ACADEMIC ATHLETIC JOURNAL

The Official Publication of the
National Association of Academic
Advisors for Athletics

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SPRING 1987

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Professional Discourse: An Editorial Comment

Editorial responsibility for the *Journal* has, for a time, been passed along to me. Gerald Gurney has moved from editor to the editorial board. At the outset I want to thank Gerry for the splendid work that he has done. I hope to sustain the positive impetus that he has provided and, by working closely with him, our publishers, and the rest of our fine editorial board, I am confident that we can do so.

While the editorial policy of the *Journal* will remain essentially unchanged, one modification will be made in its format. Beginning with the Fall, 1987 number, we will include short notes and comments on issues of salient concern to members of the profession. The readership is invited to submit brief commentaries on topics of interest. Ideas germane to the national debate on the proper balance between education and athletics are particularly encouraged. Henceforth, the *Journal* will provide a mechanism by which to continue the lively discussions that have characterized our recent national and regional meetings.

As a start, I have two proposals to set forth. These, of course, are purely personal, and should not in any way be construed as representing official positions of the NAAAA. The first proposal is a modification of NCAA Bylaw 1-1-(b)-(3). That rule stipulates what printed materials may be provided to prospective student-athletes. Conspicuously omitted are student-athlete handbooks. These handbooks can and should be a valuable source of information about academic support programs. It seems evident that prospective student-athletes should be as thoroughly informed as possible on this vital aspect of an athletic program. I suggest the bylaw be changed to allow prospective student-athletes to receive and evaluate one student-athlete handbook from an institution.

My second proposal concerns Bylaw 5-1-(j) and is, *ipso facto*, complex and controversial. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses inherent in this reform legislation, there is one disturbing aspect of it which has not, in my opinion, received sufficient attention: the stigma associated with being publicly identified as a non-qualifier. Highly visible student-athletes who do not satisfy the criteria of 5-1-(j) cannot avoid being permanently stereotyped as "dumb jocks." Underprepared—as opposed to truly unqualified—students simply do not have an opportunity to overcome their educational deficiencies without public humiliation. We don't know what the pernicious consequences of this are, but it is likely that they are considerable. As the eminent psychiatrist C. Knight Aldrich put it, "The expectation of behaviour

by others is . . . a determinant of the behaviour it prophesies" (*Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 1974, 8:127).

If we must use scores and grades, I think that we should stand 5-1-(j) on its head. That is, we should establish fairly high criteria that leave little doubt that a high school student is prepared to handle the dual roles of college student and athlete. For the sake of simplicity, let us assume that 1000 SAT and 3.000 high school GPA were the established threshold of preparation. Students meeting this standard would be allowed to participate in athletics, and indentification in the press would not constitute a problem. Freshman ineligibility would apply for all others.

This proposal would seem to offer a compromise between John Slaughter's view that freshmen need an athletics-free year and Theodore Hesburgh's position that athletics does not create problems for freshmen athletes. (*NCAA News*, May 20, 1987.) More importantly, it seems to address the very real concerns that engendered 5-1-(j), while removing the stigma. It does, as they say, "accentuate the positive."

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Going Beyond NCAA Bylaw 5-1-(j): Developing Learning Prescriptions for Student-Athletes

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and
Judith R. Holland
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Abstract

In recent years academic support programs for the student-athlete have become an integral component of athletic departments at major colleges and universities. This study reports the use of a test-scoring procedure called Modified Confidence Weighted-Admissible Probability Measurement (MCW-APM) to assist athletic department academic support personnel in diagnosing student-athlete knowledge gaps. A series of nine criterion-referenced tests (CRT) in fundamental knowledge-base areas of mathematics, language arts, and reading at the elementary, secondary, and junior college skill levels was administered to a group of freshmen student-athletes at UCLA. The MCW-APM test-scoring analysis generated specific learning prescriptions for each student-athlete along with information use-cognitive maps to indicate those knowledge-base areas where the student-athlete was informed, partially informed, uninformed, or misinformed. The learning prescription was then used by the tutorial program staff for developing an individualized instruction plan. Subsequent clustering of student-athletes by information type was used to design courses, workshops, and special programs with instructional objectives towards reeducation (for misinformed areas), instruction (for areas with lack of information) and review (for areas with partial information).

Introduction

The recruitment of "blue chip" student-athletes for college and university athletic programs has, especially in the last two decades, become a major and extremely expensive function of the modern athletic deparment. To a great extent the effectiveness of the recruiting process affects the visibility and financial success of the university's or college's athletic program. Once the student-athlete is "signed on" at a major college or university, strong efforts usually have to be made to ensure his or her retention in school, academic eligibility to compete in sports, and (ultimate) graduation. This enormous responsibility is usually assigned to personnel in the academic support division of an athletic department. Their function is to provide special classes, workshops, tutoring, counseling, and any other instructional support services required by the student-athlete. Because of visibility, athletic department academic support programs are most vulnerable to criticism from the general public, the university community, and the student-athletes themselves. When a student-athlete fails to graduate, drops out for academic reasons, or becomes ineligible to compete in sports, the reputation of the entire athletic program is suspect and the effectiveness of its academic support program is particularly scrutinized.

Function of Academic Support Programs

Academic support groups have become a critical element in college sports because of recent emphasis by the NCAA on the academic performance of the student-athlete. The passage of stricter NCAA legislation (Proposition 48, Bylaw 5-1-j-August 1986) will require an expanded administrative responsibility from athletic departments in the area of academic support.

Student-athletes who do not meet the initial eligibility criteria proposed in this new NCAA bylaw will be required to "sit out" the first year of college in order to "concentrate" on academics. There is an enormous need, therefore, to develop systematic methods for enhancing the effectiveness of academic support programs and assisting student-athletes to "concentrate" on academics. In essence, the mission of the sports coaches in an athletic department might be considered as developing the "human capital" of the athlete by refining his or her sports skills. The mission of the academic support program might be considering as increasing the "human capital" of the athlete by developing his or her cognitive skills. Academic support services have to first diagnose, then compensate for, poor educational backgrounds in order for the student-athletes to derive maximum benefit from the education they will be given in return for their athletic abilities. Many would argue that it is this latter human capital investment which should be of greatest importance to the student-athlete, because there is an extremely low probability of an athlete obtaining a professional sports career.[1]

Sociologists such as Harry Edwards have been especially critical of colleges and their athletic departments' behavior—especially with regard to black athletes (Edwards, 1983; Edwards, 1984). Edwards claims that athletically gifted students are pushed through the educational system with little or no regard for their learning needs and concludes that "dumb jocks are not born; they are systematically created" (Edwards, 1984, p. 8).

One of the major recommendations of Edwards, which formed the philosophical centerpiece for this research, was that

> Diagnostic testing should be made available to each student-athlete enrolled in order to determine academic weaknesses. Tutorial support should then be targeted to address these weaknesses (Edwards, 1984, p. 12).

How athletic departments can systematically accomplish this task in a cost-efficient manner poses a major problem for the academic support staff. Fortunately, computer technology can be used to assist academic support personnel in the diagnostic and remediation process.

Many student-athletes (not only black athletes, as suggested by Edwards), arrive at a college or university with significant amounts of misinformation (know academic concepts wrongly, e.g., $1/2 + 1/3 = 2/5$), lack of information (were never adequately instructed in certain academic areas), and partial information (were not fully instructed and evaluated in certain academic areas) in their knowledge base. To expect these academically ill-prepared student-athletes to compete on an equal footing with the general university community of students without significant affirmative resources from academic support is unrealistic and unfair to the university as well as the student-athlete.

What is proposed in this study is, therefore, an expanded role for academic support programs for student-athletes to include efficiently designed "affirmative" or proactive tutoring, in addition to class maintenance tutoring. Proactive tutoring is especially recommended for those athletes with particularly severe gaps in their knowledge base. It is not enough to provide student-athletes with a scholarship to attend classes and obtain an education without paying attention to limitations in their academic preparation. Students taking classes with gaps in their knowledge base will derive less than maximum benefit and enjoyment from their education. In short, building upon an incomplete knowledge base by attending classes is not only inefficient, but ultimately generates a negative overall attitude towards school. Imagine, for a moment, if football scholarships were awarded to the Julliard School of Music, and the student-athlete could not read music. The ability of the student-athlete to "get something out of" the free music education would be severely compromised. Affirmative tutoring, systematically and cost-efficiently designed into academic support programs, attempts to ensure that basic requisite elementary and secondary school

skills are being or have been met before the beginning of an undergraduate education. This will ensure that the intended promised educational experience will be effectively received by the student-athlete at a minimum overall cost to the athletic program.

Academic support personnel who use the norm-referenced SAT scores for insight into possible gaps in the student-athlete's knowledge base find them limiting and somewhat inappropriate. The SAT measures "scholastic aptitude," not specific cognitive skill areas. Additionally, it is norm-referenced to the distribution of many millions of college-bound students, not to any specific curriculum. The percentile breakdown of various SAT scores and the percentile ranking of a score of 350 or 700 as directed by NCAA Proposition 48 is depicted in Figure 1. Note that a score of 350 (or 700 combined) is at the sixth percentile, i.e., 94 out of every 100 college students who took the test scored higher. While this statistic might reveal something of the aptitude of the student-athlete relative to all students, it reveals very little in terms of actual achievement in special academic concept areas (e.g., do these athletes understand percentages, graph interpretations, fractions, etc.).

In short, it is of little value for academic support personnel to know that 94 out of every 100 students scored better on a test than the student-athlete. Remember, these test items are specifically designed to achieve the normal distribution or bell-shaped curve. (See Owen's *None of the Above*, 1985, for an excellent critical appraisal of the SAT.) It is far more productive for academic support personnel to measure specific academic concepts that should have been learned in elementary and high school, especially if these concepts form the basic knowledge-base skills required for undergraduate courses. Low percentiles as indicated by the SAT score might indeed indicate that major knowledge-base concept gaps exist from elementary and high school, but exactly *where* is problematic. Merely "concentrating" on academics without addressing these knowledge-base gaps will not, in the long run, benefit the student-athlete.[2]

Academic support staff have to go beyond the simple interpretation of the SAT to help the student-athlete prepare for academic work. It is essential that *all* student-athletes with scores below the 50th percentile be systematically tested in specific knowledge-base areas in order to diagnose and assess those specific areas requiring affirmative tutoring. With this type of prescriptive and diagnostic information, academic support personnel can then rigorously, systematically, and cost-efficiently begin to fill these academic concept gaps with affirmative tutoring and special workshops. Of course, some student-athletes will, because of good academic preparation, have only minor gaps in their knowledge base and will be able to compete effectively in academics as well as sports. Many student-athletes, especially those in football and basketball, will arrive at the university with varying

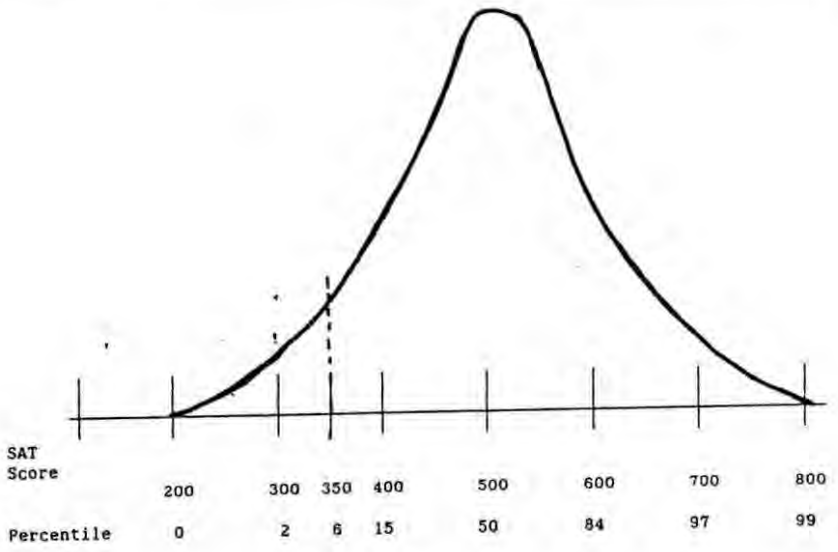

Figure 1
SAT Scores and Percentile Equivalents

configurations of knowledge-base deficiencies which will have to be diagnosed and have instructional remedies prescribed by academic support personnel.

Assessing the knowledge base of student-athletes entails two extremely different components—the test items depicting the academic concept areas to be evaluated and the proficiency level of the athlete in these cognitive areas. It is the latter of these components which is the principle concern and focus of this research—although the former is also of extreme importance. To accomplish this latter task a different way of scoring diagnostic assessment tests is needed. The research described in this study used a test-scoring system called Modified Confidence Weighted-Admissible Probability Measurement (MCW-APM)[3] (Bruno, 1986) to evaluate the student-athletes' performance (see figure 2 for response triangle). Students answered each question of each exam using the letters and associated confidence defined by the response triangle.

MCW-APM in Academic Support Progress

Twenty-one UCLA freshman athletes in the football and basketball programs were each given a series of nine criterion-referenced tests (CRTs), scored with MCW-APM, in the academic concept areas of mathematics, language arts, and reading in the elementary, secondary, and junior college

skill levels. Items used on the examination were derived from standard college texts and were considered representative of what would be "assumed" or "expected" by typical undergraduate courses (bar graphs, percentages, grammar, vocabulary, reading materials, etc.); i.e., they tended to form the academic concept foundation for a typical set of undergraduate courses at a college or university. The exams were then scored in MCW-APM format with a reward/penalty system relating the logarithm of the confidence in answer to a point score.[4]

The details of the MCW-APM test-scoring procedure were first described, with numerous testing examples presented, until each student-athlete was thoroughly familiar with all 13 response options to MCW-APM and their associated rewards and penalties (this procedure consumed about half an hour). All athletes began with the least difficult examination (elementary-level skills) and, depending upon mastery and information use, advanced to the more difficult (secondary), and then to the most difficult (junior college) skill levels over a three-day period. The student-athletes were able to finish each exam in 15 to 20 minutes. Approximately three hours, over a three-day period, were needed to complete the testing phase of the research. Separate testing in each of the three cognitive areas on separate days permitted student-athletes to advance to the next level in one area (such as math) but remain for further testing at the same skill level in another cognitive area (such as reading).

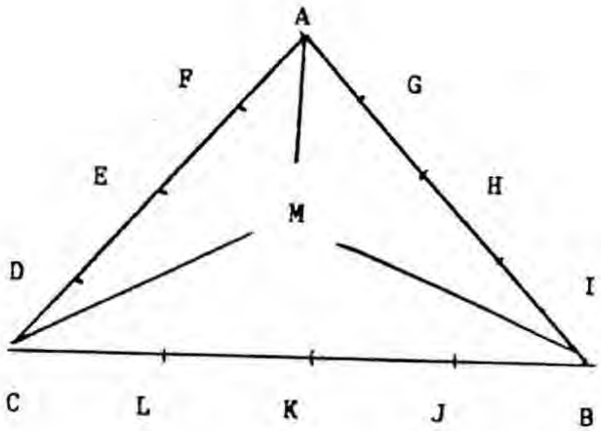

Figure 2
Modified MCW/APM Test Scoring Response Triangle

Illustration of a MCW-APM Analysis

For academic support personnel a MCW-APM test-scoring analysis is usually divided into three major parts. Part I is a detailed student information-use analysis and knowledge-base evaluation. This analysis forms the basis for the academic prescription which is later used by academic support personnel to generate an individualized learning plan for each student-athlete. Cost effectiveness is achieved by targeting tutorial resources to specific identified academic-concept areas where the student-athlete needs particular attention. Part II is a curricular evaluation based on the student-athlete's certain- and uncertain-information states. It is found by clustering examination areas by information type across all student-athletes who took the examination. This evaluation is used by academic support staff for planning workshops, specified lectures, etc. Part III is a summary class information-use profile which is found by clustering students by information type. This analysis is used to assign student-athletes to appropriate classes for enrichment, review, or reeducation. Parts I and III of the MCW-APM analysis are of particular significance to academic support personnel.

Output 1—The Learning Prescription

Part I of the MCW-APM analysis depicts the actual amount and type of information possessed by the student-athlete. It indicates specific knowledge-base areas where the student-athlete has information, misinformation, and lack of information. The learning prescription produced by this component of the MCW-APM analysis highlights "gaps" and especially indentifies those fundamental academic concepts where "misinformation" exists in a student-athlete's knowledge base. This type of information is extremely valuable for tutors as well as for the student-athletes since it forms the basis of the individual prescribed learning plan. It also indicates specific knowledge-base concepts that need reeducation because of misinformation and instruction because of lack of information. For misinformed concepts the tutor must show the student-athlete why one answer is wrong, then proceed to demonstrate why another answer is correct. For uninformed concepts only instruction is required.

Information concerning the way students value (overvalue or undervalue) their information when taking an examination is also measured with this part of the analysis. By examining the number of times a student-athlete uses an A, B, C response (the student indicates 100 percent certainty in an answer), and comparing this number with the actual number of these "certain" responses that were correct, the tutor can quantitatively assess how students value their information; i.e., it can form a quantitative measure of carelessness. Tutors can then approach their teaching tasks on two distinct levels: helping the student-athlete improve information use, critical thinking skills, etc., and addressing gaps in the knowledge base.

A typical learning prescription for a student-athlete with significant amounts of uncertainty or information is depicted in Figures 3, 4, and 5. Note the information-use cognitive maps and the learning prescriptions indicating knowledge-base areas targeted for reeducation, instruction, and review. Statistical information concerning the certainty and uncertainty in the knowledge base of the student-athlete is also presented. This information informs the tutor not just of the areas where the student is misinformed and informed, but also where there is strength or certainty in the knowledge base. It is readily apparent that this particular student-athlete will need much "affirmative" tutoring and instructional support, in addition to class maintenance tutoring, in order to have a successful undergraduate experience.[5]

Information Analysis

How Students Value or Undervalue their Information

MCW-APM Score .81

Expected Score .61

For items answered fully informed with A, B, C responses you should expect 100 percent of the responses to be correct.

Wrong	2
Correct	13
Total	15
PCT	.87

Figure 3

The Learning Prescription
(An athlete who has mastered elementary level mathematics.)

Output 3—Class Profile

Finally, student-athletes can be grouped or assigned to intensive review courses, workshops, or special lectures by their overall MCW-APM score and knowledge-base assessments. Those that have achieved mastery (MCW-APM score of 95 and above) can be assigned to an enrichment or advanced topics session; those whose MCW-APM score is between 85 and 94 can be assigned to review and basic instruction sessions. Finally, those whose MCW-APM score is below 85 (Figure 6) can be assigned to intensive instruction, reeducation, and review in remedial sessions. The class roll-book of student-athlete names for these sessions as well as the instructional objectives are also presented in this analysis. This component of the MCW-APM analysis gives the academic support program staff flexibility of

CW/APM Score 0.81

APM Score
- 95-100 Informed—Mastery—Advance
- 85-94 Well-Informed—Fair Mastery—Needs Review
- 76-84 Poorly Informed—Weak Mastery—Instruct
- 65-75 Little Information—No Mastery—Instruct
- 0-64 Misinformation in Knowledge Base—Reeducate

Information Use Score 0.87

Percent Time Correct When Using an A, B, C Response
(Indicates 100% Certainty in an Answer)
- 90-100 Good Information Use
- 80-89 Fair Information Use—Might Be Careless
- 00-79 Poor Information Use—Careless in Information Use

Expectation Score 0.61

Score if exam was taken many times using the APM probabilities and an R-W scoring system
Expected score with no partial information

Percent Overall Certainty in Information Base 0.50

Percent A, B, C Responses Used in Exam of the Total Possible Responses
- 80-100 Good Overall Certainty—Confidence in Answers
- 50-79 Weak Overall Confidence in Responses
- 00-50 Poor Overall Confidence in Responses—Exam out of Grade Level

Percent Correct Certainty in Information Base 0.41

Percent A, B, C Responses Which Were Correct of the Total Possible Responses
- 80-100 Good Correct Confidence in Responses
- 50-79 Weak Correct Confidence in Responses
- 00-50 Poor Correct Confidence in Responses—Exam Out of Grade Level

Percent Uncertainty 0.50

Percent D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M Responses of Total Possible Reflecting Partial Information of Uncertainty in Knowledge
- 00-10 Normal Uncertainty at Grade Level
- 10-20 Above Normal Uncertainty at Grade Level
- 21-100 Too Much Uncertainty—Exam Out of Grade Level

Figure 4

Modified MCW/APM Diagnostic Preparation
(weak student, elementary level mathematics)

Percent Lack of Information 0.25

Percent M or Blank Responses of Total Reflecting No Information or Lack of Time to Finish Exam

00-10 Normal Lack of Information for Grade Level
10-20 Above Normal Lack of Information for Grade Level
21-100 Too Much Lack of Information—Exam Out of Grade Level

Knowledge Base Areas of Misinformation—Reeducate

Measures-Oz	13
Mult-Mixed Fractions	25
Mult-Neg Num	32

Knowledge Base Areas with Lack of Information—Instruct

Fractions	4
Addition of Fractions	6
Num ID-Decimals	9
Circles-Radius	12
Comp-Distances	19
Graphs-Point	23
Graphs-Point	24
Fract-Decimal	28

Knowledge Base Areas with Partial Information—Review

Division 4x2	2
Measure Su Inch	14
Measure Yards	15
Graphs Point	22
Div-Fractions	26
Mult-Fractions	27
Percentage	29
Div-Decimals	31

Information and Cognitive Map of Knowledge Base

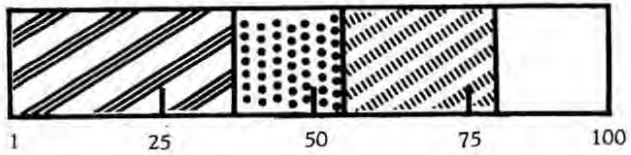

Figure 5

Areas of Misinformation and Information Use
Cognitive Map—Elementary Level Mathematics (weak student)

assigning "super" tutors or teachers to clusters or groupings of student-athletes so that their teaching talents can be shared and the limited resources of academic support used to maximum effectiveness.

Teacher Diagnostic Prescriptive MCW-APM Analysis for this Section

Grouping of Students by Information Use Maps and MCW-APM Analysis

This class has not achieved mastery, therefore, much basic instruction and review is needed.

Student Athlete	MCW-APM Score	Information Use Score	Trad. R-W Expectation Score
1	0.90	0.88	0.90
2	0.93	0.85	0.96
3	0.95	0.92	0.97
4	0.88	0.75	1.00
5	0.89	0.78	0.92
6	0.89	0.85	0.93
7	0.93	0.90	0.93
8	0.91	0.83	0.91
9	0.88	0.83	0.89
10	0.94	0.94	0.94

The number of students assigned to this section = 10.

This class was misinformed on these items:	Note frequency, reeducate in these areas:	
Division 4x2	2	2.00
Fractions	4	2.00
No ID-Thousands	7	1.00
Circles-Radius	12	1.00
Measures-Oz	13	1.00
Measures-Sq Inch	14	2.00
Comp-Fractions	16	3.00
Graphs-Point	22	1.00
Graphs-Point	23	1.00
Graphs-Point	24	1.00
Mult-Mixed Fractions	25	3.00
Div-Fractions	26	1.00
Percentage	29	2.00
Mult-Neg Num	32	1.00

Figure 6

Selection to an Instruction and Review Session
in Elementary Mathematics

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, designing effective academic support programs for athletic departments requires the precise assessment, monitoring, and diagnosis of the entering student-athlete knowledge base. MCW-APM test-scoring methods permit the coordinators of the academic support program to develop specialized curricula for workshops and review courses in order to meet the specific classroom needs of entering student-athletes. Most importantly, this analysis provides "learning prescriptions" for each student-athlete and his tutor. This type of detail promotes a better individualization of instruction and a more efficient utilization of athletic department academic support tutorial resources. Because of the uniqueness and specificity of these learning prescriptions they also encourage the student-athletes to take a more "affirmative" approach to their own knowledge acquisition. Finally, the results of an MCW-APM analysis can be used to assist in counseling student-athletes to various courses and educational programs and for research into student behavior.[6]

Finally, the learning prescription, in coordination with an effective "affirmative" tutorial program to ensure that the prescription is filled, should assist academic support personnel to meet the desired objective of a successful college academic experience and graduation for each student-athlete. Ultimately, the development of the student-athlete's "human capital" via sports skills can be matched in the athletic department with the development of cognitive skills. Successful developments in both areas will enrich the student-athlete's entire life and ensure that the student-athlete derives maximum benefit from his scholarship and opportunity to obtain a college education.

NOTES

1. The odds of participating in professional sports have been estimated at 77 to 1 for basketball, 100 to 1 for football with an average professional life of four years (from "The Worst of Two Worlds," *Time Magazine*, Oct. 28, 1985, p. 76).

2. At the University of Georgia, only 17 percent of black football players and four percent of black basketball players earned degrees in the past ten years ("It's Cleanup Time for College Sports," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 1, 1985, p.58).

3. The scoring system used for these criterion-referenced tests is based on a Modified Confidence Weighted-Admissible Probability Measurement format, where the three choices for each exam question are referenced to a response triangle. Instead of the student merely answering A, B, or C, the student is presented with 13 response options (see Figure 2). The three vertices of the response triangle represent 100 percent confidence in either the A, B, or C choice. Letters on the response triangle halfway between A and B, or B and C, or C and A indicate .50 confidence in one of the two choices. Confidence levels at .25 and .75 are also assigned letters. A point at the center of the triangle represents equal confidence in all three choices, or confidence of A = .33, B = .33, and C = .33 (see Figure 2). The logarithm of confidence yields the point score for the item. A probability of 1.00 for a correct answer receives 31 points, a probability or confidence of 1.00 for an incorrect score receives a score of -100 points. Intermediate points, or confidence in a choice, is similarly awarded. Student-athletes are awarded points for all correct information and have points deducted for information known wrongly. No points are awarded

or deducted if the student-athlete indicates "no information." For more details concerning MCW-APM test scoring see Bruno (1986).

4. MCW-APM test scoring scale is defined as:

	Award	Probability or Confidence	Appropriate Award for Communication
a *misinformed* answer is worth	-100	0.0	-100
a *random guess* is worth	-41	.08	-40
a *partially misinformed* answer is worth	-8	.25	-10
an *uninformed* answer is worth	0	.33	0
a *partially informed* answer is worth	+12	.50	+10
a *well-informed* answer is worth	+23	.75	+20
a *fully informed* answer is worth	+31	1.00	+30

The entire MCW-APM procedure is amenable to optical scanning using National Computer System (NCS) Sentry 3000 equipment.

5. ABACUS Educational Systems of Denver, Colorado, has incorporated MCW-APM into its Computer-Managed Instruction (CMI) System specifically designed for academic support and university-college counseling programs. This computer system, available on a microcomputer, provides tutors not only with activities and instructional sequences to "fill" the MCW-APM learning prescription, but additional test items to ensure that the prescription is filled. The ABACUS software is also designed to perform and instructional resource audit to ensure that learning materials, books, slides, aides, etc., are available to accommodate the learning prescription needs of the student-athlete.

6. Undergraduate introductory courses in mathematics and English can be used (with grades in these courses) to measure the effectiveness of the affirmative tutoring process. The research program at UCLA has also found that MCW-APM statistics, such as the percent score and information-use score, are powerful predictions of hours of tutoring needed the first quarter and first quarter grade point average. Research using MCW-APM statistics as predictor or explanatory variables in regression and discriminant analysis models looks extremely promising for use by academic support personnel.

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The Retention of Collegiate Athletes as Minority Students and Future Teachers: A Case Study

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Abstract

Today much attention is given to the recruitment of collegiate athletes, generally for the purpose of building strong athletic programs. Rarely is this recruitment seen as a possible means to boost affirmative action efforts to increase the number of minority students on our college campuses, or to assist in attracting minorities into professions in need of minorities, such as teaching.

This paper presents a case study which outlines some concerns and problems as seen from the perspective of the coordinator of advisement services in a college of education at a large south-central university. This person serves as the advisor of approximately 45 collegiate athletes, many of whom are minority students contemplating careers in teaching. The problems fall into two basic categories: (a) the retention of minority collegiate athletes, and (b) the recruitment and retention of minority future teachers. Some possible solutions to these problems are outlined in the form of strategies for effective academic advisement, and possible means to dispel myths contributing to the low academic achievement of black athletes.

Background Theme

The underlying theme of this paper involves the need for effective academic advisement of black student-athletes, particularly in teacher education programs where minorities are currently in high demand. Generally considered unprepared for the rigors of a college classroom environment and a majority white atmosphere, the typical black collegiate athlete could greatly benefit from an academic advisor who, among other characteristics, is familiar with the cultural background and needs of black students; has a positive attitude toward blacks and makes an honest effort to build on their academic strengths; creates and discusses goals and objectives

for students; and assists black student-athletes in developing clear and realistic priorities so they can build for their futures (Underwood, 1986). Such characteristics of advisors are even more necessary in today's environment where fewer black role models exist in education and where typical attitudes about sports in black society prevail.

Problems

Retention of Collegiate Athletics

Generally, affirmative action personnel believe that, of all minorities on our campuses, student-athletes have the most advantages. They are highly recruited by coaches, alumni, and college presidents; and systems and structures of academic scholarships, counselors, and tutors have all been created to help them along their way once recruited to an institution. Regardless of these efforts and benefits, extreme problems remain. Grades, persistence, and graduation rates, according to Edwards (1984) and McLaughlin (1986), are much lower for black athletes than for their white counterparts. Sixty-five to 75 percent of the black athletes receiving collegiate athletic scholarships never graduate from college, and of those said to have graduated, 60 to 65 percent received a physical educational degree or one in another field generally held low in esteem.

Many black athletes come to a university with very poor academic backgrounds, and thus suffer from the same problem plaguing many other minority students. They are still playing "catch up" from hundreds of years of separate and unequal educational opportunities. In addition, Edwards (1983) maintains that black athletes must fight the prevailing attitude shaped by the media which labels them as "dumb jocks" and promotes the idea of the athletic superiority of blacks. Edwards hypothesizes that much of black athletes' academic failure is due to family upbringing which promotes athletics because of the publicized fame and wealth going to the young black athlete. He says "dumb jocks" are not born; they are being systematically created because parents, schools, and teachers all tend to encourage any black child showing athletic prowess at an early age to practice, push, and "go for it," often at the expense of striving for academic excellence. Thus time is taken away from studies both in and out of school to get ready for the big game.

The athlete, in turn, gets strokes, increases in self-esteem, and confidence from his success on the court or field. Consequently he asks, "Why mess with studying when this glory feels so good?" Once recruited to college sports, he finds the glory is still on the court or field. The athlete's self-esteem turns to embarrassment and shame in the classroom. He says,

> How can I ever begin to compete with the eggheads? I'll play it cool, be top dog and make this school stuff appear to be kid's stuff. Actually I'd love to understand it, but I can't read well enough, and the math is so high above me from my weak background in junior high, it's like a foreign language—which incidentally I never took. It interfered with football practice.

But still he must stay eligible so that eventually he can go professional, his big dream.

In actuality, only one in every 10,000 high school football players ever signs as a rookie and gets a major professional contract (Edwards, 1983). Of 1,200,000 high school football players in 1982, only 40,000 played college ball, 13,000 were eligible for the draft, and only 110 signed professional contracts. The number of blacks making a living in professional football in 1982 was 1,404. With the United States Football League now out of the picture, the numbers obviously would be smaller.

Basketball statistics are similar. Only one in 10,000 who plays in high school signs a professional contract. Of 550,000 high school basketball players in 1982, 21,000 played college ball, 5,900 were eligible for drafts, 220 actually got drafted, and only 57 received professional contracts. A total of 183 blacks made a living in professional basketball in 1982 (Edwards, 1983). Considering these statistics, it is obvious that young black athletes must be shown a life other than athletics.

On the case study campus, many student-athletes see teaching and coaching in high school as a possible outlet for their abilities and interests if they do not make the pros. The reality is that they must also meet and pass the general educational requirements, grade point averages, National Teachers Exam, curriculum exams, and all the other criteria imposed by the state in its effort to reform education and teacher preparation.

Last year it was determined that of 37 scholarship athletes in the teacher preparation program at the case study university (more than half of whom were minority students), only two students had the combined ACT scores and college grade point averages required to be admitted into teacher education. This is not to say that the other 35 could not remove deficiencies by coursework and testing, but it would be an extremely difficult, time-consuming, expensive and frustrating process for them. National Collegiate Athletic Association eligibility rules also complicate the issue by making it difficult for students to repeat courses they passed with low grades.

The majority of these students (approximately 29 of the 37) were pursuing Health and Physical Education degrees, an area in extremely low demand due to school budget cuts. Therefore, even if the students remove ACT deficiencies, pass the NTE and curriculum exams, and achieve the minimum 2.5 overall GPA (their cumulative average was barely a 2.0), their chances of obtaining a straight PE teaching job are slim.

To help in the marketability of its physical education students, the case study college recently built a 24-hour science teaching endorsement into its PE program so that students would also be able to teach in this high-demand

area. This requirement consisted of 24 hours of Chemistry, Physics, Biological Science and Physiological Science, all at the level required for majors and pre-med students. Such coursework is demanding even for an average student, but almost impossible for an athlete who often has academic difficulties.

Recruitment and Retention of Minority Future Teachers

Another area which has recently become a nationwide problem is the increasing shortage of teachers. Brown (1987) maintains that approximately 1.3 million people will have to be drawn into teaching between 1987 and 1993 if the nation's schools are to have sufficient staff. This estimate is about 360,000 teachers more than the expected new supply, according to U.S. Department of Education estimates.

This problem is even more evident in the ranks of minorities. Between 1976 and 1983, the percent of bachelor's degrees in education awarded to black decreased 52 percent ("At Risk," 1986), and with new competency tests for licensure and certification of teachers, the percentage of minority teachers may become even less. This fact has serious ramifications for black students who need successful role models other than those in athletics. The editors of *Education Week* said in a recent article ("At Risk," 1986) that in the years ahead, a growing proportion of America's young will be poor, nonwhite, limited in their English proficiency, and from single-parent families in which parents themselves lack education. In addition, black and Hispanic children continue to score far below their white peers on standardized tests, scoring about 100 points lower than whites on verbal and mathematical skills. Furthermore, minority children are far more likely to drop out of high school. In 1983, 75 percent of all white 18- and 19-year-olds graduated from high school, yet only 60 percent of the blacks and 50 percent of the Hispanics graduated. With stiffened graduation requirements and current school reform movements, some educators are worried that even more minorities will drop out of school.

Research also identifies that blacks and Hispanics are less likely to enroll in college, and recent statistics from the Educational Testing Service ("College Standards Becoming," 1986) show that fewer American colleges are easing entrance requirements for minorities than were doing so at the end of the 1970's. Thirty-nine percent of the four-year private institutions in 1979 granted exceptions to their admissions requirements for minority students, but last year only 25 percent did so. At the four-year public campuses, the percentage granting exceptions to minorities decreased from 45 percent to 40 percent.

The number of total degrees awarded to minorities is consequently declining (Rodman, 1986). Only 6.5 percent of all bachelor's degrees in 1984 went to black students, compared to 10 percent in 1976. The number of master's degrees awarded to blacks is also down from 6.6 percent to 5.8

percent during the same time period ("At Risk," 1986). Despite a statewide increase in black undergraduates in 1986 compared to 1980 in the case study state (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 8, 1986), blacks still comprise only 2.8 percent of the entire student body on the campus studied. Only 20 black undergraduates are enrolled in the entire college of education, which is composed of approximately 1,200 students (*Student Profile*, Fall 1986).

There are positive reasons for the decrease in numbers of blacks in education. "Women and minority-group members, the traditional groupings from which teachers emerged, now have wider opportunities in higher-paying fields" ("Recruiting Drive," 1987). More and more doors are now open to blacks which were once closed, but despite this progress, it is obvious that black role models in education are needed due to problems minorities are experiencing in schools.

The statistics are not good for those few minorities who do choose to go into education, as well as for those already there. For example, the results of Oklahoma's spring 1986 curriculum exams showed the following: 1,999 of 2,731 (or 73 percent) whites passed, 95 of 138 (or 69 percent) native Americans passed, 16 of 26 (or 62 percent) Hispanics passed, but only 53 of 113 (or 47 percent) blacks passed. A test which created problems for minority teachers already in the field was the March 1986 Texas Teachers' Competency Test, which was part of Texas' Reform Law of 1984. Although there was a 96.7 percent passage rate, only 1.1 percent whites failed, whereas 6.0 percent Hispanics failed, and 8.4 percent blacks failed ("Testing Time," 1986). It is therefore apparent that certain measures need to be taken to assure that blacks, including our minority athletes, will have sufficient training and preparation to successfully complete teacher preparation programs once attracted to the field.

Solutions

Retention of College Athletes

Since the majority of black students in the case study college of education are athletes, it has been even more important for this college to encourage high retention and academic success of its athletes. Through effective, sincere, conscientious academic advising, not only through the athletic departments, but in colleges and academic departments, it is possible to stimulate student-athletes to excel. Going beyond Underwood's (1986) suggested characteristics of advisors of athletes, the author lists these specific suggestions for advising minority athletes:

1. Collegiate athletes should be viewed first as students, then as athletes (not vice versa). Concern should be not so much for their athletic eligibility, but for their growth and development as students and adults. Each student should be assessed for his or her level of academic achievement, and remediation developed where needed. At the same

time, every effort should be made to prevent damaging students' self-esteem. They should understand why they might be academically weak, which may require a review of the student's high school experience, or an examination of possible learning disabilities. Overall, honesty is the key, and students should be encouraged not to cover up but to overcome their academic problems.

2. Statistics such as Edwards' (1983) concerning the number of athletes who have gone professional should be presented to student-athletes, then realistic degree plans and career goals outlined for them.
3. Athletes should be viewed as whole persons with certain unique abilities, strengths and goals. Most advisors and professors in the academic arena received their recognition from playing the role of "good student," and they should recognize that athletes' rewards generally come from playing the role of the "good jock." Advisors should attend their students' games, then acknowledge their athletic successes in newsletters, on bulletin boards, and through telephone calls.

   Likewise, athletes' academic success should be acknowledged when positive test results and grade cards come out. If students know that someone is looking at their academic achievements (not just for eligibility), they will most likely improve. Similar to the Hawthorn studies in factory production, the mere fact that someone pays attention to them will make production increase.
4. Collegiate athletes should be given opportunities for success in academic, non-athletic settings. For example, athletes in the case study school regularly assist in leading workshops on teen problems for junior high and high school adolescents. Topics range from drugs and alcohol, divorce, family problems and communication, to dating and sex. These workshops give the athletes experience in a classroom setting and an opportunity to succeed off the field or court, as well as to serve as instant role models for youth.
5. The athletes themselves need positive role models. Dr. Harry Edwards, ex-Olympic athlete and black sociologist currently at Berkeley, frequently appears on college campuses. As outlined in his biography, *The Struggle That Must Be*, he tells of his struggles in growing up in East St. Louis, then relates his experiences of being among the first blacks to play college ball at a white institution. Many black athletes have benefitted from his story concerning his awakening to academics and eventual completion of his Ph.D. in sociology.
6. Pictures of black athletes, football programs, and pamphlets about minority student groups on campus should be prominent in advisors' offices to project the attitude that minorities are welcome. This is a necessity when a total of only 20 blacks are majoring in a college, such as in the case study college of education.

7. An effort should be made to develop a personal relationship with minority students and athletes. An advisor does not have to be black, talk "jive," or do special handshakes to develop a relationship of trust and encouragement. As a matter of fact, the author contends that to continue pairing black faculty and counselors with black students, and native American faculty and counselors with native American students, keeps perpetuating the age-old problems of distrust, segregation and racism. Minority students must learn to trust others of a different race and to develop a rapport, or existing barriers will never break down. Retention and remediation programs are important, but often people and their humanistic touch are more important.

Recruitment of Minorities into Teacher Education

The problem of recruitment of minorities in general into teacher education also needs solutions. The field should be made more attractive to minorities through increased salary and status, as well as advancement opportunities. Brown (1987) maintains that "authorities are offering scholarships and student loans with a zeal unknown before, trying to divert more college students into teaching and to keep them there." Such financial attractions should be specifically designated for minorities to make the teaching field a more attractive field. Loans that will be "forgiven" upon teaching a certain number of years, and scholarships to minorities who have exceptional academic credentials and are willing to commit to teaching after graduation could both be powerful incentives to choose careers in education.

It must also be determined how grade point averages and criteria of standardized tests can be met by minority students who may have certain academic deficiencies. Special tutoring programs and remediation courses should be developed to make up for the lack of solid academic backgrounds of those minority students who otherwise could be successful.

Consideration should also be given to allow for alternative criteria for passage of standardized tests required for certification and employment. Some school districts, such as the Dallas Independent School District have modified requirements in order to comply with court orders to hire additional minorities ("DISD Hires Low-scoring Teachers," 1986). Applicants for positions in this district had previously been required to pass a test measuring basic knowledge of subjects in senior high textbooks. However, due to a court ruling requiring an increase in the number of minority teachers, 45 percent of the 4,061 teachers hired between 1980 and 1985 had not passed the test. Seventy-five percent of the blacks hired did not pass the test, and 67.8 percent of the Hispanics hired did not pass. The district also hired 31.3 percent "others" who had failed so that an Equal Education Opportunity Commission suit would not be filed by whites. Despite the fact that these test exceptions existed, the district still has not complied completely with the court order to reach a minimum of 43 percent

black teachers by 1986.

Whether or not test exemptions are an acceptable means of obtaining minority teachers is questionable, but the fact remains that it is important that black children see black teachers. Minority children need to know that the scholars, the disseminators of information and producers of knowledge, can be of any race, and that blacks do not just excel on the football field and in sports.

Conclusion

Perhaps a vicious cycle could be eliminated if we could dispel the myth that athletics is the easiest means of black movement toward success. Perhaps in its place black athletes could seek the goal of mastering the academic game, which would result in achievement, satisfaction, and pride in a variety of settings.

An increase in the number of minorities pursuing careers in education, as well as an improvement in the academic skills and retention of minority collegiate celebrities, could serve to provide powerful role models much different from the Dr. J's, the Refrigerators, and the O.J.'s. These new role models would prove that young blacks could be leaders and become successful in the academic world, as well as in the athletic arena. Colleges of education, through effective advising of minority student-athletes and the recruitment of minorities, could be the catalysts for such change.

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The Freshman Athlete's Transition: Athletic and Academic Stressors

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Abstract

This article discusses the high levels of stress experienced by many freshmen student-athletes. Specific athletic and academic stressors, along with self-defeating coping behaviors, are presented to exemplify how stress conditions may, in part, explain some student-athletes' poor athletic/academic performance and transition to college.

The Freshman Athlete Transition: Athletic and Academic Stressors

While the freshman year of college is typically one of adjustment for most students, student-athletes have been identified as a population having special needs and unusual pressures (Berry & Sorensen, 1981; Harrison, 1981; Johnson & Renwick, 1983; Lude, 1983; Remer, Tongate & Watson, 1978; Schubert & Schubert, 1983).

Most likely, student-athletes are more similar to other college students than they are different from them. However, more attention has been given to the poor academic performance, and low graduation rate, of student-athletes than has been given to the academic performance of other college students (Edwards, 1983; Meggysey, 1983; Spivey & Jones, 1975; Wittmer, Bostic & Waters, 1981). Concomitantly, numerous reasons also are mentioned when explaining the poor academic performance of student-athletes. Such explanations include the use of questionable recruiting practices and eligibility criteria for student-athletes' enrollment in college, the admission of academically unqualified and underprepared student-athletes, the excessive time commitment required of student-athletes for

participation in intercollegiate sports, and the general finding by the Carnegie Foundation that more and more young people, including student-athletes, emerge from high school prepared neither for work nor college.

The NCAA has acknowledged the dilemma by passing Rule 5-1-(j), designed to address the admission of academically unqualified and underprepared students and to ensure the academic progress and graduation of student-athletes. It is our contention, however, that the complexity of these related issues in intercollegiate athletics, and the attention given them, creates exceptional pressures for student-athletes to excel in the academic environment, as well as to perform to their greatest athletic potential in a society that applauds winning.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to discuss the impact of such pressures on freshmen athletes and to delineate specific stressors that make the athletic and academic transition particularly difficult for most freshmen student-athletes.

Hans Selye (1956, 1974) defines stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it, and concludes that any major change in one's life can lead to stress. Barrow and Prosen (1981) describe several types of conditions known to produce emotional stress, which include emotional disruption stimulated by change, threat, frustration, or conflict. More specifically, they purport that when a person's self-esteem is perceived to be under attack, when the attainment of a desired goal is blocked, or when one is faced with a decision-making dilemma, the person experiences stress that is psychologically disruptive.

While stress is an ongoing part of everyday life and therefore cannot be avoided, it is also generally agreed that overly high and/or prolonged levels of stress may produce undesirable consequences (Barrow & Prosen, 1981; Selye, 1956, 1974). Holmes and Rahe (1967), for example, conclude that a score of 250 or more on *The Social Readjustment Scale* (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) indicates a high level of stress and major life crisis. Given the contention that high levels of stress are not conducive to the rational, systematic thought that mental and physical tasks demand (Cohen, 1978; Wine, 1971), it seems reasonable to assume that stress and its effects may interfere with, and in part explain, the academic and athletic performance of student-athletes. Although we have collected preliminary, unpublished data which indicate high-level stress scores for student-athletes, such as the scores of 250 or more suggested by Holmes and Rahe (1967), the information presented in this article is based on our personal experiences and observations, and a model of stress developed while working with three Division I football programs over a four-year period. The information and model relate most specifically to the experience of student-athletes who participate in a revenue-producing sport, but we also believe it is applicable to student-athletes in general.

Our focus is the specific conditions that create stress for student-athletes (change, threat, frustration, and conflict) and how their inability to cope effectively with such conditions results in self-defeating behaviors (fight or flight) related to poor academic and/or athletic performance. While it is beyond the scope of this article to provide specific suggestions to help freshmen student-athletes cope effectively with the stress, the discussion of our personal observations, experience, and model of stress may do so indirectly by facilitating the awareness and understanding of those who come in contact or work with student-athletes.

It is our further belief that student-athletes, unlike other freshmen, are in the position of making a dual transition during their freshmen year. Although most freshmen may expect college life to be a continuation of their high school experience, the academic demands of college are very different from what most freshmen expect. Freshmen athletes, however, not only are expected to make the academic transition from high school to college, they are also required to successfully negotitate the athletic transition. Consequently, we believe student-athletes are, more often than not, unprepared for the overall experience of the dual transition and its concomitant emotional impact.

The required transition in both academics and athletics also may be equivalent to doubling the impact of student-athletes' self-defeating and ineffective coping behaviors in response to specific stress conditions.

The Athletic/Academic Transition

While most freshmen athletes are accustomed to special consideration in high school and have had this special treatment reinforced during the college recruitment process, the reality of their freshman college year is that few will have the opportunity to participate, and even fewer will come close to maintaining the "star" status of their high school years. Thus, even though the athletic transition from high school to college is seldom mentioned, it involves change, threat, frustration, and conflict for most freshman athletes and is a major source of stress.

Likewise, the academic transition may be particularly difficult for freshmen student-athletes. Many enter college not only underprepared for this level of work, but also unaware of how college-level work differs from high school. As mentioned, they often erroneously assume that college is a continuation of their academic experience in high school. For example, many athletes assume that the same amount of time and energy devoted to studying in high school will result in the same grades in college, that they will receive special treatment in the classroom because they are athletes, or that their academic performance is less important than their athletic performance. Also, many enter college unmotivated and disinterested in their classes because they were not expected or encouraged to achieve academically

during high school. Finally, many freshman athletes fail to understand or accept the importance of education, often due to their unrealistic expectations and plans for a career in professional athletics.

In addition to these general statements, the following discussion of our experience and observations relates to four specific stress conditions encountered by most freshman athletes in their athletic/academic transition from high school to college. More specifically, the stress conditions of change, threat, frustration, and conflict are presented as significant aspects of student-athletes' transition. Fight and flight responses to conditions of stress are also discussed in terms of student-athletes' ineffective coping mechanisms and self-defeating behaviors. Examples provided in each of these areas are not meant to be inclusive, but represent our most typical and frequent observations and experiences with freshmen student-athletes.

Change

Contextually, almost everything changes when freshmen athletes arrive on the college campus. Not only are they away from parents, siblings, and friends, they also experience changes in where they live, who they live with, the food they eat, and the room and bed in which they sleep. Some athletes experience moving from a rural or suburban neighborhood to an urban area, or vice versa. For many athletes it also may be the first time they have lived, studied, or participated athletically in an integrated and/or segregated environment. Although these contextual or structural changes may seem minor, adjustment is required and stress may be experienced by the student-athlete.

As briefly mentioned earlier, a significant athletic change experienced by average freshman athletes is the loss of their "star" status. It is important to recognize that the loss of this status also means that, for the first time in four to eight years, they no longer receive the attention they are accustomed to receiving from fans, fellow students, friends, family, hometown communities, and coaches. Regardless of the reality, most freshmen athletes continue to think of themselves as the exception to this situation, and thus expect to participate athletically during their freshman year. When this does not occur, most freshmen have difficulty responding to the stress that this change in their status creates. Although this change may not likewise appear to be a small transition, the experience of not traveling with their team, not participating in their sport, or not dressing for an athletic event is unsurmountable for some athletes, and difficult for most.

Related to the change in their athletic status, most athletes also experience changes in relationships with others as well as others' perceptions of them. Most college athletes have received special treatment from high school coaches and they typically expect similar treatment from college coaches. This notion is often reinforced by the attention given them during the recruiting process and they are unprepared for the limited contact they have with the head coach once they arrive on the college campus. Most tend to personalize this change because they do not realize or understand the amount of time expended by coaches in other, related activities that prevent personal interaction with their athletes.

Finally, many freshmen athletes who expect college to be a continuation of their high school experience are surprised and shocked at the realization that some professors and students think less, rather than more, of them because they are athletes. Athletes who arrive on campus expecting special treatment and acceptance as important members of the academic community or student body often become aware for the first time that they are perceived by others as a "dumb jock," not as someone to be looked up to.

As indicated by Hans Selye (1956, 1974), any major change in one's life can lead to stress. Considering that the changes mentioned are not inclusive or may not be the most significant transitions required of freshmen athletes, it would seem appropriate to assume that such changes create stress for most, if not all, freshmen student-athletes.

Threat

As stated, Barrow and Prosen (1981) believe people experience psychologically disruptive stress when their self-esteem is perceived to be under attack or when the attainment of a desired goal is blocked.

Although student-athletes are familiar with performing, they also are accustomed to doing so at high levels of skill or expertise and typically are not comfortable performing poorly in front of others. Consequently, tasks such as reading, writing, taking notes and tests, or speaking in class are often threatening, generate feelings of inadequacy, and create emotional distress for many academically underprepared student-athletes.

Even though the reality is that many freshmen student-athletes enter college lacking in some of the basic skills necessary for college-level work, poor time-management skills also may contribute to athletes' feelings of inadequacy and the perceived threat of the classroom to their self-esteem.

For example, it is estimated that football players devote between 45 to 49 hours per week to their sport during season, and when travel time is included the average time commitment expands to 60 hours per week. In concert with the time demanded for athletic participation, it is also estimated that a student should expect to study two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. Obviously, time is a dynamic variable and of the essence. Without good time-management skills, most academic work will not be completed and becomes a source of threat and inadequacy for many student-athletes. In such instances, almost everything about the classroom may threaten their self-esteem.

In addition to student-athletes' academic unpreparedness and poor time-management skills, Roberts-Wilber and Wilbur (1983) believe that most student-athletes have never learned, or been taught, the student role. Thus,

they often lack important or necessary skills, such as how to study for a test, how to take notes, how to behave in a college classroom, and how to approach and ask for help from a professor. Not knowing the student role, or "academic game," therefore may be an additional factor that intensifies student-athletes' feelings of inadequacy and the classroom's threat to their self-esteem.

A number of athletic transitions also occur during the freshman year which may threaten athletes' self-esteem and prevent their goal attainment.

In addition to losing their "star" status, athletes also quickly learn that they are replaceable, expendable, subject to a serious injury that might end their athletic career, and that they are competing against other athletes who are as good or better than themselves. For the first time in their athletic lives, they also may be forced to deal with their physical equity, or limitations, in comparison to other athletes, and this may occur at a time when many are unprepared to accept the reality.

This is particularly true for many freshmen who are planning a professional athletic career, or who have little identity beyond that of an athlete. Unfortunately, an image is often portrayed to student-athletes that a lucrative professional career is theirs for the taking. While a few star athletes sign million-dollar contracts and realize their dreams of becoming professional athletes, the overwhelming majority (92 percent) never become professional athletes and must face the reality of "life after athletics" at the conclusion of their athletic eligibility (Meggysey, 1983).

The overall realization and experience of these factors often place student-athletes in a position of feeling physically and emotionally exhausted and vulnerable. In this context, even a minor failure or injury may provide a major assault and threat to their self-esteem.

Frustration

Many of the factors that are perceived to threaten student-athletes' self-esteem and block their goal attainment also create frustration. Additionally, most freshmen athletes are verbal about these frustrations. It is common to hear them complain about everything, from coaches, to being treated unfairly and like children, to the food they eat. Many find themselves in positions where they have no money for entertainment (and in some cases, no money for laundry soap, classroom supplies, or personal hygiene products such as toothpaste, shampoo, razors, soap, and clothing), no personal transportation, and no financial means to visit their homes and families. This position is especially frustrating when it is in direct contrast to many athletes' *a priori* expectations that they will receive material perks and benefits for being college athletes, e.g., automobiles, money, and clothes.

Freshmen athletes also express their frustration about not being given the opportunity to demonstrate and prove their athletic ability. Being "red-shirted" their freshman year is a reality for most and means they will have to

wait an additional year before having the opportunity to prove themselves athletically. Waiting the additional year to participate often intensifies the frustration because it not only prevents their short-term goal of being a "star" college athlete, the red-shirt year also blocks their idealized, long-term goal of becoming a professional athlete.

On the academic side, as mentioned, most freshmen enter college with unrealistic expectations, unaware of how it differs from high school. For example, many freshmen athletes become frustrated when they realize that they are expected to attend classes, write papers, take examinations, and read textbooks to remain eligible for participation in their sport. Many athletes also experience the demands of academics as frustrating because they are activities that they do not enjoy and, in some cases, are not prepared to perform.

For those athletes who have limited goals and a primary focus on athletics, the importance of an education is not usually realized, and academic requirements are commonly experienced as frustrating distractions from the time demands of their sports.

It is our belief that frustrations such as these intensify the stress experienced by many freshmen student-athletes and further impeded their transition to college life and the attainment of their academic/athletic goals.

Conflict

Although the frustrations, threats, and changes experienced by athletes may be expressed through interpersonal conflicts with their head coaches, friends, family, peers, and roommates, our observation is that most freshmen athletes also experience an intrapersonal conflict during their first semester of college.

The internal, or intrapersonal, conflict is related to their initial decision to participate at the college they are attending, and the dilemma that is created by the questioning of their original decision. Due to the nature of the recruiting process, and the concomitant pressures from coaches, family, and friends, the decision-making process of athletes is often limited and distorted during the time that the initial decision is made. Therefore, until their first semester of college, many do not understand the importance of magnitude of the decision that others have influenced, persuaded, or helped them make. Consequently, they question their decision to attend the particular college, and, in so doing, experience all of the internal conflict that accompanies making a major life decision.

For many, the first semester of college is the time they actually make the decision to attend the college at which they are already enrolled. Because the reality of being a student-athlete and the transition to college is different from and more difficult that most athletes expect, many also conclude that the solution to their negative feelings and dissonance is simply to transfer to another university. These athletes typically attribute their experience to the

particular college they are attending and believe transferring will solve their dilemma; i.e., that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Although, in most cases, student-athletes remain with their initial decision, some do transfer and a few decide to drop out of their college and sport altogether.

One of the major conflicts with which all athletes struggle, however, is how to do both: how to participate in their sport *and* meet their academic demands and requirements. This conflict is fraught with daily decisions and often results in a significant amount of stress.

While the athletic portion of the student-athlete's life is structured to the point that many complain they are treated like children, the remainder of their time, outside of sports, is typically not structured. Thus, they are in a position of making many decisions about their extracurricular activities and time commitments. Although student-athletes are accustomed to the structure and coaching in the athletic realm, many have not had the opportunity to take responsibility for themselvs in other aspects of their lives.

Complicating the decisions that all freshmen make in regard to friends, drugs, alcohol, partying, and sexual activity, athletes are often caught in conflict and peer pressure to live up to the "dumb jock" stereotype. Unfortunately, this stereotype often includes excessive sexual activity, physical fighting, partying, the misuse or abuse of alcohol and drugs, and not doing well in the classroom. Thus, for many athletes, to do well academically they are frequently required to withstand peer pressure and their desire to be accepted as "one of the boys," which may create additional conflict and emotional distress.

Self-Defeating Coping Behaviors

It is our observation that most student-athletes are both unaware of and unprepared to cope with the stress created by the change, threats, frustrations, and conflicts of their freshman college year. It is our further experience that their emotional response and inability to cope effectively with such stress conditions negatively affects their academic and athletic performance.

Coping is what people do to protect themselves from negative physical or pyschological consequences resulting from a pile-up of demands (McCubbin, Needle & Wilson, 1985). Unfortunately, ineffective coping can also be a source of strain that adds to, rather than reduces, the amount of stress an individual is forced to deal with.

Since most freshmen athletes are 18 years of age, it may not be surprising to find that many are not aware of or do not effectively cope when confronted with an inordinate amount of stress. However, they are often aware of feelings such as loneliness, homesickness, discouragement, self-doubt, and a general feeling that no one cares about them. These feelings, in combination with the young athletes' limited life experience and ability to cope with such stressors, are often expressed through self-defeating behaviors which typically increase the level of stress rather than diminishing it. Consequently, the self-defeating behaviors, and concomitant feelings, create more stress and make it more difficult to be productive in or out of the classroom.

According to Barrow and Prosen (1981) and Selye (1956, 1974), people initially respond to stressors with a "fight" or "flight" response, followed by a stage of resistance or adaptation, during which physical and/or psychological malfunctioning may occur. Freshmen athletes often expend a significant amount of time and energy attempting to change or resist people, events, and things over which they have no control. They may flee from stressors in their lives through avoidance and escape behaviors: alcohol and drug misuse, sexual activity, not attending classes, excessive sleeping, transferring or dropping out, and partying. Freshmen athletes' responses to stress conditions, therefore, appear to be limited to the "fight or flight" responses suggested by Barrow and Prosen (1981) and Selye (1956, 1974).

Fight Responses

The fight response among student-athletes is more common in the athletic realm than it is in the academic one. Examples of the fight response include verbal arguments and disagreements with coaches and, to a lesser extent, complaining about the coaching staff, teammates, training-table, practice, workouts or weight-lifting, etc. More extreme fight responses often occur during the athletes' free time, outside the athletic realm, and are exemplified by physical fights at bars or parties, and damage to personal belongings of others, dormitory furniture, doors, and community property in general. Athletes who cope with stress in this manner are typically labeled by the coaching staff as being recruiting disappointments, troublemakers, renegades, mavericks, poor practice or game-players, and as having bad attitudes.

Even though attention and some relief from stress may be obtained through such self-defeating behaviors, the consequences are usually negative and punitive, and the student-athlete's stress and feelings of inadequacy are intensified.

Flight Responses

The flight response is typically more pervasive among athletes than the fight response, and it is particularly apparent in the academic realm. At some point, almost all freshmen athletes cope with their fears of failure and academic inadequacy by simply avoiding anything related to the classroom. Examples include not attending class, going to class late, not studying, not attending study-table, not doing or turning in assignments, and withdrawing from classes. More extreme examples of the flight response consist of excessive drinking, partying, television watching, sleeping, and withdrawal

into themselves. Some athletes avoid or escape the stressors by transferring, quitting their sport, or dropping out of college altogether.

Student-athletes often mask their feelings of inadequacy and flight responses by acting "as if" they do not care about academic perfomance, not attempting to succeed academically, complaining about professors and classes, and distorting—to themselves and others—how well they are doing academically. The low graduation rate of college athletes, as well as the number of freshmen football players who are below a 2.0 overall grade-point average at the conclusion of their freshman year, further exemplifies the ineffectiveness of this coping behavior for most athletes.

As a result of their self-defeating avoidance behaviors, many student-athletes get themselves into an academic "hole" from which they do not escape. In the process of avoiding the stressors through flight responses, many athletes thus jeopardize their academic and athletic careers.

Summary

The article discusses the impact of high-level stress conditions on the academic and athletic performance of student-athletes during their first year of college. Specific athletic and academic stressors are presented to provide readers with information that may facilitate their ability to identify and and understand athletes who are particularly ineffective in coping with stress and experiencing difficulty in the academic/athletic transition to college.

A more general intent is to reframe the perceptions others may have about the self-defeating behaviors manifested by many freshmen athletes. If we, and others, understand that high-level stress conditions may be related to the dismal academic performances and self-defeating behaviors of freshmen athletes, perhaps we also will be in a position to develop the support programs and systems to facilitate their ability to cope with the stress and transition to college. Such understanding is the first step in enhancing student-athletes' academic and athletic performance.

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The Writing Process: A Means to Improving Writing Skills of the Student-Athlete

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The Writing Process: A Means to Improving Writing Skills of the Student-Athlete

Introduction

Institutions of higher education, particularly state-supported regional institutions, are constantly faced with the dilemma of educating a heterogeneous student body through means designed for an homogeneous population. Student-athletes, with their wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, their dualistic purpose in attending college, and their unusual demands on time and energy, are a group often slighted by educational strategies designed for the "typical" college student. However, in the area of writing instruction there exists an easily implemented methodology that is beneficial to all. The writing process, or the Writers' Workshop Approach, is an excellent way to enhance student-athletes' writing skills, and the approach can be facilitiated by academic advisors, study hall monitors, and tutors.

The State of Students' Writing Skills

Our present decade has seen a number of varied critiques of the higher education writing curriculum. Reports as far ranging as *The Nation At Risk*, articles in popular weekly news magazines, and research with a quantitative statistical base (Holdzkum & others, 1983) have all illuminated the need for improvement in college students' writing skills. The student body of Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) is no exception, and an internal University study found that that 28 percent of the incoming freshmen expressed a desire for help in the area of writing. The same study provided an ACT profile of the 1986-87 freshman class, and it showed the ACT English subtest to be the lowest subtest score for freshmen males. The men's mean ACT English score was 18.1 compared to the same group's composite ACT score of 19.8 or to the ACT Natural Science subtest score of 22.9 (Summary of Enrolled Report, 1987). Clearly, the concern over students' writing skills is most justified.

Determining the factors leading to poor writing skills is far more difficult than ascertaining the problem itself. Numerous educators cite inadequate and antiquated instructional methods as a prime determinant. These writers, teachers, and researchers have seen the fallacy of the traditional English curriculum in which the mechanics of writing are taught separately from the act of writing (Briton, 1978; Elbow, 1973; Graves, 1978; Murray, 1978; Holdzkum & others, 1983; Rager, 1986; Sloan, 1984).

The problematic nature of writing instruction is compounded by the special academic problems of many male student-athletes (Mayo, 1986). We suspect the wide usage of nonstandard English by some minority athletes to be detrimental to their success in English or writing classes. While regional and minority dialects are "well-order, highly structured, highly developed language systems," speakers of nonstandard English encounter difficulties in writing in a dialect different from their own (Hennings, 1982, p. 242). Underwood (1986) recommends that academic advisers make a genuine effort not to allow substandard English, jargon, slang, and colloquialisms to interfere with standard communication and the subsequent academic success of black student-athletes.

Attempts to Remediate Writing Deficiences

Universities and colleges have long understood the widespread nature of students' writing deficiences. Many institutions, attempting to alleviate the problem, have developed remediation programs that offer classes in the traditional basics of writing. All too often, though, these remedial classes are mired in the same traditional grammar-based practices that may have already provided inadequate instruction for the college student lacking in writing ability. Faced with a learning environment in which failure has previously been experienced, students often lack the intrinsic motivation and effort to make any real strides in their writing abilities.

Extrinsic motivation is also a problem with the remedial English programs of many universities. Our university, SMSU, offers a one-hour credit remedial English course for students scoring 13 or below on the English subtest of of the ACT or who have failed an English proficiency exam in their freshman-level composition classes. These students are required to pass the one-hour remedial class (English 81) before they are allowed to enroll or re-enroll in the freshman composition classes (English 111 and English 120). Unfortunately, English 81 has the "Bonehead English" stigma, and students receive neither grade nor credit toward any degree program. Obviously, the lack of grade or credit diminishes a student's desire to strive for success, and English 81 is erroneously perceived as a punitive ordeal. This attitude is particularly prevalent among many of our student-athletes required to take English 81, and it results in some student-athletes spending two or three semesters floundering in the remedial course before they are allowed to enter the standard composition classes.

The SMSU English Department is acutely aware of the problematic nature of their remedial program, and they are in the process of revamping the goals and procedures of their remedial efforts. Maybe even more important, though, is the methodological shift occurring within the instruction of the composition classes. Like many erudite language arts facilitators across the nation, SMSU's English faculty is moving from the didacticism of traditional grammar-based instruction to the process-oriented Writers' Workshop Approach.

The Writing Process

The simplicity of the writing process has often been overshadowed by the multitudes who view writing as a mysterious and impossible task. Although writing is never an easy chore, one might view the actual solution to student-athletes' writing deficiences are being very uncomplicated in nature. The solution involves writing being viewed as a process-oriented task which can be divided into four stages. These include 1) prewriting, 2) rough draft/initial writing, 3) proofreading/editing, and 4) final draft.

The first stage, prewriting, centers around language and experiences. Hennings cites many types of activities that may be utilized. These include:

1. Sharing experiences as a springboard for discussion and writing.
2. Using senses to gather data for thinking and expressing.
3. Brainstorming and charting ideas for future use.
4. Thinking out loud to help organize thoughts.

Research is also included in the prewriting stage because it gives content and substance to topics where experience is often lacking.

After the student has a clear purpose for writing, a rough draft is compiled of thoughts and ideas from the prewriting stage. It is at this time that

organizational tools such as outlines and charts provide direction for the initial writing. As with the first stage, the rough draft/initial writing stage can involve interaction which proves valuable in critiqueing organization of content. With the information of a logical framework the student follows the guide to compose the initial writing.

The student is now ready for the third stage, proofreading/editing. During this stage the student proofreads the rough draft using prior knowledge of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Reteaching and coaching may be necessary to strengthen mechanical weaknesses in writing. Hull (1987) found that students perform better on essays with peer interaction and peer/teacher feedback during the editing process.

The final draft stage is the last step in the writing process. It involves rewriting the composition with the changes made during proofreading and editing.

Utilizing the four stages of writing reduces the task to a process that can be taught and implemented to improve communication skills. The process-oriented approach to writing has been recommended for use across the curriculum, and it is appropriate for writers at any level of development (Braungart, 1985; Rager, 1986).

Working with Student-Athletes

Academic advisors can facilitate the improvement of student-athletes' writing by implementing the writing process through workshops, study hall, and tutorial programs.

1. Workshops—Workshops emphasizing the process approach should be provided for student-athletes. Too many college-age writers view writing as a "one-shot deal," where a paper is written with little forethought and immediately turned in or taken to the typist. An ongoing workshop program will help students develop an appreciation of the different steps involved in the writing process. If an academic advisor is uncomfortable with the idea of conducting a workshop on the writing process, qualified leaders can be found in the disciplines of English and Teacher Education.

2. Study Hall—Study hall monitors can facilitate the writing process by keeping track of student-athletes' writing assignments and developing an awareness of the prewriting, rough draft/initial writing, proofreading/editing, and final copy stages. Study halls should be structured so that students may interact in groups and provide each other feedback during the vital stage of editing and revising. Students learn from each other, and group work reinforces this important stage of the writing process. Finally, dictionaries, style manuals, and other writing resources should always be available in a study hall situation.

3. Tutorial Programs—We have found that tutoring in the area of English often consists of nothing more than a tutor correcting and rewriting a

student's hurriedly written paper. This accomplishes nothing for the student-athlete, and it raises an ethical question of who is actually responsible for the written work. Academic advisors should accept the role of establishing guidelines for tutorial sessions, and English tutors should be advised to emphasize the writing process rather than focus solely on the final product.

Conclusion

Academic advisors may or may not be experts in the field of writing, but they can provide invaluable assistance to student-athletes by creating an environment in which the writing process is allowed to flourish. Changing students' perceptions of writing from a "one-shot deal" to a process approach including the prewriting, rough draft/initial writing, proofreading/editing, final copy stages can be accomplished. Once student-athletes garner an awareness of the writing process, they will become more confident in their attempts at written expression.

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A Survey of Moral Concerns and Job-Related Stress Among Academic Advisors of College Athletes

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Introduction

This survey of academic advisors and counselors of athletes was motivated by the desire to investigate the manner in which and the extent to which moral considerations and moral dilemmas contribute to the stressfulness of the profession. The investigation grew out of my own perception that there is an inherent friction in the jobs of academic advisors and counselors of college athletes: the friction between student-athlete as student, and student-athlete as athlete. This friction arises from many sources: from the student-athlete's own perception of himself or herself as more qualified to fill one role than the other; from competition between athletics and academics for a rather limited amount of the student's time and energy; and from a demand by two different groups of people (coaches, athletic department staff, teammates, sports boosters, and other students on the one hand; faculty, academic administrators, counselors, and tutors, on the other hand) for successful performances in two very different areas.

Since it is often the academic/athletic advisor who is called upon to mediate conflicting demands on the student-athlete, it is perfectly predictable that the academic/athletic advisor will experience and deal with the frictions created by those conflicting demands. The conflicts faced by student-athletes and those faced by the academic/athletic advisors of student-athletes can easily create moral dilemmas—dilemmas involving considerations of moral rightness or wrongness—for the advisors. When this happens, academic/athletic advisors may be conscious of the moral considerations involved, or they may not be fully aware of these considerations. In either event, the presence of dilemmas is likely to produce job-related stress for academic/athletic advisors.

This survey is an initial attempt at investigating academic/athletic advisors' own perceptions of several matters: the stressfulness of their profession; the extent to which moral dilemmas contribute to that stressfulness; the types of moral dilemmas that they face (including the sources of those dilemmas); and the advisors' responses to those dilemmas.

My **expectations** regarding the response to the survey were few and rather

general. I expected that a fairly large percentage of the respondents would perceive their job as stressful. I expected that a significant number of them would perceive moral considerations to be involved in their jobs, and I expected that many of those would view moral considerations as contributing significantly to their job-related stress. Finally, I expected that a fair number of the respondents would trace some of their moral concerns to the behavior of others in their athletic departments, and I included some questions which would either confirm or disclaim this expectation.

My **hopes** regarding the response to the survey were better defined than my expectations. Chief among them were these:

1. That a large percentage of the respondents would be aware of the moral implications of many of their decisions.
2. That relatively few professionals would frequently perceive themselves as being under an uncomfortable amount of stress.
3. That those who do perceive stress have adequate procedures for coping with it and for dealing with the moral dilemmas that confront them.
4. That relatively few of the respondents would perceive their moral dilemmas as resulting from either their own wrongdoing or that of their associates.

In addition to generating data on these materials, the aim of this survey is to make an issue of moral concerns in the profession of academic/athletic advising. By so doing, I hope to raise the consciousness of professionals regarding the moral considerations of the profession, and to begin to enable them to eliminate, solve, or cope with the moral dilemmas they face.

The Survey

The survey instrument is a questionnaire (see Appendix A) which consists of 17 forced response questions, for each of which respondents have three response choices: "frequently," "occasionally," and "never." Questions on the questionnaire were intended to elicit responses on the following topics:

Topics	Question(s)
Respondents' perceptions of the stressfulness of their job in academic/athletic advising	6 and 16
Respondents' perceptions of moral considerations and moral decisions as part of their job	1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10
Respondents' perceptions of the extent to which moral concerns contribute to the stress of their job	17
Respondents' perceptions of the sources of the moral dilemmas which they face	2-6 and 11-15
Respondents' perceptions of responding to the moral dilemmas which they face	5-11, 14, and 15

The questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter to 308 persons included on one or the other of two mailing lists: the list of participants in 1986 Springfield College Conference on Counseling Athletes, and the 1986 NAAAA membership list. Any name which appeared on both lists was mailed only one questionnaire. In addition, not all of the names included on those two lists were mailed the questionnaire, since I omitted the names of those persons who were apparently not college-affiliated (i.e., those with high school titles or business addresses, those who I knew were not employed in academic/athletic advising, etc.).

The cover letter did the following:

—made it clear that I only wanted "professionals in the field of Athletic Advising" to respond to the questionnaire,
—assured the recipient that the questionnaires were intended to be completely anonymous,
—requested the recipient's cooperation in completing the questionnaire,
—requested that the recipient supply return postage for his or her completed questionnaire, and
—requested that the recipient make copies of the questionnaire for any colleagues on his or her athletic advising staff who did not receive one in the mail but who would like to participate in the survey.

The cover letter and the questionnaire were accompanied by a self-addressed envelope for people's convenience in returning the questionnaire.

Response to the mailing was mixed, but gratifying on the whole. Reactions to the survey ranged from suspicious phone calls (demanding to know who was funding the survey and what was I intending to do with the results) to enthusiastic anonymous comments written on or attached to the survey (e.g., "A very interesting survey. Good luck!" and "It's about time these items are addressed.").

Of the 308 questionnaires mailed, four were returned uncompleted, with attached notes explaining that the recipient was not an academic/athletic advisor. Another seven were returned (unopened) by the post office, stamped "undeliverable." My invitation to make copies of the questionnaire for colleagues who did not receive it generated 11 such copies. The total of completed questionnaires returned to me numbered 186. Subtracting from these the 11 copies which were made, completed and returned, the rate of return on the mailing of 308 was a very strong 57 percent.

Completed questionnaires came from 43 different states and from 119 different cities (as indicated by postmark). No forms were returned from the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Rhode Island, or Utah. Both Illinois and Massachusetts produced 14 responses and tied for the most from a single state. Twelve came from California, and nine were received from both Texas and Ohio.

A few of the respondents responded to fewer than all 17 of the questions

on the questionnaire. Some of the respondents felt the need to add a fourth category of response for some of the questions: "seldom" or "almost never." Since I suspect that many more of the respondents checked "occasionally" rather than write in a new response category in instances in which they very infrequently (though occasionally) did what the question was investigating, I scored all write-in responses between "frequently" and "never" as "occasionally."

I tallied the results twice by hand and then used Apple's "Crunch" software to figure percentages and produce pie charts for each of the 17 questions. The summarized raw data appears in Appendix A.

The Responses

1) **Perceptions of stressfulness:** Of the 179 people who responded to question 16 ("How often in the course of your duties in the field of athletic advising do you find yourself under an uncomfortable amount of stress?"), 147 (82.1 percent) checked either "occasionally" or "frequently." That is underscored further by the fact that 39 of the respondents (21.8 percent) checked "frequently." Fortunately, nearly as many (32 of the 179, or 17.9 percent) said that they never find themselves under an uncomfortable amount of job-related stress.

2) **Perceptions of moral considerations as inherent in the job:** An overwhelming 180 (97.3 percent) of the 185 who responded to question 1 ("How often in the course of your duties in the field of athletic advising do you perceive yourself as making decisions which involve ethical or moral consideration?") answered with either "frequently" or "occasionally." Of those, 81 (43.8 percent) frequently perceive themselves as doing so, and 99 (53.5 percent) occasionally perceive themselves as doing so. These responses are consistent with the responses to questions 7, 8, and 9: that 155 (84.8 percent) occasionally or frequently "discuss with colleagues the moral rightness or wrongness" of their decisions; that 152 (82.2 percent) occasionally or frequently "discuss with a supervisor the moral rightness or wrongness of a decision or policy"; and that 145 (78.4 percent) occasionally or frequently "discuss with a spouse or close friend the moral rightness or wrongness" of their decisions.

3) **Perception of moral considerations as contributing significantly to job-related stress:** Almost two-thirds (119 of 186, 64 percent) of those who responded to question 17 said that they occasionally or frequently "perceive concerns of moral rightness or wrongness as contributing significantly to (their) job-related stress." Of the 147 respondents to question 16 who occasionally or frequently find themselves under an *uncomfortable* amount of job-related stress, 110 (74.8 percent) perceived moral concerns as occasionally or frequently contributing to that stress.

4) **Sources of moral dilemmas:** One of the sources of moral dilemmas which I wanted to investigate involves requests by "interested others" that the academic/athletic advisor act unethically. Questions 2, 3, 4, and 12 inquire about pressures from athletes, coaches, school administrators, and the media to "bend or break" rules or—in the case of the media—"to divulge confidential information." It was school administrators who received the only really encouraging response, as only 22 (11.9 percent) of the 186 respondents to question 4 said that they feel frequent or occasional pressure from a school administrator to bend or break school, conference, or association rules. (And of those 22, only four responded with "frequently.")

The media, athletes, and coaches seem to be a much more significant source of moral dilemmas, however. Forty-four point six percent of the respondents (83 of 186) occasionally or frequently feel pressure from the media to divulge confidential information regarding an athlete's academic records. Moreover, 80 of 186 (43 percent) occasionally or frequently (although only two responded "frequently") feel pressure from an athlete to bend or break school, conference, or association rules. And—perhaps most unsettling—87 out of 185 (47 percent) responding to question 3 said they occasionally (79 responses) or frequently (eight responses) feel such pressure from coaches.

In response to question 5, a startlingly large number of respondents (127 of 186, or 68.3 percent) said that they occasionally (109) responses or frequently (18 responses) worry that their advising decisions are "based more on concern for keeping an athlete eligible to compete than on concern for the athlete's long-term well-being." If nothing else, this response confirms the "eligibility vs. education" decision as a widespread source of (moral) concern.

Over 42 percent of the 184 who responded to question 11 said that they occasionally or frequently worry about the propriety of certain requests that they make of faculty regarding their athlete advisees.

The environment of the athletic department in which they work can also be a source of moral dilemmas for academic/athletic advisors. Well over half (109 of 185, 58.9 percent) of those responding to question 13 occasionally or frequently learn of irregularities or improprieties in their athletic department that they wish that they hadn't learned of; fortunately, only 31 (16.8 percent) of 185 who responded to question 14 occasionally or frequently feel that their continued employment depends upon "keeping quiet" about wrongdoing in their athletic department. Finally, a significant—although not overwhelming—number (60 of 183, 32.8 percent) occasionally or frequently ignore, rather than investigate, events or occurrences which they aren't sure involve wrongdoing, but which they think are likely to.

Comment on the Responses

Very briefly, I see the most encouraging results of the survey as being these:

- The response to question 1 indicates that those responding to the survey have an impressive awareness of the moral implications and moral concerns which are inherent in their jobs. Ignorance of the moral implications of one's decisions and actions is perhaps the most serious threat to moral behavior, so it is gratifying to see that professionals in athletic advising are aware of these implications.
- The response to question 4 reflects very favorably on the integrity of school administrators and their requests of academic/athletic advisors.
- The responses to questions 7, 8, and 9 demonstrate a real willingness to discuss the moral implications of decisions and policies with colleagues, supervisors, and others.

Again, very briefly, I see the least encouraging results as being these:

- The response to question 5 probably indicates that a great deal of pressure on professionals in the field to place excessive emphasis on maintain athletic eligibility.
- The response to question 6 raises concerns that a significant number of professionals in the field *are at least occasionally* making job-related decisions or performing job-related actions which cause them feelings of guilt.
- Despite the encouraging responses to questions 7, 8, and 9, the response to question 10 indicates that over half of the respondents could at least occasionally wish that they had someone with whom they could honestly confer about the moral implications of job-related decisions.
- The response to question 13 indicates that well over half of the respondents learn of (and so must somehow deal with) irregularities or improprieties in their athletic departments that they wish they hadn't learned of.
- The response to question 16 indicates that job-related stress is *at least* occasionally uncomfortably high for 82.1 percent of those responding. This response strongly recommends further investigations into the causes of this stress, possible ways of eliminating it, and ways of managing it.
- The responses to questions 16 and 17 reveal that virtually three-fourths of those who (at least) occasionally feel an uncomfortably high amount of job-related stress regard moral concerns as contributing significantly to that stress. This also strongly recommends investigation into the morality-related sources of stress and into ways of relieving it.

Conclusions

This survey was intended to explore collegiate academic/athletic advisors' own perceptions of the moral concerns and the stress that they face in their profession. Given the size and the geographic spread of the response to the questionnaire, these responses can be taken as fairly representative of the profession as a whole, nationwide. The predominance of NCAA Division I

schools represented on the NAAAA membership list gives this response a distinct Division I flavor, but I think that is consistent with the percentage of academic/athletic advisors and counselors who are employed by NCAA Division I schools.

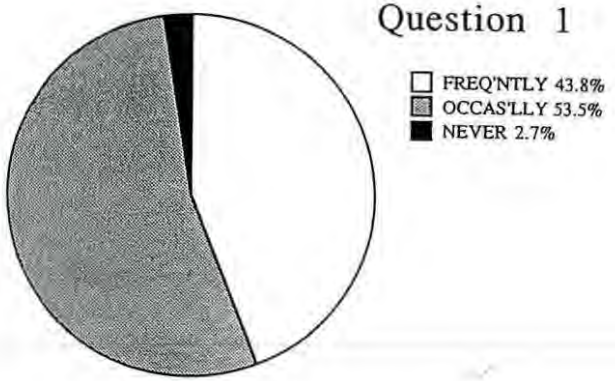
Certainly there is more that can be done in this area. There are other potential sources for moral dilemmas which might be investigated (e.g., pressure from parents or boosters to break rules). A more detailed examination of the "occasionally" response (e.g., as two choices of response: "occasionally" and "seldom") would be interesting. It would be interesting to conduct the survey repeatedly at five-year intervals to note changes in professional's perceptions of these matters. And it would be enlightening to add a few open response items to the questionnaire, requesting a more detailed response than this. Finally, it might be interesting to include a few demographic items, thereby allowing items to be tallied by geographic area, NCAA classification, size of athletic department budget, size of athletic advising/counseling staff, and so forth.

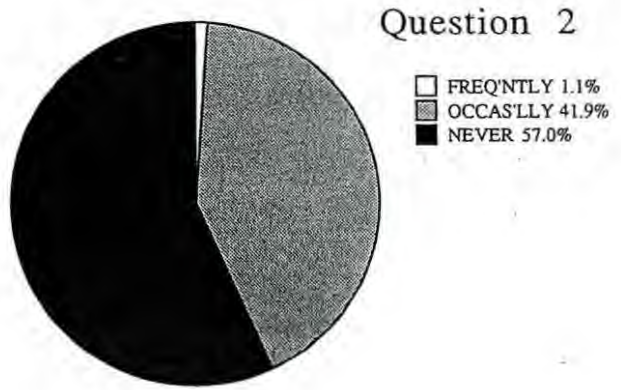
I do, however, regard all of the results of this survey as **good indications** of the current state of affairs of the profession of collegiate academic/athletic advising and counseling vis-a-vis stress and moral concerns. And if these indications warrant further investigations or actions aimed at reducing job-related stress, eliminating sources of moral concern, promoting strategies for evaluating the moral implications of decisions and policies, or coping with moral dilemmas in the profession, then this survey can be regarded as a call for such investigations and actions.

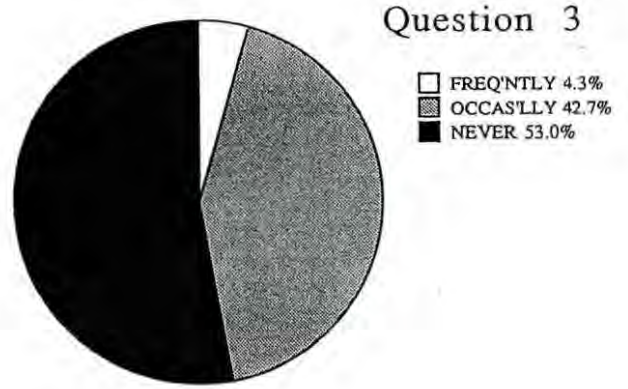
APPENDIX A

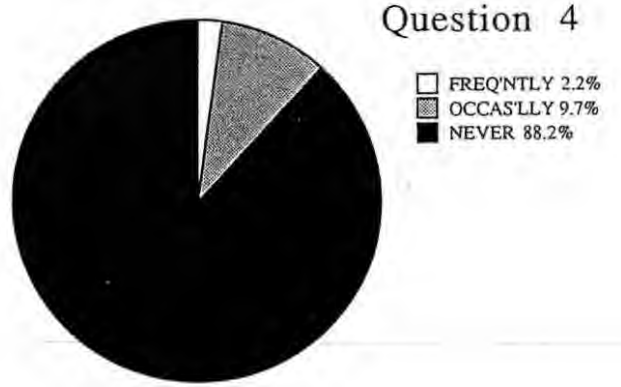
	Freq'ntly	Occas'lly	Never
1. Perceive yourself as making decisions which involve ethical or moral considerations? *(185 responses)*	43.8% 81	53.5% 99	2.7% 5
2. Feel pressure from an athlete to bend or break school, conference, or association rules? *(186 responses)*	1.1% 2	41.9% 78	57.0% 106
3. Feel pressure from a coach to bend or break school, conference, or association rules? *(185 responses)*	4.3% 8	42.7% 79	53.0% 98
4. Feel pressure from a school administrator to bend or break school, conference, or association rules? *(186 responses)*	2.2% 4	9.7% 18	88.2% 164
5. Worry that your advising decisions are based more on concern for keeping an athlete eligible to compete than on concern for the athlete's long-term well-being? *(186 responses)*	9.7% 18	58.6% 109	31.7% 59
6. Feel guilty about an action you take or a decision you make? *(183 responses)*	2.2% 4	54.1% 99	43.7% 80
7. Discuss with your colleagues the moral rightness or wrongness of a decision you have made or are about to make? *(184 responses)*	18.5% 34	66.3% 122	15.2% 28

8. Discuss with a supervisor the moral rightness or wrongness of a decision or policy? *(185 responses)*	19.5% 36	62.7% 116	17.8% 33
9. Discuss with a spouse or close friend the moral rightness or wrongness of a decision you have made or are about to make? *(185 responses)*	20.0% 37	58.4% 108	21.6% 40
10. Wish that you had someone with whom you could honesty discuss the moral rightness or wrongness of decisions you have to make? *(176 responses)*	9.7% 17	43.2% 76	47.2% 83
11. Worry about the propriety of certain requests which you make of faculty regarding the athletes whom you advise? *(184 responses)*	5.4% 10	37.5% 69	57.1% 105
12. Feel pressure from the media to divulge confidential information regarding an athlete's academic records? *(186 responses)*	9.1% 17	35.5% 66	55.4% 103
13. Learn of irregularities or improprieties in your athletic department that you wish you hadn't heard of? *(185 responses)*	7.6% 14	51.4% 95	41.1% 76
14. Feel that your continued employment in your current position depends upon your "keeping quiet" about wrongdoing by an athlete, coach, administrator, or other academic advisor in your department? *(185 responses)*	4.9% 9	11.9% 22	83.2% 154
15. Ignore, rather than investigate, events or occurrences which you aren't sure involve wrongdoing, but which you think are likely to? *(183 responses)*	4.4% 8	28.4% 52	67.2% 123
16. Find yourself under an uncomfortable amount of stress? *(179 responses)*	21.8% 39	60.3% 108	17.9% 32
17. Perceive concerns of moral rightness or wrongness as contributing significantly to your job-related stress? *(186 responses)*	12.4% 23	51.6% 96	36.0% 67









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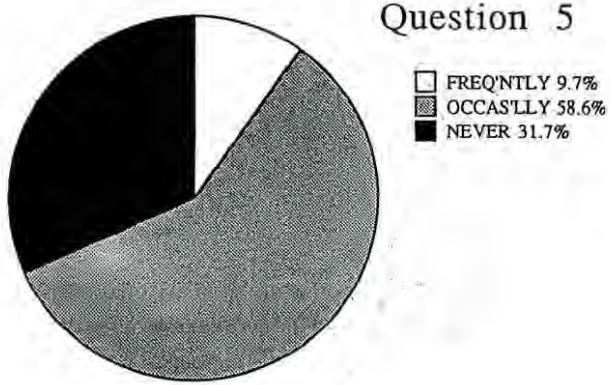

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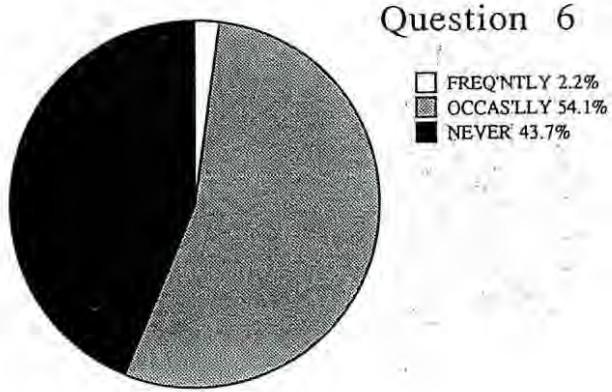

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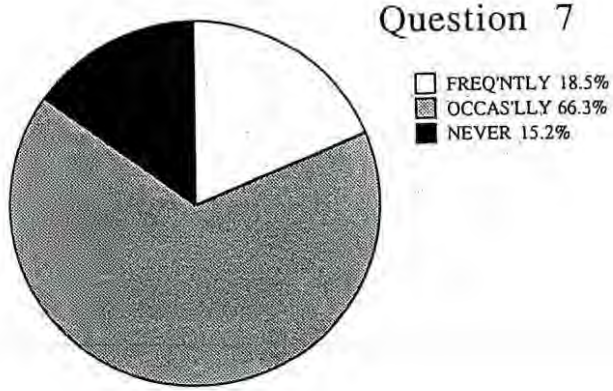

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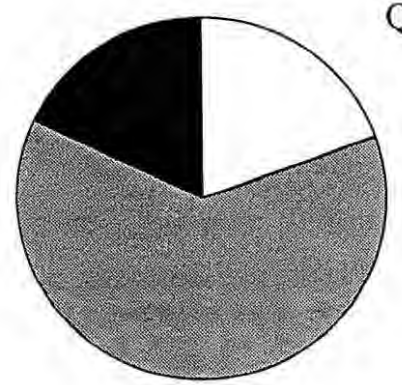

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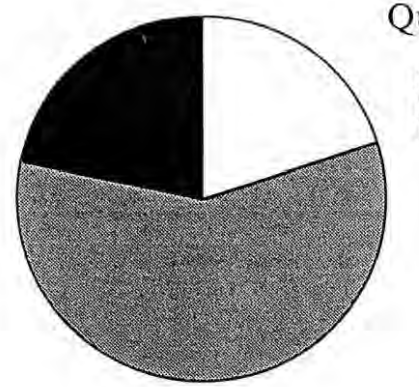

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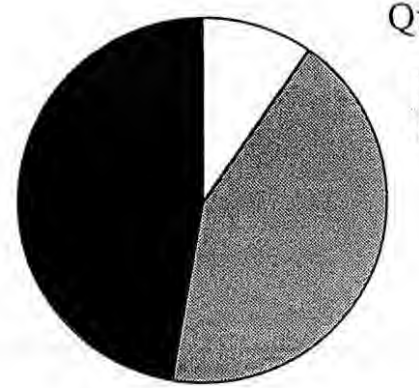

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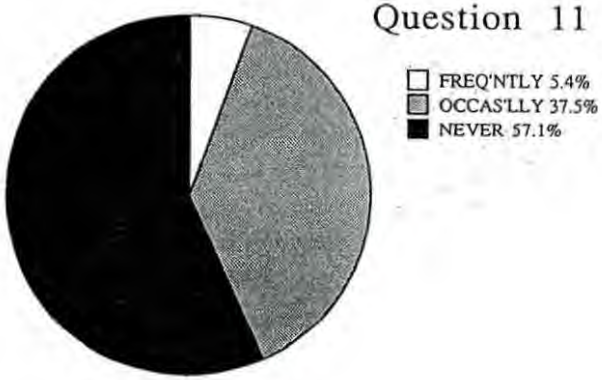

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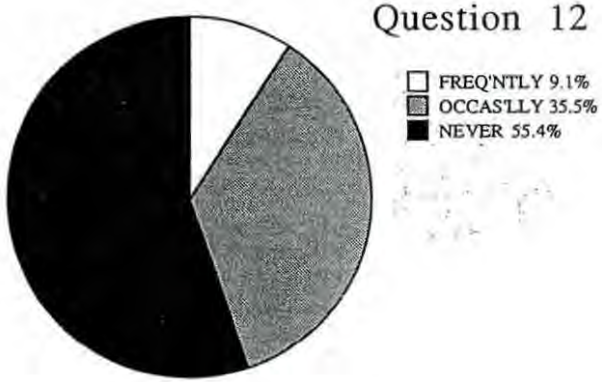

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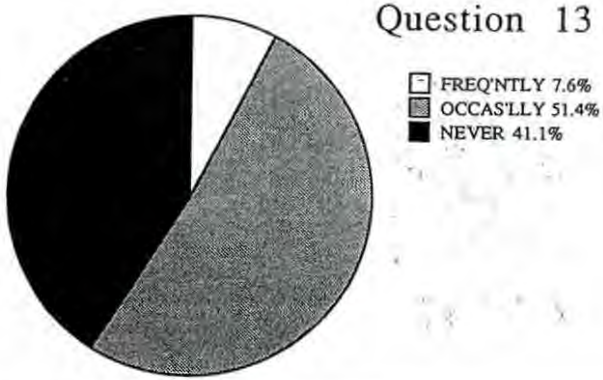

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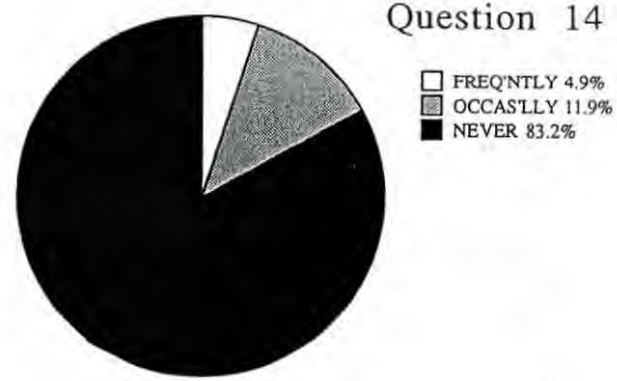

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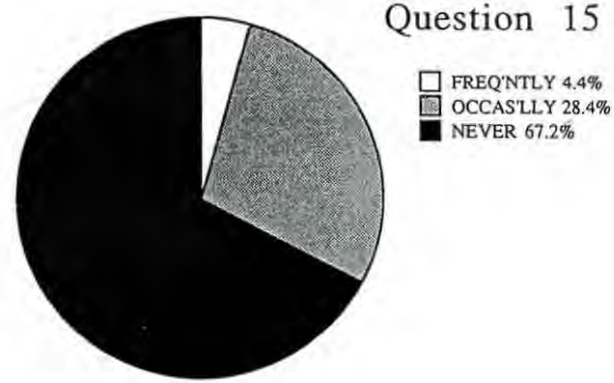

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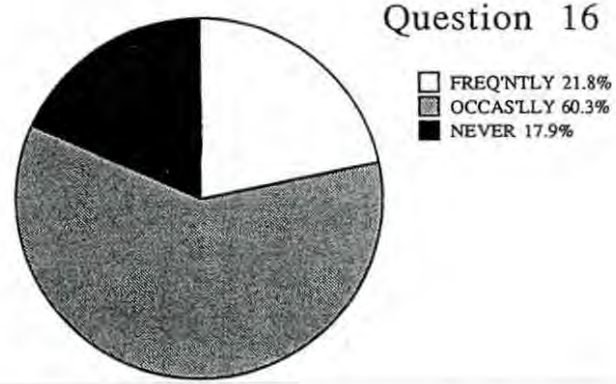

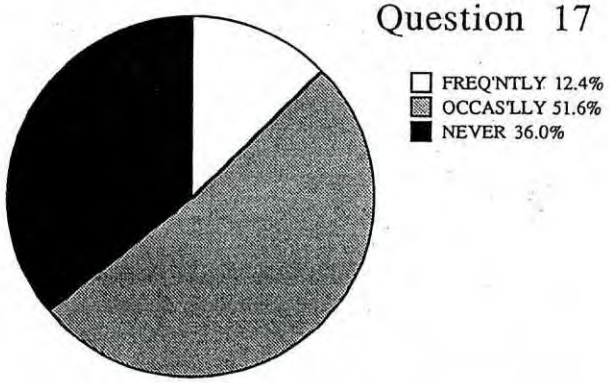
Question 17
FREQ'NTLY 12.4%
OCCAS'LLY 51.6%
NEVER 36.0%