
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<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Continual poor performance of team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all stressful</td>
<td>Extremely stressful</td>
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16. Major change in attitude toward sport (enjoy more or less).
Not at all stressful            Extremely stressful
                  1                   2                   3                   4                   5

17. No recognition for accomplishment from coaching staff.

Not at all stressful            Extremely stressful
                  1                   2                   3                   4                   5

Perceptions of student-athletes
1. Have these services (academic) been beneficial to you and your academic performance.
   Yes      No

2. Do the Services reduce your stress about academic concerns and athletic concerns.
   Yes      NO
APPENDIX D

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY’S ATHLETIC ACADEMIC MISSION STATEMENT

Florida State Athletics Department

Feb. 29, 2000

The Mission of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Florida State University shall be to produce National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I programs for men and women equally characterized by excellence. It is the philosophy of the Department of Athletics, first and foremost, that our staff and program develop and hold the concept of the student-athlete at the highest level of importance. This important principle will never be compromised. In fact, it must be encouraged and supported. Our student-athletes will be at the core of departmental priorities and decisions. Our student-athletes will be viewed as individuals’ first, students second, and only then as athletes. The department will focus on producing graduates who are successful, well-rounded people ready to make a positive contribution to society.

The Department shall strive at the same time to be a leader in areas of ethics, non-discrimination, diversity and unquestioned fiscal integrity throughout the campus, the state and the country. A consistent priority is the fulfillment of the student-athletes undergraduate degree. At the same time, student-athletes must be given the best opportunity possible to strive for the highest athletic standards through the best preparation, motivation and support. Excellence in intercollegiate athletics programs is determined by academic achievement in the classroom, as well as the development of character, maturity and a sense of fair play in athletic competition. Such excellence engenders support for the University among its constituent groups including students, faculty, alumni, and friends at all levels of interest.
The Department shall subscribe fully to the philosophy and regulations set forth by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and operate within the fiscal regulations and non-discriminatory procedures established by the Florida Board of Regents and the Florida legislature.
Student Services and Academic Support

Athletic Academic Support Mission Statement

The primary focus of the Athletic Academic Support Program is to provide an environment which facilitates the academic success of each student athlete. Student success is encouraged through competent academic counseling, study skills development, individualized assessment and support, and a wide array of tutorial services.

An Overview of an Award-Winning Academic Support Program

Academic, personal, and professional support are essential to college success. At The Florida State University, we have developed an outstanding support program which enables student athletes to reach their full potential.

Director, Mark Meleney states "Our philosophy is to offer an academic support program integrated with the total University that will assist all student athletes with the transition into college and provide continued support in all phases of academic and professional development, culminating with graduation, job placement, or graduate school".

Our program operates on a "proactive" rather than "reactive" approach. Our academic staff does not wait for crises to occur. We gather important background information on each entering student athlete, build an academic profile, and develop individualized support programs which are tailored to the unique needs of each student athlete. We also stay informed on the daily progress of the student athletes through consistent communication with our faculty.

The academic support unit is housed in the $126 million dollar, state-of-the-art University Center Complex. It includes private study carrels, a tutorial study area, and a computer lab outfitted with 20 IBM compatible computers and 2 laser jet printers. In addition, the athletic sky boxes are used for group and individualized tutorial instruction. The academic support staff is comprised of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark P. Meleney</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Brenda Monk</td>
<td>Learning Specialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amy White
Assistant Director for Program & Staff Development
Academic Counselor - Baseball, Golf, Soccer, Volleyball

Kevin White
Assistant Director for Educational Services
Academic Counselor - Men’s Basketball, Tennis

Walter Goffigan
Academic Counselor - Football

Aundrea Lyons
Academic Counselor - Cross Country, Track & Field

Matt Schmauch
Academic Counselor - Women’s Basketball, Softball, Swimming & Diving

In addition, the academic support staff has several graduate assistants, individualized learning specialists, and a large pool of tutors and mentors.

Mark Meleney was named the program's Director in 1997 and brings 12 years of advising experience to the position. Over the past six years, Meleney has played an integral role in the development of a comprehensive program of student athlete support, which in 1996 won the "Program of Excellence" award from Athletic Management Magazine and in 1998, The “Program of Excellence Award” from the NCAA.

Academic Support Tutorial Program

The Athletic Department at Florida State University has made a commitment to providing our student athletes with one of the finest and most comprehensive tutorial programs in the nation. The tutorial program is just one of several key support services that is available to all student athletes as they progress towards their ultimate goal of obtaining a college degree. We hire tutors from a variety of academic departments, who are committed to providing a proactive, individualized approach in assisting student athletes with course comprehension and study skills. The tutors are usually seniors or graduate level students who have outstanding academic backgrounds. Tutorial assistance is available for all academic coursework and may be obtained by filling out a tutorial request form at the beginning of the semester, or as needed.

Mentor Program

Academic Mentors are academic role models who have demonstrated the ability to teach and give guidance in areas of academic developmental skills. Each semester, mentors begin the process by sitting down with their assigned student athletes and assist them in identifying all of their academic responsibilities for that semester. A calendar is developed which becomes a visual blueprint of each course’s academic requirements. This tool introduces the student athlete to the concept of time management. Students learn to plan projects days and weeks in advance. Such planning aids them in developing strong study and organizational habits.
Mentors are also responsible for providing assistance in the development of skills such as note taking, test preparation, and communication with faculty. In essence, mentors become an extension of the academic counselor as they keep the academic performance of their student athletes under close observation and report to the academic counselors each week.

**Study Hall**

In an effort to help ensure the academic success of the student athletes, professionally supervised study sessions for each athletic team are organized. The main focus of the study hall program is to help students develop consistent and appropriate study patterns by providing a structured setting to work on class assignments and to provide tutorial assistance before academic problems arise. Although the criteria for study hall is left to the discretion of each academic counselor, typically most freshmen, first year transfers, and upperclassmen who have not yet achieved a satisfactory cumulative grade point average are asked to attend study hall.

**Academic Honors & Awards**

Florida State University student athletes have achieved great success in obtaining recognition for academic excellence. More than $130,000 in postgraduate monies have been granted to FSU’s student athletes over the past five years, as well as a number of other academic honors and awards.

Florida State University had a record 179 student athletes on the 1999 Atlantic Coast Conference Honor Roll and a National Association of Collegiate Athletic Directors $5,000 Postgraduate Scholarship Award Winner.

The Academic Support Program is committed to recognizing the academic success of all student athletes. The Athletic Department, in conjunction with Seminole Boosters, Inc., puts on the annual "Golden Torch Gala", a black-tie academic awards banquet, each fall. The ACC Honor Roll student athletes, as well as the individuals with the highest GPA on their respective teams, and the Men's & Women's Teams with the highest GPA are recognized at this event.

Team meetings are held each year, during which time student athletes are notified of potential honors and awards and are encouraged to apply. Combining a strong grade point average with athletic accomplishments, community service activities, and leadership experiences make for a student athlete capable of obtaining unlimited academic honors, awards, and postgraduate opportunities.

For More Information Regarding the FSU Athletic Academic Support Program, please write to:

Mark P. Meleney  
Director Athletic Academic Support  
P.O. Box 2195  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2340
Florida State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President
For Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-8673 - FAX (850) 644-4392

APPENDIX F
HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 12/4/2002

Stephanie Thorburn
7008 McBride PT
Tallahassee FL 32312

Dept.: Education Sports Psychology

From: David Quadagno, Chit

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research

Student-Athletes' Perceptions of the Tutorial Services at FSU

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be exempt per 45 CFR § 46.101 (b) 2 and has been approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by 12/3/2003 you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations. This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Dr David Pargman
HSC No. 2002.606
REFERENCES


Lewis, J. E. (1996). Student-athlete perceptions regarding the academic support services at the University of Chapel Hill. Masters of Art. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


Monaghan, (1987). Athlete’s academic advisors asking colleges for increased authority


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

My name is Stephanie Elaine Thorburn; I am the daughter of W.Garth and Silivia Thorburn. My path of education was most certainly dictated by vast experiences during my childhood and the work ethic of my parents. As a young child and throughout my adolescents I was able to experience array of countries, cultures, education and sports participation. All of these variable help to enrich my life and direct me towards pushing a degree in higher education.

Academia and athletics have always been two passions of mine, wanting to succeed both in the classroom and on the playing field. I have been an honor student-my throughout my years of schooling and I have been avid sports participant.

Both my undergraduate and graduate studies have been at Florida State University. Spending six years at this university has enabled me to dabble in many different avenues of the collegiate experience. I was an member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority, a football recruiter, Phi Beta Kappa member, an athletic academic mentor, sports reporter and the swim team sports psychology consultant. All of these opportunities incorporated my two passions into one role or task.

The decision to pursue my education at Florida State was an easy one, a respected academic program and an excellent athletic department. The research topic that was selected was able the follow this same pattern by incorporating both academia and athletics.

With the research complete and degree awarded I feel that I have the maturity, organizational skills, drive, desire, and ability to embark on a career in the sports world.

Granted this is a field that is dominated by men, by no means may I allow that to discourage my future endeavors.