

## **Administration of a Student Athlete Survey & Implications for the Quality of Advising & Related Services**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper describes the results of an exit survey administered to student-athletes at a southeastern Division I university. Graduating student-athletes were asked to complete a survey that was created in an effort to determine their level of satisfaction with the OADSA, their coaches, their major department advisors, and special campus services. This student-athlete survey is in addition to the NCAA mandated exit survey given to graduating student-athletes. The questionnaire involved 74 items with a Likert-type scale for responses ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree to Not Applicable. Of the 66% of graduating student-athletes who participated, 15 of 25 Varsity Athletic teams were represented. The information obtained from the exploratory survey was used by the Athletic Department as a guide for the implementation of the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program. Implications of the exit survey are discussed. The results indicated that the student-athletes were slightly more satisfied with their athletic advisors than with their major advisors. Of the four special campus services addressed by the survey, the Office of Career Services, the Center for Multicultural Services, the Counseling and Student Development Center, and the Reading and Writing Lab, the greatest amount of students reported visiting the Office of Career Services (21). In addition, student-athletes reported being the most satisfied with the quality of their experience at the Reading and Writing Labs. No significant differences were found in the level of satisfaction in any of the assessed areas.*

The college years are a period of rich developmental growth for young adults that may affect attitudes, interests, values, future plans and aspirations, openness to impulses and emotions, personal integration, and intellectual ability (Chickering, 1969). According to Chickering, there are seven vectors along which developmental tasks take place; these vectors are: competence, emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose, identity, and integrity. While mastering developmental tasks, college athletes face personal, academic, athletic, and social challenges different from those experienced by their non-athletic peers. Research in collegiate athletics supports the claim that student-athletes require special services to address their unique needs (Denson, 1994; Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996).

Academically, student-athletes are often unprepared for the demands of college level course work. According to Gabbard and Halischak (1993), many student-athletes lack time management, note-taking and test-taking skills; experience dealing

with professors and tutors; and possess little "game-sense" in relation to academics. Since many athletes are accepted to universities based on their athletic rather than academic abilities, they may not be prepared for the intense academic pressures and expectations of college life (Denson, 1994; Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996). The struggle to deal with a lack of academic success often leads to emotional distress and frustration for the athlete, which may result in reluctance to strive to achieve academically and compete within their majors (Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1986). In addition, time demands placed on athletes may be so extreme at some schools that they are left with little time for their studies, leading to academic decline (Jordan & Denson, 1990).

Student-athletes also struggle with divergent messages and expectations associated with fulfilling dual roles, student and athlete (Figler, 1988). They experience difficulties balancing both roles, especially since each demands a significant amount of time, focus, and energy. These conflicting roles are often sacrificed at the expense of one another, and for the athlete, may result in compromising the student role and overemphasizing the athlete role. Athletics may come to dominate all facets of the athlete's life so that other areas of individual functioning are neglected or inhibited (Eitzen, 1987). Student-athletes are often faced with issues not likely to be encountered by their non-athletic counterparts, such as pressure to maintain a competitive edge, stress and injury, exhaustion, public scrutiny, and stringent academic and athletic schedules. As a result, athletes may become limited in their support networks and inevitably, the role of the athlete prevails, especially as they progress through college (Miller & Wooten, 1995).

Experiencing academic difficulties can also lead to frustration, embarrassment, and a sense of failure. As a means of shielding themselves from having to deal with academic difficulties, athletes tend to focus solely on athletics, again at the expense of academics (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). As student athletes attempt to strike a balance between the values, expectations, and demands of sports and school, little time and energy remain to focus on personal development (Goldberg & Chandler).

According to Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufnagel (1982), student-athletes who receive full athletic scholarships are often found to be less prepared and less successful academically than partial or non-scholarship athletes. These researchers also found that many college athletes feel they owe a debt to their coaches, resulting in overemphasis of the athlete role. Full scholarship athletes, who are predominantly at the top of their sport, tend to believe that their futures lie in professional sports and often sacrifice their studies in pursuit of their athletic talents (Purdy et al.).

Due to time, attention, and physical demands, student-athletes also experience a less diversified college experience than do their non-athletic peers (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). The college experience is viewed as a time of expansion, exploration, and exposure to new cultures, experiences, and ideas. College students are presented with the opportunity to interact with people of different social, ethnic, and family backgrounds and are encouraged to gain an appreciation of individual differences. For many student-athletes, however, college is a harrowing experience as a substantial amount of time is spent focusing on their sport and interacting solely with teammates (Petitpas & Champagne, 1988). Athletes often experience limited opportunities for interpersonal interaction beyond teammates, which can adversely affect the development of effective social skills (Petitpas & Champagne). In addition, it has been reported that although college athletes develop friendships



with team members, these relationships often involve a heightened sense of competitiveness not commonly found in relationships between non-athletes (Lanning, 1982).

Developmentally, college students are faced with the difficulties of achieving major milestones and resolving personal issues. A major task facing college students is the consolidation of an identity (Levinson, 1986). This is a complex process that involves intense self-evaluation as well as external exploration. This need for active questioning and exploratory behavior may not, however, be compatible with an athletic system that promotes conformity and requires such large amounts of physical and psychological time and energy (Petitpas & Champagne, 1988 p.455). Student-athletes often fail to explore different roles as they consolidate an initial identity and exhibit early identity foreclosure by assuming the sole identity of an athlete (Petitpas & Champagne).

As a result of "role engulfment," the student-athletes' motivation to pursue and explore other alternative roles is significantly reduced (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). Many factors, including the immediate reward and feedback, the idealized view of the athlete, and the lack of emphasis placed on academics in high school increase the likelihood that the student athlete will assume the athlete role. Unfortunately, preoccupation with this role can inhibit the development of skills necessary for maintaining self-confidence and coping with the reality that the future may not include professional athletics (Goldberg & Chandler). Even when a student recognizes that professional sports participation is not an option, there is often a reluctance to relinquish the athlete identity and explore other roles (Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1989). Many athletes fail to consider non-athlete career options, cease to engage in exploratory behavior, and focus too narrowly on themselves and their futures as athletes.

In relation to the issue of identity foreclosure, student-athletes also experience difficulties with career planning. The strict time demands, invisible career role models, and limited life experiences of student-athletes contribute to increased difficulty in planning for the future (Gabbard & Halischak, 1993). Student athletes are often unaware of opportunities available beyond the world of athletics (Gabbard & Halischak).

It seems evident that the implementation of an academic advising program that recognizes the pressures and experiences specific to student-athletes is of importance in successfully meeting the unique needs of these individuals. An academic advising program should provide a variety of services and perform multiple functions to ensure that student-athletes are given the opportunity to fulfill their potential in all aspects of the college experience including academics, social skills and relationships, cultural awareness, personal development, and athletics. Gabbard and Halischak (1993) believe that the goals of an athletic program should include reducing academically related difficulties and providing opportunities for student-athletes to improve academic skills. In particular, they recommended that an athletic program should more closely monitor organizational and study skills.

An academic advising program for student-athletes should initially be responsible for assisting in course selection, ensuring that the athlete is enrolled in courses that are relevant to the athlete's progress and future needs in addition to monitoring athletic eligibility (Figler, 1988). To address and resolve academic difficulties, the program should provide tutoring services, study halls, as well as time management,

coping, and study skills training (Denson, 1994). In an effort to encourage awareness, communication, and cooperation, the athletic advisor should function as an intermediary between athletes and faculty while aiming to minimize personal conflicts arising between demands of academics and athletics. A focus on personal development and health issues as well as social skills training should also be included in this program (Denson; Jordan & Denson, 1990). Finally, continuous career and future counseling should be emphasized and this program should provide assistance in helping student-athletes resolve identity and role conflict issues (Figler).

Upon acknowledging the importance and necessity of student-athlete programs, the Office for Academic Development of Student Athletes (OADSA), which was formally initiated in 1985, was developed at this Division I, southeastern university to address student-athlete needs. The Assistant Athletic Director for Academic Development coordinates and directs all of the programs and services provided by the office, supervises three other athletic academic advisors, acts as a liaison to the members of the university community, and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the athletes are receiving the necessary programs, services, and attention to meet their personal, academic, and athletic need.

Yap and Nelson (in press) conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of the same university's OADSA program implemented in 1985. They contacted alumni who constituted the first group of student-athletes to experience the OADSA program and administered a survey that asked former student-athletes to indicate their degree of satisfaction with different aspects of the programs and services of the OADSA. In addition, former student-athletes were asked to evaluate the program in terms of how well it prepared them for life after graduation. They were also asked to report their current level of satisfaction with their careers, relationships, and individual development. The findings of this survey indicate that former athletes felt satisfied with the academic advising they received from the OADSA and with the developmental tasks of self-acceptance, making a contribution in a career, relating to others, achieving intimacy, and developing a sense of spirituality. Alumni were also given the opportunity to offer suggestions for improving the program. The results of Yap and Nelson's survey are useful in analyzing the effectiveness of changes in the program in terms of its influence on the futures of student-athletes as well as to provide information about possible improvements to the program in focusing on future issues.

Over the years, studies have focused on the educational attainment of student-athletes as indicative of the success of academic and athletic programming (Purdy et al., 1986). These studies use graduation rate and grade point averages (GPAs) as their focus. It appears, however, that due to the complex nature of the experiences of student-athletes, simply measuring GPAs or graduation rates may not accurately reflect how well their needs were addressed by the athletic department and programs.

More accurate assessment of athletic programs and services is necessary to ensure that the needs of student-athletes are being met as athletes, as students, and as developing individuals. Petitpas and Champagne (1988) believe that an assessment report is not only important for the athletic department to evaluate its own programs and services, but also as a means of gaining credibility with faculty members and academic administrators. They advocate updating the college community on the effectiveness of athletic department programming through an ongoing evaluation process.



It has been argued that in determining the effectiveness of a program, assessment should be conducted at least yearly, in a thorough and systematic manner (Figler, 1988). This assessment should be administered and directed by those in the university who are trained to conduct and interpret research and who have no potential conflict of interest relative to the findings" (Figler, 1988, p.80). If, as a result of this assessment, a program is found to be effective and successful, it should be acknowledged and commended for its achievement. If, on the other hand, weaknesses are identified or it is found to be ineffective, action should be taken to make the improvements and changes necessary for the program to become successful (Figler). Assessment is clearly a necessary process in ensuring that programs maintain quality standards and expertise in serving its clientele.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Forty-five of sixty-eight graduating student-athletes participated in this study, producing a response rate of 66%. These athletes represented 15 of the 25 Varsity Athletic teams at this university were enrolled in 18 different majors, and were 26 female (57.8%) and 19 male (42.2%). The participants represented three different ethnic backgrounds; 40 were Caucasian (89.9%), 4 were African-American (8.9%), and 1 was Asian (2.2%). These percentages correspond fairly well with the ongoing ethnic breakdown of both the general and student-athlete population at this university.

Their self-estimated final grade point averages (GPAs) on a 4-point scale indicated that 4 were between 3.5 and 4.0 (8.9%), 36 were between 2.5 and 3.4 (77.8%), and 5 were between 2.0 and 2.4 (11.1%). Approximately 31 (69%) of the athletes surveyed received full or partial athletic scholarships, (82%) were recruited, and 9 (20%) reported having tried out for the sport (6 students did not answer the question). None of the athletes reported ever losing eligibility for their sport. At the time of graduation, 27 (60%) student-athletes completed 4 years at the university, 11 (24.4%) completed 5 years, 6 (13.3%) completed 4.5 years, and 1 (2.2%) completed 3.5 years. Future plans for these student-athletes included working in an area related to their major (N = 21, 46.7%), pursuing a graduate degree (N = 11, 24.4%), pursuing a professional career in their sport (N = 6, 13.3%), and working in an area unrelated to their major (N = 5, 11.1%).

### **Questionnaire**

A 74-item questionnaire was developed based on the senior exit survey currently in use by the School of Psychology at the university (Nelson & Johnson, 1997). This survey was designed to measure student-athletes' opinions of services they received from OADSA. All graduating student-athletes were asked to complete the survey, which was created in an effort to determine their satisfaction with the OADSA, their coaches, their major department advisors, and special campus services. This detailed questionnaire provided students with space to write additional comments and suggestions. In addition, they were asked to evaluate their experiences with their coaches, their major academic advisors, and with other campus assistance programs. Results also indicated their level of overall satisfaction with their experiences as student-athletes. Their responses were used to identify areas of

strength and weakness of the different services offered to student-athletes.

The questionnaire was divided into four main areas, with a fifth section focusing on demographic information. Within each of the domains, students were asked to respond to the items using a 4-point Likert-type scale with the following choices: (A) Strongly Disagree, (B) Disagree, (C) Agree, (D) Strongly Agree with an additional category, (E) Not Applicable. Students were also given the opportunity to offer suggestions and additional comments by responding to open-ended questions pertaining to each particular area.

The survey required students to indicate their degree of satisfaction in the four main areas, including: experiences with their major department advisor (9 items), the programs and services of the OADSA (21 items), experiences with their coaches (9 items), and special campus services (13 items with 3 items relating to the Office of Career Services, 3 items relating to the Center for Multicultural Services, 4 items relating to the Counseling and Student Development Center, and 3 items relating to the Reading and Writing Labs). Other demographic items addressed future plans, athletic team membership, scholarship status, GPA's, how often they met with their advisors, and whether or not they had used a particular service.

## **Procedure**

After this survey was approved by the Athletic Department, it was determined that the most efficient mode of administration was to allow student-athletes to complete the survey on an individual basis, at their convenience. During a designated three-week period, students were expected to visit the OADSA office to complete the survey.

In an effort to increase awareness and encourage cooperation, the Director of Athletics mailed a letter to the coaches explaining the assessment procedure and the rationale for this survey. The graduating student-athletes also received a similar letter from the Assistant Athletic Director for Academic Development. This letter informed them about the purpose of the survey and how it was to be administered. Their participation was strongly encouraged and it was emphasized that their input would be of value to the Athletic Department. The athletes were also assured that their responses would be anonymous and confidential.

The survey was administered in the OADSA office during the last few weeks of the spring semester. The office secretary was primarily responsible for the administration of the survey and a master list of expected participants was kept at her desk. The students were asked to cross their names off this list upon completing the survey. Participants were placed in separate rooms and were asked not to leave their name or any identifying marks on the survey or answer sheet. An attached cover sheet reminded the students about the purpose and nature of the survey.

During the last week of survey administration, those students who had not yet completed the survey were contacted by phone and e-mail to remind them of times available to fill out the survey. The researchers collected completed surveys daily. Once data collection was complete, the answer sheets were scored and analyzed by computer. Written responses regarding the OADSA, the coaches, major department advisors, and the special services were typed up separately and returned to the Athletic Department.

## **RESULTS**

Comparisons were made between male and female responses on certain items to identify significant differences. Results indicated that more males than females had visited the Office of Career Services. In contrast, no significant gender differences were found among these student-athletes across the use of the other 3 services (the Center for Multicultural Services, Counseling and Student Development Center, and the Reading and Writing Labs). Male and female student-athletes also did not differ significantly in their future plans. No significant gender differences were evident on responses for the items related to overall satisfaction with their department major, with OADSA, and with their coaches.

### **OADSA**

Student athletes were asked to report the approximate number of times they met with their student athletic advisor throughout their college experience. Of those surveyed, 20 (44%) indicated that they met with their athletic advisor more than ten times, 5 (11%) reported meeting six to ten times, 15 (33.3%) met one to five times, and 5 (11%) never met with their athletic advisor. Over the past year, 9 (20%) indicated they met with their athletic advisor more than six times, 8 (18%) met four to six times, 15 (33.3%) met one to three times, while 13 (29%) had not met at all.

Table 1 illustrates the means, standard deviations, and percent of students who responded "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree," and "Not Applicable" to each of the 21 Likert items regarding the OADSA. These items addressed the extent to which students felt the athletic advisors of the OADSA were fulfilling their responsibilities to them as students and athletes. All of the items exhibited means higher than 3.15, indicating that the majority of the student-athletes agreed by selecting Agree or Strongly Agree in response to these items. Although responses of "Not Applicable" were not included in the calculation of item means and standard deviations, the percentage of athletes responding this manner still provides important information and is reported in Table 1.

### **Coaches**

Results of items addressing the expectations and responsibilities of the coaches are presented in Table 2. This table reports the means, standard deviations, and percent of students responding Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Not Applicable to each item. The responses in this section indicate the degree of satisfaction the students felt toward their experiences with their coaches. The higher the means, the more the students agreed that the coaches were fulfilling their responsibilities and meeting the needs of student-athletes.

## **MAJOR DEPARTMENT ADVISOR**

Student-athletes were asked to approximate how many times they had met with their major department advisor throughout their college experience. Forty-two percent reported meeting with their advisors more than ten times, 20% indicated meeting six to ten times, 29% met one to five times, and 6% never met with their major department advisor. Over the past year, 22.2% indicated meeting more than six times, 22.2% met four to six times, 44.4% met one to three times, and 8.9%



indicated they had not met with their major department advisor. Over the past year, more student-athletes met with their major advisor (91%) than with their athletic advisor (70%). The results for the Likert items relating to the athlete's experiences with their major department advisor are listed in Table 3. Responses to these items indicate student-athletes' level of satisfaction with their experiences with their major department advisor. The higher the means, the more the students agreed that their major department advisors were fulfilling their responsibilities and meeting the needs of student athletes.

### **SPECIAL SERVICES**

It appears that the majority of the student-athletes surveyed did not use the special services addressed by this questionnaire. Forty-six percent reported visiting the Office of Career Services, 36% used the Reading and Writing Labs, 16% used the services provided by the Counseling and Student Development Center, and 11% visited the Center for Multicultural Services. For those who did use the services, results of their responses are illustrated in Table 4. Each service was assessed using the same three items, with an additional item relating to the Counseling and Student Development Center.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged before interpreting the results. Though the researchers were not affiliated with the Athletic Department in any way, their purpose in conducting this study was to develop a method of evaluation for an academic advising program created specifically for student-athletes. The sample of student-athlete participants were not representative of the whole student-athlete population at the university, in that only 15 of 25 Varsity Athletic teams were represented and only 66% of the graduating student-athletes participated in this study. The results should be viewed as representative of the sample group, and not of all students-athletes utilizing the OADSA. Another limitation is that the survey did not require students to provide reasons for not using special campus services.

This survey proved to be a valuable tool in evaluating Athletic Department personnel and services, and providing a means for assessing other areas of the university involved in the experiences of student-athletes. In addition, the survey provided student-athletes with an opportunity to offer feedback regarding the various programs and services experienced at the university.

The results indicated that overall, student-athletes were satisfied with their experiences with the advisors, programs and services addressed by this survey. The majority agreed with the items relating to each area by selecting Strongly Agree or Agree, while relatively few expressed disagreement, indicating favorable perceptions and opinions about the OADSA. The student-athletes surveyed found their athletic advisors to be knowledgeable, helpful, available, and respectful of their feelings and concerns. They felt that the athletic advisors effectively advised on immediate academic, personal, and athletic problems, and the majority (73%) indicated satisfaction with the extent to which their advisors considered academic and personal issues as well as athletic issues. Seventy-three percent of those surveyed believed that their athletic advisor improved their opportunity for academic success, indicating



that these advisors seemed to effectively meet the academic needs of their advisees. More than half of the student athletes surveyed felt that their athletic advisor helped them to increase their overall self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed reported that the OADSA provided ample tutoring support and study halls, again indicating that the OADSA worked to make their student-athletes' academic experiences more positive and less stressful. Although more than half of the student-athletes felt that their athletic advisors adequately advised on long-range planning and vocational opportunities, more than one third responded that this did not apply to their personal experience. It is possible that these student-athletes received career counseling from another advisor or service, and did not feel it was necessary to see the athletic advisor for assistance in this area. However, after comparing these results to the students' written responses, it appears that many student-athletes recommended a more comprehensive future and career-counseling program.

In response to this recommendation, the OADSA acknowledged the student-athletes' suggestions and has taken steps to enhance the career-planning program. They have implemented a new program in which former students return to the university to speak to current student-athletes about the opportunities and situations after graduation. In this program, students are also given the opportunity to ask the alumni questions about the future after graduation. In addition, this program may provide the opportunity for current students to make contacts to utilize after graduation.

It is evident that the student-athletes surveyed felt that the OADSA provided effective programs and services. An interesting finding was that for several of the items, including those related to being informed about campus services, making necessary referrals, advising on immediate personal and athletic problems, providing ample tutoring support and study halls, offering ample time management, study and coping skills programs, and providing opportunities for development of social skills, over one third of the students reported that this did not apply to their experiences with the OADSA. A simple explanation is that these athletes did not need to use those particular services. Another possibility is that the students were not fully aware of the extent of OADSA services and programs available to them. This would be unfortunate since those who did report using a variety of OADSA services reported them as very valuable resources.

Student's perceptions of their coaches also proved to be quite positive. They reported that their coaches were knowledgeable and helpful and that they encouraged academic as well as athletic success. Some of the items, however, exhibited slightly more variability in responses. For instance, on items addressing the extent to which they discussed long range planning and vocational opportunities, how informed they were about campus services, and the extent to which they helped to resolve conflicts between academic and athletic demands, some dissatisfaction was reported. It is hoped that the written responses, which were returned to coaches, may help them to reevaluate their responsibilities to student-athletes. It appears that, overall, the student-athletes developed positive relationships with their coaches, as over 90% reported that they were pleased with their coach-athlete interactions.

Student-athletes also reported high levels of satisfaction with their experiences with their major department advisors. They found their major advisors to be

knowledgeable, accessible, helpful concerning course selection, and respectful of their feelings. They also expressed satisfaction with the degree to which their advisors offered advice on academic problems. As is evident by both the objective and written responses, major department advisors seem to have an overall positive impact on student-athletes' experiences.

In comparison, student-athletes indicated that their athletic advisors were more knowledgeable about campus services (including tutoring and the reading and writing labs) than were their major advisors. Student-athletes also felt that their athletic advisors considered academic and personal issues as well as athletic issues more than their major department advisors. In contrast, slightly more student-athletes reported satisfaction with the extent to which major department advisors addressed future and career issues.

It was found that the majority of student-athletes did not use the special campus services addressed by this survey. Unfortunately, the survey did not require participants to provide reasons why they did not use the services. It is possible that the students were not aware of the services or that they just did not need them. This issue could be addressed in future survey administrations. It is interesting to note, however, that while only 16% reported visiting the Counseling and Student Development Center, this is comparable to the approximately 10-15% percent of undergraduates in the general student population who use the services of this office. Of those who utilized special campus services, however, responses were generally positive.

To further emphasize their commitment to academics, it was reported that the advisors of the OADSA referred the majority of the respondents (80%) to the Reading and Writing Labs. Although there were only a few written comments regarding these services, the students indicated that the Reading and Writing Labs were helpful and reported them as a valuable resource for student athletes. The majority of students who used the special services expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experiences with the Office of Career Services, the Counseling and Student Development Center, the Center for Multicultural Services, and with the Reading and Writing Labs.

The information provided by this survey could prove to be a valuable tool as the athletic advisors at this university begin to implement the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program. This program involves five different areas including Academic Commitment, Athletic Commitment, Personal Development, Career Development and Service. It is designed to offer universities the flexibility to focus on specific areas of their programs they feel are most important in influencing the development and success of their student-athletes. The student-athletes offered suggestions regarding issues they felt needed to be addressed more within this athletic department, which could be used to guide the direction of the CHAMPS/Life Skills program at the university. For example, as was mentioned earlier, several student-athletes indicated that they felt career and future counseling should be emphasized more for the athletes, and that some type of career counseling should begin as early as the first year of college. Using this information, the OADSA could examine the CHAMPS/Life Skills area relating to career development, and in turn develop a more comprehensive approach to prepare student-athletes for the future.

In addition, results from this survey can be used to identify the strengths of the



current program and could provide the OADSA with information concerning areas that are currently addressed by the office, and would require less emphasis in terms of the CHAMPS/Life Skills program. As the CHAMPS/Life Skills program continues, more specific questions could be added to the survey to gain specific feedback as to the success of the program in meeting the needs of the students it serves. Future surveys could also be designed to ask for more student input regarding issues that need more attention in the OADSA's current programs and services.

We offer several suggestions for future survey administrations. To obtain a higher response rate, it is suggested that this exit survey be tied into the university's annual assessment day held during spring semester. All classes are canceled on assessment day, so survey participation would likely increase. In addition, it would ease administration since the student-athletes would have a specified time to complete the survey in this group setting. This would alleviate time costs associated with the survey process, since test administration originally lasted approximately three weeks. Another area that needs to be addressed concerns the athletes who graduate in December, as they would be missed in survey administration unless a provision is made to ensure that the survey is completed before graduation. Another suggestion is for those students carrying a certain amount of credit hours to be required to complete the survey in the spring, which should include those who would potentially graduate in the following December. In addition, although drug and alcohol issues were not specifically addressed in this survey, it may be an area to consider for future surveys. Since student-athletes may be at risk for developing drug and alcohol problems, it may be important to examine and evaluate the resources and programs available to help them with these issues.

The Associate Directors of Athletics and the Faculty Athletic Representative who share this information with the Athletic Director conduct the NCAA mandated exit interview at this university. This exit interview tends to be sport-specific, focusing primarily on the athletic-related experiences of senior athletes. In comparison, the paper and pencil survey used in this study covers a broad spectrum of issues related to the life of the student-athlete. This survey could be administered every year as a developmental approach to the assessment of the to which the Athletic Department and the university are addressing the holistic needs of their student-athletes. In this study, a student-athlete survey proved to be an effective way for the students to evaluate current programs and services. This survey also provided an opportunity for the student-athletes to offer suggestions and comments that may influence the direction and focus of future programs, giving them a chance to take an active role in affecting the programs that would shape their experiences. Although this particular survey was developed to address the athletic advising program at this university, this form can be easily modified and adapted to fit programs of other schools.

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TABLE 1

Responses to Items Relating to Athletic Advisors (OADSAs)

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	%NA <sup>e</sup>
1. In general were knowledgeable regarding eligibility requirements.	3.76	.43	66.7%	20.0%	-	-	13.3%
2. Monitored my eligibility.	3.63	.54	57.8%	28.9%	2.2%	-	11.1%
3. Have sufficient knowledge of NCAA/JMU policies, processes, and requirements to provide me with accurate and useful information.	3.67	.48	57.8%	28.9%	-	-	13.3%
4. Have sufficient and convenient office hours to meet my needs.	3.55	.56	48.9%	33.3%	2.2%	-	15.6%
5. Advised on immediate academic problems.	3.60	.66	48.9%	22.2%	2.2%	-	26.7%
6. Advised on immediate personal problems.	3.44	.58	28.9%	28.9%	2.2%	-	40.0%
7. Advised on immediate athletic problems.	3.56	.58	33.3%	20.0%	2.2%	-	44.4%
8. Advised on long-range planning and vocational opportunities.	3.21	.73	24.4%	28.9%	11.1%	-	35.6%
9. Are well informed about campus support services and refer me to other sources of information and assistance when such referral better suits my needs.	3.58	.56	42.2%	24.4%	2.2%	-	31.1%
10. Improved my opportunity for academic success.	3.43	.78	42.2%	31.1%	4.4%	-	22.2%
11. Acted as an intermediary between the faculty and me.	3.25	.84	31.1%	31.1%	4.4%	4.4%	28.9%
12. Provided ample tutoring support.	3.40	.68	31.1%	33.3%	-	2.2%	33.3%
13. Provided ample study halls.	3.30	.82	24.4%	20.0%	4.4%	2.2%	48.9%
14. Offered ample programs regarding time management, study, & coping skills.	3.24	.72	20.0%	31.1%	2.2%	2.2%	4.4%

TABLE 1 (continued)

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	%NA <sup>e</sup>
15. Respected my feelings and concerns.	3.62	.49	51.1%	31.1%	-	-	.8%
16. Respected me as an individual and made me feel like I was a valued and important person.	3.62	.49	51.1%	31.1%	-	-	15.6%
17. Considered academic and personal issues as well as athletic issues.	3.67	.48	48.9%	24.4%	-	-	26.7%
18. Helped me to increase my overall self-esteem.	3.19	.83	33.3%	26.7%	-	-	31.1%
19. Helped me to increase confidence in my abilities.	3.17	.83	24.4%	33.3%	4.4%	4.4%	33.3%
20. Provided me with opportunities to interact with others and further develop my social skills.	3.15	.86	22.2%	28.9%	4.4%	4.4%	40.0%
21. Overall, I am pleased with the academic advising program for student-athletes at JMU.	3.59	.50	53.3%	37.8%	-	-	8.9%

**Note.** SA<sup>a</sup> = Strongly Agree; A<sup>b</sup> = Agree; D<sup>c</sup> = Disagree; SD<sup>d</sup> = Strongly Disagree; NA<sup>e</sup> = Not Applicable.

For all items in the survey, The range of values for each item was 1 to 5, with 4 indicating the highest level of agreement and 5 indicating the item was not applicable. Means and standard deviations do not include those responding ANot Applicable, so that means closer to 4 indicate higher levels of agreement.



TABLE 2

Responses to Items Relating to the Coaches

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	%NA <sup>e</sup>
1. Have sufficient knowledge of NCAA/JMU policies, processes, and requirements to provide me with accurate and useful information.	3.57	.83	57.8%	33.3%	-	2.2%	-
2. Discussed long range planning and vocational opportunities.	3.20	.88	40.0%	31.1%	13.3%	4.4%	8.9%
3. Is well informed about campus support services and refers me to other sources of information and assistance when such referral better suits my needs.	3.23	.73	35.6%	37.8%	15.6%	-	8.9%
4. Encouraged academic as well as athletic success.	3.66	.69	71.1%	20.0%	6.7%	-	-
5. Is aware of the programs offered by the student-athletic advisors.	3.44	.77	55.6%	35.6%	2.2%	-	2.2%
6. Helped resolve conflicts between academic and athletic demands.	3.40	.67	44.4%	35.6%	8.9%	-	8.9%
7. Respected my feelings and concerns.	3.43	.59	46.7%	46.7%	4.4%	-	-
8. Considered academic and personal issues as well as athletic issues.	3.43	.73	53.3%	35.6%	6.7%	2.2%	-
9. Overall, I was pleased with my coach(es).	3.53	.69	55.6%	35.6%	4.4%	-	-

**Note.** SA<sup>a</sup> = Strongly Agree; A<sup>b</sup> = Agree; D<sup>c</sup> = Disagree; SD<sup>d</sup> = Strongly Disagree; NA<sup>e</sup> = Not Applicable. SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; SD = 1; NA = 5.

TABLE 3

Responses to the Items Relating to Major Department Advisors

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	NA <sup>e</sup>
1. Has sufficient knowledge of department/JMU policies, processes, and requirements to provide me with accurate and useful information.	3.49	.59	51.1%	40.0%	4.4%	-	4.4%
2. Is available during scheduled hours or schedules alternative times.	3.45	.55	44.4%	46.7%	2.2%	-	6.7%
3. Advised on immediate academic problems.	3.40	.60	37.8%	42.2%	4.4%	-	15.6%
4. Advised on long range planning and vocational opportunities.	3.20	.79	28.9%	35.6%	11.1%	2.2	22.2%
5. Is well informed about campus support services (e.g. tutors, counseling) and refers me to other sources of information and assistance when such referral better suits my needs.	3.00	.76	15.6%	24.4%	15.6%	-	44.4%
6. Assisted me with course selection.	3.46	.70	44.4%	24.4%	8.9%	-	22.2%
7. Respected my feelings and concerns.	3.65	.48	57.8%	31.1%	-	-	11.1%
8. Considered academic and personal issues as well as athletic issues.	3.31	.79	37.8%	31.1%	8.9%	2.2%	20.0%
9. Overall, I am pleased with my major department advisor.	3.54	.59	55.6%	33.3%	4.4%	-	6.7%

**Note.** SA<sup>a</sup> = Strongly Agree; A<sup>b</sup> = Agree; D<sup>c</sup> = Disagree; SD<sup>d</sup> = Strongly Disagree; NA<sup>e</sup> = Not Applicable. SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; SD = 1; NA = 5.

TABLE 4

Responses to Items Relating to the Special Campus Services

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	%NA <sup>e</sup>
<i>Office of Career Services</i>							
1. I have been given helpful advice from the Office of Career Services.	3.10	1.03	15.6%	17.8%	6.7%	-	57.8%
2. I have been treated in a courteous manner by the Office of Career Services.	3.30	.88	20.0%	26.7%	-	-	51.1%
3. Overall, I was satisfied with the Office of Career Services.	3.00	1.07	15.6%	20.0%	6.7%	2.2%	53.3%
<i>Center for Multicultural Services</i>							
1. I have been given helpful advice from the Center for Multicultural Services.	4.00	0.0	2.2%	-	-	-	95.6%
2. I have been treated in a courteous manner by the Center for Multicultural Services.	4.00	0.0	2.2%	-	-	-	95.6%
3. Overall, I was satisfied with the Center for Multicultural Services.	4.00	0.0	2.2%	-	-	-	95.6%
<i>Counseling and Student Development Center</i>							
1. I have been given helpful advice from the Counseling and Student Development Center.	3.00	1.00	2.2%	8.9%	2.2%	-	84.4%
2. I felt comfortable discussing my concerns and/or personal issues with a counselor from the Counseling and Student Development Center.	3.00	1.00	2.2%	8.9%	2.2%	-	84.4%
3. I have been treated in a courteous manner by the Counseling and Student Development Center.	3.14	.69	4.4%	8.9%	2.2%	-	82.2%
4. Overall, I was pleased with the services of the Counseling and Student Development Center.	3.14	.69	4.4%	8.9%	2.2%	-	84.4%



TABLE 4 (continued)

Item	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	%SA <sup>a</sup>	%A <sup>b</sup>	%D <sup>c</sup>	%SD <sup>d</sup>	%NA <sup>e</sup>
<i>Reading and Writing Labs</i>							
1. I have been given helpful advice from the Reading and Writing Labs.	3.80	.81	26.7%	6.7%	-	-	64.4%
2. I have been treated in a courteous manner by the Reading and Writing Labs.	3.80	.81	26.7%	6.7%	-	-	64.4%
3. Overall, I was satisfied with the Reading and Writing Labs.	3.80	.81	26.7%	6.7%	-	-	64.4%

Note. SA<sup>a</sup> = Strongly Agree; A<sup>b</sup> = Agree; D<sup>c</sup> = Disagree; SD<sup>d</sup> = Strongly Disagree; NA<sup>e</sup> = Not Applicable. SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; SD = 1; NA = 5.