

Summary of Findings from the 2010 GOALS and SCORE Studies of the Student-Athlete Experience

To be presented at NCAA Convention, Thursday, Jan 13 2011

Study Background

GOALS is a study of approximately 20,000 current student-athletes that was conducted during spring 2010. Analyses for this presentation will focus on three general hot-button areas: 1) recruitment and college choice; 2) ethical leadership issues, and 3) student-athlete time demands. The first two areas are new areas of inquiry within the GOALS study, and the third is an issue that received much attention from the membership when first studied in 2006.

SCORE is a study of over 7,000 former student-athletes who entered college in 1996. Analyses for this presentation will focus on long-term academic outcomes and try to identify important influences on eventual academic success.

GOALS Study

Recruitment and College Choice

- In the majority of the sport groups studied, athletics participation was the most-often reported reason for choosing a college. Academics was generally a close second, followed by the institution's proximity to home. The sport groups that had the largest disparity of athletics as a choice factor over academics were Division I women's basketball, and baseball in Divisions II and III. Division III student-athletes generally reported academics and athletics as similarly important factors in college choice.
- Most student-athletes found the recruiting process to have provided useful information to help with their college decision. However, fewer than half of the student-athletes indicated that coaches had "talked a lot about academics" in the recruiting process.
- Depending on sport, between one-fifth and one-third of student-athletes felt that some coaches contacted them too often in the recruiting process. Football and women's basketball student-athletes were most likely to say that they had received too much contact. Highly recruited athletes were also more likely to indicate more contact than they wanted, although no sports group had more than half of their student-athletes indicate excessive recruiting contact.
- Most student-athletes felt that their expectations regarding academics and time demands were generally accurate. They reported that their perceptions of the athletics and social experience in college were less accurate. Division I women's basketball players reported that their expectations about their athletics experience were least accurate of any group.

- Coaches have a profound effect on college choice. Between 40 and 60 percent of student-athletes said it was unlikely that they would have chosen the same institution if there was a different coach. Men's and women's basketball players were most likely to tie their decision to the coach, as were highly-recruited athletes in all sports.
- A majority of student-athletes indicated that they were glad they made the choice to come to their current school. Groups that indicated less satisfaction with their choice included student-athletes in Division I women's basketball, Division I football, Division II men's basketball and baseball and Division III baseball. Highly-recruited student-athletes in Division I were less likely to indicate satisfaction with their choice.
- A large majority of student-athletes across all divisions believe that athletics participation is important in preparing them for life after graduation. Division I baseball players are most likely to have this attitude, while women's participants in Divisions II and III are least likely to endorse this notion.

Ethical Leadership

- Generally, student-athletes are fairly positive about the ethical leadership of their coaches. Football coaches earned the highest mark in this area, while women's basketball coaches were rated most poorly among the groups studied. We cannot distinguish whether this is attributable to differences in coaches' behavior or differences in expectations of the student-athletes.
- In most sport groups, a majority of student-athletes "strongly agree" that their head coach can be trusted. Student-athletes in the sport of football report the most positive feelings of trust in their coaches. Division I women's basketball and Division II men's basketball student-athletes report lower levels of trust.
- Student-athletes were asked if their coaches show them proper respect in terms of interpersonal behavior. In most sport groups, fewer than one-in-four student-athletes indicated that there were issues. However, there are some sport group differences worth noting:
 - o The highest occurrence of disrespectful behavior reported was in the sports of men's and women's basketball;
 - o Baseball student-athletes reported that their coach was more likely to put them down in front of others than reported in other sports;
 - o Division III student-athletes were less likely to report this behavior than those in the other two divisions.

- Most student-athletes believe that academic honesty is strongly valued at their institutions, although baseball players across all three divisions were less likely to endorse this concept than others. Women were more likely than men to agree with this statement about their schools, and Division III student-athletes were more positive than those in the other divisions.
- When asked their agreement with the statement that “winning is more important than good sportsmanship”, men were much more likely to agree with that than women. Almost half of men in the sports of football, baseball and basketball agreed with that statement.
- Over 25 percent of male student-athletes in Division I football and basketball and Division I and II baseball indicated some level of agreement with the idea that their teammates would be willing to cheat in order to win games. Fewer than 10 percent of any women’s sport group agreed with that statement.

Time Demands

- Measuring time spent in any domain is difficult and survey self-report of time spent is an imperfect method for assessing time demands. However, the convergence of the results from the 2010 and 2006 GOALS surveys leads us to believe that these are useful data for making national comparisons across sport and division.
- With a few exceptions, student-athletes across sport and division spent similar amounts of time on athletic pursuits in 2010 as in 2006. The exceptions:
 - Among men’s Olympic sports in Division I, a small decrease in time on athletics was reported. The decrease was similar across most of the sports in this group.
 - Increases in time on athletic pursuits was reported in Division I baseball, Division I and II men’s basketball and Division I FCS football.
- Division I FBS football players still report the highest weekly in-season athletic time commitment (43.3 hours/week). This is similar to what was reported in 2006. Note that Division I baseball and FCS football players also now report more than 40 hours/week on athletics in-season. Division I men’s basketball players report about 39 hours/week on athletics and Division I women’s basketball players report about 38 hours/week. Even in Division III, student-athletes report spending at least 30 hours/week in-season on their sport.
- Time spent on academics in 2010 was very similar to what was reported in 2006, except for an increase in academics time for Division I men’s basketball. No sport group studied showed a decrease in time on academics over the four-year period.
- Within several sport groups, the academics-athletics time balance shifted toward athletics. This was noted in Division I baseball, Division I FCS football, and Division II men’s and women’s

basketball. Division I baseball stood out with participants in that sport reporting spending more than 10 hours/week more on athletics than academics during the season. Relative to other sports within division, baseball in Divisions II and III also showed a differential balance favoring athletics.

- Across sport and division, it appears that many student-athletes are spending more time in total on the combination of athletics and academics than they did four years ago. Football players in Division I report roughly 80 hours/week during the season on those two, with men's and women's basketball at about 77 hours/week.
- The number of classes that student-athletes typically miss during the season was very similar in 2010 as in 2006, with the exception of reported increases in Division I men's baseball and Division I FBS football. In Division I, participants in women's basketball, men's basketball and baseball miss the most classes (about 2.5/week on average). Within Division II, the highest numbers are in baseball and women's sports (about 2/week). In Division III, baseball misses the most (1.8/week vs. 1.2/week in next highest sport). Across division, baseball players in all three divisions also reported more time away from campus for competition in 2010.
- Not much change was seen in the percentage of student-athletes reporting that they spend as much or more time on athletics during the off-season as in-season. However, across many sports, these percentages are high. For example, about 78% of Division I and II baseball players and 70% of Division I and II football and men's basketball players report spending as much or more time during the off-season. These numbers are lower for females and within Division III.
- A new question in 2010 asked student-athletes if they were satisfied with the amount of time spent with their coaches. Particularly high numbers of Division I women's basketball players (34%) said they would prefer less time with the coach (vs. 7% saying they would like more time with the coach). 30% of Division I football players stated they would like less time with coaches (although about 15% said they would prefer more time). Across division, women's basketball had the highest sport averages saying they would prefer less time with coaches.
- As seen in 2006, student-athletes in certain sports expressed a preference to spend less time on athletics. Of note were high percentages (and increases from 2006) in Division I baseball (18%), football (22%) and women's basketball (29%). Female student-athletes across division, particularly in women's basketball, expressed that they would prefer less time spent on athletics.

Student-Athlete Comments

- Current student-athletes were asked open-ended questions about the best part of their student-athlete experience and the one thing they wish they could change about their experience. These comments are currently being analyzed for broad themes.

- An initial look indicates the strong role that coaches play in the student-athlete's experience. Fully 11% (7% of men and 16% of women) cited the coach or some aspect of their relationship with the coach as the one thing they would most like to be different.

SCORE Study

Academic Attainment

- The new data suggest that the estimate that 88 percent of Division I student-athletes receive a bachelor's degree by the age of 30, which was calculated in the previous iteration of the SCORE study, will be similar in this 1996 cohort of college entrants. We also see a transfer rate that remains fairly high.
- Over 35 percent of these students report having earned a post-graduate degree by 2010.
- High school core GPA remains the best pre-college predictor of academic outcomes in college.
- Initial study of these new data was focused on understanding the differences between those who earn a bachelor's degree and those who have not by age 30. Those who did not graduate within this 10-12 year timeframe reported:
 - Perceived lower academic effort while in college;
 - Less support from a coach to earn a degree;
 - Lower self-identification as a student while in college;
 - Lower self-identification as an athlete while in college;
 - Less satisfaction with the overall college experience (academics, athletics and social), and
 - A higher likelihood of believing they would have a professional athletics or Olympic career.

Academic Effort

- How a student perceives their efforts put forth in the classroom and how motivated they were to succeed both have significant relationships with eventual academic success. This finding holds when we control for demographic variables like gender, race and sport.

Influence of Coach

- The SCORE survey asked respondents several questions about the influence of the coach on their academic and athletics experiences. One item that had a relationship with eventual degree attainment was: *How important was the goal of graduation from an undergraduate college or university for your college coaches?*

- The majority of respondents reported that the goal of graduation was important to their coaches (69%); however, this is lower than the reported importance of graduation for themselves (94%) and for their family (91%).
- Overall, graduates were statistically more likely to report that their graduation was an important goal for their coaches. And, again, when examining separately by gender, ethnicity and sport group, the importance of graduation to the coach remained significant.

Student-Athlete Identity

- Overall, the majority of respondents reported that they strongly identified as both athletes and as students while in college.
- Graduates were more likely to report greater levels of student identity and greater levels of athlete identity than were non-graduates. The greatest difference, however, between graduates and non-graduates was on the student identity scale.

Satisfaction with Collegiate Experiences

- Overall, as was seen in the previous version of SCORE, over 90 percent of former student-athletes feel happy with their overall collegiate experience.
- Graduates were more likely to report greater levels of satisfaction with their overall experience, and with their individual academic, athletics and social experiences. The greatest difference in satisfaction between graduates and non-graduates was in their response to their satisfaction with their *academic* experiences.

Professional Aspirations

- Respondents were asked if they thought it was likely upon entering college that they would eventually pursue a professional and/or Olympic career. While the majority did not think this to be very likely, almost one-third did report they thought it was at least *somewhat likely*. Male student-athletes (including those in sports other than basketball and football) reported greater likelihood that they would be pursuing a professional athletics career.
- There was a significant relationship between degree attainment and reporting a likely professional athletics career. Those who did not earn their degree were more likely to report what may have been unrealistic expectations to become a professional and/or Olympic athlete.