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The Benefits Felt by Division I-A Student-Athletes from Participation in Community Service Activities: A Case Study

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

THE BENEFITS FELT BY DIVISION I-A STUDENT-ATHLETES FROM
PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

The foundations laid by democracy engrained in society a responsibility to help fellow citizens. As observed by De Tocqueville in 1831, “by dint of working for one’s fellow citizens, the habit and taste for serving them is at length acquired.” Community service has been studied from many perspectives throughout time, but the unique situation of an athlete engaging in community service, has received little attention. From extrapolation of literature in psychology and marketing, the instance of an athlete performing community service has the potential to create a triad of benefits. Research suggests benefits can be experienced by the athletes themselves, the community in which they are serving, and the institution, or organization the athletes represent. The current research sought to examine three particular benefits (social responsibility, attitude toward oneself, and future intentions to volunteer) which might be experienced by the athletes themselves, and the particular circumstances under which the benefits may be experienced. Eight student-athletes from a large Division I-A institution were interviewed, some of whom had participated in social cause community service, and some of whom had participated in standard community service. The student-athletes who participated in social cause community service reported feelings of civic duty and social responsibility, and had formulated plans for future service beyond college. The student-athletes who participated in standard community service reported feelings of obligation toward service, and did not have clear plans for continued service upon graduation. Both groups felt positive about their experiences, and attributed positive feelings toward their own abilities after participating. The current case study suggests student-athletes feel these benefits to a larger degree if the community service is social cause oriented rather than promotional in nature. Future research could study this notion further, and examine the other sides of the benefits triad

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of community service existed long before the pillars of democracy were set in the quagmire of the New World. The foundations laid by democracy, engrained in society a responsibility to help fellow citizens. As observed by De Tocqueville in 1831, “by dint of working for one’s fellow citizens, the habit and taste for serving them is at length acquired.” The benefits and costs of volunteering have been examined from myriad angles throughout U.S. history. In today’s society, there is more disquiet than ever over the citizenship behaviors of the younger generations. Community service is being integrated into the classroom and in some states it is a requirement for high school graduation. This research will look at the possible benefits bestowed on the volunteer through participation in two types of community service. Specifically, the research will examine community service facilitated by an organization, for a special subset of the population, college student-athletes. In particular, the study will look at the benefits relating to civic duty or social responsibility, benefits to oneself, and future intentions to volunteer.

Both professional and collegiate athletes have been positive contributors to society for generations. Behind the scandals and front page news headlines lie the positive stories that often go unreported. Professional athletes contribute in numerous ways to benefit society, by forming foundations, by making public appearances, and by doing community service. Student-athletes in college today are contributing more than ever to their local communities, by donating their time and efforts for numerous social causes and philanthropic works. In late December 2004, and January 2005, both college student-athletes and professional sports stars helped lead the largest humanitarian campaign in recent decades, aiding the victims and survivors of the tsunamis in Southeast Asia. The campaign showed the ability professional and college athletes possess to use their power, influence, and affluence to encourage citizens around the world to pitch in to the relief effort (Athletes, 2005). At the University of South Carolina, members of the

women's basketball team and football team held a "Family Literacy Night" in February 2005 (Team Gamecocks). University of South Florida athletes have joined other campus members in an after-school reading program for financially needy elementary school students (Haber, 2005). Student-athletes at Purdue University participated in a "Reading Extravaganza" in early March 2005 (Poppe, 2005). The list could go on. Nearly all universities from large Division I programs to small Division III schools are getting their student-athletes out into the community.

In a business framework, athletes are the assets that keep college athletics and professional teams afloat. Without the athletes there would be no product for the consumers. In business vernacular, increasing the value of your organization can be accomplished by increasing the value of your assets. Extending the business metaphor further, athletic events are business ventures, consequently, schools and teams could focus on adding value to their assets –the players. How does one facilitate adding value to human life? The impetus of this research is to discover if there is an additional benefit behind the community relations or community service aspect of sports which incites positive changes within the athletes.

In college sports, the academic services departments help students succeed in the classroom. Prior to 1994, little attention was being paid to athletes as people and their development outside of the classroom and beyond the playing fields. Then in 1994, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) began an initiative called Challenging Athletes Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS). The CHAMPS program was designed to help athletes grow and mature as individuals off the court and outside the classroom. Since its introduction in 1994 when 40 schools began participating, the CHAMPS program has grown to include more than 400 schools with 124 schools in Division I-A alone (NCAA 2004). Similar programs have developed in the professional leagues through player development programs and community relations departments. One of the important components of these programs is community service. It is clear these types of programs are beneficial. Are these programs a matter of corporate social responsibility? Altruistic philanthropy? A marketing campaign? Player development? Who is benefiting?

The time and money that athletes contribute to their communities can change the lives of the children, the homeless, the sick, the elderly, and others. The benefits to a community may not be the only impetus behind the proliferation of community service programs. An athlete performing community service, at either the professional or collegiate level, is a special instance where the benefits may actually be three-fold. Related research in psychology and marketing suggests two benefits of community service programs that are ancillary to the rewards experienced by a community. First, research in psychology supports the notion that participating in volunteer activities can have salubrious effects for the volunteers themselves (Metz, McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Rhoads, 1998; Simon & Wang, 2002; Uggen & Janikula, 1999; Wilson & Musick, 1999). At the same time, research in marketing suggests that community relations and community involvement by athletes is part of building brand equity and brand loyalty (Ferrand & Pages, 1999; Gladden, Irwin & Sutton, 2001). Brand equity and brand loyalty is what brings fans, customers, and consumers to a product or service and keeps them returning in the future. In professional organizations, the practice is akin to corporate philanthropy, which has become popular in today's business environment (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Finally, the accumulation of dollars, as well as hours of service, tremendously impacts the local communities, charities, and individuals the athletes are helping (Brown, 1999; Edwards, Mooney & Heald, 2001; Farmer & Fedor, 2001).

Extrapolation from the research suggests these types of programs not only aid social needs and responsibilities and add value to the colleges and teams, but also help to incite positive changes within the athletes. This triad of benefits loosely tied together in research from disparate disciplines needs to be studied within the genre of sport management literature. The triad of benefits needs to be studied from all sides, specifically, looking for the results within the context of athletes volunteering. Close examination of the positive effects experienced by the student-athletes, the teams/schools and the community could spurn further support for CHAMPS/Life Skills programs. These types of programs may be the solution as to how organizations can add value to their assets (the players), while also possibly reaping results for themselves and aiding society. As the psychology research suggests, student-athletes who perform community

service will form ideologies that help them make better decisions, and as a result they may be less likely to get in trouble, thus mitigating negative or troublesome behavior. The marketing literature suggests there are positive outcomes for the schools as well. As the word gets out to the public that student-athletes are volunteering and doing good deeds in the local areas, more community members will want to associate with the teams, or will be more loyal than they previously were. The increase of fans, and more loyal fans, means more ticket sales and more merchandise sales, which ultimately translates to more revenue for the schools. While the athletic department does have to expend funds to support the community service programs, the positive effects experienced by the student-athletes, the communities, and the school, have the potential to far outweigh those preliminary costs. Research in this area might provide evidence that the benefits are three-fold, and thus, in economic terms, provide a return greater than the original cost. Figure 1.1 depicts the triad of benefits, showing the outward growth of benefits in three different directions caused by athletes engaging in community service.

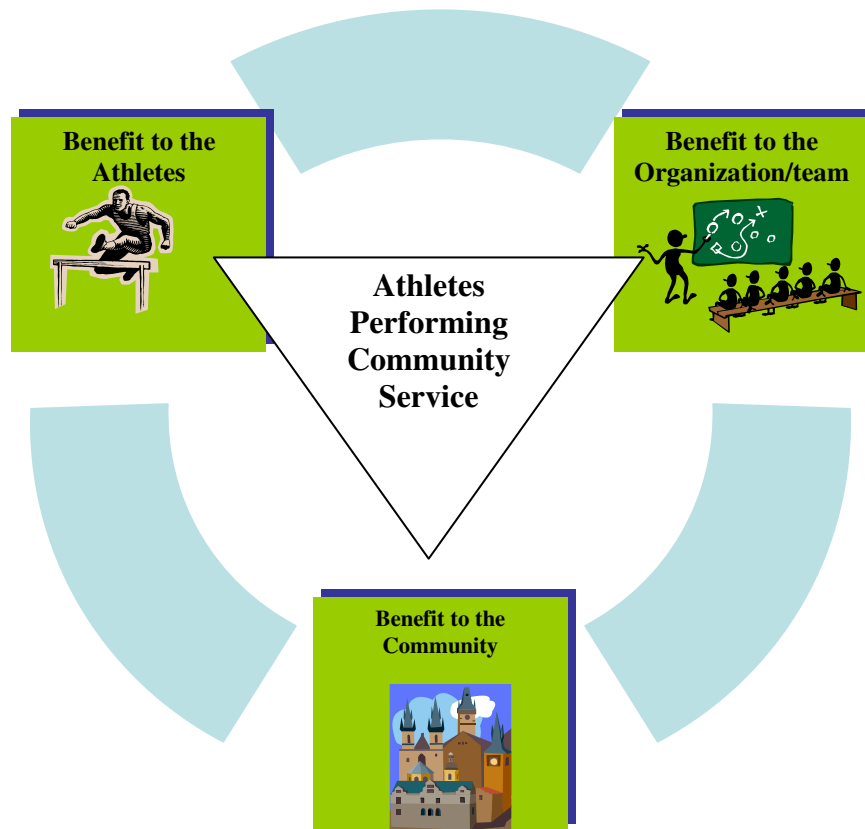


Figure 1.1
Triad of Benefits

The next step, through research, is discerning whether these programs are in fact helping the athletes themselves. It seems plausible through extrapolation, that these three benefits do in fact exist, and manifest themselves through community outreach programs. Focused sport management research that demonstrates these benefits might encourage larger budgets for community service programs and more participation and commitment on behalf of the schools or teams involved. The purpose of this research is to discern the potential benefits experienced by college student-athletes as a result of participating in various types of community service activities.

Before a thorough analysis of the literature can begin, a definition of community service and the types of community service must be agreed upon. One of the difficulties of studying volunteerism is the often broad and generalized definition of volunteering and what constitutes community service. According to Wilson (2000), there exists a debate concerning the definition of volunteering. Some propose that the volunteer is someone who gives time freely in order to help someone else, while others contend that volunteering, “means acting to produce a ‘public’ good: no reference to motive is necessary” (Wilson, 2000, p. 1). For the purposes of this case study, the latter definition will be most appropriate, where there is no reference to the intentions of the volunteer, only that s/he gave time to participate in an activity to produce some public good. The student-athletes studied through this research engaged in activities planned and organized through a Student Services Office. So, whether student-athletes attend a booster lunch, or read to children in the hospital, they are acting to produce a public good. However, it is obvious that these two activities are drastically different in terms of the audience or cause being helped.

Herein lies the second problem of definition. What constitutes community service and how can you categorize the various types? Following the division utilized by Metz, et al., (2003), community service can be broken into two broad categories: social cause service and standard or promotional service. On one side is social cause service, during which students, “were exposed to and dealt with persons in need or a public issue such as poverty” (Metz, et al., 2003, p. 190). In the current study students visited hospitals, read to children, or helped raise money for charities. On the other side is standard or

promotional service, which does not expose students to larger public issues, or people in need, but occurs instead when students, helped fellow students or did functionary work for organizations” (Metz, et al., 2003, p. 190). In the context of this case study, some students may have helped put freshman survival kits together, attended a booster lunch, or appeared for an autograph signing.

A third area of definition pertains to the notion of civic duty or social responsibility. As Perry and Katula (2001) point out, much of the current literature lacks a formal definition for civic duty or citizenship. Instead, researchers have chosen to define the terms relative to the particular attributes they focused on over the course of their studies. In their extensive three part definition of citizenship, Perry and Katula (2001) provide a definition in relation to philanthropic and civic behaviors. That definition will form the basis for the idea of civic duty and social responsibility used in the current study. They define this dimension as, “nonpolitical behaviors that produce public benefits” (p. 333). More specifically, Weber, Weber, Sleeper and Schneider (2004) define civic participation as, “the desire to become involved in supporting the less fortunate by volunteering time and money to those in need” (p. 360). In turn, demonstrating civic duty or social responsibility goes beyond just participation in community service but the ability to express a good greater than your own. For the current case study, expressions of common good, societal benefits, and duty to others will constitute feelings of civic duty or social responsibility.

Significance

The significance of this study lies, not only in the practical application of the ideas to the athletic departments housing community service programs, but also in the filling of an important gap in the sport management literature. The potential triad of benefits extending to the community, to the university (or pro team) and to the individual is an important concept that could affect attendance, community support, and student-athlete development. Though much money gets filtered to athletic departments, sometimes the programs that benefit the student-athletes most are left behind. The funds go first to the fields, equipment, and other matters that make the program externally

aesthetic and attractive to the fans. The programs behind the scenes, Academic Support and CHAMPS/Life Skills, are often left to fend for themselves, with small budgets and few personnel.

If this current study and further research can show support for the triad of benefits, previously under-funded departments could implement community service programs that not only benefit the community but also have positive effects for the university and the student-athletes.

The following section will discuss the current literature on the benefits of community service experienced by the volunteer, in both a voluntary manner and through programmatic or more mandatory service programs. In particular, the research pertaining to personal benefits and social benefits focused on in this case study will be highlighted. The literature review will be followed by the methodology chapter, the data analysis chapter, and the discussion and implications chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the current case study was to elicit the responses, feelings, and thoughts of student-athletes who participated in two types of community service to judge three potential benefits of service. That student-athletes feel benefits from community service is an important part of the benefits triad. This study will try to discern whether student-athletes who participated in social cause community service and students who participated in standard service experienced the same benefits.

Within the genre of volunteering literature, there exist two lines of research that are particularly germane to this case study. Both investigate the benefits to the volunteer derived from participation in some form of service activity. The first line of research examines the benefits felt by the volunteer, depending on where the community service activity lies along a continuum, from required to truly voluntary. The participants in this case study hail from an athletic department that facilitates, but does not mandate, service. The students are asked each year to fill out interest cards, upon which, one of the many options that can be checked off, is community service. In other instances, however, some coaches require their whole team to do community service together, thence making the service experience more mandatory in nature. Since there are also a number of different volunteer opportunities available on a regular basis, the students have some autonomy in choosing the activities in which they participate. Accordingly, an analysis of programmatic or service-type-learning applies to this case study. A review of the current literature will show that while the greatest benefits hail from truly voluntary participation, benefits can be derived from mandatory or facilitated service.

The second line of research stems from the first line, but goes further to examine the benefits felt by volunteers (in both mandatory and voluntary activities) based on participation in various types of service. Different types of service vary in terms of the quality and involvement of the participant. This is where the distinction between social cause service and standard or promotional service comes into play. This review is crucial

to the context of this case study and the inherent research questions posed. The Student Services Office, which facilitates the community service projects, makes a variety of activities available, from autograph signings, to reading to children, to booster lunches, to emergency relief efforts. In other words there are various types of service; some are social-cause oriented, or hands-on with community members, while others are more promotional in nature. It is important to look at the potential benefits gained from participation in various types of activities. The benefits associated with different types of service may vary, and as a result it is crucial to examine the benefits of community service as they pertain to different types of activities.

Service-Learning and Programmatic Service

The first analysis will be an overview of the current research pertaining to service-learning, and the debate between voluntary, mandatory and programmatic service. Then, an analysis will follow of the research regarding different types of service and their corresponding benefits. From these analyses will be drawn the particular benefits germane to this case study, and how those benefits manifest themselves.

In recent years, in conjunction with the proliferation of service-learning programs in schools, a plethora of research has been conducted concerning the degree of voluntary action in performing community service, and the benefits of service learning (Jones & Hill, 2003; McCarthy & Tucker, 2002; McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Stoukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). With more and more high schools and colleges developing service learning programs, or requiring community service as part of the curriculum, the research has turned to the effectiveness of these programs. Does requiring community service have the same impact and do the participants feel the same benefits as the volunteers who freely donate their time? After all, for decades community service has been equated with punishment in the judicial system. Even though the service is required as part of a program or as punishment, is it possible for the participants to feel benefits?

Though the body of research is sparse, these are the questions now being asked in the academic realm. Stukas, et al., (1999) concluded that some mandatory programs may in fact inhibit students' future intentions to volunteer. In a study of college business

students enrolled in a service learning class, the students admitted feeling forced into volunteering, and the high level of external control mitigated their intrinsic feelings of civic duty. Particularly important was that the students who felt most controlled were least likely to report future intentions to volunteer. A second study of 63 college psychology students tested this finding further. Some of the students were given a choice to volunteer, some were strongly encouraged to volunteer and some were required to volunteer. The results supported the hypothesis that, for those participants who would not have chosen to volunteer, the high level of external control resulted in negative feelings toward future intentions to serve (Stukas, et al., 1999).). One implication from the work by Stukas et al. is that by implementing elements of choice, or feelings of autonomy in required service learning, practitioners can help make their programs more powerful and have a greater impact on the students.

In a qualitative study, Jones and Hill (2003) examined the likelihood of community service participation during college years of those who had participated either at the behest of external control, or voluntarily on their own during high school. The authors note that habits and patterns of participation in community service from high school to college are affected by whether the past participation was personally meaningful, or done because of some external force (e.g. resume building or required service). One important theme emerged from the students who only participated in required service during high school. These particular students viewed the service as homework, something that had to be endured; they did not think about how they were helping others (Jones & Hill, 2003). The students failed to internalize their experiences and overlooked the bigger picture because the service was required. Again, this study outlined the importance of some feeling of choice, autonomy or education about the service in a program that is required.

Berger and Milem (2002) focused their study on three main components: time spent by the students volunteering, the types of activities in which they were involved, and the students' motivations for being involved. In studying these components, Berger and Milem asserted the need to study both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the activities performed. It is not only important to measure how much community service students are exposed to, but also the type of community service in which they participate.

The authors concluded that it is important to study motivations in order to help understand the positive benefits that can result from service. Greater benefits were seen in those who voluntarily participated in community service, versus those, who participated due to departmental or program mandates. The study also suggests that programs could take into account students' motivations for participating and accordingly match them with or let them choose an activity of interest. By doing so, the community service would be more likely to meet the qualitative experience necessary from which the students could derive benefits (Berger & Milem, 2002). The question of whether it is a quantity of service that makes a difference, or the quality of the service, remains up for debate. The answer would seem to lie in the middle, where a program might be required or externally controlled, but the students were able to choose activities they are interested in, or certain organizations they would like to work with. In addition, the service activities that are in the program should steer toward those that would qualify as social cause service and cognitively involve students through interaction and contact with the needy or with a social cause.

Types of Community Service

McLellan and Youniss (2004) took the notion of required service one step further, examining the types of service that are being offered to the students. While the authors did suggest that the benefits reaped by volunteers are more likely to be felt (and felt to a greater degree) if the community service were performed voluntarily or there was perceived autonomy in the choices of a service learning program, they ultimately concluded that it is the substance of the work performed that tends to effect positive results and feelings. If one student is feeding soup to the homeless, while another is collecting boxed food for a food drive, while another is making large cardboard boxes for a future food drive bin, the impact on each student is going to be very different whether the students were all required to serve or not. This example demonstrates why the research by McLellan and Youniss (2004) is important. The authors purported that the benefits felt by the volunteers cannot possibly be measured unless the type of service is

taken into account. It is this angle that has spurred further research into the benefits drawn from different types of community service.

This second line of benefits research posits that it is not necessarily whether the community service was performed voluntarily, but rather the level of human interaction and hands on service that provides the benefits. This line of research looks at the tasks and actions of the volunteers, whether mandatory or voluntary, to analyze the benefits reaped out of participation in different kinds of service. It is precisely that distinction that the current case study is based on. While it may be fun, and in some ways benefit the community, to have fan day and sign autographs, a community service program must incorporate activities that facilitate the derivation of benefits by the student-athletes as well. This study will help determine exactly what those activities entail. In a study by Metz, et al., (2003) results indicated that the benefits derived from volunteering were due to the emotionally involving and cognitive nature of the service rather than whether it was mandatory or voluntary. In addition, they found that both students who participated voluntarily and those who participated as part of a mandatory program reaped similar benefits. The goal should be to have student-athletes participate in programs of interest to them, thereby combining mandatory service with a selection component, optimizing the potential for personal growth. The more ownership a volunteer can take, the more rewards will be felt. The social cause types of community service projects seem to have more of an impact on the students in terms of the benefits felt. They are exposed to issues, people and organizations they might not otherwise consider. This forces them to face the issues and deal with the people and organizations within their framework of our society and their role as citizens.

Potential Benefits of Community Service

The research then turns to what are the potential benefits. What is meant by benefit? What are institutions hoping students will learn or experience from service? Since the genre of volunteering research began forming, a number of benefits have been identified. Benefits can be psychological (satisfaction, pleasure), skill or task oriented (working with others, organization skills), sociological (civic duty, social responsibility),

or encompass intentions for future service. Since it is not within the scope of this case study to analyze all the potential benefits named above, the research focused on social responsibility, feelings of personal fulfillment and future intentions to volunteer. These three particular benefits were chosen as a focus because part of the overall goal of a community service program should be the introduction of larger social issues, fostering personal benefits, and inciting a desire to volunteer in the future. A community service program that capitalizes on the holistic nature of these three particular benefits could impact students profoundly.

In terms of the potential benefits, Rhoads (1998) and Youniss and Yates (1997) found that service can aid in the formation of personal identity as well as social responsibility. These are precisely the results that can benefit a person in terms of making better decisions, becoming a more positive role model, and staying out of trouble during compromising situations. McCabe and Miller (2003) measured the attitudes of college students who tutored young children in reading. The four measured factors were attitude toward one's self, attitude toward children, attitude toward tutoring, and attitude toward others. The authors found that by helping children learn to read, the tutors developed self confidence, sympathy for the children, and became more aware and sensitive to broader social issues (McCabe & Miller, 2003).

In a study performed for AmeriCorps results indicated several other positive impacts for the volunteers themselves:

There is also evidence that these newly developed or enhanced skills are generic foundation competencies that will continue to be valuable to the individual members, to their employers, and to their communities in the future. In the context of members' own personal development, these skills will provide a basis for increased aspirations, sustained perseverance in achieving what may be difficult further objectives, and heightened self-confidence in confronting difficult new situations. (Aguirre International, 1999, p. 105)

The goal of a CHAMPS/Life Skills department is to help athletes become more productive citizens, in part, by teaching them the value of service and hoping the positive effects of participation leave a lasting impact. If student-athletes are able to internalize

their experiences, instead of perfunctorily going through the motions, they can develop more of a personal identity outside of sport and cultivate a sense of social responsibility. Wilson and Musick (1999) identified five possible areas in which benefits may be felt for the volunteers: Citizenship, decreased anti-social behavior, physical health, mental health, and occupational achievement.

Civic Duty and Social Responsibility

A number of studies exist in which the subjects reported an increased sense of civic duty, or feelings of increased social responsibility because of their engagement in community service (Wilson & Musick, 1999). The study of civic duty or social responsibility has its own literature. McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) began a flurry of studies concerning generativity throughout the life-course. Generally stated, generativity is a concern for future generations, aiding others and becoming intellectually involved, in the political and social fabric of society. In a study of personal identity and civic responsibility, Singer, King, Green and Barr (2002) compared students' personal narratives from two types of programs. One program was the Program in Community Action (PICA) which "seeks to integrate the core educational activities of students with community work and activism" (Singer, et al., 2002, p. 539). The second program was the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies (CISLA) which seeks to help students internationalize their experiences and majors by sponsoring programs abroad that incorporate a student's interests and major. Singer et al. found that the students from the PICA group highlighted their experiences from community action situations as opposed to the CISLA students who highlighted business interactions, research, or artistic activities (Singer et al., 2002). While all students might recognize a need or an inherent good in performing community service, those who have participated in social cause service will report more meaningful experiences as they relate to aiding society as a whole. Civic duty extends from political participation, to membership in community organizations, to seeking enhancement for the quality of life of others. According to Metz, et al., (2003), students who come in contact with community members are forced to think about the realities of society, and challenge their previous opinions, which lead to the building of a civic identity and feelings of social responsibility. Rhoads (1998) used social responsibility to mean balancing the "interests of oneself with those of others" (p.

281). For the current case study, feelings of civic duty or social responsibility will entail a regard for society as a whole, including feelings of a duty or obligation to help community members, and any feelings that relate to a bigger picture.

A heightened sense of civic duty/social responsibility ultimately means showing concern and caring for those outside one's immediate circle. In addition, civic duty relates to involvement in the democratic process including political affiliations and voting behavior. Social cause community service requires that the volunteer face larger social issues that may not have been previously pondered. In doing so, student-athletes confront their own identities and their roles as a citizens. Conversely, standard community service does not force the volunteer to contemplate larger social issues. By not confronting these issues, these student-athletes may not form a sense of social responsibility. Based on the literature (Metz, et al, 2003; Rhoads, 1998; Singer et al., 2002) different patterns and thoughts concerning social responsibility might develop between those student-athletes who participated in social cause community service, than those who participated in standard community service.

Research Question One: What patterns relating to social responsibility will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in social cause community service?

Research Question Two: What patterns relating to social responsibility will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in standard or promotional service?

Attitude Toward Self

A second major benefit of community service is the possibility of positive self improvement. While broad, this area looks at the benefits one might feel toward himself/herself. Wilson and Musick (1999) pointed to a number of studies that all found a decrease in problem behavior for those who participated in volunteer activities. Uggan and Janikula (1999) found that volunteer work done during the teenage years inhibits likelihood of arrest. In addition to possibly decreased problem behavior, the volunteer's mental state may be improved, as the authors state, "providing help, even to a generalized other, as in formal volunteering, is a self-validating experience" (p. 145). Similarly,

McCabe and Miller (2003) found strong evidence, that giving college students control and power over a learning situation (tutoring children in reading), “allows them to attribute success to personal efforts” (p. 55). In the study, four of the measures for attitude toward self-improvement, ranked magnitude-wise, among the top six items overall in terms of attitude change (McCable & Miller, 2003). Rhoads (1998) conducted a phenomenological study regarding participation in community service. The author noted that students mentioned, sometimes with cynicism, that they, or others, felt good about participating. Rhoads (1998) stated, “the idea that one often develops positive feelings about oneself as a result of involvement in service reminds us that our sense of self indeed is tied to others” (p. 291). For the dimension “benefit to self,” the researcher hoped to find not only positive attributions toward the activities, but also positive reflections upon the self for having participated. These might include feeling happy, having fun, or feeling proud that they were able to help others. Wilson and Musick (1999), pointed to a number of studies in which researchers argue that volunteering actually lowers mortality rates because it increases self efficacy, self esteem, and positive affect, the combination of which reduce stress and increases positivism. It follows that students who participate in social cause community service may feel like they can make a difference, which in turn, increases self efficacy, and could be felt even stronger if they are enjoying themselves while participating. On the other hand, standard service, such as autograph signing, or a booster lunch, may feel more obligatory or arduous in nature and not evoke feelings of helping others or fun, which would not foster self efficacy and positive attitude toward oneself. Therefore, the previous literature suggests that there might be differences in positive attitude toward self depending on whether the community service activity gets the student-athletes involved with social cause service or does not actively engage the students, such as in standard service.

Research Question Three: What positive feelings and associations toward oneself will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in social cause community service?

Research Question Four: What positive feelings and associations toward oneself will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in standard or promotional community service activities?

Future Intentions to Volunteer

In a study of service and civic participation, Metz, et al., (2003) found that doing community service was predictive of intended future service. Similarly, Berger and Milem (2002) found a strong relationship between high school participation in community service and participation four years later during the senior year of college. On the one hand, while previous studies (Berger & Milem, 2002; Metz, et al., 2003) seem to indicate that doing any type of community service is predictive of future service, it seems logical that participating in social cause community service would foster a deeper sense of social obligation, and more of a desire to continue to help in the future. Participating in standard service, on the other hand, might introduce volunteers to community service in the larger sense but might not have the same profound effect, and thus, these volunteers will express little or no desire to continue community service in the future. Previous literature (Berger & Milem, 2002; Metz, et al., 2003) found that performing community service is predictive of future service. There may be a difference in how committed to future service a student-athlete truly is depending on the type of community service she/he participated in.

Research Question Five: Will participating in social cause community service foster a stronger commitment to future service than participating in standard or promotional community service?

An ancillary point that was investigated through this case study was the pattern of performing community service in high school and future intentions to volunteer. Following Berger and Milem (2002), it is more likely that students, who participated in social cause community service in high school, will voluntarily continue that trend, in college and beyond. Therefore the final research question is as follows:

Research Question Six: Will Student-athletes who participated in social cause community service in high school, or earlier, be more likely to report future intentions to volunteer, (regardless of the type of community service participated in during college) than those that did not participate in community service in high school?

A desired outcome is that the new found or solidified sense of self, incorporating a sense of social responsibility and positive self thought, may encourage more deliberation in decision making in order to mitigate potentially poor judgments in compromising circumstances. Instead of getting involved with drugs, alcohol, or gambling, the student-athletes may have built up a foundation of beliefs and core values to withstand peer pressure or boredom. The purpose of this case study was to elicit the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of student-athletes to ascertain whether participation in an institutionally controlled community service program produced notions of social responsibility, personal improvement, and future intentions to volunteer beyond college.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current case study was to elicit the thoughts and feelings of student-athletes who had performed two distinct types of community service, social cause community service and standard community service. The research questions relate to three possible benefits from participation, feelings of civic duty, positive attitude toward oneself, and future intentions to volunteer. Evidence was gathered through qualitative interviews with eight student-athletes who performed community service through a facilitated program at a large university.

Having reviewed the research to date pertaining to the benefits derived from participation in community service, the most appropriate form of research, for the time-frame and the complexity of the issues, was the case study. More specifically the research employed a multiple case study design. As Yin (1994) explained, a case study was the appropriate design for this research, because the phenomenon and the context are intimately interwoven. The use of a case study allowed previous research to be replicated and therefore potentially corroborated, using a particular subset of the population, namely, student-athletes. As Weiss (1994) explained, a case study allows for information that cannot be provided through brief answers to survey items, and allows for a full report to gain more of an understanding of the subjects' experiences. In this case study, the population consisted of college student-athletes at a large Division I-A public university in the Southeast region of the United States. These student-athletes had access to a facilitated community service program.

Participants

Participants were chosen through the Student Services Office, where they participated in community service activities through the CHAMPS/Life Skills program.

Student-athletes are asked to fill out a form at squad meetings each school year indicating what facets of the Student Services programs they would like to learn about, and/or participate in. The Student Services Office organizes and facilitates the community service activities. The student-athletes who choose to do community service are mailed a packet of community service projects and are subsequently contacted via email or telephone as opportunities to participate in community service become available. Additionally, some coaches have required certain members, or a whole team, to participate in community service projects. Each student-athlete's volunteer record is kept in a database, which logs hours spent, date participated and the activity. With the assistance of the Community Outreach Coordinator, all community service activities since November, 1, 2004 were compiled and divided into two categories: social cause service and standard or promotional service. Social cause community service consisted of any service activities that dealt with larger social issues, were hands-on with the needy, or directly dealt with children. The standard service list consisted of activities that were strictly promotional in nature, such as fan day, autograph signings, and public appearances. Table 3.1 illustrates examples of activities in both of the categories.

Table 3.1
Social Cause and Standard Community Service Activities

Social Cause	Standard
American Heart Association Walk	Celebrity Waiter Dinner
Sports Ability	Global Gathering
W.T. Moore Elementary	Coach Luncheon
Dick Howser Center Visit	Compliance Video
Barnes & Noble Reading	Autograph signing day
Nursing Home Visit	Fan Day Kiosk
Make a Difference Tallahassee	
Special Olympics	
America Reads	

Once the master list was divided, five student-athletes were chosen from each list. The first group consisted of those student-athletes who participated in a social cause community service activity since November 1, 2004. The second group included the student-athletes who participated in activities that were classified as standard service or promotional service since November 1, 2004. Once there were two main lists, the lists were subdivided further by gender, and then further divided by sport. The first person from each sub list of each service category was highlighted as a potential subject. To gain a full breadth of experiences student-athletes were chosen along a variety of other independent variables such as class in school (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior), gender, race, and sport. The researcher's goal was to get at least five individuals from each list to agree to participate in the study. Once a student agreed to participate and scheduled an interview, the next student-athlete would be chosen based on differing characteristics from the previous one(s). This purposive type of sampling allowed for interviews to be conducted with student-athletes from various academic classes, multiple ethnicities, both genders, as well as from a variety of team and individual sports. The combined subjects give a representative sample of the desired population of student-athletes at the university, while maximizing the range of potential responses, in relation to the study objective. A purposive sample was utilized, as a purely random sample of all student-athletes would not have provided significant variation in individual characteristics and experiences (Weiss, 1994). The main independent variable is the type of activity or service performed. As a result, taking samples from groups that provided a contrast across that variable was important to the case study.

The Academic Outreach Coordinator began calling from the first name on the social cause community service list to recruit subjects. Once a social cause community service student-athlete was recruited and scheduled for an interview, the Coordinator called the first name on the promotional service list from a different team. As an incentive, the student-athletes were offered one hour of community service credit for participating in the study. Interviews were scheduled with ten student-athletes. If there

were a cancellation or no-show, the athlete was contacted once to try to reschedule. If s/he could not reschedule the next student-athlete on the list was recruited. This process was to continue until ten athletes were interviewed. Two student-athletes, however, from the standard/promotional list were scheduled for the last week of interviews and both failed to make their scheduled appointments. The two student-athletes were rescheduled for the next day, but failed again to make their appointments. At that point in the semester, there was no more time to conduct interviews. Thus, a total of eight student-athletes were interviewed. Table 3.2 shows the breakdown of participants by gender, race, sport, class and type of service.

Table 3.2
Student-Athlete Participants

Student-Athlete Code	Gender	Race	Sport	Class	Type of Service
S-A 1	Female	Caucasian	Volleyball	Junior	Social Cause
S-A 2	Female	African American	Track & Field	Junior	Social Cause
	Female	Hispanic	Track & Field	sophomore	Social Cause
S-A 3	Female	Caucasian	Golf	senior	Social Cause
S-A 4	Male	Caucasian	Track & Field	junior	Standard
	Male	African American			Social Cause
S-A 5	Male	American	Football	junior	
S-A 6	Male	Caucasian	Baseball	senior	Standard
S-A 7	Female	Caucasian	Soccer	senior	Standard
S-A 8	Female	Caucasian	Soccer	senior	Standard

Interview Questions

The interview questions were developed from both the body of literature and conceptually by the researcher, in consultation with the thesis advisor. The questions were divided for flow of conversation into present experiences, past experiences and future intentions. To elicit the opinions, feelings, and thoughts of the student-athletes, the researcher asked open ended questions dealing with the activities themselves as well as reflective questions on how the students felt during or after the activities. The interviews began with a series of questions regarding the most recent one, or two, activities in which the student had participated. Table 3.3 shows the questions relating to current activities.

Table 3.3

Questions Pertaining to Current Community Service Activities

PRESENT
Please describe the latest community service project you were involved in?
How did you feel while you were participating in that activity?
What do you remember most about the activity?
How did you feel when the activity was over?
Would you choose to participate in that activity again? Why or why not?
In general how do you decide which activities to participate in?
If one of your teammates were preparing to participate in a similar activity, how would you describe what s/he could expect?
What would influence you to participate in any community service activities outside of the events Student Services arranges?
Do you participate with your team or by yourself?
How influential are your coaches in your decision to volunteer?

In addition, there were questions about past service. These questions probed whether there was any history of past service at the university and whether there was any high school participation. In addition, the researcher asked who may have influenced the student-athlete to become involved in community service. Table 3.4 lists the guide questions for this section of the interview.

Table 3.4
Research Questions: Past Experiences

PAST
What other community service projects have you participated in as a college student?
[If there are others] Which activities do you remember most? What made those activities the most memorable?
What kinds of volunteer activities did you participate in during high school, if any?
If yes, were these projects part of school or athletic team requirements or on your own?
How did you get involved in those projects?
Who was influential in your decision to participate?
How did that person influence you (or your decision) to participate?

The last section dealt with the student-athlete's future intentions to volunteer. Additionally, following the general research, two questions were added pertaining to political participation. The literature indicated a trend of community service involvement and civic duty or social responsibility which ties into the democratic process (Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1997). The questions used as a guide for the future section of the interview are listed in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Questions Pertaining to Future Intentions to Volunteer and Political Participation

FUTURE
Assuming you had the time, would you participate in more community service projects?
Are there certain groups or organizations in particular you would like to work with?
How do you see community service fitting into your life after graduation?
Are you registered to vote?
Did you vote in the last presidential election?

Interviews

A pilot interview was conducted to test the relevance of the questions to the purpose and research questions of the case study. The pilot interview also served to gauge the flow of conversation and what additional questions might need to be asked. The form and content of the pilot interview were reviewed with the thesis advisor for content validity.

A total of eight student-athletes were interviewed from seven different teams. Of the eight, three were men and five were women. Two were African American, five were Caucasian and one was Hispanic. The interviews took place in the Student Services or Compliance Conference rooms in the athletic center. The interviews were structured using a fixed-question open-response method. This method was necessary given the limited qualitative research knowledge and experience of the researcher as well as the time frame of the study. While many of the questions were fixed and asked to every student-athlete, the questions were used as a guide to the conversation allowing the researcher to probe further where relevant.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed word for word, from audio tapes, by the researcher, into separate text documents. Following transcription, all the interviews in the same service-type category were compiled into one document for ease of analysis. The document of interviews of the participants who did social cause community service was divided into three sub themes. The same was done for the document of interviews of the participants who did standard service. The general themes follow the main research questions of the study and are as follows:

1. Social Cause Community Service:

- Thoughts and feelings related to others (civic duty/social responsibility):
- Thoughts and feelings related to self:
- Future intentions to volunteer

2. Standard Service:

- Thoughts and feelings related to others (civic duty/social responsibility):
- Thoughts and feelings related to self:
- Future intentions to volunteer

3. High School Participation:

- The past community service record for both types of community service

Using a content analysis method, the researcher highlighted all recurring themes along the six research questions as outlined above, as well as any additional themes that developed. Yin (1994) entitled this strategy pattern matching. While it is deemed one of the most desirable strategies, according to Yin (1994) the inherent lack of precision can, “allow for some interpretive discretion on the part of the investigator” (p. 177). The researcher could be either too lenient on one hand, or, on the other hand, overly restrictive. For this reason, the current case study focused the pattern matching along the research questions. Any themes that emerged beyond those were only reported if offered by more than two participants. Thoughts, feelings, attitudes and comments regarding these categories were coded separately for each interview. Text was highlighted using

various colors. The data fitting each category (and sub-category if applicable) were compiled across all the interviews to keep the study issue oriented rather than case specific.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current case study attempted to draw out the feelings of student-athletes who had performed two types of community service, as they related to three potential benefits, civic duty, attitude toward oneself, and future intentions to volunteer. The purpose was to discern whether participation in social cause and or standard community service fosters the benefits of civic duty, positive attitude toward self and future intentions to volunteer. Student-athletes were qualitatively interviewed to draw relevant responses to the proposed research questions. Content analysis was used to connect themes throughout the responses and, in particular, in relation to the research questions.

Weiss (1994) identified four approaches to qualitative data analysis and interpretation. The approach most appropriate for this case study, and researcher, is what Weiss termed “issue focused” and “generalized.” As he stated, issue focused analysis describes “what has been learned from all respondents about people in their situation” (Weiss, 1994, p. 153). The intent of this research is to learn about the issues surrounding student-athletes who participate in two types of community service, not necessarily the particular experiences of each student-athlete. As a result, the analysis will focus on specific areas that developed from a content analysis as they pertain to the central research questions. The outcomes are reported as they pertain first to the three research questions followed by the ancillary topical themes that emerged.

Research Question One: What patterns relating to social responsibility will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in social cause community service?

The student-athletes who participated in social cause community service reported feelings of social responsibility and civic duty. In contrast, the student-athletes who participated in standard community expressed notions of civic duty to a far lesser extent. Each of the students who had participated in social cause service recognized there was a bigger picture to community service and was able to articulate why s/he is out in the

community. These student-athletes showed a concern for others outside their immediate lives. Table 4.1 lists the most common words or phrases these students used throughout their interviews, when talking about their activities, and how they felt.

Table 4.1

Social Cause Community Service Responses Regarding Civic Duty/Social Responsibility

Student Athlete Code	Response Indicative of Civic Duty/Social Responsibility
S-A 1	“Give back to the community”
S-A 2	“make a difference”
S-A 2	“Sharing your time w/ others”
S-A 3	“owe it to our community”
S-A 3	“Superficial because it is not really helping”
S-A 3	“always made sure that I knew what was going on around where I lived”
S-A 3	“impact one person can have”
S-A 4	“put in volunteer hours for people who are less fortunate than you”

Numerous comments from the student-athletes indicated they not only were aware of the bigger picture, but they had thought about their place in society and their ability to help others. As one student-athlete expressed we, “owe it to our community” to give back and be an active participant. This supports conclusions made by Metz, et al., (2003), who noted that participation in social cause community service forced students to confront challenging social issues broadening their perspective.

Research Question Two: What patterns relating to social responsibility will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in standard or promotional service?

Previous literature (Metz, et al., 2003; Youniss, et al., 1997) suggested that the students who participated in standard or promotional service might not express a heightened sense of civic duty. Contrary to the student-athletes who participated in social cause community service, would the student-athletes who performed standard or promotional community service report feelings of social responsibility or civic duty? The research question asks whether these students will exhibit a feeling of greater needs above their own (at least in the discussions of their promotional service). In addition, they may not express the idea of a bigger picture, greater good, or the responsibility of citizens to get involved in helping others. Their responses might not incorporate notions of helping society, broader social issues and a desire to be involved in helping the community and its less fortunate members. The responses from the standard service participants relating directly to civic duty were scant, while notions of obligation and external pressures were more prevalent. There was a general sense that they volunteered because they were told to do so, or they were told it was a good thing to do. As a result, there were only a few comments relating to social responsibility, but a number pertaining to the idea of obligation. One student-athlete expressed her feelings saying, “I was like, ok, so this is part of me being an athlete here, you have to do it.” This student-athlete felt that part of her duties as an athlete was to get out into the community, not out of responsibility to society, but responsibility to her team or coach. Table 4.2 below indicates the phrases or words used to express any notions of civic duty or social responsibility as well as obligation or external pressure.

Table 4.2

Standard Student-Athletes Responses Relating to Civic Duty/Social Responsibility.

Student Athlete Code	Reports of Civic Duty/Social Responsibility	Reports of Obligation or External Pressure
S-A 5	“. . . they really do help those kids”	“The head coach, he always talks, he is saying go out and do community service”
S-A 5	“I don’t think there’s any reason I shouldn’t help others”	
S-A 8	“you feel like you can change the world”	<p>“usually I’m told”</p> <p>“usually you just tell people to go”</p> <p>“you’re told basically it is kind of like if you have no class then you’re expected to be there”</p>
S-A 7		<p>“Sometimes they come to us whether we have to do it or kind of present it to us to where it might be something good for us to do”</p> <p>“I think our guys think it’s more of something they have to go do instead of doing it for the enjoyment”</p>

Reports on the standard service activities did not themselves draw out notions of civic duty; however, as the student-athletes reflected on community service as a whole they made comments relating to civic duty. These student-athletes did not mention a personal ideology that they should help others, but instead, focused on the notion that community service is a positive institution and has the ability to help others. Again, this supports the conclusions of Metz, et al., (2003), that because standard service does not

expose students to certain ideological issues, students are not required to think about larger social issues in these instances.

Instead of the apathy and lack of benefits expected by student-athletes who participated in standard service, all of the student-athletes indicated at least general concern for the time they committed to community activities. It was expected, based on previous literature (Metz, et al., 2003) that student-athletes who participated in standard service would not express feelings of civic duty or social responsibility when talking about their standard or promotional service activities. While overall the student-athletes did express some concern for others, and the notion that doing community service is beneficial to society, the students who had participated in social cause community service expressed ideas of social responsibility to a much greater extent and more often. In addition, the student-athletes who participated in social cause community service were more likely to express a personal ability and desire to help, rather than using overarching statements about how community service is positive. This reflects the ideas set forth by McCabe and Miller (2003), that interaction may cause positive feelings toward others, but also toward social issues.

A second aspect to the civic duty variable is political participation. Part of our duty as citizens is to participate in the democratic process, and exercise our right to vote. Each student-athlete was asked if she/he was registered to vote and if he/she voted in the 2004 presidential election. Each student-athlete interviewed, from both types of community service, was registered to vote and had voted in the November 2004 election.

Research Question Three: What positive feelings and associations toward oneself will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in social cause community service?

Much of the literature on benefits of community service predicts some benefit to the person volunteering (Berger & Milem, 2002; McCabe & Miller, 2003). Participating in community service has the potential to help people feel good about what they have done. These positive feelings may translate to positive benefits, in terms of confidence and attitude toward oneself. In addition, there would be some indication of positive self attributes, derived from their participation in social cause service. Table 4.3 illustrates

the positive associations to the events themselves and the positive feelings reported toward the self.

Table 4.3

Responses Relating to Self and to Social Cause Activities.

Student-Athlete Code	Feelings from Activities	Feelings Toward Self
S-A 1	“a lot of fun” “addicting”	“blessed” “humbling”
S-A 2	“it makes me feel good” “it was so fun”	“Thankful”
S-A 3	“I really like it” “I love projects that work with kids” “Just fun for me” “I just feel happy, I love people”	“I thought it was really hard, it tests your Spanish and English skills”
S-A 4	“a lot of fun”	“I get a thrill out of going”
S-A 6	“I can do this all day” “I can do community service ‘till I’m blue in the face”	“be an influence” “role model”

Every single student-athlete identified the activities as fun, whether they were helping kids read, playing bingo with the elderly, or helping with a local track club. One female student-athlete told a story about a little girl who had a birthmark on her eyebrow that was fairly noticeable. The other children would make fun of her, but this student-athlete told her she was special and unique, like Cindy Crawford who has a mole on her cheek:

When you see a kid take something that could have turned negative into a positive it makes you feel happy about how they're going to go on because so many people can affect you in different ways and when you can affect just one person in one moment for the better (S-A 3).

Table 4.4 presents the emotions reported from student-athletes who participated in standard and promotional community service activities.

Table 4.4
Responses Relating to Self and to Standard Activities.

Student-Athlete Code	Feelings toward Activities	Feelings toward Self
S-A 5	“mostly I didn’t want to be there I was tired . . . but the kids were fun” “they really do help those kids” “it’s not a bad time”	“I liked helping because I had something to provide” “I’m selfish sometimes I think if it is conversation I can say you know I did this” “I draw pride”
S-A 8	“you feel like you made their day”	“you make your day”
S-A 7	“it’s a lot of fun”	“You feel glad that you went and helped out”

Research Question Four: What positive feelings and associations toward oneself will be exhibited by student-athletes who have participated in standard or promotional community service activities?

The promotional community service student-athletes did report positive feelings toward the activity and themselves similar to the social cause community service participants. One student-athlete talked about how he felt after he had worked with kids

at an activity, “it’s nice to put in a couple of hours of your time to do that kind of stuff, you know you feel glad that you went and helped out” (S-A 7). All the student-athletes described the various activities, of both types, as fun, and that they enjoyed participating. As expected, the social cause community service participants reported feeling positive not only about the activity but also concerning themselves. One common theme that developed was that they felt empowered. They felt like role models, and sometimes they felt humbled by the circumstances. Similarly, standard service participants felt they were role models with something to provide to others. Common to both types of service, student-athletes expressed their joy about being involved in the activities. Important to fostering a desire for future service is showing the student-athletes that whether they are participating in social cause service or standard service, they are helping their team, and representing their institution, and having fun. The student-athletes also enjoyed the activities because the involvement meant mingling with other team members off the field, but also getting to know other student-athletes from other teams.

Research Question Five: Will participating in social cause community service foster a stronger commitment to future service than participating in standard or promotional community service?

The literature overwhelmingly indicated that those who participate in cognitively involving social cause service are likely to express future intentions to volunteer (Stukas, et al., 1999). Getting students involved, with children and/or with other community member groups, leaves a lasting impact and the hope is that the student-athletes will go out into the world after college, as productive citizens, with community service a part of their identity. Table 4.5 shows the responses indicating an interest in keeping community service a part of their lives. Research question five asked whether themes would develop particular to the social cause community service participants relating to future intentions to volunteer, as opposed to other themes for standard service participants. All of the social cause student-athletes showed a genuine concern for the continuation of community service. They did not simply report that they thought they would, but instead reported detailed explanations of how they envisioned community service would fit into their future plans. This finding supports past literature, including some longitudinal studies, which have found youth who perform social cause types of community service

are more likely to be civically engaged as adults (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Youniss, et al., 1997).

Research question five also deals with the future intentions to volunteer of student-athletes who performed standard community service, and who did not get involved hands on with community members, or children, for a social cause. The student-athletes who performed promotional or standard service, for example attending booster lunches, fan days, and autograph signings, may not report intentions to participate in community service beyond their college career.

Table 4.5
Future Intentions to Volunteer

Student-Athlete Code	Social Cause Community Service Participants: Future Intentions to Volunteer	Student-Athlete Code	Standard/Promotional Community Service: Future Intentions to Volunteer
S-A 1	I think its going to be more on my shoulder . . . researching certain foundations and organizations that I can get involved in”	S-A 5	I plan on being a teacher . . . I’ll be with high schoolers all the time and they have opportunities. . .

Table 4.5 continued next page

Table 4.5 - continued

Student-Athlete Code	Social Cause Community Service Participants: Future Intentions to Volunteer	Student-Athlete Code	Standard/Promotional Community Service: Future Intentions to Volunteer
S-A 2	I want to be a chiropractor so as long as I'm in school I know I'll have the time but as far as when I start working, especially if I opened up my own office I think I can give back whether it is monetarily or my time I will definitely try to stay up on it.	S-A 8	. . it being introduced to you in college you realize the importance of it and I think it's going to carry on . . .
S-A 6	. . . get involved in the community go to elementary schools . . . hopefully my church has a lot of churches around the nation so hopefully I can go somewhere like that, get plugged in they'll put me into a youth program, college athlete program. . .	S-A 7	“ . . . athletes stand out as celebrities and I think it is more important for those types of people to go out and do community service and people are looking up to them as role models. . .

Patterns developed concerning the standard community service participants that had not developed for social cause community service participants. The comments indicated superficial future intentions to volunteer, but lacked the substance of the reports given by the social cause community service participants. While none of the standard service participants explicitly indicated they do not intend to volunteer in the future, their responses leaned toward socially acceptable answers instead of thoughtful responses. For example, one standard service participant mentioned that, “it [community service] being introduced to you in college you realize the importance of it and I think it’s going to carry on.” In contrast, one of the social cause service participants (S-A 6) spoke very specifically about how community service would fit into his life, “my church has a lot of churches around the nation so hopefully I can go somewhere like that, get plugged in, they’ll put me into a youth program [or a] college athlete program.” The responses differ in the depth of thought that had been given to just how community service would fit into their lives in the future. The standard community service participants did not have a plan about how much community service would fit in their lives, or what types of community service they might do, or even groups they would like to work with. While all the student-athletes showed a general concern for the community, there were notable differences between those who had participated significantly more in the social cause community service activities. First, most of the social cause student-athletes easily identified specific groups or organizations they would like to work with in the future. One student-athlete (S-A 1) recognized that the onus will be placed on her once she graduates: “I think its going to be more on my shoulder . . . researching certain foundations and organizations that I can get involved in.” Conversely, standard service student-athletes either could not come up with groups or organizations they wanted to work with outside of working with children, which most had already done. By naming specific organizations, or subsets of the population they wanted to work with, the social cause student-athletes showed they were cognitively involved with the activities and were thinking about what they can do or could do to help society. As Youniss, et al., (1997) concluded, “by offering youth meaningful participatory experiences, we allow them to discover their potency, assess their responsibility, acquire a sense of political processes, and commit to a moral-ethical ideology” (p. 629).

Research Question Six: Will Student-athletes who participated in social cause community service in high school, or earlier, be more likely to report future intentions to volunteer, (regardless of the type of community service participated in during college) than those that did not participate in community service in high school?

The researcher expected some variation in the data might occur because of the influence of past service experiences. Because the researcher did not know prior to the interviews which student-athletes participated in community service in high school, research question six asked whether the students who had participated in service activities in high school, would report future intentions to volunteer, regardless of their college participation. Following the research, previous service often leads to future service, whether performed as part of a mandatory program or voluntarily (Stukas, et al., 1999). All of the social cause student-athletes had participated in some form of community service in high school. Most commonly the students had participated through a church group or a school organization. None of the participants participated in community service as part of an athletics team. The service performed during high school could be categorized as social cause service for all of these participants. Some of the service organizations they participated in during high school were soup kitchens, church service groups, Habitat for Humanity, and other youth leadership groups. Individual activities included helping the elderly, tutoring children, and coaching youth teams.

On the other hand, high school participation in community service for the standard or promotional service student-athletes was not as consistent. One of the three student-athletes did participate through a church group. The other two did not participate or did very little. S-A 8 felt she needed to explain why she had not performed much community service in high school, “I played sports year round and it’s hard your afternoons were filled with practices and weekends were games. . . I really didn’t know it was kind of like an option for me.” The results follow the patterns set forth by Stukas, et al., 1999, that students who perform meaningful, social cause type service are more likely to volunteer in the future.

Additional Results

Through the course of the content analysis, additional themes emerged. One theme in particular related to the student-athletes feeling they are role models. Table 4.6 summarizes the responses by both social cause participants and standard/promotional participants relating to the notion of being a role model. Though feeling like a role model is a part of attitude toward self, it is important to mention as a separate category because of the prevalence of the theme across all of the student-athletes, regardless of the category of service in which they participated.

Table 4.6
Responses Relating to Role Models

Student-Athlete Code	Response Relating to being a Role Model
S-A 1	<p>“you are a role model”</p> <p>“she kind of took me under her wing and so I’d kind of like to do that same thing for the younger girls from where I was from”</p> <p>“you are a role model and you do need to set the standard for what this is and this is the way you represent our not only yourself but our program”</p>
S-A 6	<p>“be an influence to be like I did it you can do it”</p> <p>“that this here football player was getting school paid for had to go through the same things, so maybe it is something they want to aspire to be”</p>
S-A 5	<p>“I liked helping because I had something to provide”</p> <p>“I think I’ve been given a lot and I think I can give a lot”</p>
S-A 8	<p>“when you see a kid and you teach them how to do something new and they catch on right then and they get so excited about it”</p>
S-A 7	<p>“people are looking up to them as role models”</p>

This attribution of one's relation to others is a positive effect; it shows the student-athletes regard themselves as in a position of power or that they possess some skills and knowledge that others might desire. One student-athlete (S-A 6), recognized that his path may give light, or hope for others who may have to overcome obstacles as he did to succeed. The realization that you have something to offer other people is a powerful notion. Because they have reached a high level of competency in their sport, competing at the Division I-A level, they recognize they have something unique to offer community members. This was reflected in the study by McCabe and Miller (2003) of college student reading tutors. The authors found that once the students realized they had a competency, and could offer help to young readers, the benefits were felt to a greater degree.

A second theme that emerged related to the student-athletes, particularly those who performed standard community service feeling as though volunteering was a requisite of athletic team membership. Interestingly, the responses relating to obligation were in response to the same questions that brought out feelings of civic duty for the social cause participants. When the standard service student-athletes were asked why they had participated, they usually indicated it was because someone asked them, or as one student-athlete put it, "sometimes they come to us whether we have to do it or kind of present it to us to where it might be something good for us to do." Unless a coach requires, the student-athletes are not required to serve, but they are all encouraged to serve either by the coaching staff or by the Student Services Office. The theme of obligation versus a theme of social responsibility in response to the same question indicates that some student-athletes have already internalized notions of civic duty, while others may have yet to reach that stage of development. This raises the question of whether the social cause community service student-athletes are building their sense of civic duty because of their participation in the social cause activities, or whether they are more likely to be participating in the social cause activities because they already have a sense of social responsibility. Future research could probe the ethical and moral development of student-athletes in terms of community service to narrow the focus on this issue.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this case study was to elicit information from student-athletes who participated in two types of community service activities. The researcher intended to discover particular themes pertaining to three benefits based on the type of service in which they participated. The three main research questions focused on a sense of civic duty, positive attitude toward oneself, and finally, future intentions to volunteer. Responses were garnered through eight, fixed-question open-response interviews and subsequently analyzed, using content analysis.

The research questions focused on three benefits student-athletes might or might not exhibit from participating in social cause community service, versus those same benefits from standard community service. Research questions one and two focused on the first benefit, feelings of civic duty. Questions one and two asked what type of themes would develop relating to civic duty and social responsibility for the two types of community service participants. While the social cause community service participants did exhibit more of a sense of social responsibility than the standard service participants, the next step is to determine whether the social cause community service participants are increasing their sense of social responsibility by engaging in the activities, or if they are performing service because they already had a sense of social responsibility built into their belief system. Perhaps, the mix of standard service and social cause service can help illustrate the need for social cause volunteers by showing the student-athletes that do both, what a difference a single person can make in his/her community.

As the literature indicates, feelings of civic duty are connected to political participation (Youniss, et al., 1997). Interestingly, every single student-athlete interviewed (from both service types) was registered to vote and voted in the last presidential election (or at least told the researcher they did). A few additional factors, other than their general feelings of civic duty, may have played into this phenomenon. First, the student-athletes' institution falls in a state much talked about in the political

arena. This high profile attention within the state as well as nationally may play a part in the students' voting habits. Second, beyond the fact that the students' institution is in a controversial state, most of the student-athletes were originally from the state as well.

Research questions three and four related to the second measured benefit: the positive thoughts the student-athletes would attribute to themselves, as well as to the activities in which they participated. Common to both social cause community service participants and standard service participants, were notions of fun, and general positive memories of the events as well as positive attributions toward the self for having participated. That all the student-athletes were enjoying themselves pays homage to the efforts of the Student Services Office and the work they put into making a worthwhile community outreach program. Gaining confidence off the athletic fields may have salubrious effects for the athletes in terms of academics and life choices. This benefit of community service should be studied further to narrow the focus and determine the effects of increased confidence, and positive self image on other facets of their lives.

The fifth research question sought to find patterns relating to future intentions to volunteer for the two different types of service participants. There was a marked difference between the responses from the two types of service participants. The social cause service participants all had specific future plans in terms of what organizations they would like to work with, and in terms of how much time they will spend. In contrast, the standard service participants made overarching statements about how they thought it was important to perform community service. The difference shows the cognitive attachment to community service and to a sense of social responsibility on the part of social cause participants. They have made community service a part of their identity and sense of self, whereas the standard participants have not. Future research could follow standard service participants throughout college to see if their identities changed as they participated in more and more social cause community service versus continuing to just do standard service.

The final research question focused on whether the student-athletes who had participated in social cause community service in high school would report future intentions to volunteer regardless of the type of service performed in college. The majority of the eight student-athletes interviewed participated in social cause community

service in high school. Some, however, admitted participating more perfunctorily than others, to put something on a resume, or as a requirement for graduation. That most of the student-athletes were introduced to community service at a young age may explain why even the ones who performed standard service have some feelings of civic duty and superficial intentions for future service. The discrepancy between whether some reports were more socially constructed answers or not remains unanswered. However, the sincerity and thoughtfulness that went into the responses about future participation differed immensely between the two groups of participants. A longitudinal type study could follow the student-athletes into the future to see what transpires.

Ancillary to the central research questions, other themes emerged through the content analyses that warrant discussion. Two particular themes emerged that may pertain particularly to athletes. First, there was a general indication that performing community service was a requisite (even if small in some cases) of participation on a collegiate athletic team. The athletes felt that if the community supports you, that therefore you should in turn support the community. This notion is somewhat different than the social responsibility discussed by Wilson and Musick (1999). Instead of supporting the community to help those who are less fortunate (as a primary purpose), there emerged a theme that the student-athletes felt they ought to support the community so the community members in turn come to watch their games. Alternatively, some student-athletes expressed the notion that you should do community service because community members are the ones who come to watch your games. This notion is particularly interesting. The athletes realize that the presence of the fans is important to the viability and marketability of their sport. They are thankful that the community supports them as athletes, and they feel they should give back as a result. This result relates to the student-athletes self-efficacy toward service and the numerous reasons why people volunteer. Wilson (2000) refers to a branch of the exchange theory, whereby volunteers give their time because they anticipate needing help themselves (such as fans to come to their games), or want to give back due to help they have already been given (fans came out to the game, so the student-athletes feel they should give back).

A second theme emerged from the responses of all the student-athletes about their unique position as potential role models. Once they have reached the Division I-A level

these student-athletes have succeeded on the playing field for a number of years. In addition, many of them may define themselves and their identities by this success. This is the facet of their lives that they excel at, and realizing that others may want to emulate their behavior, skill, or drive leaves them with a sense of personal fulfillment.

Recognizing you are in a position to be a role model for someone else, intrinsically means you have derived a certain amount of confidence in yourself. Getting student-athletes out into the community to interact with children (especially), shows them this phenomenon. When the kids express awe, or exhibit fan type behavior, the student-athletes are forced to confront their position as someone that child admires, thus imbuing a sense of personal satisfaction and confidence.

While no particular themes emerged across the research questions regarding the specific demographic of the student-athletes, a larger sample may evoke differences. There did not seem to be any significant differences between the men and women student-athletes across either category of participants. Additionally, neither race, nor age seemed to play much of a factor in the derivation of benefits either. One theme that may be found using a larger sample would be the likelihood of participation in social cause community service depending on which team the athlete participates. Each team seems to have its own culture of community service, sometimes emanating from the coach, sometimes from the student leaders or captains.

The current case study was a good starting point for this side of the benefits triad. The research revealed clear demarcations in the benefits felt, in terms of civic duty and future intentions to volunteer, by student-athletes participating in social cause community service versus those participating in standard or promotional service. The ancillary themes of obligation to participate, and the student-athletes generally regarding themselves as role models are important topics that warrant further investigation.

Future Research

In addition to previously mentioned ideas for potential investigations, future research could focus on the student-athlete as volunteer, gaining insight to the reasons and motivations for participating, and determining further benefits felt by student-athlete

volunteers. The current study suggests that there might be aspects to student-athletes volunteering that are particular to that population. A thorough analysis and understanding of the motivations and benefits could prove useful for the CHAMPS/Life Skills and Student Services Offices around the country, in helping to build programs that are most beneficial to the student-athletes. In a more broad context, further research regarding the benefits triad, based on student-athletes performing community service might also be explored. Studies might analyze the benefits felt by the team or organization in terms of how getting athletes into the community affects attendance or brand image. Further, empirical studies of the time, effort, and financial contributions of student-athletes to the communities around the country may help spawn additional funding and support for facilitated community service programs.

As community service becomes more ingrained in the fabric of our educational system, the potential benefits and how those benefits can be best derived will provide valuable information. For athletes in particular, research in sport management could help foster support and funding for community service programs at both the professional and intercollegiate and perhaps at the interscholastic level as well.

Limitations

A few caveats must be issued as to the limitations of the research. First, the researcher, admittedly, is a novice at interviewing and qualitative analysis. The neophyte status of the researcher impacted the potential depth of information gathered, as the interviews tended to be more fixed-question open-response oriented rather than free-flowing conversational interviews. Yin (1994) illustrated this dichotomy; while an open-response fixed-question format is easier in terms of the interview process and analysis, the depth of the data is inherently compromised.

Second, subjects were chosen based on their participation in social cause or standard community service activities since November 1, 2004, rather than all the activities they had participated in over their college career. As a result, the standard service participants generally reached back to previous or outside experiences, instead of discussing the activities about which the researcher intended to garner information.

Additionally, students are somewhat self-selected, as not necessarily all student-athletes are involved in community service. They get to choose whether they participate in the first place (unless they are required by the coach) which means possibly only the student-athletes who are more civic minded to begin with chose that option.

Third, the nature of the topic being discussed may have triggered a social desirability response bias in the subjects' answers. The subjects who had participated in only a few community service activities were clearly embarrassed to admit so, and in turn may have provided information that was not entirely accurate, but what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. It is not easy to say, or admit, that one does not like community service, or that it is not something that one cares about, and as a result, answers may have been formed to sound socially acceptable. Our society dictates that altruistic behavior, such as giving your time or donating money behooves all of society and is therefore a necessary and positive thing to do. While not everyone has an affinity for service or helping others, they may not readily admit that.

Additionally, the results are generalizable only to student-athletes at large division I institutions that have similarly run facilitated community service programs. These same results may not be found for student-athletes at Division III institutions, or even small Division I institutions in which the community service program is run differently, or does not exist.

The growing field of sport management benefits when new areas of research are brought into the academic forum. The practical implications, and application of research focusing on athletes performing community service, could prove invaluable. A well rounded community service program has the potential, not only to benefit the student-athletes by broadening their experiences, but also to benefit the school and the community. The current study scratches the surface, revealing the importance of mixing social cause community service and standard community service activities to expand the experiences for the student-athletes. Social cause community service may open students' minds to new ideas, points of view and lifestyles. Standard community service is also an important part of a program, allowing the students to feel like role models, have fun with their teammates and meet other athletes. The current research provides a starting block for further investigation into the triad of benefits.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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