

A DESCRIPTION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT SYSTEMS  
IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The effects of collegiate athletic programs have been debated by educators for decades. Although academic achievement is almost always listed as a major goal of athletic departments, there seems to be a conflict between the goals of higher education and athletics. Concerns about the balance between academics and athletics in the collegiate setting have been expressed both inside and outside the educational environment.

As athletics have become an increasingly prominent part of higher education in America, athletes as a student subpopulation have become more vulnerable to academic exploitation. As a result, the need for effective academic support programs for athletes presumes the need for accurate and useful information about their educational characteristics.

This research is an exploratory study which seeks to identify the major variables impacting the academic achievement of student athletes. Using Glaser and Strauss' discovery of grounded theory methods of research, thirty-two

interviews were conducted with student athletes spread among six institutions. Findings identify factors and conditions which contribute to student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. The study attempts to explain the relationship among these variables and how they facilitate or impede the academic progress of student athletes. Information from the research serves as a basis to form an integrated theoretical framework to explain how various factors affect student athletes' academic achievement.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For as long as intercollegiate sports have been taken seriously in the U.S. the image of the dumb jock has endured. In caricature, he is not an altogether unappealing figure: the fullback whose neck is a size larger than the best grade he has ever received in math class: the kid with the rampant pituitary gland who calmly dribbles behind his back but breaks into a cold sweat at the prospect of diagramming a simple sentence. This was always an exaggerated image, one that was more playful than seriously advanced. No more. The dumb jock has now come into full flower in the American educational system. He is fast becoming a national catastrophe. He is already a national disgrace. (Underwood, 1980, pp. 39-40)

Concerns about the balance between academics and athletics have been expressed for years, both inside and outside the educational environment. Educators often express the feelings captured by Underwood.

Images of student athletes as dumb jocks serve to fuel concerns over the proper role of intercollegiate athletics in higher education. Although proponents of intercollegiate athletics cite academic achievement as a major goal of athletic departments, colleges and universities frequently are accused of sacrificing their academic and moral integrity in order to develop competitive athletic teams. "These compromises demonstrate that athletic programs must be altered, not to just survive, but to thrive in an atmosphere that gives people pride and integrity both to intercollegiate athletics in general and to the institution of higher learning in particular" (Miller, 1980, p. 7).

Educators acknowledge that a gap does exist between academics and athletics. Expressions of dismay and legitimate concerns frequently are voiced from academia that intercollegiate athletics are in partnership with big business and not academics. The authenticity of these concerns is based on institutional emphasis upon winning teams, huge crowds, television revenue, and national championships.

The magnetic appeal of potential revenue to be gained through intercollegiate athletics serves to exert a major influence upon the academic practices of many institutions. Critics argue that academics are relegated to a secondary position to athletics because institutions which rely upon athletic revenue for significant contributions toward budgeting, planning, and development frequently compromise their academic integrity to accommodate winning programs (Shriberg & Brodzinski, 1984).

The student athlete is caught in the web of the dilemma created by the two collegiate worlds of academics and athletics. Institutional reliance upon athletic success for monetary gain, notoriety, increased enrollments, and alumni participation places an increasing demand upon student athletes to devote more time to athletic commitments than to academic pursuit. "Participation in the sport for which the student athlete is receiving a scholarship is often so time consuming that survival in the classroom is difficult at

best" (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981, p. 18). As a result, as Michener (1976) points out, athletics have been accused of generating some of the most difficult, deplorable, and embarrassing academic problems for institutions. These problems are manifested in athletes who possess extraordinary skills athletically, but who demonstrate inferior academic qualities.

\* Premised on the belief that student athletes indeed are learners in higher education with the same obligations, rights, and privileges as all other students, and recognizing certain special characteristics in the formal and informal relationship of the student athlete and the institution including, at least, unusually large investments of student time in essentially nonacademic activities, the issue of student athletes' academic achievement is heightened among educators and deserves careful examination. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify selected factors and conditions affecting the academic achievement of athletes, and to explain any interactive characteristics which might illuminate the effectiveness of academic assistance programs and services designed specifically for athletes.

#### Statement of the Problem

Much attention has been focused on the financial elements of intercollegiate athletics and occasional compromises made in the academic integrity of educational

institutions. Student athletes are the base of the enterprise of intercollegiate athletics, and as such, are subjects of disturbing reports of academic abuses, in some institutions, designed to guarantee athletic eligibility at the price of education.

Although athletics represents a meaningful component in the educational process, college athletic programs, due to heralded academic abuses, are in danger of losing their educational credibility. Consequently, the creation of academic support programs, designed to assist athletes in their academic pursuits, are the result of united intervention on the part of administration, faculty, and athletic personnel, each of whom have a professional mandate to safeguard integrity in colleges and universities.

The problem is that even where academic support programs are offered, the effectiveness of such programs is often unknown. Although the controversy concerning the academic achievement of student athletes permeates educational environments, very few theoretical investigations exist to offer explanation of the factors which contribute to the academic achievement of student athletes.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify selected factors and conditions affecting the academic achievement of athletes, and to explain any interactive characteristics

which might illuminate the effectiveness of academic programs and services designed specifically for athletes. Information from the research forms the basis for an integrated theoretical framework to explain how various factors affect student athletes' academic achievement.

#### Background and Significance

Although it is apparent that the role of athletics in the American educational structure is responsible for divergent views of the subject, nevertheless, one cannot deny the move of intercollegiate athletics into the realm of big business. The economic dimension has evolved to rule intercollegiate athletics, just as it rules the rest of the sporting enterprise. Multimillion dollar athletic budgets are prevalent for major college programs, while additional revenues may be added from television contracts and post season championship tournaments, contingent upon a team's success. Such in depth monetary involvement ignites concerns among educators that the rewards for athletic success may fuel a win-at-any-cost syndrome resulting in academics becoming secondary to athletic prominence.

Concerns about institutional compromises in academic integrity, for the sake of athletic rewards, is not a recent phenomenon. An uneasy alliance has existed between athletics and academics since the introduction of athletics on the American college campus more than 130 years ago (Michener, 1976). Reflecting the traditional philosophy of

mid-nineteenth century, with its emphasis on scholarship and intellectual development, college administrators felt that the sole function of a college or university was an education, one which would not allow for anything noneducational such as sport or play (Brownell & Hayman, 1951). College faculty, of the same era, stressed mental discipline, failing to recognize that motor or physiological processes could have any pronounced effect on mental development (Brownell & Hayman, 1951).

The introduction of athletics to college campuses in America spawned academic abuses, not because of financial considerations, but rather an insatiable desire of the nineteenth century student to compete. Intercollegiate athletics, with accompanying abuses in professionalism, eligibility, and academics, resulted from the desire of the students of one institution to match their physical prowess and playing ability with those of another (Rice, Hutchinson, & Lee, 1969).

From the Civil War to the early twentieth century, the seeds of turmoil, planted by the introduction of athletics on college campuses, grew into major problems confronting college administrators. The purpose, organization, and structure of athletics represented major tasks in defining the relationship between academics and athletics. The control of athletics fashioned power struggles providing a springboard for instability and undesirable academic

practices. The intensive and dubious ventures of college alumni to field outstanding football teams to publicize their institutions and attract gifted students and faculty further compounded the relationship between athletics and academics. Athletics impacted the educational environment so profoundly, that by the turn of the century violations in recruiting, eligibility standards, and academics, in general, were common problems to be found on college campuses (Voltmer & Esslinger, 1967). Such was the overemphasis on athletic programs, that "by the turn of the century competitive intercollegiate athletics had significantly influenced the social character of institutions of higher education" (Shapiro, 1983, p. 10).

The establishment of national governing bodies curtailed these early academic abuses somewhat. The largest and best known of these governing bodies is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), founded in 1906. Originally established to investigate and curtail football problems and injuries, the NCAA grew to become the primary regulatory body for intercollegiate athletics.

Although the NCAA proved to be successful in many endeavors, the uneasy alliance between athletics and the institutions of higher education continued to exist. As this uneasy alliance became more pronounced, the relationship of organized sports to educational goals grew more important, but less easy to define.

The posture taken by administration and faculty, in the early twentieth century, reflected the uneasiness generated from the nebulous alliance of academics and athletics. Early faculty involvement in administration of athletics resulted as much from the embarrassment caused by unethical practices as from any admission that educational values might be derived from athletics (Brownell & Hayman, 1951).

Following World War I, the irregular practices of intercollegiate athletics came under such severe criticism that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching financed a survey of the situation in hopes that the facts could be determined and a remedy devised. The report deemed that faculty control was an ineffective but necessary adjunct to athletic programs. Other findings revealed that serious conditions of proselytizing and professionalism did exist, resulting in academically unqualified athletes representing institutions in intercollegiate contests.

Intercollegiate athletics moved into the realm of big business following World War II. Financial profit supplanted the desire for competition, which served as the culprit for academic abuses in the mid nineteenth century through World War I, as the prime component prompting academic compromises (Rice, et al., 1969). As a result, society witnessed a radical change in the role of athletics as institutions became more aware of the profits to be made in collegiate athletics.



Just as intercollegiate athletics enjoyed a flourishing role after World War II, societal demand for increased emphasis upon sports dictated a continued growth for intercollegiate athletics, a growth sustained until present day. The aggrandizement of intercollegiate athletics proved significant not only for claiming responsibility for a parallel growth in income revenue, but also for its impact upon academic communities by attracting students to participate in intercollegiate athletics who possessed inferior academic skills. As a result, accusations of academic wrong doing, prompted by success in athletics, frequently served to offer characterizations of student athletes, quite often in an uncomplimentary manner. "Few characters on the American collegiate scene evoke images more startling in their contrast or suffer more inattention and are misunderstood more than the student athlete" (Zingg, 1982, p. 16). On one end of the spectrum is the ideal image, the "student athlete"--an individual who has mastered both the rigors of a particular sport and the demands of a academic program. On the other end, is the image generally summarized in the expression "dumb jock." For these characters, the term "scholar athlete" has little or no meaning.

As with most contrasts, a middle ground does exist. Unfortunately, the portrait of the dumb jock is so pervasive that it has had a slanderous effect on all student athletes.

The image problem confronting athletes is amplified by the fact that many student athletes entering college have already spent several years where their rewards have come from athletics rather than academics. As a consequence, their learning skills are frequently underdeveloped, and often inadequate for academic success in college.

Thus, coaches frequently face the dilemma of winning athletic contests with players who must remain academically eligible, but who also manifest very poor academic skills. Unfortunately, both coaches and student athletes often espouse the course of least resistance, one in which student athletes enroll in carefully "hand-picked" courses with no apparent academic goals other than to stay eligible. Along with these hand picked courses come "easy" instructors. The net result is many scholarship student athletes who have accumulated many hours, but no degree. "The extraordinary travesty of this situation is that a large percentage of these young people who were victimized because of their apparent lack of academic potential and lack of self imposed discipline could develop the necessary academic skills if they were given the proper assistance and support" (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981, p. 18). More importantly, many more could graduate if they were directed to develop their academic skills rather than using their energies to enroll in so called "easy" courses.

The American college coach expects student athletes to

concentrate on the job for which they were recruited. The aim very often may be neither graduation nor education. The sine qua non for many of the athletes is maintaining their eligibility (Green, McMillian, & Gunning, 1972). "From the moment the student athlete sets foot on campus, the name of the game is majoring in eligibility, and it is a vulgar, callous, shameful, cynical, and perfectly legal exploitation of the system by and for the American college athlete" (Underwood, 1982, p. 43).

Maintaining eligibility, at best, will become more difficult in 1986 when new and more stringent NCAA guidelines for eligibility become effective. Institutions will need a heightened awareness of the necessity to recruit more academically qualified student athletes. Having recruited them, a greater responsibility will exist to provide the necessary academic support service systems to allow student athletes the tools to maximize academic potential which will lead to graduation.

Fortunately many institutions presently take responsibility for the academic progress of student athletes. Expectations of more stringent NCAA academic guidelines for athletic participation, coupled with accusations of academic exploitation of athletes, have resulted in many institutions creating programs to assist athletes academically. Frequently, academic assistance programs for athletes consist of special advising,

orientation, tutoring, counseling, mandatory study halls, reading and writing labs, and basic study skills courses (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981).

Academic support systems for student athletes have experienced a steady growth due to their impact in providing academic avenues of assistance (Hurley & Cunningham, 1984). This steady growth of academic support services is due in part to the move of intercollegiate athletics into the realm of big business (Scott, 1971). Athletics as big business furnished the impetus for the establishment and growth of academic support programs by creating a competition for financial gain among colleges and universities, resulting in the recruitment of academically deficient, but athletically gifted, athletes in need of academic support services (Scott, 1971).

Due to the special relationship of athlete and institution, wherein heavy investments of student time and energy are diverted from academic matters to university-sponsored activities, student athletes need academic assistance programs to guarantee equal opportunity in academic pursuits. Institutional implementation of effective measures to evaluate academic assistance programs are needed to determine which services are successful in assisting athletes academically. National attention constantly is focusing on institutions whose neglect in this area creates scenarios whereby athletes are declared

ineligible for participation or exhaust their eligibility without an academic plan leading to a degree.

This study offers potential for providing insights for all who have given attention to these important and volatile matters. Perhaps most importantly, results of the study might serve as an important basis for streamlining and improving existing academic support programs.

The intention of this research is to provide a detailed description of the aspects within the collegiate environment that help the student athlete, and in so doing, provide assistance to institutional personnel involved in academic support systems specifically designed for athletes. Clearly, there is a need to understand how the problems that exist between academics and athletics might be bridged. This understanding will be enhanced by a description of the aspects of an institutional environment that facilitate learning on the part of student athletes.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarification, the following served as working definitions throughout the research:

1. Academic Advisor--a professor who is assigned the task of directing a student through collegiate coursework designed to lead to a degree.
2. Athletic Academic Advisor--a staff member responsible to the Director of Athletics. This person provides feedback to the coaches on the

athletes' grades, secures tutors for athletes, seeks solutions to problems that the athlete may encounter with course time and sequence, and directs the athlete to the proper channels for counseling, career information, and learning assistance programs.

3. Eligibility--defined by achieving the necessary grade point average in order to maintain active participation as a member of an intercollegiate team.
4. NCAA--National Collegiate Athletic Association, the largest governing body for intercollegiate athletics.
5. NCAA Division I Institution--a scholarship-granting member of the NCAA. Scholarships for athletes consist of room, board, books, tuition, and fees. Member institutions in this category are distinguished from other institutions in the NCAA by the magnitude of their athletic programs. Facilities, caliber of competition, and number of sports offered are factors associated with classification into a division of the NCAA.
6. NCAA Division II Institution--a scholarship-granting member of the NCAA. Although these institutions grant scholarships to athletes, their athletic programs do not enjoy Division I

classification because they do not meet the necessary requirement for facilities, caliber of competition, number of sports offered, or any combination of these.

7. NCAA Division III Institutions--a nonscholarship (athletic) granting member of the NCAA.
8. Scholarship student-athlete--one who is receiving financial aid in the form of room, board, books, tuition, and fees or any combination of these in return for actively participating on an intercollegiate team while simultaneously carrying the equivalent of a full academic load (usually 12 academic credit hours or more).

#### Structure of the Study

The study is detailed in a sequential fashion in the following chapters. The method utilized is described in Chapter 2, including rationale, procedures, and limitations. The analysis of the data is reported in Chapter 3, yielding core and conceptual categories and their properties, as well as a model depicting the data. Chapter 4 contains a review of the related literature describing the relationship between academics and athletics.

The theory developed from the data analysis is found in Chapter 5, while Chapter 6 summarizes the study and provides recommendations for future study in the area of academics and athletics.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

Implementation of academic assistance programs specifically for athletes presumes a need to discern the interactive process of numerous individual and situational factors impacting the relationship of academics and athletics. The unique demands placed upon student athletes suggest that they represent a distinctive subpopulation, and as such, require special programs designed to enhance their educational development. Therefore, in order to understand the milieu of student athletes, a research method allowing for the identification and explanation of conditions or factors impacting the academic achievement of student athletes seemed most appropriate to accomplish the stated purpose of this study.

#### Choice of Method

The discovery research strategies used in this study are adapted from the methodology presented by Glaser and Strauss in The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967). Discovery strategies represent a general methodological approach that Glaser and Strauss term "comparative analysis." This approach to research utilizes the logic of comparison to discover similarities and difference in social settings. Experimental and statistical methods of research also use the logic of comparison. The major difference,



however is that experimental and statistical methods use the logic of comparison to verify differences or similarities between carefully contrived groupings, but the comparative analysis method uses it to generate concepts from groupings as they occur in natural settings (Mahan, 1978).

Although verification of theories and hypotheses is part of any methodological approach, discovery research is more concerned with the generation of theory. The differences between the two approaches are distinct. Researchers committed to verification either move immediately to verify emerging categories or discard them as not part of their original theoretical framework (Mahan, 1978). Discovery research allows the researcher continually to conceptualize and reconceptualize trends and categories as they emerge from the data.

Discovery research tends to focus on qualitative data because the conceptual categories with the greatest potential for generating theory are most likely to emerge from qualitative characteristics such as structural conditions, consequences, deviances, norms, processes, patterns, and systems (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The application of this approach is best suited for studying the relationship between athletics and academics because the aspects of an educational environment which function to help athletes academically generally are unknown. Research conducted using the methods of grounded theory provides a

strategy for handling highly individualistic data.

The nature of the present research problem lends itself to discovery research. Because the relationship between athletics and academics is nebulous at best, grounded theory research enables the researcher to remain open to explanations which emerge from the data, rather than being committed to testing existing theory. This type of qualitative approach to research is the most adequate and efficient way to obtain the type of information required to provide an explanation of what really helps student athletes achieve academically.

#### Method Explained

Darkenwald (1980) described grounded theory in the following way:

Essentially, grounded theory is an inductive approach to research that focuses on social interaction and relies heavily on data from interviews and observations to build theory grounded in the data rather than to test theory or simply to describe empirical phenomena. (p. 64)

The idea of being "grounded" means that to know, understand, and systematically explain social phenomena, the investigator (researcher) derives conceptual formulations from the data. This approach is antithetical to forcing data to fit logically derived theories, and contrasts with experimental or quasi-experimental research, which seeks to verify and test hypotheses, rather than discover theory.

Like verification, description is of interest and

importance to the grounded theory researcher. However, it is not the primary objective of the research. Instead, the major concern is "the systematic exploration and illumination of social interaction in real life settings" (Darkenwald, 1980, p. 68).

Grounded theory has as its goal the generation of theory, not the testing of theory. Theory can be defined as "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 9).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) maintain that theory in sociology is a strategy for handling data in research, providing modes of conceptualization for describing and explaining. They consider theory inductively generated from the data through the use of the constant comparative method to be the best method of description.

Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only arise from the data, but also develop systematically in relation to the data during the course of research. Therefore, generating a theory involves a process of research, a process resulting in the properties, conceptual categories, and theories being derived from the data they seek to explain.

Grounded theory is tied to a particular set of social circumstances. It is said to emerge from a

body of data that is subjected to a carefully controlled process of property definition, concept categorization, comparative analysis, and substantive theory generation. (Mahan, 1978, p. 42)

A category is a basic theoretical concept, or a conceptual element of the theory, that allows the researcher to explain and predict behavior (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A property is a conceptual element of a category that gives meaning to the category (Darkenwald, 1980). Hypotheses provide a framework of explanation for the relationships among the categories and their properties. However, both categories and properties are concepts indicated by the data (and not the data itself), and both vary in degree of conceptual abstraction (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Basic to the operation of the discovery strategy is the researcher's active on-going process in conceptualization and reconceptualization of data. Emerging categories and properties are incorporated continually into the central theoretical framework. This inductive approach to the generation of theory requires the researcher to approach the social setting with an open mind. The researcher must conduct the investigation without a preconceived set of answers and hypotheses, while remaining open to those concepts which emerge from analysis of the data through constant comparison and reconceptualization. Through the use of methodological techniques such as theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method of joint

collection, coding, and analysis of data, the researcher generates theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The most apt description of the procedures resulting in a generation of grounded theory is given by Glaser (1978).

The steps, as now formulated, are collection of research data, open coding of the data soon after, theoretical sampling, generating many memos with as much saturation as possible, and emergence of core social psychological problems and processes which then become the basis for more selective theoretical sampling, coding and memoing as the analyst focuses on the core category. (p. 16)

The essence of this approach is vital to the research and the need for returning to selectively gather and reexamine data as a means of validating and expanding on emerging concepts and hypotheses is central to this process (Harnish, 1983).

#### Components of the Method

Constant Comparative Analysis. Comparative analysis is a process whereby each incident in the data is coded into as many categories as possible. The coding of an incident into a category involves comparing the incident being coded with previous incidents in the same or different categories. This process involves a continual rethinking and restudying of previously coded incidents. "The analyst must constantly confront the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimized, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties"

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 106).

Identification, comparison, and delimitation of categories are elements of constant comparative analysis. Continuous correction of categories through the discovery of incidents typify the nature of the discovery strategy. These corrections enable the researcher to modify and reformulate theory as conceptualizations emerge from the data.

The ultimate purpose of constant comparative analysis is to generate theory systematically. Therefore, it functions jointly with theoretical sampling, the process of data collection whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes the data and decides what further data to collect on the basis of emerging categories (Mahan, 1978). The constant comparative method uses four stages in the process of conceptualizing categories, properties, and hypotheses about a general problem area. These are: (a) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (b) integrating categories and their properties, (c) delimiting theory, and (d) writing theory. A description of each is provided below.

The researcher collects data with the purpose of coding incidents into as many categories as possible. Study, examination, and analysis of each incident follow to allow comparisons with other incidents. The researcher accomplishes this task through the technique of "memoing."

By doing this, the researcher uses the process of continuous writing to probe insights, questions, and thoughts about what has been learned from the data.

Having developed a full range or continua for each category, the researcher then is able to compare incidents with properties of categories that resulted from the initial comparison of incidents. This begins the process of integration of concepts with their respective categories and properties. These concepts lead to an emerging theory that the researcher shapes through this constant comparative method.

Using the constant comparative method to develop categories and compare new incidents with existing categories and their properties, the researcher is able to narrow the scope of categories by discovering underlying uniformities in the data. This restriction of categories allows an emerging theory to formulate with a smaller set of higher level concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theory begins to solidify as reduction occurs. Through this delimitation of terminology and consequent generalizations, the researcher meets two requirements of theory building, namely, simplicity and scope. A reduction of categories, as the theory emerges, provides a more simplistic explanation of variables with greater applicability or scope for a wide range of situations.

Once the process of constant comparative analysis has

taken the researcher to the delimiting stage of theory building, the time is ripe for theory writing. The concepts developed by the researcher's use of memos provide the content of the theory.

Theory generated through the constant comparative analysis method of research is judged on its applicability as opposed to the accuracy of the data. Although verifying the accuracy of evidence is important, the researcher is more concerned with evidence being directly related to the process of theory generation. "Concepts that are generated from the properties of evidence do not change but even the most accurately derived facts do change from setting to setting" (Mahan, 1978, p. 47).

Theoretical Sampling. As stated earlier, the constant comparative method of analysis is used jointly with theoretical sampling. The emerging categories and the integration of concepts dictate where and from which group or individual the researcher will go next to collect data. A group or individual's theoretical relevance to the research prompts the analyst to include them as part of the data. This method of sampling is in contrast to statistical samples which are identified before any data gathering occurs.

Initial criteria used to identify the sample of student athletes interviewed for this study were (a) students with scholarships granted for athletic services, and (b) a cross-



section of athletes representing several sports. The researcher determined that these criteria met the general assumptions which served as the point of entry into the field; namely, that athletes are also students and that they must achieve a certain grade point average in order to participate in intercollegiate athletics.

Data collection began with the above assumptions. As the research proceeded, basic criteria for choosing individuals for additional data collection were theoretical purpose and relevance.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate that the basic questions in theoretical sampling are, What groups or subgroups does one turn to next in data collection? And for what theoretical purpose? These questions served as a guide for the researcher to include the appropriate individuals or groups as part of the data.

As a result of the on-going process of data collection, the researcher becomes in tune with the theory as it emerges from the data, and develops a theoretical sensitivity to the data. Theoretical sensitivity guides the researcher in theoretical sampling.

Theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, and constant comparative analysis must exist in harmony in order to realize the goal of grounded theory; namely, the generation of theory as opposed to verification of theory. As the researcher actively samples the data, identifies

categories and their respective properties, and compares and integrates concepts, he or she is able to determine the next theoretical question to pursue. This is a continuing process until the data reaches a saturation point, that is, where no new data emerge on which to develop additional properties. The criteria for determining saturation are "a combination of the empirical limits of the data, the integration and density of the theory, and the analyst's theoretical sensitivity" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 62). A summary of the procedures, purposes, and activities involved in using the grounded theory approach to research is provided in Figure 1. This research progressed through the generation of substantive theory.

#### Entry Into the Field

Widely held assumptions concerning student athletes comprised the point of entry into this research. The first assumption was that athletes are also students, hence the term "student-athlete." In this sense, athletes are like the rest of a student body. They have many of the same needs, have to be enrolled in a certain amount of credit hours to be considered a full-time student, and must take a core curriculum of courses that are required of all students.

A second assumption was that athletes must maintain a certain grade point average for participation in intercollegiate athletics--a requirement sanctioned by the

<u>PROCEDURES</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>PRIMARY RESEARCH ACTIVITY</u>
Property Definition	To identify potentially significant properties, e.g., causes, conditions, consequences, dimensions, types, processes, etc.	Recording data incidents Coding data incidents
Concept Categorization	To create concepts that are analytic and sensitizing	Grouping related and potentially significant data incidents under new synthesizing concepts
Comparative Analysis	To reveal patterns and relationships	Comparing and/or contrasting categories Creating new categories Proposing generalized relationships
Generation of Substantive Theory	To produce an elegant, abstract	Conceiving and testing various hypotheses Integrating the various categories into one consistent format
Generation of Formal Theory	To produce an elegant, abstract theoretical model that is universally applicable	Exploring existing deduced models Devising a comprehensive theoretical expression

Figure 1. Discovery Research Procedures (Mahan, 1978, p. 54)

national governing body for intercollegiate sports, the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Dependence upon initial assumptions provided nothing more than a basis for entrance to the research problem. Schatzman & Strauss (1973) provided a good description for entry into grounded theory research in this manner:

The discovery process and question raised by the researcher need not be related to any "received" or prior theory. His framework need be no more elaborate than a scheme of general but grounded concepts commonly applied by his discipline. (p. 12)

Data were collected with as little commitment to preconceived theories about athletes as students as it was possible to maintain. The researcher, in this type of study, should investigate an area without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to research, relevancies in concepts and hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Interviews were used to collect data for this research. Student athletes enrolled at several collegiate institutions comprised the population for the study. The purpose of the study was to develop a theoretical framework to generate grounded substantive theory. This framework included a set of relevant categories, definitions, and propositions integrated into an analytical and meaningful scheme. Substantive theory, as contrasted with formal grand theory which is broader in scope and more conceptually abstract, is concerned with a limited domain of inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It seeks to explain phenomena relevant to

practitioners in the field and is considered an appropriate concern of researchers in applied professional fields such as education (Darkenwald, 1980).

#### Preparation of the Researcher

The thoroughness of the researcher in collecting data was evidenced through the following preparations. The researcher was a participant in a class studying qualitative methods of research during the course work portion of his doctoral program. Criteria for conducting interviews, procedures and processes of data collection in natural settings, and the art of asking questions comprised much of the class. Techniques of coding and analysis of data from interviews were emphasized as being highly significant in qualitative research. Supplemental readings and research concerning the nature of interviewing helped further prepare the researcher to undertake this research problem.

Additionally, to further develop interview skills, note taking, coding, and analysis of data, the researcher conducted interviews, under the supervision of his major advisor, with student athletes at a major university. Critique of the interviewing process, types of questions asked during the interviews, and recording and analysis of data proved to be beneficial for the researcher's preparation to gather data.

Finally, as the researcher began the formal data collection process, the major advisor of the researcher

reviewed initial interview tapes. The researcher's major advisor applied the same evaluative standards to this data as before. The researcher implemented these suggestions for more effective interviews into the data collection process.

#### Conducting the Field Research

The field for this research included six collegiate institutions, each of which were members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The researcher conducted interviews with 32 student athletes spread among six institutions. The researcher chose institutions, as well as the student athletes, for the theoretical relevance that each offered this study. A descriptive analysis of the student athletes is presented in Appendix A.

Subjects were chosen for interviews from the following institutions:

1. Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University--NCAA Division I
2. University of Virginia--NCAA Division I
3. University of Richmond--NCAA Division I
4. James Madison University--NCAA Division I
5. Liberty Baptist College--NCAA Division II
6. Lynchburg College--NCAA Division III

NCAA division criteria are provided in the Definition of Terms section in Chapter 1. Additional descriptive data for these institutions are provided in Appendix B.

The researcher requested and received permission to

interview student athletes from each institution's Athletic Academic Advisor, who in each case cleared the request with the Director of Athletics. A student athlete's relevance to the research was the major criterion for selection for the study. The on-going process of data collection, coding and comparison of incidents, and analysis of data, served as the basis for the researcher to determine which types of student athletes (sport, sex, etc.) to interview.

The researcher scheduled and conducted interviews over the course of four months. Interviewing, transcribing the tapes, analyzing the data, and the development of a set of detailed field notes equalled approximately 300 hours.

The process of gathering the data was as follows:

1. The Athletic Academic Advisor scheduled a definite time to conduct the interviews. Interviews were usually conducted on the weekends or week-day mornings so as not to conflict with scheduled athletic practices.

2. Interviews usually lasted 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours. The researcher spent time with each athlete prior to actually taping the conversation in order to attempt to gain the athlete's confidence.

3. Coding of each interview took place the same day as the interview. An explanation of the coding process will follow later.

4. Analysis of each interview was an on-going process. The constant comparative analysis method has been explained

earlier. The researcher utilized all of the elements of this process to seek relevant questions and integrate concepts as they emerged from the data. Conceptualization and reconceptualization occurred as the researcher allowed time to rethink each participant's response before conducting the next interview.

5. The researcher made a second trip to each institution for purposes of validation. He interviewed student athletes (not the same ones who participated during the first visit) to discover if the information obtained from the first visit could be verified. "The on-going nature of this approach is stressed and the need for doubling back to selectively gather and reexamine data as a means of validating and expanding on emerging concepts and hypotheses is central to this process" (Harnish, 1983, p. 103).

6. The researcher developed a complete and detailed set of field notes for each interview by summarizing conversation from the tapes after each interview session.

Data collection began on the campus of Liberty Baptist College. Accessibility, the willingness of the athletes to participate, and the fact that the institution granted athletic scholarships and proclaimed lofty goals in intercollegiate athletics contributed to the decision to begin data collection at that particular institution. Additionally, Liberty Baptist College was the employer of



the researcher at the time of data collection. All of these factors provided a smooth beginning into the field, plus gave the researcher additional confidence in the techniques of interviewing due to familiar surroundings.

The researcher's reaction to the data collected at Liberty Baptist was a desire to compare the findings to data from a NCAA Division III institution. Lynchburg College provided the setting for such findings. Again, the familiarity with these two institutions served not only to provide such needed data, but also allowed the researcher to gain experience and confidence as he analyzed the data for direction in further data gathering (theoretical relevance).

After collecting data from NCAA Division II and Division III institutions, the relevance of the data led the researcher to add Division I schools to the sampling populations. The researcher added these institutions as part of the study as the collection and comparison process of data progressed. The developing categories and properties of the data suggested that student athletes from other institutions be added for theoretical relevance, until data saturation occurred. The saturation point of the data did not occur until a total of six institutions and 32 athletes participated in the research.

Although the schools participating in the research varied in institutional type, each school consistently provided basically the same types of academic support

programs. The academic programs and services available to athletes at these institutions varied somewhat in organizational patterns, structure and accessibility to athletes, however, they did not differ by range or type of academic assistance program or service. Academic support programs for student athletes are typically the same regardless of institutional type or affiliation (Zingg, 1982).

#### Coding and Analysis of Data

For grounded theory research methodology to be utilized properly, collection, coding, and analysis of data must be done simultaneously. These joint actions provide the basis for the researcher to conceptualize and reconceptualize concepts as they emerge from the data.

This research process began the first day of data collection. At the end of each interview day, the researcher transcribed each tape, listening carefully for emerging themes, categories, and properties. The researcher accomplished this through a technique called open coding, whereby he classified incidents or items of discussion into different categories.

After transcribing each tape, the researcher spent time (usually two to three days) conceptualizing what had emerged from the data. An analytic or rethinking process took place. He analyzed responses by comparing them to previous incidents. He compared categories with previously

identified categories. The researcher then proceeded to identify core variables as they emerged from the data. The focus then shifted to a more selective coding process which attempted to identify conditions and consequences related to the core dimensions.

Glaser (1978) offered the proper description of the above process. He described the process as one in which the general procedure is to

elicit codes from raw data from the start of data collection through constant comparative analysis as the data pours in. Then to use the codes to direct further data collection, from which the codes are further theoretically developed with respect to their various properties and their connections with other codes until saturated. Theoretical sampling on any code ceases when it is saturated, elaborated, and integrated into the emerging theory. (p. 36)

Glaser & Strauss (1967) maintain that the generation of theory is accomplished through memo writing. This allows the researcher to test ideas (concepts), write notes to himself, and delimit the theory. Core concepts migrate to a more theoretical level through this technique. Glaser (1978) states that "Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding" (p. 83). This technique of memoing provided the process of developing insights into the data. It helped make sense of the data by providing a means to describe the relationship between categories and their properties, and served to direct the researcher's thinking in the area of theoretical relevance, that is, where does the data lead for

relevant comparison groups and questions.

#### Limitations of the Research Methodology

The strategy for research combining the ideas of Glaser and Strauss involves discovery research as opposed to verification research. Some of the best methods to discover and explain phenomena rest on observations and interviewing. Because this research relied on the interview method for collection of data, the methodological limitations are those frequently associated with this type of field research.

Interviewing obviously involves the ability of the interviewer to obtain responses to questions, to conduct a smooth flowing conversation, to probe for answers, and to get the participant being interviewed to open up in conversation. All of these characteristics of a good interview are in some ways dependent upon the relationship that exists between the researcher and the participant. Obviously it is difficult to establish a meaningful relationship in a few hours. Therefore, the researcher made a conscientious effort to spend as much time with each participant in an attempt to win confidence prior to taping each conversation. Although the researcher attempted to establish a good relationship with each participant, a few of the participants still showed signs of being ill at ease while being taped. As a result, some significant responses did not occur until after the taping had ceased and the atmosphere was more relaxed. Therefore, the research was

dependent upon the researcher's ability to establish a good relationship with each participant prior to taping and to be able to obtain in depth responses from those who were uncomfortable in such a setting. With those ill at ease with a microphone in view, often it was more profitable to turn off the recorder and extend the interview without the use of a recorder.

In addition to the relationship between interviewer and participant being important, the ability to get student athletes to express what they actually meant was very important. The researcher sensed that many of the athletes needed a continual reassurance that the conversations were strictly confidential. Again, this reassurance came through establishing a good rapport with each athlete and stating for the record that the interview was confidential. The researcher observed this insecurity from the following remarks that were voiced frequently: "Remember, you said this was confidential," or "No one will hear this, will they?" Once reassured the athletes were willing to elaborate upon responses and describe in more detail exactly what they were talking about.

Another limitation of this type of research method was that a few of the participants manifested a tendency to want to say "the right things." They wanted to say what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. With this type of individual every facet of university academic support was

excellent, as was the assistance of coaches, counselors, professors, and everyone else involved. It was necessary to spend considerable time building the confidence of those falling into this particular category, but they often emerged as being extremely informative, giving responses that were antithetical to their positions when having first met with the researcher.

Another limitation of the study was the limited experience which the researcher possessed in the technique of interviewing. However, ten years of college coaching experience, as well as the preparatory steps taken by the researcher prior to beginning this study, served to minimize the effects of this limitation.

Grounded theory necessitates approaching the data without restricting questions, interpretations, or preconceived explanations about what is really going on, and remaining open to emerging concepts in the data, despite an initial framework of conceptual areas to explore in the interviews. For these reasons the researcher did not conduct an extensive review of the literature until after the collection, coding, and analysis of data.

Finally, the data were based on self-report through the technique of interviews. While it is possible that student athletes may have fabricated some of the data, the same possibility exists with all types of research methods. Doubling back to selectively gather additional data not only

provided a means of validation, but also provided a check against this limitation.

The researcher was not attempting to verify hypotheses, but instead to identify, describe, and explain phenomena. The ultimate purpose of grounded theory research is to use incidents or pieces of data as indicators of concepts which are then compared to other incidents to arrive at theoretically central or significant processes, and to generate rather than to prove hypotheses. Therefore, limitations such as the above are less severe than for research in which the objective is primarily accurate description and verification of theory (Harnish, 1983).

Utilization of grounded theory involves discovery. A researcher may explore phenomena, identify categories and their respective properties, take the categories to a higher theoretical level by delimiting theory, and finally write the theory itself. The uniqueness of grounded theory is that another researcher may discover an entirely different set of core categories and processes within the same set of data. In no way would this necessarily negate the significance of the analysis, but would only serve to present another aspect of the overall problem area. Additional analysis serves to strengthen the theory and increases its applicability.

Chapter 3 presents the findings of the research. The core category, conceptual categories, and respective

properties of the categories are identified and explained.  
A model depicting the data is also provided.



## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS

The most effective way to describe the uses of discovery strategies in this study is to present the findings in a running theoretical discussion indicating the significant properties and conceptual categories developed from them as they appeared in the progress of the study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate a discussional form of presentation which places a high priority on the "ever developing" nature of theory. "When successful, a discussional format reveals the richness, complexity and density of an emerging conceptual framework in a manner that enhances the "fit" of the theory as well as its comprehensibility" (Mahan, 1978, p. 52). When findings are presented in this manner, the emphasis is on theory as a process, that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

A model is provided in Figure 2 which depicts the conceptual framework of academic assistance for athletes. An explanation of the origin of the model from the development of properties through the delimitation and theory writing stages follows.

#### Model Explanation

The story within this data has as its major theme the perceptions of academic assistance. An explanation of the

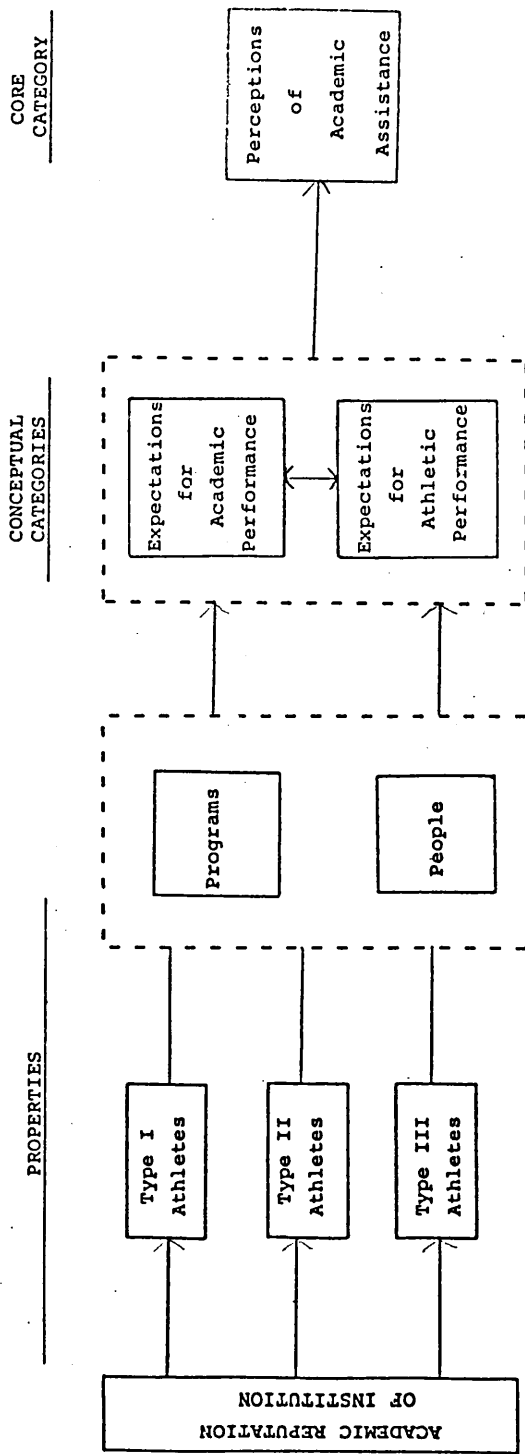


Figure 2. Model of Academic Assistance for Athletes

model demands that the core serve as the centerpiece of discussion. Properties, conceptual categories, and resulting interactive patterns of factors are understood vis a vis perceptions of academic assistance.

Initial data collection provided an open-ended scheme of properties relevant to student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. The key question which the researcher employed to develop such a wide range of initial responses was, "Of all the elements (people, programs, services, etc.) which combine to form a college or university, which is most helpful in assisting you academically?" Subsequent questions (see Appendix C) were used to probe for an elaboration of responses, resulting in a broad continuum of incidents for comparison.

As the data grew, the constant comparative units began to change from comparison of response to response to comparison of responses with properties identified in earlier comparisons. As the respondents discussed their perceptions of academic assistance, responses were coded into these previously identified units of comparison.

Initial data collection allowed the researcher to develop a wide range of responses. A comparison of initial responses allowed the researcher to generate concepts from groupings of responses as they occurred in natural settings. For example, athletes identified study halls, tutoring, advisors, coaches, and professors, among other elements of

college and university life, as impacting their academic achievement. This diversity of responses resulted in a broad continuum of answers, but through the utilization of the constant comparative method of analysis, the researcher was able to integrate and categorize these responses into the properties of "programs" and "people."

The technique of "memoing" was used to clarify and identify issues and their properties during the process of data collection. Memos took the form of questions raised by the researcher to probe insights, thoughts, and issues which were raised by the data.

The researcher recorded questions and comments after each interview to provide a point of comparison with other participants' responses. For example, the researcher coded a student athlete's response concerning tutors, a response which raised the following question, "Do all identified types of athletes have the same perceptions of tutors or is this perception unique to Type I athletes?"

Utilization of the constant comparative method of analysis in this fashion allowed the researcher eventually to integrate the diversity of responses into the properties of academic reputation, athletic type, programs, and people. These properties of analysis which emerged from the data were developed by the end of the first round of interviews at the participating institutions.

The second round of interviews at the participating

institutions served to validate the previously mentioned properties of analysis developed from the data. Doubling back to gather data selectively is central to the process of grounded theory (Harnish, 1983).

As the second round of interviews was conducted, the point of theoretical saturation became apparent. The data began to contribute nothing new to the study but did confirm what had been discovered during previous collection.

As the point of theoretical saturation was approached, the process of theoretical sampling and theory delimiting allowed the combining and collapsing of uniformities in properties that allowed theory development at a higher level conceptually with a reduced set of concepts. The higher level concepts, derived from a discovery of the underlying uniformities of the properties, emerged as "expectations for academic performance" and "expectations for athletic performance."

Expectations for academic performance is that conceptual category explaining the views of student athletes which dictate what is expected of them in terms of academic performance. Student athletes' views concerning what is expected of them athletically is represented by the conceptual category, expectations for athletic performance.

The interactive framework of expectations for academic performance is type-of-athlete dependent. The relationship of these two conceptual categories uniquely influences each

student athlete, depending upon each athlete's perceptions of the relationship of academics and athletics. For example, student athletes who perceive that they are expected to perform at a high level in the academic arena are likely to shape their perceptions of academic assistance programs accordingly. Conversely, expectations for academic performance at a minimal level will likely result in corresponding perceptions of academic assistance programs.

Student athletes' perceptions of expectations for athletic performance also shape their views of academic assistance programs. The manner in which each athlete perceives expectations for athletic performance dictates the perceptions of his or her purpose on campus and provides each athlete a meaningful picture of the effectiveness of academic assistance programs.

As a result of the interworkings of the expectations for academic and athletic performance, categorizing student athletes by type, contingent upon academic involvement, presented a relatively easy task. Student athletes' perceptions of the relationship of academics to athletics made it easy to distinguish those students who perceived themselves first and foremost as students, as opposed to those who viewed their primary function on campus as that of an athlete. The interaction to interactive framework and properties of analysis effecting athletes' perceptions of the expectations for academic and athletic performance came

sharply into focus after the researcher advanced the data into higher level concepts. This interaction to interactive framework of the properties of analysis is depicted in Figure 3.

Delimitation of theory, resulting in higher level concepts, provided a more simplistic explanation of variables with a greater applicability or scope for a wide range of situations. During the second round of interviews it became obvious that student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance was dependent upon the interactive process of academic performance and athletic performance. Performance in one area affected performance in the other. The combined effect of this interaction impacted perceptions of academic assistance.

The use of memos not only allowed the researcher to identify and clarify properties, but also provided a tool for conceptualization and reconceptualization of data, facilitating the delimitation of theory. As the researcher probed insights, thoughts, and questions which were raised as a result of constant comparison of incidents, memoing provided an effective means to reduce concepts, thereby raising the theory to the higher level concepts of academic performance and athletic performance.

How the student athlete perceives academic assistance is the central theme of this study. To discover theory, it was necessary for the researcher to see through the eyes of

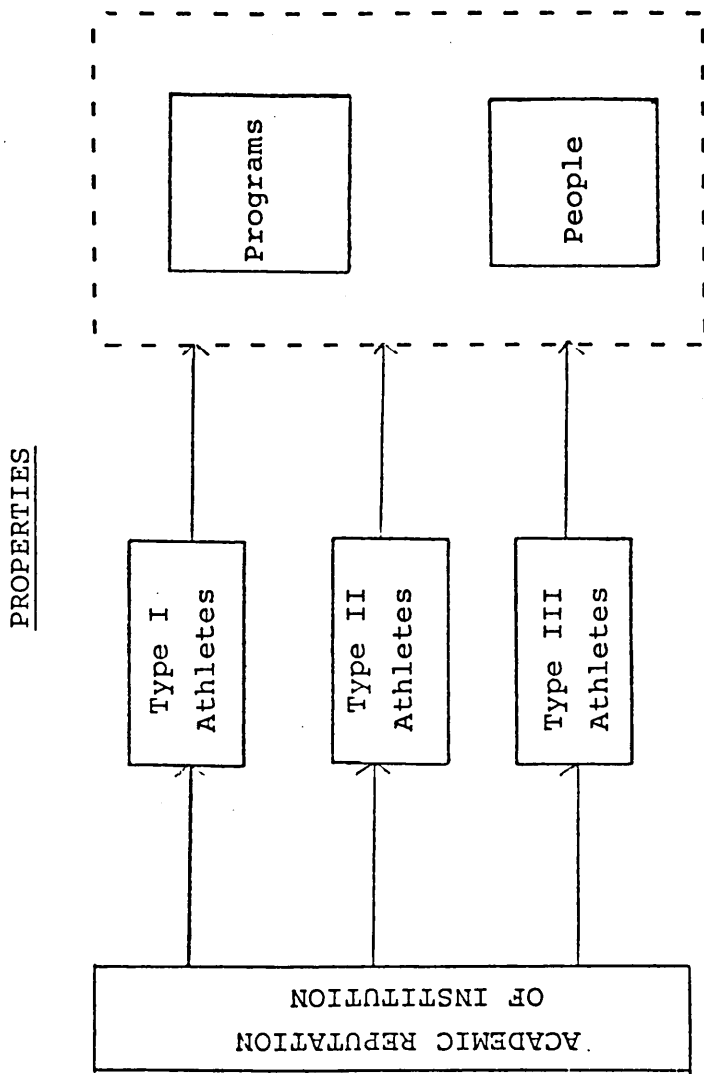


Figure 3. Interactive Framework of Properties



the participants. Some of the subjects spoke as athletes, others as student athletes, and still others represented a more purely academic view. The type of student, the perception of the academic reputation (image) of the college, the academic assistance programs offered by the institution, and the relationship of the student athlete to other people on campus (both positionally and personally) interacted to produce student athletes whose perceptions of academic assistance depended upon the interworkings of their expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance.

The origin of the model in Figure 2 is a result of the implementation of the principles of grounded theory. A description, in a discussional format, follows to offer explanation of the individual properties and the conceptual categories of the core dimension of the data, namely, perceptions of academic assistance.

#### Development of Properties

To discover the variables that impact an athlete's academic achievement, the researcher directed the following questions (or variations thereof) to student athletes, "What aspects of this educational environment help you to achieve your academic goals?" or, "Of all the components or elements that combine to form this institution, which are helpful in assisting you academically?"

Most often the athletes understood the question,

however, it was necessary to offer explanation to a few who appeared perplexed. In these instances the researcher provided assistance by explaining that colleges and universities consist of faculty, staff, curricular programs, and academic support services, just to name a few of the contributing areas of an institution. After briefly describing an institution in such a manner, additional assistance was no longer needed.

The purpose of initial data gathering was to develop as many properties or categories of analysis as possible. Responses were varied, furnishing a full range or continuum of incidents to compare.

The basic, defining rule for this constant comparative method of analysis is "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 106). Constant comparison of incidents not only allowed the researcher to develop as many categories of analysis as possible, compare categories or incidents, and eventually collapse the categories into higher level conceptual categories, but also allowed the researcher to determine the saturation point of the data. Data saturation occurs when no new data are being found to develop additional properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation occurred in this study after a total of 32 student athletes were interviewed.

The researcher, utilizing the constant comparative method of analysis, identified the following properties or categories of analysis from the data: (a) academic reputation of institutions, (b) types of student athletes, (c) programs, and (d) people. An explanation of the properties as they emerged from the data follows.

Academic Reputation. The academic reputation of institutions impacted the academic achievement of student athletes by influencing the amount of effort athletes directed toward study. The amount of academic effort was in direct proportion to the extent the athlete perceived the institution had a good academic reputation. These perceptions affected study habits and utilization of academic support programs.

Student athletes reported greater efforts academically in institutions described as being "concerned about their academic well-being." Athletes depicted institutions manifesting such concerns as being academically reputable, producing feelings of pride, academically, in the athletes' respective institutions. For example, this institutional effect upon academic effort was very visible at the University of Virginia. Athletes at that particular institution enjoyed telling others that "they go to the University of Virginia." This impact of institution upon academics did not guarantee that athletes would attain higher grades, it only ensured the fact that they would work

harder to achieve better grades.

Student athletes described the academic reputation of their institutions in terms of broad generalities. Comments such as the following were typical. "Everyone knows that UVA is a great school." "UVA has produced many great leaders," and, "Tech is a great school, academics are tough." Athletes reported that they attempted to "live up to" the academic standards and reputation of their institutions, demonstrating this tendency in terms of effort, not necessarily achievement.

All of the institutions participating in this study offered similar academic support programs. Institutions with a strong academic reputation, such as the University of Virginia, did not differ with a relatively new institution, Liberty Baptist College (founded in 1971), in types of support programs offered to athletes. The major differences in institutional support programs were in structure, organizational pattern, and accessibility to student athletes.

The manner in which the athletes perceived the purpose of the support programs proved to be significant. It was important for athletes to feel that the institution offered support programs for their benefit, not merely as "window dressing," as one athlete stated, just so that the institution could say that support programs were available.

Impacting this scenario was the aforementioned academic

reputation of an institution. The better the academic reputation of the institution, the greater effort the athletes made toward academic achievement, and the greater use of the academic support programs.

The academic reputation of the institution was more important to the athlete after enrolling in the school than it was during the time the athlete was contemplating college choice. Athletes, on the whole, gave reasons other than academic for enrollment in a particular institution. Indicative responses supportive of this included, "I felt I could start as a freshman by coming here," "The coach and I hit it off pretty well," and "The school is close to home. Mom could see me play."

Institutional characteristics such as type, affiliation, and size had little or no impact upon an athlete's decision to enroll. More important factors were level of competition, a chance to play, reputation of the coach, living accommodations, a chance to travel via an "attractive" schedule, and the athletic reputation of the school. None of the participants interviewed stated that they chose a college because it was a state school, private school, liberal arts college, employed nationally known professors, or had a certain affiliation. These and other institutional characteristics became significant only if the athlete perceived that the school had a good academic reputation. This "good academic reputation" did not take

the form of scholarly lectures or degree of curricular difficulty. Rather, student athletes equated academic reputation with the amount of personal interest shown to them by administrators, faculty, coaches, and staff. Comments often reflecting this sentiment were, "This is a great academic institution. Everyone goes out of their way to help you," or "You can tell this is a good school by the emphasis everyone puts on academics." If athletes perceived that institutional personnel (administrators, faculty, coaches, etc.) were of one accord in stressing the value of academics, they tended to view the school as having a good academic reputation. The greater the perception, the greater the extent of academic effort expended by the athlete.

Athletes who perceived that their institution had a good academic reputation developed a loyalty toward institutional type. For example, one student athlete remarked that "I'm glad I decided to go to a private school. People here care about you." This consideration was after the fact. As stated earlier, athletes, for the most part, did not consider institutional characteristics as the most important criteria for college choice. However, their perception of the academic image of the institution after enrollment did impact their academic effort.

As the study progressed and incidents were coded and compared to previous incidents, the data led the researcher

to discover that student athletes could be typed into three separate categories. These categories were: (a) those who desired either a good job or attendance at a graduate school immediately after college (Type I); (b) those who wanted to work in some form of athletics after their college days, (Type II); and (c) those who desired a professional career in athletics (Type III). These three types of student athletes may be perceived on a continuum as those who are most inclined academically occupying the highest point on the continuum (Type I), those who occupy a place somewhere on the middle of the academic continuum (Type II), and those who are least inclined academically occupying the lowest point on the continuum (Type III).

It became very obvious to the researcher that student type interacted with the additional properties of analysis to offer explanation of athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. Figure 3 provides the nature of this interaction among properties.

Types of Student Athletes. As the researcher coded the data, the following characteristics emerged to describe the different types of student athletes. Career aspirations, the manner in which the athletes viewed academics, their perceptions of academic support services, and their relationship to other people in the college setting emerged to offer distinctions among types of students. These characteristics gave significance to the purpose of the

research; namely, attempting to discover and identify selected factors and conditions of an educational environment which assist athletes academically. The data indicated that the answer to the problem is directly related to type of student. Type II athletes represented the largest group of athletes. Type I and Type III athletes combined came very near to equalling the numbers found in Type II.

Career aspirations were readily discernible by type. Type I athletes desired an "either/or situation" after college. They either wanted a good job immediately upon graduation or to attend graduate school. A good job meant one that "paid well." Athletes in this group made no overtures toward professional sports or demonstrated any desire to remain in athletics after graduation.

Type I athletes were somewhat materialistic and demonstrated this characteristic by stating career goals which would result in security and materialistic possessions. Athletes in this particular group believed these goals could be achieved through a good job or advanced degrees. Type I athletes recognized the insecurity of relying upon professional athletics for a livelihood. They also recognized the low pay associated with coaching and teaching. The only way they desired to remain affiliated with athletics as a means of subsistence was if they owned a recreational club or spa or some type of thriving athletic



business. Otherwise, their career aspirations were apart from athletics. Interestingly, Type I athletes recognized the value of athletics for "contacts" for future employment. Although not desiring to play professionally, they wanted to use the notoriety received from college athletics to propel them into other areas.

Type II athletes wanted to make their livelihood by working in some fashion with athletics after graduation. Teaching physical education, becoming a recreational director, working at an athletic club, and coaching high school or college sports were typical responses from this group of athletes. Athletes in this category realized that for one reason or another they would not have an opportunity to play professional sports. Reasons given were, "I'm not good enough," "I don't have the physical tools," or "Although I know I'll never play professionally, I want to remain in some form of athletics."

Type III athletes were those who desired to play professionally. This type of athlete was by far the easiest to categorize. The consuming desire of Type III athletes was to become a professional athlete. In so doing, he desired to make the "big bucks."

The manner in which athletes viewed academics was another distinguishing feature of the different types of athletes. Academics were as important as athletics for Type I athletes. These athletes knew that they had to expend the

effort to make the grades for entrance into graduate school or to receive recommendations for "good" jobs. Type I athletes, as expected, majored in curricular areas other than physical education. Type II and Type III athletes, for the most part majored in physical education and related areas such as sports management.

Type II athletes described themselves as "middle-of-the-road" students academically. Recognizing that their chances of playing professionally were almost nonexistent, but nevertheless desiring to remain in the field of athletics, they wanted to finish their degree programs. Type II athletes, on the other hand, did not make their greatest effort academically. They viewed their undergraduate lives as being terminal academically. Academics was "something to do well enough in, in order to get the degree."

Type III athletes gave the least amount of attention to academics. If they were to fail professionally, academics was something "to fall back on." These athletes took the path of least resistance academically. Their main goal educationally was to "stay eligible" in order to participate in athletics.

Programs. The properties of "people" and "programs" also emerged from analysis of the data to offer explanation of the conditions and factors assisting student athletes academically.

One of the questions posed to the athletes participating in the study was, "Are you familiar with any programs that the institution provides to help you, as an athlete, academically?" The two services identified most often were the tutorial programs and the supervised study halls. Other areas of help, although not mentioned as frequently, were reading and writing labs and counseling.

Regardless of athletic type, all athletes agreed that these programs were helpful and a necessary support to their academic well-being. Having discovered this stated agreement, the researcher assumed that athletes would create a great demand for these services. Such was not the case. Once again, the researcher discovered that the utilization of programs depended upon the type of athlete in question.

Type II athletes represented a middle ground between the extremes of Type I and Type III athletes. Athletes with professional aspirations (Type III) used the tutoring services more frequently than any other group. Type I athletes rarely used tutors. As far as a particular sport was concerned, football players, more than any other group of athletes, perceived tutoring as being extremely helpful academically.

Tutors most often were other students. They were not necessarily dean's list students, but students who were proficient in the particular curricular area in which they were tutoring. A case in point was a math tutor for

football players at the University of Richmond, whose G.P.A. was 2.3.

The researcher discovered an interesting phenomenon while attempting to find out how tutors impact athletes' academic achievement. Was there a particular method of instruction involved? What accounted for tutors being "helpful" academically? The answers to these questions were somewhat revealing. The scenario painted by "informed opinion" is that tutors prep athletes for the test at hand. However, the researcher discovered that tutors instruct with long-term goals in mind. In each instance, the athletes made references to the tutors asking them, "What problems are you having in the class?" or "Do you understand the concepts being taught?" None of the athletes being interviewed, when questioned about tutors, made any reference to tutors telling them that they had better know a certain section of material for the next day's class, or the professor will ask "this question" on the test.

Athletes who had used the tutoring service mentioned the "one-on-one" benefits of instruction. They felt "more at ease" in asking questions. One athlete stated that "he didn't feel so dumb when asking a tutor a question that he probably would never ask in class."

Although the athletes who used the tutoring program reported it as being extremely helpful academically, the majority of athletes, regardless of type, had never used the

program. Drawbacks to use included the inconvenience of having to "travel" to meet with the tutor. Tutors were usually scheduled to instruct athletes at supervised study periods. Unless the athlete had to be at the study hall, this meant getting dressed after a hard practice and traveling (in most cases) a mile or so to meet the tutor. Athletes considered this an inconvenience. After a hard practice and meal time, athletes much preferred to relax and study in their rooms.

Scheduling a tutor, usually accomplished through the Office of the Athletic Academic Advisor, also presented another inconvenience for athletes. Most of the athletes were reluctant to contact the academic advisor to arrange for a tutor merely because of the inconvenience.

Athletes regarded study halls as being very helpful to them academically. Study halls were usually for freshmen and any other athlete (in a revenue sport) whose grade point average was 2.0 or below.

All three types of athletes found these study sessions to be helpful as long as they were closely supervised. Type I athletes remarked that on several occasions the study halls would turn into "bull sessions," often because athletes who were not required to attend did so and contributed to these informal social sessions. The fact that study halls at times were more social than studious did not appear to bother Type II and Type III athletes.

Although all three types agreed upon the effectiveness of closely supervised study halls, Type I athletes were vehement in objecting to being made to attend study halls which resembled social events. Typical comments included, "If a position coach is present, he most often ends up talking to his players," "Players are too tired to study, so they end up socializing," and "It's hard to study, for those who really want to. After an hour or so the players want to talk to someone."

Athletes of all types expressed joy over not having to attend study halls after their freshman year. They recognized the academic potential of such a program if conducted properly. However, as they moved toward upperclass status, they preferred to study in manners of their own choosing.

An objection voiced by many athletes concerning study halls was the "rigidity" of study. Study halls, most often, took place in the evening hours, somewhere in the 7-10 p.m. slot. Athletes were tired and did not wish to sit at desks or tables to study. Many preferred to recline on their bed for study or go to a lounge area.

Reading and writing labs represented another program frequently mentioned by athletes as being helpful in their academic achievement. A problem associated with this service was that many athletes were not aware of this program until late into their sophomore year. Type III

athletes reported greater use of this service than the other types. However, Type III athletes also reported that even though the program was helpful, they did not like utilizing the service. Typical comments were, "Every time you go there, they end up giving you something to read or write," "It's helpful, but who has time to go there, and even if you did, they want to give you some kind of assignment to improve your skills," and "The 'quick fix' is your roommate, not a reading and writing lab." Athletes hesitated utilizing reading and writing labs for fear of extra work. Instead, they reported a desire to "get help quickly" by asking other students for assistance. Type II athletes used those labs more often than Type I. However, even Type II athletes hesitated to use the reading and writing labs if they thought additional work would result.

Type I athletes preferred not to use the reading and writing labs. Rather, their interest lay in using their available time for study. Type I athletes would use the labs when they had professors who were critical of their "writing style." Athletes in this group maintained that "they possessed good writing skills, but at times needed assistance in modifying their writing style to appease certain professors." Even then, their quickest and most often mentioned resource was to seek assistance from other students, not institutional personnel in the reading and writing labs.

The only other programs which athletes considered helpful in their academic achievement was that of counseling. The "counseling" mentioned by athletes was not counseling in the "traditional sense," but counseling which athletes perceived as sports psychology.

Many athletes were willing to seek help from psychologists in the areas of relaxation, motivation, and concentration. Type III athletes, in particular, expressed concerns that these were important areas in their lives. They needed as much assistance in these areas as possible to reach their goals of professional sports. Type II athletes recognized the importance of such counseling, although they did not place as much value on it as did Type III athletes.

Type I athletes did not feel they needed "gurus" to provide assistance with concentration, motivation, and relaxation. According to Type I athletes, these attributes were intrinsic and, as such, could not be enhanced through sports psychology.

Type II and Type III athletes depicted the relationship between academic achievement and counseling of this type by such comments as "If it helps me to concentrate on the court, it can't help but make me concentrate more in the classroom," and "Maybe such motivational help will have a spillover into the classroom."

The data led the researcher to attempt to discover if athletes used counseling services for personal problems.



Athletes were asked, "If you had a personal problem such that it was negatively impacting your grades, where would you go for help?" Without hesitation, athletes were almost unanimous in voicing that they would turn to other students for help. These responses directed the researcher to question and probe for an elaboration of answers. Since institutions provided qualified counselors willing to serve the needs of students, the researcher asked athletes why they did not make use of their services. Typical responses were, "Counselors may be qualified, but they are strangers to athletes," "Counselors do not understand the problems of athletes," "Most counselors were not athletes themselves," "It will go on my record and may even stigmatize me that I had to use a counselor," and "What will people think if it gets out that I had to use a counselor to help me with a personal problem?"

Athletes, regardless of type, generally did not utilize the counseling services. An Athletic Academic Advisor at one of the institutions participating in this study verified this conclusion. Holding advanced degrees in counseling, she remarked, "I know that many of our athletes have personal problems. However, they just will not seek help!"

People. The relationship that athletes held with other people represented the last property of analysis, developed from the data, which athletes acknowledged as impacting their academic achievement. Not long into the study, the

researcher discovered that athletes are primarily "people oriented." The data continually validated this property. Athletes would rather discuss people than programs. Categories of people who primarily impact the academic achievement of athletes are other students, coaches, professors, and athletic academic advisors.

According to student athletes, of all the people on college campuses who represent any type of subpopulation, the group which contributes the most to the academic achievement of student athletes are "other students." Other students serve as a support base for athletes primarily by encouraging athletes academically, providing notes for missed classes, assistance in classwork, and counseling for personal problems. In addition, peers provide prompt solutions to problems through their accessibility. Athletes frequently reported that other students "could be seen without an appointment."

Student athletes perceived that the willingness of other students to handle "bureaucratic red tape" in their behalf was significant in assisting them academically. Many of the Type III athletes had "friends" who were willing to stop by faculty offices to pick up academic materials from professors, stand in line for them at the bookstore, run library errands, and make copies of needed academic materials. These demonstrations of friendship occurred quite often when athletes were on road trips. The data

indicated that Type III athletes reported having more fellow students willing to do these niceties than did Type I and Type II athletes. Type III athletes (those with professional aspirations) reported that their chances of playing professional sports seemed to account for the charisma that draws other students to themselves.

Although acknowledging that their chances of playing professionally were minimal, Type I and Type II athletes, nevertheless, maintained multiple and solid relationships with other students. Type II athletes described their relationship with other students as one in which friendships "will be lasting." Athletes, in this category, described this type of relationship as being less superficial than relationships described by Type III athletes. Athletes with professional aspirations (Type III) perceived that many students form relationships with them due to their athletic prowess, apart from which there might not be any relationship whatsoever.

Type I athletes described their relationships with other students as more meaningful than did Type II athletes. Not only did Type I athletes recognize their relationship with other students as having a lasting value, but also depicted the athlete-nonathlete fellow student relationship as one contributing to their total development.

Type I athletes, more so than the other types, relished the company of nonathletes. These athletes reported that

there was a "time and place for athletics," after which they desired to fellowship and socialize with nonathletes.

Professors also represented an interesting contribution to the academic achievement of athletes. According to student athletes, professors maintained that "they treated all students alike." However, athletes reported being able to detect differences in professorial attitudes toward athletes. These differences were viewed both positively and negatively, depending upon the professor. Athletes "research" professors' feelings about athletes in general prior to enrolling in a particular class. Information concerning a particular professor's attitudes about athletes primarily came from other students.

Athletes from all three categories preferred that the professors not know that they were members of athletic teams, unless they knew for sure that the professors were "for" athletes. Athletes expressed comments such as, "I could sense a change in the professor's attitude toward me once he knew I played football. It was as though he started intentionally lowering his teaching standards for my benefit," "The first day I walked into a business class, the professor gave me body language, as if to say it was going to be a long semester with me in his class," and "Professors really make an effort to hide their feelings about athletes, but after a while it is obvious that athletics is an issue with them in some fashion or another.

There is no neutrality on the subject."

Athletes, when questioned how professors demonstrated that they were "for" athletes, gave comments such as, "The professor is willing to accommodate my athletic schedule. He will either let me take a test early or give me a make-up as soon as I get back," "The professor really understands the extra time demands on athletes. He is accessible when I need to see him," and "He shows a real interest in the athletes. He is willing to listen to us and doesn't feel that we're just giving him a bunch of excuses."

The data indicated that Type III athletes expressed intense concerns about choice of professors. Type III athletes were convinced that certain professors disliked having athletes in their classes. Athletes in this category believed that their relationship with the professor was critical for maintaining eligibility.

Type II athletes expressed the same concerns, but not to the degree or intensity level as Type III athletes. Type I athletes appeared to recognize that their academic task (graduate school/good job) was going to be difficult whether the professor possessed "athletic sympathies" or not. A Type I athlete at a Division I institution remarked, "Life is not a bowl of cherries. The exams in my curriculum are hard, regardless what the professor may think about athletes."

A minority of professors who possessed "athletic

sympathies" were guilty of "giving grades" according to a few of the student athletes. This giving of grades materialized in lower academic expectations and requirements for athletes. Athletes who responded in this manner maintained that they still took all of the exams, wrote all of the papers, and did all of the assignments. However, they also felt that their work, most often, was inferior to nonathletes, even though their grades on certain assignments were basically the same.

Professors, then, assisted athletes academically by being accessible, by being willing to "work around" the difficult schedule of athletes, and by being sympathetic to their needs. Athletes sought these particular qualities in a professor before enrolling in a class, unless there was no other recourse. In situations where a professor possessed negative feelings toward athletes, student athletes preferred to remain "low-key," hoping that the professor would not discover that they were athletes. Obviously, student athletes of immense physical size reported difficulty in "being able to hide."

Coaches served as a source of encouragement and support for athletes. In essence they were academic cheerleaders. This kind of support was extremely valuable for Type III athletes. A football player who had visions of playing professionally remarked, "Coach stays on us about our grades." Another Type III player commented, "I need the pep

talks Coach gives us. He tells us that we will never get a chance to go pro if we flunk out."

Whereas Type III athletes required continual academic encouragement from their coaches, Type I athletes relied on intrinsic motivation, a recognition of the difficulty of their curricular area, and their academic goals as motivating forces for academic achievement. This is not to say that Type I athletes did not value the encouragement given by the coaching staff. On the contrary, they relished encouragement. The point is that Type I athletes usually possessed enough motivation to do well academically apart from the support of the coaches. Additional encouragement from the coaches only improved the situation.

Type II athletes also manifested tendencies to rely on coaches for encouragement. Although athletes in this category believed that they possessed adequate academic abilities, an open admission of lack of academic effort characterized responses. Encouragement and support from the coaches supplied a countermeasure to combat what many of the athletes in this group termed as "laziness."

Type II athletes, as a group, did not set lofty academic goals. Academics were viewed pragmatically as a means to an end. A degree to Type II athletes represented the "key to a future" in coaching or teaching physical education. Additionally, athletes in this group did not appear to be overly concerned about grades. One of the

subjects in the study remarked, "It's pretty easy to earn a "B" in my major, and by doing so, it helps pull up lower grades outside my field."

Athletes of all types maintained that academic success as defined by the coach, the institution, and the NCAA was easy to obtain. These three entities identified success as "staying eligible." According to the athletes, "Success always seemed to be measured by a 2.0 grade point average."

Coaches continually implored athletes to "stay eligible." When questioned about the relationship between staying eligible for participation and academics, most of the athletes reported that the coaches stressed maintaining eligibility as opposed to loftier goals. A Division I basketball player remarked, "It's so easy to keep my eligibility. I can make a couple of "C's" in my major and a couple of "D's" outside my major and still be eligible. When this happens, the coach is off my back and everybody's happy."

Athletes reported that if the eligibility requirements were raised to allow participation in intercollegiate athletics, they would expend more effort academically and achieve higher grade point averages. One of the keys to higher grade point averages, according to student athletes, is that coaches need to stress higher goals than merely "staying eligible."

Student athletes indicated that their coaches did not



appear to understand how their institutions functioned academically. By this, they meant that the coaches were unaware of degree requirements, bureaucratic steps in registration and orientation, and academic assistance programs, and as a result, were limited in their ability to give academic advice. Many coaches channeled athletes to other members of their staff to obtain academic information.

The athletes did not blame the coaches for providing little or no assistance academically. Athletes spoke of coaches in terms of winning and losing and the time constraints placed on their jobs. Typical comments included, "Coach is always on the road scouting and recruiting. There's no way he can really know the professors or give us advice on our classes," "The institution doesn't pay the coach to see if we're going to class; they pay him to win," and "Coach is satisfied if we stay eligible. He knows that we have enough pressure on us anyway."

The Athletic Academic Advisor also proved to be a very significant person impacting the academic achievement of athletes. Persons in these positions played prominent roles in the academic lives of student athletes. Formal duties of the Athletic Academic Advisor most often included checking athletes' course schedules, securing course preferences (time and day) for athletes so as not to interfere with athletic commitments, securing tutors for athletes, acting

as a liaison between coach and professor, providing academic feedback to coaches, channeling the student athlete to the proper offices for information about various institutional activities and functions, counseling, and basically acting as an "academic trouble-shooter" for the athletic department.

Athletic Academic Advisors need to be distinguished from Academic Advisors. Academic Advisors (often referred to as "Curriculum Advisors" by the athletes) steered the athletes in academic programs that would eventually lead to a degree. They offered suggestions on course sequence and choice of classes. The Athletic Academic Advisors handled problems that arose after the courses were agreed upon by the student and academic advisor. Problems such as class closings or scheduling conflicts represented typical problems in this area.

Type III athletes make the most extensive use of the services of the Athletic Academic Advisor. Besides serving in a positional role, the Athletic Academic Advisor often served in a personal role in assisting Type III athletes academically. Many Type III athletes who reported having difficulty academically were able to use the Athletic Academic Advisor as a "sounding board" to hear their problems.

Type III athletes also used the services of this office to make sure that their academic schedules would in no way

conflict with their athletic commitments. Any conflict between academics and athletics would represent, for Type III athletes, an obstacle to reaching their goal of professional sports.

The importance of the office of Athletic Academic Advisor cannot be overstated. Although most of the athletes did not like the inconvenience of having a problem with which to contend, they knew that they could go to the Athletic Academic Advisor for advice, academic assistance, and direction. An example of such confidence was typified in such statements as, "The Athletic Advisor can fix any problem I might have in my schedule," and "The Athletic Advisor knows where I can get help for any academic problems."

Type I and Type II athletes also used the services of the Athletic Academic Advisor. Both types made sure that their academic schedules were harmonious with their athletic schedules. Type I athletes reported utilizing the Athletic Academic Advisor to "go to bat" for them with certain professors. This meant that they wanted the professors to understand and sympathize with them concerning the time constraints placed on them by participating in athletics. Type I athletes felt this was necessary due to the difficulty of curricular areas in which they were enrolled. Type II athletes did not express this concern.

Athletes of all types expressed concern that

insufficient recognition was given for academic achievement of athletes. According to the athletes, Athletic Academic Advisors initiated most of the recognition received in this area. Most institutions had designated areas in their coliseums or field houses for such recognition in the form of plaques or pictures of the athletes placed on "Walls of Fame."

Athletes are people oriented and thus respond to recognition from others. As a result, all of the athletes participating in the study voiced a need to give greater recognition to their academic achievement. Their contention was that their institutions give only "lip service" to academic achievement. Typical responses reflecting these sentiments were, "The recognition that the institution does give to athletes for academics is largely due to the efforts of the Athletic Academic Advisor," "The Wall of Fame was not an institutional idea but an idea of the Athletic Department," and "Most of our academic recognition comes from the efforts of the Athletic Academic Advisor. The institution doesn't push academics for athletes."

Many of the athletes voiced displeasure at having a problem which necessitated meeting with the Athletic Academic Advisor. This was not a reflection on the Athletic Advisor, but a feeling of guilt on the part of the athlete. Athletes of all three types felt that the Athletic Academic Advisor and his or her staff were overloaded with

responsibilities. Many voiced a need to enlarge the present size of the staff.

Athletic Academic Advisors were considered very important in assisting athletes academically. They provided a service to the athletes both positionally and personally, while simultaneously helping to create an awareness of the need to recognize athletes for accomplishments in academics.

#### Development of Conceptual Categories

Grounded theory dictates that the researcher use the constant comparative method of analysis to delimit the theory. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), "the analyst may discover underlying uniformities in the original set of categories or their properties, and can then formulate the theory with a smaller set of higher level concepts" (p. 110). The delimitation stage reduces terminology and allows for a generalization by constant comparison. The theory begins to solidify while the data becomes better ordered and more compact allowing the researcher more time to analyze a smaller set of concepts.

Theoretical saturation initiates the delimiting stage of the theory. At this point in the research, there is no longer a need to code incidents, for they add new nothing to the study. The continuum of responses for each category has been saturated.

The delimitation stage of theory development allows the researcher to reduce terminology and generalize findings.

At this stage of development, the theory acquires the attributes of "(1) parsimony of variables and formulation, and (2) scope in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations while keeping a close correspondence of theory and data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 111).

The delimitation stage of theory development for this research began after 32 interviews, conducted with student athletes spread among six institutions. Using the constant comparative method of analysis, the researcher conceptualized and reconceptualized the data, leading the researcher to collapse the data into higher level conceptual categories of "expectations for academic performance" and "expectations for athletic performance." Expectations for academic performance represents the student in the student athlete phrase, while expectations for athletic performance represents the athlete. The conceptual categories, with their properties, form the basis for providing a description of the central theme of the research; namely, perceptions of academic assistance.

#### Interaction of Conceptual Categories

Upon reaching the saturation point in the data collection, it became very obvious to the researcher, that when attempting to discover and identify the factors and conditions of an educational environment that assist athletes academically, it was necessary to determine the student athletes perceptions of the interaction between

athletics and academics. The data indicated that the manner in which student athletes perceived this interaction determined their perception of academic assistance. Leach and Connors (1984) describe this scenario in the following manner.

Unlike other students, there is a conflicting duality in the role of the student athlete. Academicians on one side insist on the primacy of academic achievement. Avid fans on the other side insist on a winning team in return for their money. Faculty insist on regular class attendance while boosters clamor for more college baseball games that would make regular class attendance impossible. Ignorant of the demands of others, constituencies exert pressure on the student athlete that often creates conflicts too overwhelming for the individual to resolve, resulting in athletes having to determine for themselves the interaction process of academics and athletes. (p. 47)

This interaction between expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance is shaped by the academic reputation of the institution, differences in types of student athletes, the academic assistance programs offered by the institution, and the relationship of the athletes to other people on the campus--all of which, as properties of analysis, serve as factors or conditions impacting this interaction. The manner in which athletes perceive their environment, through these interactions, determines whether they speak as "students," as "athletes," or as "student athletes."

Athletic performance affects the academic performance of athletes and vice versa (Hurley & Cunningham, 1984).

Athletes, participating in this study, report that their performances as athletes are better when they are confident, relaxed, "feel good about themselves," and think positively. They become more productive in the athletic arena when these characteristics are operative, a productivity which has a "spillover effect" upon the academic setting. Athletes responded that they "tried much harder" academically when they were performing well athletically.

The researcher also discovered that expectations for academic performance has a profound effect upon expectations for athletic performance. Athletes, on the whole, resent being labeled as "dumb jocks." Some of the Type I and Type II athletes acknowledged that the label does fit, but only for Type III athletes. Reasons given for the label varied; however, the most prominent reason was that Type III athletes are basically lazy academically.

The "dumb jock" image undermined the student athlete's self-concept, which was important for academic performance. Athletes reported that this academic stereotype put more pressure on them athletically. If they performed poorly in the athletic arena, many felt that fans would hurl personal insults such as, "He's just another dumb jock."

The athletes' perceptions of how the institution implemented provisions for their total development also helped determine their expectations for academic performance. Athletes who visualized their institutions as



"athletic factories" perceived that their institutions recognized them primarily as athletes and not students. It was "easy" for these athletes to determine their purpose on campus. The college provided special living quarters for them, training meals, isolated them from the rest of the student body, and made no special efforts to encourage academic achievement beyond "staying eligible." Athletes with these perceptions voiced resentment toward their schools. Typical comments reflecting these resentments included, "They do everything for us. All we have to do is perform," "If I was here to get "A's," do you think I would be treated this good?" "They hold our hands through registration, get us the best classes, and basically do everything for us. It's hard to learn responsibility in a situation like that."

Type I and Type II student athletes recognized the importance of total development offering the following definition: "Total development means making provisions for students to become well rounded--physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually." Type III athletes also recognized the importance of total development, however, athletes in that group viewed it as being important insofar as opportunities for personal development did not interfere with their professional goals.

Athletes of all types reported striving for the total development of students was a proper goal of institutions.

However, the athletes also reported being able to ascertain the degree of institutional commitment to this goal by the emphasis placed on certain programs, howbeit athletic or academic. If the athletes perceived that the institutions were indeed interested in their total development, each reported expending greater effort academically. Conversely, if the institutions did not demonstrate an interest in total development, athletics occupied even more of the student athletes' time. Athletes were not to be deluded in this area. One athlete at a Division I institution reported, "When viewing academic and athletics, it's easy to see which is the dog and which is the tail."

Further questioning of athletes concerning their perceptions of the interaction between athletics and academics produced responses represented by a near perfect negative correlation. Athletes reported that the loftier the athletic goals of an institution, the lower the emphasis of academics. Athletes believed that intercollegiate sports have become such big business that it puts the institution in a compromising position academically. According to one football player, "Colleges no longer win national championships and simultaneously produce athletes who are Rhodes scholars."

Athletes perceived that college administrators and faculty were frustrated because the academic-athletic scenario had become too difficult to control. According to

the athletes, institutional personnel were often forced to make decisions that involved choosing in favor of academics or athletics. Dollars and cents dictated that many choices favor athletics, even in settings renown for educational endeavors.

Athletes sympathized with colleges and universities, recognizing that institutions wanted to remain loyal to their stated purposes and academic goals. However, in order to attract the best athletes, that was not always possible. According to a Division I basketball player, "Institutions were willing to hedge their academic standards if it means enrolling a potential "All-American." Athletes felt that institutions were in a "Catch-22" situation. They could not afford to enroll certain athletes, nor could they afford to reject them from a monetary standpoint. Athletes represented income to the college treasuries. As a result, institutions were willing to "take a chance" on athletes, provide academic support programs for them, and hope that the athlete would give emphasis to the "student" part of the "student athlete" phrase.

Student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance is the central theme of this study. This chapter on findings offered a description of these perceptions. Chapter 4 provides a review of related literature on the academic environment of student athletes, the factors which impact their academic achievement, and a basis for comparing the

findings reported in this chapter with data from relevant research.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine research directly relevant to the main thrust of this study; namely, the expressed perceptions of academic assistance as seen through the eyes of the student athlete. An additional purpose of the following review is to abstract some relevance in the literature which explains the model of academic assistance provided in the previous chapter. Adherence to the sequential components of this model would comfortably suggest a treatment which unfolds through: (a) the academic reputation of the institution; (b) isolation of even indirect references to athlete types; (c) curricular programs and specific people; and (d) the results of the program and personnel variables as manifested in both academic and athletic performance. In summary, a reputable academic institution impacts its varied clientele of student athletes with a variety of support services to overcome the historically inherent conflict wrapped up in the grammatical hyphen often inserted between "student" and "athlete."

#### Academic Reputation of the Institution

As noted earlier, the academic reputation of the institution, whether public or private, produced feelings of pride in the athletes to the extent to which they perceived their institution as academically reputable. This pride was

expressed in greater efforts toward academic achievement in an attempt to "live up to" institutionally established academic standards. This impact was not necessarily a guarantee of a higher grade point average.

The crux of this academic reputation was the athlete's feeling that the institution was sincerely concerned about both the personal and academic well-being of athletes. Support programs, however organized or structured, were more highly regarded if they clearly appeared as accessible and specifically designed for an athlete's unique benefit, not merely as "window dressing." These nonperfunctory supports appeared to impact with greater significance after enrollment than at the time the athlete was debating a college selection. Traditional institutional characteristics (size, affiliation, type, etc.) became significant only after the athlete had experientially equated the academic reputation of such institution with the personalized attention shown by administrators, faculty, coaches, and other staff. Conversely, a facade of institutional concern for academics seems to encourage a corresponding diminution of scholastic effort from the athlete.

Spreitzer and Pugh (1973) found this correspondence between personalized academic goals and the institutional priority of value placed upon "interscholastic achievement" to hold also at the high school level. Similar examples of

high school oriented programs were discussed by Hanks and Ekland (1976) and Hanks (1979). A junior college picture depicting this same relationship was drawn by Hyatt (1982). Perhaps athletic participation generates pseudo-expectations in that personal status perceptions and subsequent goals are elevated without inculcating the academic skills and scholastic orientations necessary for their fulfillment, as suggested by Spady (1970). When these skills and orientations are promised and not delivered in a genuine manner to the athlete, they may be perceived as a form of "bait-and-switch," or "window-dressing," that will eventually erode both academic and athletic performance. The potential for damage not only to perceptions of academia but to those perceptions of self as one who was apparently not perceived by significant others as worthy of better treatment should be noted (O'Connor, 1982).

The literature is replete with descriptions of educational environments designed to assist athletes academically. A study undertaken at Florida State University (Johnson & Renwick, 1983) "compared the academic achievement of current athletes to matched nonathletes and former athletes, specifically comparing the impact the intercollegiate athletic experience had upon the academic attainment of these student athletes" (p. 22). A comparison of male athletes in three sports (football, basketball, and baseball) and female athletes also in three sports

(volleyball, basketball, and softball) concluded "that extensive effort on the part of the Florida State Athletic Department to assist student athletes through tutorial programs, mandatory attendance in study sessions, and updates on the athlete's academic progress are working" (p. 24).

An academic success program (ASP) for athletes at Wichita State University (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981) which detailed the packaging of existing strategies to "maximize the student athlete's opportunity to take advantage of available services" (p. 19) emphasized the development of communication skills necessary for academic success in college. Evidence of genuine concern for the athlete was visible in a concluding statement:

The program clearly involves an enormous amount of initial investment of time and energy in helping these young people. But, the pay-off is very high in terms of time saved later, and most importantly, in redirected human lives. (p. 20)

The system of monitoring athletics at the University of Missouri at Columbia was created with a main goal "to assist the university community in developing the awareness and shared concern in effectively maintaining institutional control over the entire athletic program" (Lengyel, 1982, p. 19). There were four basic areas involved in Missouri's monitoring process: (a) institutional control which subsumed athletic representatives, outside athletic-related compensation, and quarterback clubs; (b) recruiting which



included alumni clubs, weekly recruiting contact reports, student athlete recruiting contact reports, summer employment reports, receipts for cash expenditure forms, and a master recruiting book; (c) academic eligibility wherein the Director of Admissions submitted an annual report to the Chancellor which contained information on athletes concerning incoming GPA's, special admissions percentages, average hours and GPA's for individuals and groups per semester, rates of program progress, graduation and persistence rates, etc.; and (4) financial aid records maintained at the AD level with precise indications of total allowable institutional aid awarded to each student athlete during the year, plus monitoring all outside interests to prevent any illegal incentives being provided to any student athlete (Lengyel, 1982). A sincerity is apparent in Lengyel's conclusion:

The monitoring of the athletic program at the University of Missouri is far from perfect and it will be under continual modification to create simplifications wherever possible but never at the expense of accountability. In the final analysis there is no monitoring program that will ever replace the honesty and personal integrity of the administrators, coaches, alumni, boosters and student athletes involved in college athletics.  
(p. 21)

#### Student Athletes Types

The data garnered for this study sifted out into three reasonably distinct categories of student athletes, viz.:

(a) the "STUDENT>athlete" with either graduate school or a

good-paying job as a goal; (b) the "student athlete" who desired a teaching/coaching position as a career choice; and (c) the "student<ATHLETE" who plans to enter a professional athletic career. These three were labeled as Types I, II, and III athletes, respectively. Type I is a student who also is an athlete; Type II represents a more-or-less balance between the "student" and the "athlete" components; and Type III is an athlete who also is a student.

The potentially obvious implications of this "student athlete classification system" in terms of perceptions of academic assistance were not available to other researchers. Whereas these categories provided a structured significance to the purpose of this research, attempts to locate similar categories in the literature were not quickly rewarded, but those references found are reviewed below.

McFarland and Yeargan (1981) underlined the fact that "many student athletes view the four years of intercollegiate competition on a university team as a farm club experience, during which time they must sharpen their athletic skill and establish the reputation which will lead to lucrative professional athletic contracts" (p. 18). Miller (1980) emphasized the necessity for examining a certificated program for a small percentage of student athletes that would prepare them for professional sports but not necessarily lead to a degree.

Ross (1983) even more boldly suggested that degrees be

awarded in the curricular area of athletics.

Colleges and universities need to give some consideration to adding a major degree in "Athletics" for these student athletes who attend school on athletic scholarships or play varsity sports. If you analyze this suggestion rationally and practically, it is not as radical as you might assume. Many fine institutions offer degrees in Physical Education and Health, Recreation and Sports Studies. Students obtaining such degrees must satisfy minimum academic requirements before graduation. Why wouldn't a similar degree in Athletics be feasible, assuming these students would have to meet the same minimum academic standards?

I recognize that such a degree would be open to a limited number of student athletes. But selectivity is a part of graduate school, law school and medical school. Only those possessing the requisite skills and aptitude can be admitted. Let's be realistic--everyone can't be a neurosurgeon or practice before the Supreme Court. By the same token, everyone can't run 100 meters in 10 seconds, make a vertical leap of 40 inches, or break par regularly. (p. 64)

McFarland, Miller, and Ross appear to be referring to the Type III student<ATHLETE--those who desire to play professionally and make the "big bucks." They tend to take the path of least academic resistance toward their main objective of staying eligible in order to participate in athletics. If they fail professionally, academics becomes a cushion of last resort.

Types I and Types II are virtually indistinguishable in the literature and would theoretically subsume the whole volume of research which does not so obviously refer to the Type III student<ATHLETE.

## Programs and People

Both the reputation of the institution and the type of student athlete responding to that institution were earlier judged as impacting academic achievement. In addition to these more content-relevant dimensions of the model were the operational properties of "people" and "programs." The interplay between programs and people and the reputation of the university has been codified recently by a study on intercollegiate athletes made by the American Council on Education. Johnson and Renwick (1983) produced a statement on the purpose of this ACE Commission.

That Commission's purpose, broadly stated, was to help intercollegiate sports assume their true place in higher education. Accordingly, the true place of collegiate athletes was rationalized in terms of educational contributions to the individual participant. Institutions were urged to insist that the student athlete make satisfactory progress toward graduation, that participation in the intercollegiate athletics not interfere with progress toward completion of educational goals, that the so-called advantages accruing to the universities as the result of intercollegiate sports not be permitted to influence academic treatment accorded the athletes and that student athletes in general be treated in equivalent fashion to nonathletes enrolled in the college. (p. 22)

McFarland and Yeargan (1981) disagreed with the Commission's last clause relevant to "equivalent treatment." They had carefully pointed out that "students who participate in intercollegiate athletics often encounter many difficulties not faced by traditional students, and as a result, participation in the sport for which the student

athlete is receiving a scholarship is often so time consuming that survival in the classroom is difficult at best" (p. 18).

Zingg (1982) agreed with this statement but would be quick to add that the special considerations which athletes necessitate--reduced course loads during the sport season, tutors, special advisors, mandatory study halls, academic monitors--are meaningless, if not demeaning, if they are not accompanied with an understanding of why they may be appropriate and what they are intended to accomplish.

McFarland and Yeargan (1981) added these three additional reminders concerning the problems often caused by academically inferior athletes:

(a) ... the fantasy of fame and wealth often makes it difficult for the student athlete to take seriously the academic opportunities available on a college campus; (b) ... coaches frequently are presented with the dilemma of winning athletic contests with players who must remain academically eligible and who do not appear to have the necessary skills; and (c) ... a large percentage of these young people ... could graduate with college degrees if they were directed to develop their academic skills rather than skirting these skills by enrolling in the so called 'easy' courses. (p. 18)

#### Programs

There appears to be no shortage of suggestions relevant to the need for some type of program support for some student athletes. There is, as was stated earlier, a significant silence regarding the "perceptions" of athletes in terms of the programs offered. The student athletes did,

however, in this study mention tutorial assistance and supervised study halls with infrequent reference to reading and writing labs and personal counseling. Although all athletes concurred that these programs were a positive influence on their academic health, the specific utilization of assistance was type-of-athlete-dependent.

Tutorial Assistance Programs. A precis of the findings of this study is encapsulated in the following points: Type III athletes were the most frequent users of tutors, Type I the least frequent, and Type II were between these extremes. In terms of "perception," football players saw tutoring as more helpful than did other athlete groups. The academically average student was an acceptable tutor. Good tutoring aimed toward both long- and short-term academic needs and goals. The tutored preferred the informal, personalized, nonthreatening convenience (dorm-centered), preselected and prescheduled by Athletic Advisor brand of assistance.

Bruce (1976) studied the effects of ten weeks of twice-weekly tutoring sessions upon the academic achievement of 24 athletes at Vanderbilt. He reviewed the obvious, that since the student athlete in many instances represents a sizeable monetary commitment by the institution, tutorial programs supported by athletic departments would provide a measure of security for both the athlete and the department.

Variables investigated included study skills and

attitudes, self-concept, academic achievement as measured by overall grade point averages and specific grades in English. The concomitant influences of immediate feedback, positive reinforcement, and social interaction were reviewed in terms of lowered attrition rates, higher weekly quiz grades, and inward potential for success.

Based upon inconclusive results he cautioned that:

(a) Zealous coaches should avoid presenting the tutoring program to recruits as the means of guaranteeing academic success; (b) the participation and cooperation of the faculty would strengthen the tutoring program; (c) the diagnosis of the student athlete's deficiencies should ideally occur prior to college admission; (d) the program should be designed for individuals rather than for specific classes; (e) tutors should be very carefully selected based upon their understanding of both the tutoring process and their content specialty; and (f) tutors should view their priorities as a professional commitment with important responsibilities. (pp. 72, 73)

Johnson and Renwick (1983) analyzed the college transcripts of over 1,000 subjects, one fourth of which were either current athletes, nonathletes, athletes from 10 to 15 years past, and those from 20 to 25 years ago. They determined the number of hours passed and attempted in basic studies, the major field of study, and electives. Annual and cumulative GPA's, transfer credits, length of time in school, and attrition rates were determined for each student. In addition, the extent of academic achievement during their seasons of sport was calculated. They strongly recommended that tutorial programs be continued at Florida State.

McFarland and Yeargan (1981), in an open admissions urban university which has developed a variety of student service strategies that emphasized careful monitoring of student progress, have advertised their development of "academic potency" in their assignment of student athletes to individual tutors. Their academic success programs (ASP) at Wichita State University is based upon efforts to maximize athletes' opportunities to take advantage of available academic assistance programs. Much of their efforts are directed toward an encouragement of all athletes to make use of a variety of existing tutorial services.

The pervasive themes in these brief reports appear to be the perceptual capacity of those student athletes with greatest need--as measured by that subjective distance which occurs between their future expectations for themselves and the current realities of their academic status--to respond to genuine indications of institutional concern. This concern is variously expressed through acceptable or accessible tutorial support for the student athlete. On these points, high concurrence is maintained between the previous research and this study.

Supervised Study Hall. The student athletes in this study generally considered study hall to be helpful for them, if study times were closely supervised, and therefore, not allowed to become "bull sessions," attendance was not required after their freshman year, and they were not over-



restrictive. The athlete with graduate school in mind was the most vocal on these points.

Bruce (1976) suggested that compulsory study hall attendance be eliminated. He reasoned that "required attendance tends to encourage development of poor study habits in that the athlete may restrict time invested in study to these required sessions alone" (p. 73). In this same vein, the student athlete may be incidentally conditioned to procrastinate both the initiating or the completing of assignments until the study hall period.

McFarland and Yeargan (1981) developed an academic success program with at least two objectives; namely: (a) the implementation of techniques which maximize student athletes' opportunities for success in the classroom, therefore enhancing the possibility for the athlete to earn both a letter for sport participation and a diploma for degree completion; and (b) the provision of assistance to athletes in their development of "skills which will allow pursuit of career goals that do not hinge on the fragile hope of succeeding in professional sports" (p. 19). Their conclusion that this program, goal-oriented in this manner, was "a tremendous resource to the university as a whole, to our athletic association, and to our student athletes" (p. 19) was predicated in part upon a "required four-night per week study hall" (p. 20) with various tutors provided at this time under the overall supervision of the tutoring

coordinator.

Johnson and Renwick (1983) insisted upon "mandatory attendance in study sessions" (p. 24). The rigid overtones on their academic support for the student athletes appears to have been rooted in recent national attention which has been focused on intercollegiate athletics. In fact they prefaced their program description by underling that:

Periodically, lurid details of the seamy side of college sport programs have been brought to the public's attention. The ensuing scandals have precipitated the firing of coaches, declaration that certain athletes are ineligible, appointment of commissions to study the problems, and promises to reform the system...Yet, before this commission could issue its final report and recommendations, several NCAA-affiliated schools became entangled in major academic scandals. Student athletes were enrolled in phantom courses; they did not attend authorized classes for which they were given undeserved credit; transcripts were falsified; and the student athletes who completed graduation requirements appeared to be the exception. (p. 22)

Hanford (1979), then president of the College Board and a member of the American Council on Education's Commission on Collegiate athletes (the flagship commission mentioned by Johnson and Renwick above), reduced what could easily have become a polemic to a partial listing of violations which came to the attention of the Commission's team.

Because the academic malpractices cited by Hanford continue to surface in the media, institutional coordination of academic support programs includes mandatory study halls for athletes, a program existing primarily as a reaction to heralded academic abuses. As a result, athletes, especially

in the revenue sports, will probably be required to continue to attend study halls, however perfunctory.

Reading and Writing Laboratories. These laboratories were frequently mentioned as available but not well advertised on campuses. Users were able to relate an assortment of pros and cons. Briefly, Type II athletes used these laboratories more than Type I athletes, but balked when additional work was piled on. Type III athletes reported heavier use than the other types, but they also hesitated when supplemental reading or writing assignments were added to an already heavy academic work load. Type I athletes would attend, if their professor(s) made an issue of their writing facility. Otherwise, like Types II and III, immediate, "quick-fix" attention from another student was generally preferred over formal laboratory assistance. In general, this study supported higher visibility as a suggestion for reading and writing centers.

Gurney, Robinson, and Fygetakis (1983) investigated trends in academic support services among 114 NCAA Division I institutions. They reported that 44.7 percent of these athletic departments were offering some type of remedial reading program. The Nelson-Denny Reading Test was the most commonly used reading developmental assessment tool (33.3%). Other assessment instruments used were the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills Reading Test and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test series.

Twenty-five percent of the responding departments assessed the writing skills of their student athletes. The most common evaluation instrument was the writing sample analysis. Eighteen percent included study skills analysis and 13 percent said they assessed learning disabilities, with the Woodstock-Johnson Scale and the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale as the most frequently mentioned tests used for this purpose. Many other academic placement tests were used including some in math and English.

Along with a Math Lab, McFarland and Yeargan (1981) mentioned their use of a Learning Resource Center Writing Laboratory which was coordinated by their University College counselor. Freshmen athletes comprised the target population of their resource center.

In summary, reading and writing aspects of academic support programs are sometimes offered by the institution. Very little evidence has accumulated to defend these aspects relevant specifically to student athletes. The literature indicates that reading assistance appears to be about twice as popular a program as writing assistance programs, with freshmen athletes the main target group. However, a phenomenon of this study was that athletes reported unfamiliarity with these services. Student athletes, generally, were not aware of the existence of such services until their sophomore year, resulting in low popularity and infrequent mention of reading and writing labs as

significant to academic achievement.

Counseling. In this study the student athletes preferred a form of counseling that focused upon relaxation, motivation, and concentration. They did not seek traditional professional counseling, even if they had significant personal problems. To reach desired goals, Type I students felt little need for help with concentration, motivation, or relaxation; Type II student athletes placed a moderate value upon this brand of counseling while Type III athletes rested heavily upon it. Most student athletes preferred peer counsel over professional counseling for these reasons: (a) "Strangers" make poor counselors and may not be completely trusted to safeguard personal information; (b) Only another athlete would or could understand my problems; and (c) The sports-type of counseling sought for relaxation, etc., may eventually transfer its effects over into the classroom milieu, maybe even into the private, personal side of an athlete's life.

Gurney, et al., ((1983) reported that only about 15 percent of their NCAA Division I sample included personality assessment in their programs with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory most commonly listed. Eighteen percent used some form of career assessment with the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory and Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD, most often noted.

According to Gurney, et al., (1983), the type and use

of ancillary psychological services commonly associated with therapy offered by sport psychologists and counselors were, in this order:

1) interpersonal communication (9.6%); 2) stress and conflict management (both 7.0%); 3) mental rehearsal imagery (6.1%); progressive muscle relaxation and meditation (both 5.3%); and biofeedback and hypnosis (both 4.4%). (p. 13)

They did acknowledge, however, that the hiring of mental health professionals to provide psychological supports for the student athlete is a recent phenomenon among those responsible for their academic progress.

The Academic Success Program at Wichita State "attempts to help student athletes develop personal identity that is separate from or in addition to, that of the athlete" (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981, p. 19). This feat is accomplished in part by a trained counselor for the program whose special responsibility is to meet with each of the student athletes each week in a one-credit hour counseling seminar, labeled P.D. 100. The counselor, with the assistance of an intern, provides all student athletes with personalized counseling regarding academic, career, and personal problems. "Strategies for working with resident assistants and counselors in the dormitories are being considered as ways of reinforcing the counseling aspect of this program" (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981, p. 19).

This personal identity concept was picked up by Bruce (1976) who found that "athletic department personnel

frequently testify to the need to view athletes as students first and athletes second" (p. 10). He notes, however, that three-fourths of the midwestern athletic directors "encouraged student athletes to share their problems with the athletic staff rather than with the college guidance department." (p. 3)

West (1976) investigated the effectiveness of counseling on first year student athletes at the University of Virginia in an attempt to determine satisfaction with the counseling situation that was provided, as well as the affects of such counseling upon grade point averages at the end of the first college semester. West's synopsis of the literature enunciated the following:

It is becoming clear to society that difficulties which people experience in many areas of life are closely connected with the way they perceive themselves in the world in which they live. There is considerable evidence that the college student's problems of identity, academic adjustment and acceptance of self and others are in a large measure faulty perceptions of one's self and his environment. Since one of the primary goals of counseling is helping the individual better understand himself, his behavior, and his environment, it would appear that counseling should provide a potentially effective remedy for many of the personal problems of the first year college student. (p. 40)

This reference to counseling as a potential avenue of remediation for faulty "perceptions" is specifically germane to this study. In light of the student athletes reluctance to seek professional counsel as sometimes needed, West's weighed conclusion that "required counseling" is as

effective as, if not more effective than "volunteer counseling," assumes a measure of importance.

The counseling techniques with student athletes were credited with producing a half of a grade level difference in GPA's--a key concept vis-a-vis eligibility. Group methods were as effective as individualized approaches, therefore, West recommended that the individualized methods be reserved for those individuals whose problems are not suited to group counseling.

The literature provided a base for differentiation for athletes not only in the area of individualized versus group counseling, but also in developmental tasks in a contest of athletes vs. nonathletes. Sowa and Gressard (1983) explored the relationship between participation in varsity sports at the University of Virginia and the achievement of developmental tasks suggested by Chickering and others. Where differences were found, athletes scored significantly lower than nonathletes.

In recent years, the work of Chickering...on the developmental tasks of students has become an important concept for researchers interested in the psychological well-being and adjustment of the college student. Because college athletes are exposed to different environments than non-athletes (e.g., practice, special living arrangements, fan reaction), it is likely that the difference in environments may be reflected on Chickering's developmental vectors. (p. 236)

Sowa and Gressard (1983) used the Student Development Task Inventory to assess progress toward achievement of such developmental tasks as developing autonomy, purpose, and



mature interpersonal relationships. This inventory also provided scores on nine subscales: emotional autonomy, instrumental autonomy, interdependence, appropriate educational plans, mature career plans, mature life-style plans, intimate relationships, mature relationships with peers, and tolerance. Significant differences were found between athletes and nonathletes on three subscales: educational plans, career plans, and mature relationships with peers.

Suggesting caution in the interpretation of these data, Sowa and Gressard (1983) were willing to venture that

...these differences may be due to the factors related to athletic participation. The suggestibility or coachability of a player that aids the individual in athletic participation may cause difficulty for the athlete in developing individual purpose. The development of purpose requires formulating plans and priorities that integrate avocational interests, vocational plans, and lifestyle considerations. (p. 238)

The data collected by Sowa and Gressard left the implication that student athletes may have more than usual difficulty in formulating well-defined educational goals and gaining personal satisfaction from educational experiences. They concluded that athletic participation greatly impacts the opportunity for academic achievement due to the constraining demands placed on athletes. As a result, student athletes represent a subpopulation with special concerns. Provisions for evaluation of the developmental stages of athletes are suggested, as are auxiliary

counseling programs, designed to offer counsel to athletes commensurate with their stage of development.

Harrison (1981) investigated the enrollment (in U.S. colleges) of many highly skilled athletes who demonstrated inferior academic skills. He concluded that remedial success could be optimized if developmental studies personnel better understood the unique psychological dimensions of the student athlete. An understanding of competition and its effect upon a student athlete's value system was deemed indispensable as a means of offering enlightenment to those attempting to counsel athletes.

In summary, once the topic of counseling is opened for discussion, a plethora of ideas relevant to the unique characteristics and needs of student athletes becomes quickly manifest. Unfortunately, the profession tends not to be engaging these issues in a manner that voluntarily attracts those in need of such counsel. As the stakes are raised and the pressures on the student athlete mount, these services will likely become even more pertinent. The student athlete, of whatever type, will probably continue to withhold participation unless anonymity can be guaranteed by those considered qualified in all salient ways to address the athlete's unique regimen.

Generally speaking, there is a visible excitement over the potential of the above four academic program offerings: tutoring, study hall, reading and writing labs, and personal

counseling. The significant participants in these supportive efforts are, in most cases, convinced that over the next few years the results will become obvious in reduced academic problems and in increased graduation rates of student athletes.

## People

As stated in Chapter 3, the relationship with people represented the last property of analysis which helped athletes academically. People who impact the academic performance of athletes are other students, professors, coaches, and athletic academic advisors.

Student-Peers. Peers impact the student athlete in a variety of ways. They support through encouragement, class assignment assistance, and personal counsel. Peers are always accessible. Type I athletes enjoy both more, and more lasting, friendships with nonathletes. The Type II athletes spoke earlier of lasting friendships in meaningful relationships. Type III athletes suspected that social attachments might be more fleeting, since they felt that their athletic prowess might often be the only basis for peer-relationships.

Zingg (1982), at the University of Pennsylvania, described the socialization components in a student athlete's peer relationships. Athletes vie for nearly 100 national championships, are under the auspices of our national governing organizations, receive unending accolades

when successful, and are daily extolled or criticized in the media, depending upon performance.

In terms of the unique peer-based socialization of the student athlete under these circumstances, Zingg (1982) highlighted that the socialization of the student athlete requires perceptive discernment, and delicate responsiveness by the college, not only throughout the admissions and orientation process, but also through the duration of the athlete's college life.

According to Golden (1984), the socialization needs of athletes go unmet when provisions for "special housing" are offered by institutions. Frequently, such provisions serve no purpose beyond control and confinement, and are definitely life-limiting experiences. "Psychosocial development is frequently limited to other team members who have neither the desire nor the capacity to discuss anything except sports" (Golden, 1984, p. 65). Chickering (1975), in extensive studies on campus-based activities, wrote that students who live in residence halls have more contact with faculty, with student personnel, do better academically, and are more satisfied with college life. These living arrangements presume a mixture of students, not just athletes. Therefore, societal emphasis upon sport has created a tenseful milieu for student athletes, an environment in which athletes are pampered and protected, but who are simultaneously lonely and sheltered.

This "lonely and sheltered" existence is elaborated by McFarland and Yeargan (1981) who reported that "student athletes are often living a considerable distance from friends, and find it difficult to break into the previously established friendship circles of students" (p. 18). Thus, student athletes frequently encounter a sense of personal isolation and loneliness in the midst of a whirlwind of activity. "As a consequence, personal identity and ego become even more highly tied to athletic performance, rather than to a broader sense of self" (McFarland and Yeargan, 1981, p. 18). In addition, Harrison (1981) reinforced this concept of loneliness and isolation of athletes by concluding in his research that the segregation of athletes leads to an inability to cope in "universal situations," perhaps a type of social immaturity.

Sowa and Gressard (1983), however, may have shed some light on the lonely and sheltered existence of student athletes. In their research at the University of Virginia, the Student Development Task Inventory was used which indicated that student athletes scored significantly lower than nonathletes on the subscale "mature relationships with peers." This scale defines a mature relationship with peers as a shift toward greater independence and individuality. The need to be a "joiner" also declines in favor of spending increased time with a few good friends. "This independence may be uncharacteristic of peer relationships in the

athletic environment, especially in team sports, and may not be a sign of developmental immaturity" (Sowa & Gressard, 1983, p. 238).

Wilson (1972) argued that peer group influence is increased as the influence of other agents of change is diminished, an argument verified from the data in this study. Athletes expressed a desire to "break away" from their coaches and other confining influences as they progressed in academic rank.

Although predominantly characterized in the literature as isolated, lonely, and socially immature, student athletes of all types report the value of peer friendships. "Relationships with other persons exert the most powerful influences on individual development" (Chickering, 1975, p. 86).

The data reported in Chapter 4 indicates that athletes view peers as the immediate solution to academic problems. As a result of seeking academic assistance from other students, athletes develop binding ties with certain peer groups, from which relationships of trust emerge. This bond of trust acts as a stimulus for athletes in their personal development as indicated by this study.

Studies which have documented the impact of close friendships are plentiful. Davie (1958), Dressel & Lehmann (1965), Newcomb (1961, 1962), Feldman and Newcomb (1969), White (1958), Wallace (1966), and Sherif and Sherif (1964)

substantiate the impact of friendships upon life goals, religion, politics, and a person's general orientation to life.

An important consideration which the literature, for the most part, fails to address, however, is the negative impact of peer academic assistance for athletes. Although the benefits of peer friendships are enumerated and well documented, the negative implications often are overlooked. Athletes, though reporting the "quick fix" academic benefits offered by other students, also reported an "interest in total development." Due to their high visibility, athletes felt they could "easily obtain academic assistance from other students." However, an awareness also existed to suggest that athletes recognized that a continual plea for academic help hindered them in an attempt to become more personally responsible for their academic status. Athletes reported that relying on other students for academic assistance often resulted in perceptions of peer academic assistance as a "crutch," which hampered their efforts to become more personally involved and responsible academicians.

In conclusion, peers may be offering the best hope for healthy socialization, or they may be retarding such development with catering tendencies, as this study suggests the possibility of such, especially with Type III athletes. In either case, there is no lack of concern for the topic as

the literature is united in depicting other students as highly significant in their relationship to student athletes.

Professors. Student athletes will affirm that no two professors are alike, and these differences become profoundly significant as professors either overtly or covertly express their valuation of both the specific athlete(s) or the whole athletic program. Type I athletes tended to look beyond professors, to their own future academic challenges. Type II athletes preferred some anonymity in their classes, while Type III athletes were often convinced that certain professors disliked athletes. Customarily, the student athletes know how to avoid the professors who are negative and detached and select those that are positive, fair, and accessible.

Although many view the academic endeavors of student athletes as inferior, the resentment that the student athlete probably bears most poignantly comes from faculty (Leach & Connors, 1984). Impetus for this resentment tends to be the result of growing tension between major college athletic programs and the basic academic values that depict institutions of higher education. "Many faculty see these two camps in diametric opposition to one another. Each views the other with suspicion and disdain" (Leach & Connors, 1984, p. 37).

The data from this study indicates that professors are



not neutral on the subject of athletics. Although the academic achievement of athletes is a controversial topic, Johnson and Renwick (1983) have reminded professors that "a review of research shows no empirical findings to conclude that participation in intercollegiate athletics precludes, enhances or interferes with the student's academic achievement or lack thereof" (p. 22). Studies concerning academic achievement of student athletes compared to regular students paradoxically concluded that the athlete is both superior and inferior academically (Johnson & Renwick, 1983).

McFarland and Yeargan (1981) offered an explanation for the perceptions held by many professors concerning student athletes' academic abilities.

...many student athletes entering college have already spent several years where their rewards have come from athletics rather than academics. As a consequence their learning skills are frequently underdeveloped, and sometimes inadequate for academic success in college...(facing the problem of eligibility) student athletes often press toward the apparent solution of least resistance, i.e., for the student athletes to enroll in a conglomeration of carefully picked courses not dependent upon an academic plan, but rather dependent on "easy" instructors and "easy" courses. (p. 18)

In many academic support programs the faculty are hand-picked with the more-or-less tacit agreement that they will work as part of the team. "Teamwork generally subsumes such practices that reflect extra sensitivity to the needs of student athletes, a willingness to contact other 'team

members' for any special assistance, and a desire to work out supportive or disciplinary actions with coaches and other personnel" (McFarland & Yeargan, 1981, p. 19).

Chickering (1975) established four very important criteria for faculty to be successful in their interaction with students, whether athletes or nonathletes. These criteria were: (a) authenticity, (b) knowledgeable, (c) accessibility, and (d) a willingness to listen. Students from multiple and diverse backgrounds considered these attributes significant in pinpointing faculty as role models and further describing faculty as being desirous of creating learning situations for students.

In summary, the categorization of professors into at least two divisions relative to their concern for student athletes will probably continue with some institutions facilitating the overall development of their student athletes better than others.

Coaches. Beyond any and all doubt, the coach tends to be a preferred academic cheerleader, providing encouragement and support for his or her troops, regardless of classification. To review, Type I athletes found the intrinsic challenge of their curricular area sufficient to motivate them. The external encouragement from their coach merely supplemented their internally nurtured motivation system. Type II athletes equated academics with a college degree which was the key to the door of opportunity in

coaching or teaching physical education. Grades were relatively insignificant and little effort was expended to achieve grades or goals. The coach was, nevertheless, perceived as encouraging. Type III athletes relied heavily upon the encouragement and "pep talks" from their coach to continually remind them of the importance of academics, especially "keeping those grades up." Athletes of all types perceived that their coaches considered eligibility to be the athletes' most desired academic goal, although most athletes would respond positively to whatever academic goals the coach might set.

Coaches were not blamed for failing to comprehend the academic structures of their institutions. Student athletes perceived their coaches, in this regard, as sufficiently preoccupied with other equally important objectives, such as recruiting, scouting, and winning.

Gurney, et al., (1983), however, noted:

There still remains among athletically competitive institutions a large number of coaches (27.4%) who assume the additional or sole responsibility of serving the psychological and academic needs of student-athletes. Their somewhat more traditional models of academic support were usually comprised of academic monitoring, tutoring, and a mandatory supervised study table for student-athletes. The findings further indicated that often these staff members were offering psychological and advisement services without corresponding levels of professional training. (p. 13)

Golden (1984) maintained that coaches alone cannot totally be blamed for failure to understand the academic process because so little time is spent investigating the

prospective coach's educational background and value system. Coaches are hired to win games, a mandate which keeps them away from the campus, heavily involved in other aspects of their jobs. Golden (1984) advocated a formal and periodical evaluation of coaches, based on the same evaluative standards as other members of the student life division.

Organized and structured programs of academic support have been devised that attempt to involve the coach(es) in a meaningful manner. McFarland and Yeargan (1981) reported their academic support programs included briefing sessions with the coaches prior to the start of classes. The purpose of such sessions included clarifying the role of coaches in the academic process and their role(s) relative to professors, academic support personnel, and student athletes in the academic setting.

Well-controlled delivery of genuine concern for the student athletes, such as this program offered, has allowed validity to be associated with statements such as the following:

Efforts of athletic administrators and coaches to achieve a balance between the academic and physical demands made of the student-athletes are being accomplished. Public criticism that athletes are not "real" students is not substantiated...Athletics may have slightly impeded the academic attainment of the student-athletes, but by no means are they deterring or denying the opportunity for athletes to improve themselves educationally. (Johnson & Renwick, 1983, p. 24)

In summary, the job of providing for both the athletic

and the academic needs of a student in some balanced fashion requires a coordinated team effort wherein maximum influence potential resides in the coach(es.) This enviable "sphere-of-influence" capacity is, however, often delegated to subordinates who must develop their own leadership image. Coaches are well-advised to provide leadership to both the academic as well as the athletic components of a well-balanced support system. According to this study, athletes of all types would likely be both differentially and positively affected.

Athletic Academic Advisors. Recapping the findings of this study, the Athletic Academic Advisors played a prominent role in the scholastic life of a student athlete by: checking class schedules to prevent conflicts with athletes' commitments; serving as an academic liaison between coaches and professors; plus securing and coordinating, for the athletes, tutorial and overall institutional support, which included distinct and separate functions as opposed to the "academic curriculum advisor," who typically provided counsel on course selections and sequence.

All three types of student athletes relied upon athletic academic advising for the usual services plus some unique aspects. Type I student athletes requested help with time--on assignment overloads from specific professors. Type II athletes wanted to have conflicts resolved between

athletic and academic schedules. Type III athletes desired someone to hear their more personal conflicts. All types responded favorably to either institutional or departmental recognition of consequent scholastic achievement. In general, they perceived their Athletic Academic Advisors as essential but overworked.

Banks (1978) provided a brief historical account of the introduction of "athletic academic advisor/counselors" as a new professional on campus:

The spontaneous development of sports throughout the world, the constantly higher level of ability of the competition taking part in the championships, increased interest displayed by the public in sports events and contests, and the interest of student-athletes in their physical and intellectual development, gave rise to a new profession in the past two decades--the athletic academic advisor/counselor...Advisement programs designated specifically for student-athletes are not altogether new but the coordination and establishment of an academic office and the full-time employment of an advisor/counselor for all student-athletes is relatively new. (p. 1)

The National Association of Academic Athletic Advisors (NAAA) was founded in 1976. These advisors were generally involved in varying degrees in most of the following activities: providing information for recruiting, orientation, monitoring programs, liaison with the faculty and other university services, tutoring, remediation, course advising, counseling, and placement upon graduation (Hurley & Cunningham, 1984).

Although NCAA regulations stipulate that scholarship student athletes shall not receive any services that are not

available to the student body as a whole, the above services are different, in that athletes are systematically exposed to these services through explicit cooperation between athletic departments and other institutional departments.

The services provided by athletic academic advisors are an outgrowth of the demand for athletics and its relationship to big business (Golden, 1984). NCAA proposals for more stringent academic requirements for eligibility also have made more institutions aware of the need to provide special academic programs for athletes. As a result, the position of Athletic Academic Advisor was created to offer academic assistance to athletes and to protect institutional investments in student athletes.

Since athletes and their coaches continue to place a premium on setting athletic goals, then the student athlete must be provided academic assistance to cope in an educational environment. And if athletics are to remain as a significant component of the collegiate experience, the educationally immature must come to it with the basic skills to be successfully competitive both academically as well as athletically. Once admitted to the institution, the entire academic system must maintain integrity.

This crucial responsibility of maintaining institutional integrity in academic-athletic relationships operationally defines the area of the professional accountability for the athletic academic advisor. The

perplexing aspect of this requirement is that academic standards have been slowly eroding to the point that a ground swell of undereducated athletes are now being admitted into programs.

In light of these challenges, academic support systems have been developed. The central focus in most cases is to provide a comprehensive educational service to each student athlete. The athletic academic advisor must be qualified to respond to both the enduring and the changing needs of these student athletes.

Banks (1978) described the responsibility and resulting effectiveness of the office of athletic academic advisor:

...programs are...being broadened to include services and activities designed for improving the quality of life for its student-athlete population. Student-athletes have also accepted the need for such programs. If the role of the advisor/counselor is congruent with the expectation of his/her student-athletes, the more harmonious the relationship will be. A difference in expectation to any marked degree, however, increases the possibility of clashes in behavior between the two. Advisors need to keep abreast of how students, faculty, parents, and administrators perceive the services they offer. (pp. 2, 3).

At the time of writing, Banks (1978) claimed to have found no research which had focused on the actual perceptions of athletic academic advisement programs. From her study of such perceptions on 14 campuses, she concluded that student athletes are receiving with both general satisfaction and perceived necessity the services provided by their "brain coaches." She also noted "that the location



of the academic office, students' grade point averages, and satisfaction with advisement programs do affect the use of services by student-athletes" (p. 159).

Participants in the Banks (1978) study listed, in no particular order, their major responsibility with student-athletes as follows:

1. course selection
  2. academic advising
  3. selection of the major area of concentration
  4. assisting in the orientation and preregistration of student-athletes
  5. counseling in the area of institutional eligibility requirements
  6. counseling in the area of graduation requirements--vocational and career development and/or postgraduate education.
- (p. 11)

The sixth area was identified as the major responsibility of academic support programs.

Bruce (1976) had recommended that "the academic advisor should assume responsibility for orienting student athletes to [the] true value of tutorial programs; namely, a means to take advantage of the university's educational opportunities" (p. 72). Such orientation, according to Bruce (1976) should begin during recruitment, emphasize the athlete's role as a student first and as an athlete second, and fall under the direction of the athletic academic advisor. Furthermore, the academic advisor must explain the tutoring program's purpose to other members of the academic community.

In 1983, Gurney, et al., reported on the general

demographics of professionals working the field of athletic academic advising and the educational services offered. A few of their findings are relevant to this point:

1. Nearly forty five percent of Division I athletic departments responding to the survey had no staff member responsible for psychological or academic support services.
2. Among the 62 athletic departments that had at least one staff member, 30.6% of principal staff members had professional counseling backgrounds, while 27.4% were from coaching backgrounds.
3. The predominant level of training of athletic academic counselors who were principal staff members were at the masters degree level. Twenty percent of the principal athletic academic counselors had earned doctorates.
4. Typical academic support services offered within the responding athletic departments were: academic monitoring (85.1%), general academic advising (80.7%), tutoring (73.7%), study table (72.8%), direct student-athlete scheduling (50.9%), career counseling (45.6%), personal counseling (45.6%), remedial reading (44.7%), test assessment (41.2%), and group counseling (20.2%). (pp. 11, 12)

In summary, the office of athletic academic advisor, although a relatively new position, significantly impacts the academic endeavors of student athletes. The literature as well as this present study repeatedly verify the importance of the athletic academic advisor in assisting athletes academically.

#### Conceptual Categories

The interaction of expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance has

been debated for years. Although this debate is decades old, very little research exists to prove or disprove, credit or discredit athletics as a positive or negative factor impacting academics. Participants in this study offered mixed responses when asked if their grade point averages would go up if athletic commitments were abolished. Most, however, reported that their grades would not go up or show only slight improvement.

Opponents of athletic programs view the effects of participation quite differently. They believe that athletics lead to:

1. Distracting the attention of athletes away from academic activities.
2. Focusing the attention of athletes on a set of values that may no longer be appropriate in the context of American society.
3. Relegating most students to the role of spectator rather than participant.
4. Creating among students a superficial, anti-intellectual spirit that has nothing to do with the educational goals of the school.
5. Depriving educational programs of resources, facilities, personnel, and community awareness and support. (Coakley, 1978, p. 126)

Research evidence on the benefits of participation in intercollegiate athletics is limited. The ACE Commission on Collegiate Athletics, while examining the relationship of collegiate athletics and the educational mission of higher education, discovered that there existed a "considerable dearth of professional studies in this area" (Banks, 1978,

p. 173).

A number of studies reviewed by O'Connor (1982) concerning academic achievement and participation in collegiate athletics, which have been undertaken by collegiate athletic organizations, substantiate assumptions that the relationship between academics and athletic participation is difficult to explain. The American College Testing Program, the College Football Association study, the Kirchner Study and additional studies by Smith, the National Football Foundation, and Dubois are in agreement that no significant differences exist between the academic performance of athletes and nonathletes.

The foundation of the relationship between athletic and academic performance in this present study is based primarily on student athletes' self-concept. Responses of "feeling good about oneself," "positive thinking," and "performing well in one area makes one perform well in the other area" typified the athletes' views of this interaction.

Hosts of studies have verified the fact that a positive self-concept is associated with higher academic performance [Roth, (1959); Gowan (1960); Caplin, (1969)]. Evidence has also been presented to the literature that

...a characteristic which has been conceptualized as Self Concept of Ability or Scholastic Self Rating is associated with grades earned in college. (Biggs and Tinsely, 1970, p. 195)

It is with this specific area that the athletes, in

this study, reported an interaction of expectations for academic and expectations for athletic performance, namely, the efforts upon self-concept. Negative performance in one area (athletic or academic) generally caused negative performances in the remaining area, regardless of athletic type.

The findings of this study are reported in Chapter 3 and juxtaposed with the literature in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents a theory of academic assistance for athletes.

## CHAPTER V

### THEORY

Grounded theory has as its goal the generation of theory. The power to explain, predict, and provide a sense of understanding of events are among the attributes of a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These functions provide the basis of discussion for this chapter. Additional discussion will focus on the theory, generated from the data described in Chapter 3, in comparison with the theory it compliments, namely, Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement in higher education.

#### Student Athlete's Perceptions of Academic Assistance: A Theory

Utilization of the grounded theory research method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) dictates the emergence of a core category from a process of on-going conceptualization and reconceptualization of categories and properties which are derived from the data. Glaser (1978) identifies this core as that "which sums up in a pattern of behavior the substance of what is going on in the data" (p. 49). The central theme or core of discussion for this study emerged as student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. These perceptions are functions of the interactive framework of expectations for academic and expectations for athletic performance, conceptual categories of the theory and the

following properties, derived from the data: (a) academic reputation of institutions, (b) athletic type of students, (c) people, and (d) programs.

To understand the factors and conditions in an educational environment which student athletes identified as being helpful to them academically, it was necessary to understand the student athletes themselves. The data indicated that student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance depended upon the manner in which they perceived their dualistic role of "student" and "athlete." The data therefore led the researcher to develop the property of athletic type. Student athletes were classified into three distinct types, a description of which is provided for each in Chapter 3. Although an explanation of perceptions of academic assistance in terms of properties of analysis was clearly evident from the data, the relationship between these identified properties and the self-perceived roles of respondents, some of whom spoke as students, others as athletes, and still others as student athletes, represented a significant factor in each student athlete's perceptions of academic assistance.

In addition to athletic type, identifiable properties of academic reputation, programs, and people, emerged from the data as significant factors impacting athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. The data indicated that the most effective educational environment for any athlete

was one in which each segment of institutional personnel (administrators, faculty, coaches, and support personnel) stressed academic achievement and showed a genuine interest in the academic well-being of the athletes. Institutional personnel who exemplified such behavior made definite impressions upon athletes, of all types, to the extent that they made greater efforts to achieve academically, perceived their institutions as having good academic reputations, and made greater use of the academic assistance programs available to them. Additionally, the data indicated that the failure to stress academics and academic support programs, on the part of any segment of institutional personnel, reduced academic effort on the part of athletes. For example, when professors were the only group to emphasize academics, athletes' efforts to achieve academically were not as great as having professors, coaches, and administrators stressing academics.

Student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance were further shaped by their perceived purpose on campus and their identity within the educational environment. The extent of institutional commitment to academics and/or athletics was easily discernible on the part of student athletes, resulting in each athlete being able to determine his or her role on campus by the degree of involvement expected of them in academics or athletics.

Athletes recognized that academics and athletics



represented two independent entities on college campuses. Intercollegiate athletics, according to the athletes, have become more and more of an extra-curricular activity. As a result, academicians are unaware of the day-to-day operations of the athletic departments and those in athletics do not understand the academic process. Therefore, student athletes report being left to resolve the interactive process of these two areas. Their perceptions of this interactive process determined the manner in which they utilized institutional resources to assist them academically. Athletes who perceived of their institutions as "athletic factories," whereby recognition was continual for athletics but nonexistent for academics, did not expend as much effort academically as athletes who were encouraged constantly to make good grades and graduate.

Athletes of all types, considered time their most valuable asset and lack of time their major hindrance to academic achievement. However, the data indicated that athletes would use more of their available time for academics if they perceived that academic success was a top priority of their institution. As a result, a recurring theme from the data was the necessity of institutional personnel to be of one mind and one accord in stressing academics for athletes. Athletes perceived academic emphasis in this manner as the supportive philosophy they needed to motivate them to expand greater effort

academically.

In summary, athletes' perceptions of academic assistance were shaped by the manner in which they perceived the interactive process of expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletics performance. Institutional commitment to academics, to athletics, or both, had a "trickling down effect" upon athletes, and influenced their perceptions and use of academic assistance programs, and the amount of time and effort given to academic pursuit and athletic endeavors.

Athletes who perceived that institutional emphasis was primarily upon academics reported that such emphasis was reflective of every facet of institutional life. Administrators, professors, coaches, and other staff members were perceived as harmonious in stressing the need for athletes to achieve academically. Such emphasis resulted in athletes making greater commitments to expend more effort academically and making greater use of the academic support services. Additionally, in such settings, institutions were viewed as having good academic reputations, and the interaction between the properties of people and programs were perceived as effective, in the sense that institutional support programs were established for the athlete's benefit and institutional personnel collectively emphasized their use.

On the other hand, athletes who perceived that

academics were relegated to a secondary role to athletics, did not report the same need to expend as much effort to achieve academically, due to a lack of institutional emphasis upon academics, or what the athletes termed as "token emphasis upon academics." Athletes manifested insightful perceptions in this area. Athletes, regardless of type, gave indication of being certain about their purpose on campus, as determined by their perceptions of institutional policies and decisions. Athletes reported that they were able to detect if institutional standards of excellence in academics really pertained to athletes, and if so, to what degree.

Although the theory of perceptions of academic assistance does not extend or validate any other theory, it serves as a compliment to Astin's theory of student involvement in higher education. A discussion of Astin's theory follows with a comparison to the theory generated from the data in this research.

#### Astin's Theory of Student Involvement in Higher Education

Components of the Theory. Astin (1984) defined student involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). It is apparent from his definition that a highly involved student is one who devotes considerable time and energy to study, while an uninvolved student neglects

studies and expends little energy in academic pursuit. Astin (1984) further characterized the involved student as one who "spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students" (p. 297). Obviously, the uninvolved student demonstrates antithetical tendencies in these areas.

The student involvement theory of Astin (1984) has five basic postulates:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for an examination).
2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum: that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in different objects at different levels.
3. Involvement has both quantitative (how many hours a student studies) and qualitative (how a student studies) features.
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. (p. 298)

The significance of the student involvement theory is in its comparison to traditional pedagogical theories. In this capacity, Astin identifies three implicit theories for comparison. These theories are labeled as subject-matter,

resources, and individualized theories.

The subject-matter theory, a content theory, is popular among professors, stresses student exposures to "right" subject matter, and emphasizes a "liberal education" for students by mandating that students take a wide assortment of courses. Strong emphasis is placed upon the credentials of professors, whereas professors with the greatest knowledge of a particular subject matter are viewed as having the highest prestige. The most serious limitation of this theory is that it creates a missionary scenario whereby "knowledgeable" professors lecture "ignorant" students in hope that the student will acquire the professor's knowledge. This setting tends to favor highly involved students according to Astin (1984).

The resource theory, a favorite among administrators and policy makers, stresses a build up of ingredients to enhance student learning. These ingredients take the shape of physical facilities, human resources (well trained faculty, counselors, and support personnel), and fiscal resources. To the extent that the combination of these resources are evident, to that extent will student learning and development occur. The resource theory acknowledges that high achieving students are a resource, and as such dictates intensive recruitment efforts on the part of institutional personnel.

Limitations of the resource theory include the

finiteness of available academically gifted students and prestigious faculty. Another limitation of the resource theory is that overemphasis is most often concentrated on the accumulation of resources as opposed to their deployment and evaluation.

The third theory which Astin used as a base of comparison is the individualized (eclectic) theory. This theory, a favorite of many developmental and learning psychologists, "attempts to identify the curricular content and instructional methods that best meet the needs of the individual student" (p. 300). Elective courses, advising, independent studies, and counseling are significant factors of this theory. "Self-paced" and "competency-based" learning are phrases often associated with this theory.

The limitations of the individualized theory include the expense of implementing provisions for such individual attention. The theory suggests an ability to identify the best educational program for each student.

The theory of student involvement argues that an effective curriculum elicits sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about desired learning and development. It encourages educators to become student-centered, that is to say, to become more aware of time-on tasks for students and to ascertain the degree of student energy directed toward study. The theory of student involvement focuses more on the behavioral mechanisms or

processes that facilitate student development, the "how of student development," according to Astin (P. 301), rather than the developmental outcomes, or the what of student development.

The how of student development is dependent upon time and effort directed toward learning. According to Astin (1984), the most precious resource a student has is time, a finite resource. As a result, administrative decisions and policies can significantly affect how students spend their time and energy (involvement). For example, regulations on class attendance, the location and allocation of living quarters, the design and location of recreational facilities, and the number and type of extra curricular activities can impact student time and effort expended toward study.

Astin's theory has its roots in a longitudinal study of college dropouts. The results showed that a lack of student involvement, (for example, boredom) constituted the greatest reason for students dropping out of college. According to the involvement theory, "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (Astin, 1984, p. 307), with a result of lower attrition rates. Consequently, academicians need to be aware of what students do and how they behave, for these traits define and identify involvement.

Comparison of Theories. The theory of perceptions of academic assistance serves to compliment the theory of student involvement. Common threads running through each theory are manifested in three areas: (a) quantitative and qualitative concerns; (b) a categorization of students; and (c) interactive relationships. A discussion of each follows.

Quantitative versus qualitative concerns address the issues of time, effort, and intensity as each relates to student learning. According to the theory of student involvement, "the extent to which students can achieve particular developmental goals is a direct function of the time and effort they devote to activities designed to produce these gains" (Astin, 1984, p. 301). Quantitatively, effort to achieve developmental goals is easy to measure in terms of hours spent in study.

The qualitative or intensity factor is much harder to measure. The student involvement theory argues that institutional personnel (administrators, professors, and support personnel) need to focus less on the content of curriculum and institutional resources, and more on what the students do: how motivated the students are and how much time and energy students devote to the learning process. These concerns deal with the how of student development. Although acknowledging that involvement is an abstract psychological construct, Astin, nevertheless, advocated that



educators should attempt to measure effort and intensity of student involvement through direct observation. The key question which should guide educators in an attempt to facilitate learning and measure involvement is "How do you get students involved?" (Astin, 1984, p. 301).

Time and effort are also key elements of the theory of perceptions of academic assistance, although reported by the athletes in a negative sense. The major hindrance to academic achievement, according to student athletes in this study, is lack of time. Just as the theory of student involvement acknowledges time as a valuable and finite resource for which various institutional elements compete, athletes represent a significant reduction in time and energy the student has to devote to educational development. As a result, societal demand for increased emphasis upon athletics is counterproductive to institutional goals of producing an educated citizenry.

Institutional policies and decisions also served to impact the quantitative and qualitative concerns of both theories. "Administrators and faculty members must recognize that virtually every institutional policy and practice can affect the way students spend their time and the amount of effort they devote to academic pursuits" (Astin, 1984, pp. 301, 302). Astin's conclusion was very evident in the data gathered for this study. Student athletes were very perceptive in their evaluation of

institutional policies and decisions. When they perceived that institutional emphasis was indeed upon academics, they reported a desire to expend greater effort toward academic achievement. More of the athletes' available time, after athletic commitments were met, was directed toward study when athletes perceived that institutional policies were issued to truly enhance academic standards of excellence.

Astin's theory was based upon research which treated student involvement on a continuum, whereby "dropping out of school" anchored the involvement continuum at the lowest end. Although students were not channeled into distinct categorization on the continuum, nevertheless, Astin's research revealed that higher student involvement, in terms of the amount of physical and psychological energy directed to the academic experience, resulted in lower attrition rates (Astin, 1984).

The theory generated from the data in this research provided no continuum for student involvement in academics. However, the data led the researcher to classify athletes into three student types. The manner in which athletes viewed academics represented a key component in the typing of athletes (see Chapter 3 for a detailed description). The differences in types of student athletes were very discernible by their respective degree of involvement in the academic process.

The final area in which the theory of perceptions of

academic assistance compliments the theory of student involvement is in the area of interactive or interpersonal relationships. Concerning student-faculty relationships, Astin's research revealed that, "Frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic" (Astin, 1984, p. 304). In contrast, the data for this research revealed that other students represented the most significant group impacting the academic achievement of athletes. Nevertheless, the data substantiated the importance of student-faculty interaction as did the student involvement theory. Athletes reported the significance of student-faculty interaction and relationships as having a direct bearing on their academic well-being, due to athletes' perceptions of professorial non-neutrality on the subject of intercollegiate athletics.

Astin utilized the term "cathexis," a Freudian concept, to describe the importance of interpersonal relationships. Cathexis is an investment of psychological energy in objects and persons outside oneself (Astin, 1984). To apply this term to the theory of perceptions of academic assistance is to say that athletes "cathect" on other people, particularly other students.

Athletes basically are people-oriented, and as such reported that they valued the friendships of nonathletes

more highly than athletes, particularly after practice sessions and athletic commitments are met. According to the athletes, their involvement in relationships with other students (nonathletes) contributed to their total development. As a result, athletes preferred living accommodations which provided for a mix of athletes and nonathletes. This was especially true as the athlete gained upperclass status.

Athletes did not mind the "pampering effect" of athletic dorms, special meal accommodations, and the other "luxuries" of being an athlete. However, they realized that such arrangements did not contribute to their total development, a valued goal of college attendance according to the athletes.

The theory of student involvement substantiates the values which athletes associated with sharing living quarters with a diversity of students. "Living in a dormitory is positively associated with several other forms of involvement: interaction with faculty, involvement in student government, and participation in social fraternities or sororities" (Astin, p. 303).

In summary, the theory of perceptions of academic assistance is dependent upon student athletes' perceptions of the interactive framework of expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance, conceptual categories derived from the data. The data

revealed that athletes' perceptions of this interactive process influenced their self-concept and perceived purpose on campus, the use of academic support programs, and furthermore, formed the basis for athletes' perceptions of their institutions (as academic institutions or athletic factories). These findings compliment the theory of student involvement which states that, "Athletic involvement is also associated with satisfaction in four areas: the institution's academic reputation, the intellectual environment, student friendships, and institutional administration" (Astin, 1984, p. 304).

Finally, although the theory of student involvement proposes the necessity of involving students in the academic process, and the theory of perceptions of academic assistance for athletes follows suit, the obvious conclusion that "more involvement is better" is true only to a certain extent. For example, a student who studies to the extent of failing to make lasting friendships or does not have enough time for any extracurricular activities probably will not be as "well rounded" or "totally developed" as the student who leads a more balanced lifestyle, one which includes time for development socially, academically, physically, etc.

A student involved in one facet of campus life to the detriment of all others may be subject to the law of diminishing returns. That is to say that passage over a certain point on the involvement continuum may lead to an

isolation of the student. The data for this study indicated that student athletes believed that overemphasis on intercollegiate athletics negatively affected their opportunities for total development. Therefore, students' intensity of involvement in any concentrated area may limit their overall development if such areas are promoted to the exclusion of all others.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of this study with suggestions and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, ISSUES, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify selected factors and conditions affecting the academic achievement of athletes, and to explain any interactive characteristics which might illuminate the effectiveness of programs and services specifically for athletes. Accusations, voiced by academia and the general public, that a gap exists between academics and athletics such that intercollegiate athletics has supplanted academics, in terms of institutional emphasis, provided the impetus for the study.

The method chosen to accomplish the purpose of the study was that of grounded theory. The utilization of discovery research strategies, adapted from grounded theory methodology, guided the researcher in developing a model which depicted the factors impacting the academic achievement of student athletes.

The core dimension or central theme of the model is student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. These perceptions were found to be a result of the interactive process of expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance, conceptual categories of the model. Expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance interacted to produce

perceptions of how athletes perceived their institutions, and how they perceived themselves--as students, as athletes, or as student athletes. This interaction stemmed from factors identified as academic reputation of institutions, athletic type, programs, and people. These factors interacted in such a way as to explain perceptions of academic assistance.

### Issues

Given that the aspects of an educational environment which function to help athletes academically generally are unknown, the method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) was an appropriate choice for this study. Discovery research tends to focus on qualitative data, and as such, provided an excellent strategy for handling such highly individualistic data.

Although the data which emerged from this study was subjected to a carefully controlled process of property definition, concept categorization, and comparative analysis, nevertheless, limitations were inherent in the study.

The technique of interviewing, although the interviewer became more accomplished as the study progressed, created somewhat of an artificial situation. As a result, the willingness of the participants, to elaborate upon responses, at times, depended upon the ability of the researcher to establish a good rapport with each participant



prior to the actual interview. Therefore, the quality of the interview, on occasion, was proportional to the mesh of personality between the researcher and the participant. Recognition, on the part of the participants, that the researcher was a former college coach served to minimize this particular limitation.

In addition to the positive effects of coaching, the researcher's coaching background also served to impact the study in a negative sense. Although a minimum amount of time was spent in literature review prior to data collection, it was difficult for the researcher, having coached for several years, to divorce himself from the knowledge gained about athletes and their relationships to academics.

Research, employing the methods of grounded theory, requires the investigator to enter the field with an open mind to emerging trends, without any preconceived ideas or biases. Concerning this point, it seems appropriate to report that the findings of this study resulted in the researcher viewing the interactive framework of expectations for academic performance and expectations for athletic performance, which emerged as conceptual concepts of the data, from a perspective not witnessed during his years as a coach. Viewing the interaction of academics and athletics through the eyes of the participants allowed the researcher to conceptualize the data from an entirely new perspective.

As the study progressed, the initial biases of the researcher began to disappear due to the employment of the strategies inherent in the research method.

Finally, student athletes' unwillingness or inability to substantiate certain claims represented a weakness in the research. For example, when athletes reported that "institutional policies" impacted perceptions of their environment, they generally demonstrated difficulty in identifying distinct policies. At times, their definition of institutional policies was equated with departmental level policies; at other times, divisional or college-wide policies.

In addition to displaying an inability to pinpoint exact "institutional policies," which the athletes reported as having an affect upon their perceptions of institutional emphasis as being on academics or athletics, participants manifested tendencies to overuse the word "they" when speaking of institutional personnel. Athletes appeared to want to lump administrators, faculty, and most support personnel together, and refer to them as "they" on one side of the fence, but combine coaches and athletic academic advisors and refer to them as "they" on the other side. As a result of these "unions," it was necessary for the researcher frequently to probe for more elaborate responses, since athletes, at times, were unable or unwilling to mention a specific person or group. Athletes' responses,

therefore, reinforced settings in which academics and athletics have been characterized as separate worlds under one roof.

These issues appeared to be limitations of the method. To say that the participants would have been more specific in their responses if, for example, they had filled out confidential questionnaires and thereby avoided a face-to-face encounter with the interviewer is unfounded. However, acknowledgement must be made that athletes, on occasion, did appear to exhibit an uneasiness when speaking into a microphone. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed description of the limitations of the interviewing technique, with the steps the researcher took to minimize the limitations.

## Discussion

The model depicting academic assistance (Figure 2) contains the categories and properties of student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. One of the properties of analysis which emerged from the data was athletic type, a property described in detail in Chapter 3. Although categorizing athletes by type was a relatively easy task (especially Type III athletes), nevertheless, making distinctions between Type I and Type II, for a few of the participants, presented a more difficult task. Characteristics unique to each type of athlete were easily discernible. However there appeared to be an overlap, although evident in just a few cases, between Types I and II

in the area of career aspirations. This overlap manifested itself in responses of desiring a "good job." Type II athletes equated a good job with a career in athletics (not as a professional) while Type I athletes equated a good job as one which paid a high salary. Both types, however, perceived that the job would be "good" if it met the respective criteria.

In situations where overlap did occur, the investigator relied on "researcher insight," legitimized by Glaser and Strauss (1967), to type student athletes. At no time, however, did the researcher violate the principles of grounded theory by forcing data into logically preidentified categories.

Regardless of athletic type, the findings revealed that student athletes' perceptions of the academic reputation of their institutions impacted their academic achievement in terms of effort expended toward study. Effort was expended in proportion to the perceived degree of institutional academic reputation. What the data did not reveal in any systematic fashion was the difference in degree of intensity among the three types of athletes. It was very clear that all athletes reported greater effort academically, when perceptions of academic excellence existed, but comparison of degree of effort by type was unclear.

Although the researcher was unable to measure the degree of intensity of academic effort, Glaser and Strauss

(1967) advocated the inclusion of researcher insights and impressions relating to the intensity question. Additionally, Astin's theory of student involvement, which this theory compliments, suggests that involvement (time and effort) be measured by direct observation and personal interaction with students. This also would appear to give further license to the researcher to interpret the intensity issue. Invoking such license, it would appear, for instance, that student athletes' efforts academically, due to the impact of the institutional academic reputation, was greater for Type I athletes than Types II and III. Additionally, the effort of Type II athletes appeared to be greater than that of Type III athletes.

The intensity issue was relevant only when applied to the academic efforts (time and energy) of athletes, and then only as it related to the institution's academic reputation. Student athletes' use of academic assistance programs and their reliance upon other people for academic support was much more measurable. For example, Type III athletes reported making use of the tutorial program more often than did Type I. Additionally, Type II athletes reported less need than Type III athletes to consult with athletic academic advisors concerning schedules (see Chapter 5 for a description).

The interactive framework of institutional academic reputation, athletic type, programs, and people impacted the

relationship of academics and athletics, the two components common to each type of student athletes. This impact manifested itself in the time and energy each student athlete afforded to academics or athletics. The nature of this relationship (academics and athletics) provided insight into student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance.

Astin's theory of student involvement (see Chapter V) provided a base of comparison for student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance. Both theories argue that learning outcomes are greater for students to the degree that they are involved in academic pursuit. Both theories also argue that it is imperative for institutions to become more effective in involving students in academic endeavors. For example, the data for this research indicated that student athletes were not familiar with many of the academic support programs until well after their freshman year. These and other issues are addressed as matters of further research in the next section.

#### Recommendations

One phenomenon to emerge from the data was the categorization of student athletes by type. Due to the distinct characteristics which allowed the researcher to type athletes, it appears that further research would be warranted which would pertain to only one type of student athlete. Type III athletes, for example, receive much notoriety due to announced intentions of professional

careers in athletics. Using this study as a base for theory development, it seems that further research which includes Type III students only should both add to the descriptive aspects of athletes' perceptions of academic assistance and strengthen or verify suspected tenets of the theory which emerged from this research.

Further research also is warranted into better understanding the academic needs of Type III athletes. As a result of this research, an understanding of the data evolved which necessitates the researcher to suggest that student athletes, who attend college with no other purpose than as a training ground for professional sports, should be offered the options to "major" in athletics as opposed to a traditional curricular area.

The literature review (see Chapter 4) revealed that professors possessed the most ambivalent feelings toward athletes' academic pursuits. The rewarding of a certificate, diploma, or degree in athletics would seem to alleviate hostile feelings of academicians, who have voiced accusations that athletes possess inferior academic qualities.

The intensity issue, as it relates to athletes' efforts to achieve academically (see Chapter 5), represents another suggested area of further research. Astin (1984) advocated measuring student involvement in the academic process through direct observation (theory of student involvement).

It appears that employment of the direct observation techniques would facilitate quantitative and qualitative concerns about the amount of time and effort athletes expend academically. Further research is therefore suggested to compare athletes' involvement academically with nonathletes, in terms of time (quantitative) and effort (qualitative), through direct observation. Although the qualitative aspect, effort, represents a difficult element to measure, nevertheless, employment of grounded theory methodology legitimizes a researcher's perceptions of insights and impressions from the data.

Further research also is suggested in the area of implementation of academic assistance programs. The support programs and services provided by the participating institutions in this study did not vary by type, but rather by organizational structure, pattern, and accessibility to students. The same is true for most scholarship-granting institutions (Zingg, 1982). A recurring response from the data, however, was that many athletes were not familiar with several of the support programs until after their freshman year. Research which would identify available options for institutional implementation of support programs designed specifically for athletes, with documented evidence of effectiveness, such as that provided by the University of Missouri (see Chapter 4), would seem to enhance developmental and learning outcomes for student athletes.



Research limited to scholarship or nonscholarship athletes represents another area of further study. The majority of athletes who participated in this study attended NCAA Division I institutions. The data suggests that research involving Division III (nonscholarship) athletes exclusively would seem to offer potential for a more applicable theory of academic assistance for athletes in environments where athletics exist for reasons other than big business.

Finally, further research is warranted to provide verification of the properties and conceptual categories which emerged from this study. Additional research in this area would seem to provide verification for the assertion that it is the function of the interactive framework of expectations for academic and athletic performance which shapes student athletes' perceptions of academic assistance.

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APPENDIX A

Descriptive Analysis of Student Athletes Interviewed

Total Interviews = 32

Sex

Male = 21  
Female = 11

Race

Caucasian = 25  
Black = 7

Financial

Scholarship = 28  
NonScholarship = 4

Type of Sport Represented

Basketball = 8  
Football = 7  
Field Hockey = 3  
Baseball = 2  
Track = 2  
Gymnastics = 2  
Softball = 2  
Lacrosse = 2  
Golf = 1  
Swimming = 1  
Wrestling = 1  
Soccer = 1

Majors Represented

Physical Education = 15  
Business and Business  
Associated Majors = 11  
Sports Management = 2  
Communications = 2  
History = 1  
Undecided = 1

G.P.A.

Reported = 30

Avg. G.P.A. = 2.25

APPENDIX B

Description of Institutions Participating in Study

State Supported Schools

\*James Madison University

University of Virginia

Virginia Tech (State supplies capital outlay, athletic department operating expenses are privately funded)

Private Schools

Affiliation

\*University of Richmond

Southern Baptist

Liberty Baptist College

Independent

Lynchburg College

Disciples of Christ

\*Although the athletic programs at these institutions are classified as NCAA Division I, their football programs are NCAA Division IAA, meaning that the criteria established for football programs at the NCAA Division IA level are not being met by these particular institutions.

APPENDIX C

Typical Interview Questions

The questions which served the purpose of initial inquiry for the interviews were as follows:

Question 1--What aspects of this educational environment actually help you academically?

Question 2--Of all of the people and elements which combine to form an institution (Ex. programs, staff personnel, professors, coaches, other students, etc.), which, if any, of these are important in assisting you academically?

Certain other questions were used in the interviews, depending upon the flow of each interview and participants' responses. The following questions are typical of those which the researcher used as a follow-up to the "root" questions above.

Question 3--How would you describe yourself as a student?

Question 4--How do you describe other athletes as students?

Question 5--What role do coaches play in your academic well being?

Question 6--What role do professors play in your academic well being?

Question 7--Are you aware of any programs that the institution provides to assist you academically?

7(a) How effective are these programs?

Question 8--What is the greatest obstacle that you face which keeps you from reaching your academic



goals?

Question 9--Does this institution have a good academic reputation?

9(a) Is that important in the effort you expend academically?

Question 10--Why are athletes called "dumb jocks"?

10(a) How do athletes compare academically to nonathletes?

Question 11--Where would you go for help for a personal problem that was impacting your grades negatively?

Question 12--What does "total development" mean to you?

12(a) How does this institution assist you in an effort to achieve total development?

Question 13--Under what conditions or in what type of environment do you study best?

Question 14--Is there anything that you know helps you academically that we have not discussed?

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