

AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES ATTENDING DIVISION I INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION — A SUMMARY

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The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the significant variables related to the effectiveness of support services for student athletes attending NCAA Division One institutions. For comparative purposes, the investigator sent questionnaires to all (285) Division One public and private institutions. Many of the 134 responding individuals supervised or directed support service programs for student athletes.

The following general conclusions may be gleaned from the study:

- (1) There is no significant difference in the types of support service for student athletes at public and private institutions.
 - 1.1 Over 50% of the programs provide the same services.
 - 1.2 Academic advising, counseling and tutorial assistance is offered by more than 90% of the programs.
 - 1.3 The findings correspond with previous research which suggests that these services are standard procedures.
- (2) There is significant difference in the educational training and experience with regards to supervisors who coordinate support services for student athletes:
 - 2.1 Nearly two-thirds of the supervisors for support services have only a master's degree.
 - 2.2 Seven percent have baccalaureate degrees.
- (3) There is no significant difference in support services for student athletes with regards to public and private institutions:
 - 3.1 No differences in service to males and females.
 - 3.2 No differences in service to freshmen or sophomores.

- (4) There is no significant differences in the functions and responsibilities of academic advisors and counselors with regards to support services:
 - 4.1 Securing tutorial assistance for student athletes is the number one priority.
 - 4.2 Facilitation of study skill programs is a close second.
 - 4.3 Require student athletes to attend special programs, i.e. study hall, math and writing centers.
- (5) There is no significant difference in support service supervisor's perceptions of effectiveness with regards to student athletes:
 - 5.1 Most of the responding institutions feel they are effective.
 - 5.2 Many supervisors feel some of their student athletes are either academically underprepared or learning disabled, the former is more likely.
- (6) There is no difference in support service supervisor's perceptions of success (graduation) with regards to student athletes:
 - 6.1 Public and private institutions agree in some form (98%) that their success with student athletes is based on the size of their staff, close monitoring and designed programs of study.
 - 6.2 The size of staff is a central issue throughout the literature.
- (7) There is significant difference in the financial assistance for support service programs with regards to public and private institutions:
 - 7.1 Public institutions receive nearly 33% more funds for salaries than private institutions.
 - 7.2 Public institutions feel they need more money while private institutions have a different position.
 - 7.3 Supplies, equipment and special program funds are the same.

The final question did not relate to the seven research questions. It was one of personal inquiry. From those responses, nine specific must-do functions were developed for those who counsel or academically advise student athletes:

- (1) Communications must be maintained with all involved individuals.
- (2) Must establish program credibility and integrity.
- (3) Must monitor student athletes' academic endeavors constantly, perhaps as often as once per week.
- (4) Program must be on neutral grounds.
- (5) Must not accept financial assistance from athletic departments or friends of athletics.
- (6) Counselor/student athlete ratio must not exceed 100/1.
- (7) Counselor/academic advisor must be able to levy sanctions.

- (8) Counselor must maintain confidentiality.
- (9) Counselor must allow student athletes to mature, accept responsibility and be held accountable for their actions.

This study revealed information that will enhance the efforts of those who counsel or academically advise student athletes. The results of this study confirms most of the literature and assisted in the development of the nine must-do functions for individuals that academically advise or counsel student athletes.