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APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

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ABSTRACT

A sample of 98 student-athletes at one southern Arizona high school completed a survey that examined their personal characteristics, athletic goals, knowledge about the college recruiting process, and the role of the school counselor in that process. Results revealed that the majority of student-athletes were not well informed about the college going process. However, there was a significant increase in recruiting knowledge of students who definitely want to participate or possibly want to participate in college athletics between 9th and 11th grade and between 9th and 12th grade. The majority of participants felt “slightly comfortable” or “very comfortable” coming to their school counselor to discuss this information. However, they would feel more comfortable if the counselor were knowledgeable about college athletics. Results show that high school counselors need to be better prepared to assist student-athletes with the college going process.
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

There are over seven million high school student-athletes nationwide, with 70% of these athletes anticipating competing in their sport at the college level (New Study-Based Handbook Promotes Student Athlete Success in PA, 2008). Although a high percentage of student-athletes wish to do this, roughly 6% will successfully transition onto a college athletic team (New Study-Based Handbook Promotes Student Athlete Success in PA). Currently, the State of Arizona does not require school counselors to give any information to prospective student-athletes about the recruiting process (Arizona Academic Standards, 2008). As a result, many students may remain unaware of the options they have to earn scholarships and awards for their athletic and academic success.

The American School Counselor Association states that, “through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, professional school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students” (American School Counselor Association, 2009, ¶ 2). School counselors are required to do this through individual student planning, responsive services, and a school guidance curriculum (American School Counselor Association, 2009). An important way that school counselors can help students plan for the future is through “coordinat[ing] ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish personal goals and develop future plans” (ASCA, 2009, ¶ 4). ASCA suggests that this is best done with a school counselor to student ratio of 1:250 (ASCA). However, the average school counselor to student ratio in the state of Arizona of 1:750 puts a great strain on school counselors as they handle the college,
career, academic, and personal needs of their students. The overburdening of school
counselors may be contributing to the lack of services that many prospective college
student-athletes are now receiving. Although the ASCA has attempted to set national
standards to encourage the most effective use of school counselors, the national average
school counselor to student ratio of 1:460 shows that much of the country has not adhered
to these suggestions. Because the counseling of prospective student-athletes is a
specialized process, the overburdening of high school counselors may affect this aspect
of school counseling in a greater way because these counselors do not have ample time to
research and help students navigate through this process.

As previous research shows, there is a large proportion of student-athletes who
are unable to transition to college athletics successfully (New Study-Based Handbook
Promotes Student Athlete Success in PA, 2008). Because of this, the researcher
casted this study to understand the knowledge that perspective high school student-
athletes have about the recruiting process, and the role their school counselor plays in this
process. Data were collected using a 23-question student survey developed by the
researcher for this study. The survey asked students about personal demographic
information, recruiting knowledge, and the role they feel their school counselor should
have in helping them with this process.

Statement of Problem

This study investigated the problem that many high school student-athletes face
when going through the recruiting, college admission, and decision process. Because the
student-athlete application process is specialized, most school counselors do not typically
receive training for assisting this group of students. Therefore, the problem is that high school student-athletes may not be able to rely on their school counselor for information and assistance in their college preparation. Because of this, they may not have the opportunity to obtain this information, resulting in the retirement from their sport with their completion of high school.

In order to study this problem, the researcher examined the knowledge that high school student-athletes have about the college recruiting process and the role of their high school counselor in helping them with this process. This is necessary as there is currently little research in this area. It is important for more research to be conducted because school counseling professionals need to understand how to best help this group of students. This research will address that by asking the student-athletes about their current goals and the knowledge they have about college athletics. The survey results will then show us the areas where students are lacking in information and how to best disseminate this information to them. This will allow school counselors to help high school student-athletes in a more efficient way.

This study utilized a student survey that contained 3 sections: Student Information, College Recruiting Knowledge, and Role of the High School Counselor. All participants were asked to complete the entire survey, regardless of future plans. This survey investigated the relationships between the future plans of the high school student-athletes, the knowledge they have of the recruiting process, and how they feel about the role of their high school counselor.
Assumptions

Several assumptions underlie this study. First, the researcher assumes that the high school students surveyed in this study are a representative sample of the high school student-athletes from across the country. Second, the researcher assumes that the students who returned the surveys are representative of the Browly High School\textsuperscript{1} student-athlete population. Along with this, it is assumed that the student survey answers are free of error. Third, the researcher assumes that Section 2 of the survey is both a valid and reliable measure of college recruiting knowledge. This means that it is assumed that a student’s score on Section 2 of the survey is positively related to the likelihood he/she will make an informed decision about college choice.

General Research Hypotheses

The past research on academic advising at the secondary level and on the student-athlete population has informed the hypotheses for this study. Because little research has been done on the academic advising of high school student-athletes, research with the general high school population is shown when none has been found for the student-athlete population.

Although a high percentage of students hope to attend college during their middle and early high school years, students generally do not begin actively looking into college information until their 11\textsuperscript{th} grade year (Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, & Perna, 2009). In a study on the college knowledge of 9\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} grade students, the 11\textsuperscript{th} grade students were

\textsuperscript{1} Browly High is pseudonym for the high school at which the study was conducted.
more knowledgeable about college preparation activities (Bell et. al). Because students do not actively start researching college choices until 11th grade, I hypothesize that:

1. There will be significant differences by student grade level on the measure of the level of knowledge about the recruiting process.

   As the amount of time spent in high school increases, students use their schools’ resources in a more effective way. During the freshmen and sophomore years, students’ primary source of college information comes from family and peers (Bell et. al). However, during the junior and senior years, students’ information sources have expanded to include school counselors, parents, and teachers (Bell et al). This research found that students do not often seek their school counselor for college information until their 11th grade year. Because of this, I hypothesize that:

2. There will be significant differences by student grade level and the extent to which students perceive the school counselor to be a helpful resource in the process.

   Bell et al. (2009) found that the more knowledge students have about college and financial aid, the more likely they are to enroll in college. I believe that this will be true for student-athletes as well, as the desire to become a college student-athlete will directly affect the amount of knowledge they have about the recruiting process. Because of this, I hypothesize that:

3. There will be a significant positive relationship between desire to become a college student-athlete and score of Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge on the student survey.

   Smith and Zhang (2009) found that 84% of high school students received some form of help from their guidance counselor in preparing them for college. The students
who met with their counselor about school related problems and college information had a higher GPA than those who did not (Smith & Zhang). Additionally, the students’ perception about their high school counselor in helping them with these issues is positively related to their high school GPA (Smith & Zhang). Although the students who have a higher comfort level with their counselor are more likely to have a higher GPA, I do not believe comfort level will affect recruiting knowledge in the same way. When student-athletes do not perceive their counselor to have knowledge about the recruiting process, they may find this information from other resources such as parents and coaches (Goldberg, 1991). Because of this, I hypothesize that:

4. There will not be a significant relationship between score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the survey and student comfort level with high school counselor.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because there has been little research done about the prospective college student-athlete population. The current research will give school professionals an overview of high school student-athletes’ future plans, recruiting knowledge, and feelings about the role of their school counselor. This information will help school counselors learn about how they can serve this population in a more appropriate way.

The previous research has shown that the needs of student-athletes are often not met by the public school. This may be because high school counselors are not required to be knowledgeable about the regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). When counselors are not well-informed about one group of students, their
needs may go unmet. It is important that the needs of prospective college student-athletes are met, as it has been shown that when they are provided with information about college, their grades increased and they were more prepared for the next stage of their life (Goldman, 1994). It is important that school counselors know what this group of students needs so that they can help them be successful in both school and athletics.

This group of students needs to be knowledgeable about the college recruiting process so that they can either take advantage of recruiting opportunities when they are presented or advertise themselves to prospective colleges. Research shows that 54% of college student-athletes were contacted by a college coach (Sander, 2008). When this happens, the student needs to be educated about which college coaches to respond to and how to respond to them. It is important for high school athletes to understand how to take advantage of opportunities when they are presented. Sander also found that 37% of college student-athletes initiated the recruiting process with their respective college. This is defined by the student-athlete initiating contact with the college coach by sending them an email, filling out a recruiting questionnaire, or sending them film of their athletics (Sander). Without knowledge of the recruiting timeline, students are less likely to understand how to successfully navigate through this process. They will also be unaware of the requirements needed to be accepted into their choice college.

As school counselors increase their knowledge about the prospective student-athlete population, they will also increase their job security. There have been instances in California, Iowa, and Wisconsin where school counselors have unintentionally given the wrong information to prospective student-athletes (Stone, 2009). When this is done,
school counselors are at great risk of losing their jobs, being taken to court for negligence, and feeling responsible for forever affecting the future of the student-athlete. In order to be a proficient high school counselor, Stone recommends that they need to stay current on academic advising information, empower students and coaches to take responsibility for NCAA regulations, publicize academic information to parents and students, and consult professionals when appropriate. These suggestions will help school counselors aid student-athletes in the most effective way.

Delimitations of the Study

The opportunity to participate in this study was given to a randomized group of 450 student-athletes at one Arizona high school. Although the researcher attempted to use a randomized group of students, there are delimitations associated with this study. First, this population only consists of student-athletes who participate in their sport at their high school. Because of this, athletes who are involved in outside sporting activities were not involved. This decision was made because the student-athletes were taken from a high school athletic list. Additionally, the survey was given to the student-athletes to complete at home. Because of this, approximately 25% of students who were given the survey completed it. If students did not complete it within the given time period, they were reminded one time. If they still did not complete the survey, they were not asked again, thus eliminating them from participating in the study.

The survey given to the student-athletes was developed because the researcher could not find a recruiting questionnaire of desired length and information. The researcher chose to have a short survey as to increase the percentage of surveys
completed. The survey only asked 22 multiple choice questions and 1 open ended question.

Definitions and Terms

High school student-athlete: Student in grades 9-12 who is currently (within the present school year) participating in a high school sponsored athletic sport.

Core courses: Name that the NCAA gives the list of approved high school academic courses. Students must complete a certain number of core courses to be eligible for Division 1 and 2 universities.

NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association

NCAA Clearinghouse: The organization that determines whether prospective college athletes are eligible to play sports at NCAA Division I or Division II institutions.

Division 1: Institutions who offer the highest level of athletic competition sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Division 2: Institutions who offer the immediate level of athletic competition sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

College student-athlete: Student who is on the roster of a NCAA approved Division 1 or 2 sport.

Recruiting: The process of college coaches pursuing high school student-athletes to sign a letter of intent with their prospective school.

School counselor: Counselor who is certified by the State Department of Education and works in the 9-12 grade schools to provide academic, career, and personal/social guidance to students within his/her school.
Summary

The lack of research in this area was a guiding force in this study. Because of this, the survey aimed to collect demographic and knowledge based information about the high school student-athlete population.

It is important to gain more information about this group of students, so that high school counselors can be better equipped at working with this population. As counselors become more knowledgeable about this group of students, they can feel confident that they are guiding them in the correct manner. The students will also become educated about their post-secondary options, thereby increasing the chance that they successfully choose the right educational and athletic path for themselves.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School Counseling Standards

School counselors who are employed at the secondary level are given the opportunity to have a positive impact on the current actions and future goals of their students. The American School Counseling Association’s Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2004) states that school counselors should do this by “advocat[ing] for counseling plans supporting students right to choose from the wide array of options when they leave secondary education.” School counselors are expected to accomplish this task by “encourag[ing] the maximum development of every student” (Ethical Standards for School Counselors, 2004). Although the ASCA expects school counselors to do this, the average Arizona school counselor to student ratio is 750:1 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Because school counselors are overburdened throughout the United States, certain populations can sometimes be ignored. The student-athlete population may fall into this category, as the NCAA rules and regulations are specialized and continue to change. For example, students need to be aware of test score requirements, GPA requirements, and NCAA Clearinghouse Eligibility information to successfully transition from high school to college athletics (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2008). Additionally, students seeking scholarship money need to be aware of the requirements of Division 1, Division 2, and Division 3 colleges (National Collegiate Athletic Association). When the high school student-athlete population is not given information about their post-secondary options, they are less likely to perform well academically and understand the many college and scholarship opportunities that exist (Goldman, 1994).
This may cause them to receive fewer college and scholarship offers from college athletic coaches, thereby reducing their chances of obtaining a college education.

**Prior High School Student-Athlete Interventions**

When teachers and counselors show student-athletes that they care about their academic success, these students will be more likely to get good grades and be interested in college. Goldman (1994) conducted a study on the academic and athletic achievement of the high school football players in an academically oriented Southeastern United States urban high school (Goldman). This group of students had a lower average GPA and lower SAT scores than the remainder of the high school student population, decreasing their chances of attending college and earning an athletic or academic scholarship. Fifty-three football players received a 9-week intervention that included small group guidance, study hall for students whose GPA fell below a 2.5, and an SAT prep course for 11th and 12th grade student-athletes. Over the 9-week intervention, the average attendance at study hall sessions was 73% and the average attendance for the SAT classes was 67%. The results show that the program was successful academically, as the average GPA of the football team rose from 2.3 at the beginning of the group to 2.8 at the end of the group (Goldman). Goldman also included teachers in his intervention plan. This was important, as many of the teachers perceived the student-athlete population to be “trouble makers and low achievers” (p. 9). By including their teachers, the student-athletes began feeling that the staff cared about their academic and athletic achievement and wanted to help them succeed. This was further evidenced in the 100% return rate of the academic progress reports that teachers were required to submit on a weekly basis. Overall, the
student-athletes showed academic improvement during the 9 week intervention. Thus, it appears that when student-athletes are given the tools to succeed academically, they will.

A similar intervention was implemented for high risk high school student-athletes in a large academically and athletically oriented high school. Student-athletes were identified as high risk students by low grade point average and poor attendance rates (Manning, 1990). These athletes were then asked to participate in a nine-week intervention. During the first week of the intervention, the researcher met with students, parents, coaches, teachers, school counselors, and parents. During weeks 2-9 students were expected to participate in the following activities: attend study hall three days a week, complete homework diaries, attend meetings with their school counselor, and have meetings with a high achieving student-athlete who they were paired with during the second week of the intervention (Manning). The parents of these athletes were also asked to complete surveys to identify their specific needs and sign student progress reports. Manning reported that “77% of the student-athletes improved their grade point averages for the last grading period by .5. The remaining 33% improved by a minimum of .1” (p. 32). Additionally, 12% of the student-athletes improved their attendance throughout the 9-week intervention (Manning). The most successful area of the program was the increase in student attitudes of positivity about school. The study skills meetings with the school counselor and high achieving peers helped the high risk students improve their study skills and complete homework assignments (Manning). The students were also greatly affected by the behavior changes they noted in their coaches. One hundred percent of the students stated that their attitude towards school improved because of the
concern their coaches displayed. This research further proves that when student-athletes feel that their academic and athletic accomplishments are important to their teachers, school counselor, and coaches, they will achieve at a higher level than when they feel as though their accomplishments are not important.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City partnered with the Kansas City, Missouri school district to provide an intervention designed to ease the transfer of high school student-athletes into college athletics (Mares, 1986). The intervention was a 2-week pilot program where two students were selected from each of the nine Kansas City high schools who met the following criteria: junior class standing, demonstrated athletic ability, and desire to participate in the program. During the program, the following themes were discussed: injuries and treatment, community commitment, leadership skills, recruiting rules and procedures, study skills, substance abuse, and parental concerns (Mares). Throughout the two week program, students were given lectures and demonstrations by various college and community members. Because my research focuses on the academics of high school student-athletes and their knowledge of the recruiting process, I am going to focus on the following themes: recruiting rules and procedures, study skills, and parental concerns. The students were given information about NCAA and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) recruiting, eligibility, and financial aid information. They were also given study skills and test review to prepare them for the SAT and ACT (Mares). Additionally, the parents of the group members were asked to attend a meeting where they were able to talk to the parent of a current college student-athlete. During this session the parent of the current college
student-athlete discussed her role in the eligibility and recruiting process of her child. This group provided a multitude of information to high school student-athletes to aid them in transitioning to college athletics and academics (Mares). Although no specific conclusions were given in this article, this intervention utilized many different community members to discuss a wide variety of concerns that face many high school student-athletes. School counselors can utilize these ideas when they begin aiding student-athletes through this transition.

*Decision-Paths Associated with College Choice*

There are many developmental changes that occur in students during their high school years. Developmentally, high school students may not be cognitively mature enough to think about the realities of college academics and athletics (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). This lack of cognitive development may play an important role when student-athletes choose a college. Ryan, Groves, and Schneider (2007) found that high school basketball players follow five verified decision paths when choosing a college. These decision paths are found by looking at how the student-athletes arrive at their decision to choose a specific college. Of the five decision paths, the three most common are:

**Path 5:** 1) Glitz and attraction of the campus 2) Coaching style 3) Basketball Dominant Sport 4) Recognition Status

**Path 7:** 1) Closeness to home 2) Parents 3) Maturity of Athlete 4) Quality of life after graduation
Path 8: 1) Parents 2) High School Basketball Coach 3) Quality of Education 4) Non-Professional Job Opportunities

Two of the most common paths, 7 and 8, show that high school student-athletes are able to make informed decisions about their future. These students rated their quality of life after graduation and future job opportunities as the most important factors in college choice (Ryan et al, 2007). Although two of the most common decision paths show that student-athletes are making well informed decisions, Path 5 shows that some student-athletes are making their college choice for the wrong reasons. Students who make a decision about college choice based on the glitz and recognition status of a college may not be focused on choosing the school that is the best fit for their academic and personal goals. School counselors need to be aware of these students, and educate them on making the best decision for themselves. This concern is also evident in the research done by Goldberg and Chandler (1995). When interviewed about future planning, high school student-athletes often mentioned that they were going to be pampered by coaches and professors in college. They also believed that their athletic participation would lead them to have a high social status (Goldberg & Chandler). This type of thinking may be detrimental to high school student-athletes as they are not able to realistically plan for this next stage of their life. The developmental immaturity of high school student-athletes is compounded by the length of time that some of them have to make their college choice. Approximately 15% of college student-athletes were given less than one week to accept a scholarship offer at their current college (Sander, 2008). In this amount of time, high school students may not be able to process their choices and
make the best decision for themselves. In times such as these, it is important that the school counselor is available to help them arrive at the best decision.

*College Athlete Graduation Rates*

Once student-athletes are accepted and begin college, they sometimes discover that they are not happy. This can be due to a wide variety of reasons such as athletics, college environment, or location of college. Additionally, when some of these athletes who feel that their dominant role is that of an athlete, they often have unrealistic expectations that lead them to lack a clear sense of their future goals and expectations (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). This can sometimes cause the graduation rates of student-athletes to be lower than that of the general student population. Although the college student-athlete dropout rate of 57.7% is only slightly higher than the overall college student dropout rate of 58.8% (Ferris, Finster & McDonald, 2004), the dropout rate varies greatly at some universities. Additionally, an “effect of the betters” exists at many of the top ten academic universities (Ferris et al.). This means that “universities with ‘better’ graduation rates do a worse job of graduating their athletes, relative to their student cohorts” (p. 565). Student-athletes who attend these universities may choose them based on the glitz and attraction of the campus rather than on the best academic and athletic fit. Because the graduation rates of student-athletes vary based on type of institution, making comparisons between the general student population and the student-athlete population is a complex task. Additionally, only scholarship athletes are used when calculating these statistics, thereby possibly skewing the data.
The graduation rates of college student-athletes should generally be higher than the general college population because they are given more resources to succeed. These resources include tutoring, academic advisors, yearly academic-plan forms, and priority class registration. These resources give these students more academic opportunities and allow them to keep track of their progress. Although this exists, twenty-three percent of college student-athletes will choose to transfer to another institution to finish their college education (Ferris, et al.). This means that student-athletes will transfer to another college after they have begun attending what they thought was their first choice college. Some athletes will choose to do this because they believe the new school will be a better fit with their academic, personality, and athletic beliefs. These statistics show that high school student-athletes often do not make well informed decisions when they choose where they will attend college. By having the guidance of the school counselor available, students are more knowledgeable about their athletic and academic goals, causing them to be more likely to choose schools where they feel they fit in well academically and athletically.

*Legal Considerations*

Although the lives of student-athletes are at risk when a school counselor is not educated on the NCAA eligibility rules, the school counselor’s well-being is also at stake. Secondary counselors need to be vigilant when advising student-athletes as they are responsible for being “knowledgeable of laws, regulations, and policies relating to students.” If they fail to give students the correct information about higher education, they are at risk for losing their jobs, negatively impacting the life of the student-athlete,
and being sued for negligence. For the first time in 2001, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in favor of the student in the Sain vs. Cedar Rapids Community School District lawsuit. The ruling stated that the high school counselor owed a duty to the student-athlete after the student lost a five year basketball scholarship because he lacked one-third credit of English (Stone, 2009). During the student’s senior year, he went to his counselor because he was unhappy with his English class. The counselor suggested the student sign up for a technical communications class and explained that this class would be approved by the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse before the end of the year. However, the class was never approved, causing the student to become ineligible to receive his scholarship and compete at the college level. Because the student lost a large sum of scholarship money, the courts found that the erroneous information given by the counselor is equivalent to the misrepresentation that may take place in a business (Stone). Although the courts have historically been reluctant to impose negligence on the school counselor in academic advising cases, this case may encourage similar rulings in the future when students are reliant on specific information that will affect their future educational and financial situation. These rulings should encourage school counselors to be current on the NCAA Eligibility Center information, so that they can both give the correct information to their students and stay employed.

Role of the School Counselor

The high school counselor has a unique role in the college recruiting process as they have the ability to become the coordinator of the “athletic triangle” between the coach, athlete, and parent (Brady, 1997). This role is important as the counselor can act
as a balance between the sometimes skewed positions of the parents and coaches. When the counselor assumes this role, it may help the student-athlete have a lower level of stress (Goldberg & Chandler). The relationships the counselor has with the parents and coaches are especially important for many reasons. It is important for the school counselor to have a close relationship with the parents of the student-athletes as he/she can provide them important information. Goldberg and Chandler recommend that counselors provide workshops to parents that inform them of the importance of setting realistic academic and athletic goals among other topics. By doing this, counselors will be a knowledgeable figure who parents feel they can come to when going through the recruiting process. The relationship the counselor has with the coaches can also be important as high school coaches play a large role in the lives of their student-athletes (Goldberg & Chandler). This relationship may also allow school counselors and coaches to work together when helping student-athletes choose the best college, thus creating a more beneficial environment for them.

**Summary**

Overall, high school student-athletes need more information about how to attain their goal of becoming college student-athletes. The three previous interventions show that school counselors can do this by becoming a more prominent figure who the students feel is a knowledgeable resource. Many students and parents are misinformed about the availability and regulations surrounding athletic scholarships; believing it is much easier to obtain scholarships than it is (Brady, 1997). Because of this, school counselors can encourage student-athletes to take their academic role seriously. This will give students
both the requirements needed to earn a spot on a college athletic team and will also give
them the opportunity to attend college without athletics. If the school can instill this
belief into its student-athletes, there will be a greater percentage of students who have the
option of attending college.
METHOD

Research Design

The researcher employed a cross-sectional survey research design that was guided by the lack of past research in the area. Thus, the survey asked participants about their demographics and the general recruiting information they should know when applying to college for athletics. Therefore, the research hypotheses were derived from logic and the minimal amount of past empirical findings in this area.

The student-athlete survey took both a census of tangibles and a census of intangibles (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). The first two sections of the survey (Section 1: Demographics and Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge) took a census of tangibles by asking student-athletes about demographic information and about their knowledge of the recruiting process. The third section of the survey took a census of intangibles by asking students how they feel about the role of their school counselor.

The most important limitation with survey research is non-response. In order to control for this, the researcher sent out one reminder to students who had not yet completed the survey. Once they received the reminder, they were given 5 school days to submit their survey. Although this was done, approximately 75% of students still did not complete the survey.

An important strength of survey research is that it is typically a reliable measure because it asks all students the same questions and gives them a certain time frame in which to complete the survey.
Participants

The participants in this study were randomly drawn from a list of 641 Browly High School student-athletes from grades 9-12. The 450 invited participants were chosen with a random numbers generator. This number was taken from the student-athlete listing from high school records for all students signed up to play a fall, winter, or spring sport for the 2009-2010 academic year. Ninety-eight student-athletes responded to the survey and turned in their assent and their parental consent form. Of the 98 students, 48 were male and 50 were female. Participation was voluntary and the students did not receive any benefits for participating.

Sampling Procedures

The 450 selected participants were invited to participate in the study during their advisory base and cluster classes. The researcher went into the classes of all the selected participants and briefly explained the study to them over a 2 week time period. Once the study was explained, the students were given the materials and were asked to complete the survey within a one week time period. If they did not respond by a given date, a reminder was sent. The following tables show the demographic information of the participants:
Table 1

**Gender Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

**Grade Level Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Grade Point Average Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0-2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5-3.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0-3.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-4.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*High School Sport/s Played by Student-Athletes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Sport</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Demographics of Students’ Future Athletic Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan for College Athletics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments

The survey instrument used in this study was created by the researcher. The first page of the packet was a parental consent/student assent form. The remaining two pages was the 23 question student-athlete survey. This survey contained three different sections. Section one contained ten questions about the current and future plans of the student-athlete. Section two contained nine knowledge-based questions about the recruiting process that all prospective college student-athletes must undergo. Section three contained four questions about the school counselor’s role in helping students with this process. Twenty two of these questions were close-ended questions and one was open-ended. The open-ended question came during Section three of the survey.

The survey was created by using past personal knowledge of the recruiting process, researching current student-athlete surveys, and field testing with current high school student-athletes. The researcher has an extensive background with high school and college athletics, which played a small role in the creation of this survey. In addition,
existing high school student-athlete surveys were examined. Those researched primarily focused on knowledge of the recruiting process. Many of these surveys contained more than 50 questions. Once the current survey for this research was created, it was field tested with a small group of high school student athletes. The students were asked to take the survey and give constructive feedback about readability and length of it. The researcher received positive feedback from the students and no changes were made to the survey.

**Variable List**

The variables are as follows: gender, grade level, grade point average, sport played in high school, future athletic plans, and questions assessing recruiting knowledge and level of comfort with school counselor.

**Data Collection**

The 450 selected student-athletes were given a packet containing both the consent/assent form and survey in their advisory base class. With the permission of the school principal and teachers involved, the researcher visited the advisory base and cluster classes of all selected student-athletes. The students were called together in small groups so that the researcher could explain the study. These groups ranged in size from 1 student to 15 students. After the study was explained to the student-athletes, they were asked if they wanted to participate. If they stated that they wanted to participate, a packet was given to them. They were then asked to complete the survey on their own time and have the consent form signed by their parent or guardian if they were under 18 years old. If students were 18 years old, they did not need parental consent. They were asked to
have the packet completed and turned into the counselor’s office within the next week.

There were two sealed boxes where the students could turn in their packets. The consent/assent form was to be placed in one box while the survey was to be placed in another box. Each of these boxes was labeled so that students knew in which box to place their papers.

*Statistical Treatment*

In order to understand if there were significant differences between student responses, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the student responses. This test was used to find if there were significant differences by student grade level, in the amount of knowledge about the recruiting process, and comfort level with the high school counselor. This statistical test was used because it is the most versatile test to use when multiple groups are being compared. Additionally, the Pearson correlation was calculated to find the correlation of the following two relationships:

1. If the desire to become a student-athlete in college significantly relates to the student’s score on *Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge* of the survey

2. If the score on *Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge* of the survey significantly relates to student comfort level with high school counselor.

The Pearson correlation was used to calculate these relationships because it is the most efficient statistic to understand the relationship between two variables.

*Summary*

A 23-question survey was used to ask high school student-athletes about the knowledge they have about the recruiting process and the role of their school counselor in
this process. The students were given approximately two weeks to return the survey to their school counselor’s office. Of the 450 students invited to participate, approximately 25% completed and turned in their survey.

ANOVA and the Pearson correlation were the statistical methods used to understand student responses. These statistical tests allowed the researcher to understand the knowledge that high school student-athletes have about the recruiting process.
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Demographic Descriptive Statistics

The High School Student-Athlete Survey was taken by 98 student-athletes. Of these 98 students, 49% (n=48) were male and 51% (n=50) were female. 22.4% (n=22) were freshmen, 21.4% (n=21) were sophomores, 24.5% (n=24) were juniors, and 31.6% (n=31) were seniors. 2.0% (n=2) of the students had a GPA below 2.0, 2.0% (n=2) had a GPA ranging between 2.0-2.5, 23.5% (n=23) had a GPA ranging between 2.5-3.0, 32.7% (n=32) had a GPA ranging between 3.0-3.5, and 39.8% (n=39) had a GPA ranging between 3.5-4.0. When asked if they planned to participate in college athletics, 51.0% (n=50) stated “yes”, 35.7% (n=37) stated “maybe”, and 13.3% stated “no”:

Figure 1. Number of students who plan to participate in college athletics

Students were asked to identify the sports they play at the high school level (Note: Students were asked to circle all that apply, so percentages do not add up to 100). Thirty
three percent of participants compete in track and field, 20.4 % play soccer, 19.4% play football, 19.4 % play basketball, 17.3% play volleyball, 17.3% compete in swimming/diving, 11.2% compete in cross country, 9.2% play baseball, 8.2% play another sport, 7.1% compete in wrestling, 6.1% play golf, 1.0% play tennis, and 1.0% play softball.

The following table shows the sports that the students hope to play at the college level. Only the students who stated that they want to participate in college athletics are included in the following 3 statistics:
Table 6

*Sports that Student-Athletes Hope to Play at the College Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Sport</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked how much time students have spent researching college choices, 10.4% (*n*=10) stated “a lot”, 20.4% (*n*=20) stated “quite a bit”, 44.9% (*n*=44) stated “just a little”, and 12.4% (*n*=12) stated “none”. This question was asked only of the students who stated they wanted to participate in college athletics. The following table shows how they have researched their college options (Students were given the option of choosing all options that apply to them):
Table 7

*Ways by which students have researched college athletics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look Up Schools Online</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look Up Rules Online</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email College Coaches</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to College Coaches</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Colleges</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to High School Coach</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to Counselor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to Friends</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following item was completed only by students who stated that they have not spent any time researching their college options. When asked why they have not yet done this, 20% of the participants stated that they were too young, 28% stated that they do not know how to begin researching colleges, 36% stated that they have not gotten around to it yet, 12% stated that they are unsure if they want to participate in college athletics, and 4% stated there was another reason they have not begun researching their college options.

The following item was completed only by students who stated that they do not want to compete their sport at the college level. 8.3% of participants stated that their
grades are not good enough to play their sport at the college level, 16.7% stated that they did high school sports for fun, 16.7% felt that their athletic abilities were not at the college level, 37.5% stated that they want to focus on academic in college, and 20.8% stated there were other reasons they do not want to participate in athletics at the college level.

The following survey items assess the student-athletes’ feelings about the school counselor’s role in the college recruiting process. The graph below shows the comfort level that student-athletes have with their school counselor:

Figure 2. Comfort level of student-athletes with their high school counselor

When asked what would help them feel more comfortable going to their school counselor about the college recruiting process, 45.4% of the student-athletes stated that they would feel more comfortable if they knew that their counselor was more knowledgeable about the recruiting process, 7.2% stated that nothing would help them
feel more comfortable as they are getting their information from another source, 25.8% stated that they would feel more comfortable if they knew their counselor better, 26.8% stated that they would feel more comfortable if they had more experience talking about athletics with their counselor in the past, and 6.1% stated that other reasons would help them feel more comfortable. The following table shows how student-athletes would like their school counselor to help them prepare for college athletics:

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways that student-athletes would like their school counselor help them plan for college athletics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help in Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Testing the Research Hypotheses

Quantitative Data

Four research hypotheses were tested. The first research hypothesis was:

1. There will be significant differences by student grade level on the measure of the level of knowledge about the recruiting process.

A one-way between subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the differences by student grade level on the level of knowledge about the recruiting
process. When computing the student scores on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge, Question 16 was not included in student score calculations. Student scores were only calculated for participants who answered every question on this section. Fourteen percent of the students did not answer this question, leaving out a significant percentage of student scores. Therefore, the researcher felt that the best option was to exclude this item. The first test was conducted using data from all participants, regardless of future athletic plans. There was no significant difference on the level of recruiting knowledge by student grade level. The second test included all student-athletes who stated they may want to participate in college athletics. Although the overall ANOVA test statistic ($F=2.38$) was not statistically significant ($p < .10$), post-hoc comparisons using the Least Significant Differences (LSD) test indicated that the mean difference for 10$^{th}$ grade students ($M= 3.8$, $SD= .45$) was significantly different from 11$^{th}$ grade students ($M= 6.1667$, $SD= 2.64$). No other grade level differences were found to be significant. The third test conducted included all of the student-athletes who stated they want to participate in college athletics. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p<.05$ level in knowledge about the recruiting process by grade level [Welch $F(3,34)=2.427$, $p= .003$]. Post-hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for 9$^{th}$ grade students ($M=4.889$, $SD= 2.42$) was significantly different from 12$^{th}$ grade students ($M=7.15$, $SD= 1.519$). Although, no other grade level differences were found to be significant among students stating they want to participate in college athletics, the mean scores on the recruiting knowledge survey steadily increased from 9$^{th}$ grade to 12$^{th}$ grade ($M$ 9$^{th}$ grade= 4.89, $M$ 10$^{th}$ grade= 5.57, $M$ 11$^{th}$ grade= 6.33, $M$ 12$^{th}$ grade 7.15).
The second research hypothesis was:

2. There will be significant differences by student grade level and the extent to which students perceive the school counselor to be a helpful resource in the process.

A one way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to explore the differences by student grade level on the comfort level they have when coming to their school counselor about college athletics. Student comfort level was taken from student answers to Question 20 on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge. No significant differences were found by grade level.

The third research hypothesis was:

3. There will be a significant positive relationship between desire to become a college student-athlete and score of Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge on the student survey.

The relationship between desire to become a college student-athlete and score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. A significant correlation was not found. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare desire to become a college student-athlete and score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge. There was no significant difference in scores for students stating they want to participate in college athletics (M=6.13, SD=2.15) and students stating they might want to participate in college athletics (M=5.13, SD=1.77). The eta squared statistic (.06) indicated a moderate effect size.

The fourth research hypothesis was:
4. There will not be a significant relationship between score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the survey and student comfort level with their high school counselor.

The relationship between score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the survey and student comfort level with their high school counselor was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. Student comfort level was taken from student answers to Question 20 on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge. A significant correlation was not found.

In addition to the research hypotheses, additional data was examined for relevant findings. In Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge, the student-athletes were asked to name a Division 1, Division 2, and Division 3 college to assess their knowledge about the differences between the three types of 4-year colleges. The following tables represent the number of student-athletes who answered correctly:

Table 9

Student answers about Division 1 colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division 1 Knowledge</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Answers</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect Answers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Student answers about Division 2 colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division 2 Knowledge</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Answers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect Answers</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Student answers about Division 3 colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division 3 Knowledge</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Answers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect Answers</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables show that 75.5% of student-athletes correctly named a Division 1 college, while only 23.5% correctly named a Division 2 college and 17.3% correctly named a Division 3 college.

Qualitative Data

The survey contained one qualitative section that asked about student opinion of how the school counselor can further aid students in the recruiting process. This question was optional, and asked students to state any additional information they felt was
important. Thirty three percent of students responded. Comments were read carefully with key words being identified. Key words were examined and combined into the following themes:

1. Theme 1: Student-athletes seeking information about NCAA rules and regulations
2. Theme 2: Student-athletes seeking encouragement and personal advice from counselor
3. Theme 3: Student-athletes seeking specific questions about college athletics
4. Theme 4: Negative feedback for school counselors about previous interactions
5. Theme 5: Other.

Fifty two percent of respondents wrote a comment associated with Theme 1. The remaining 48% of participants responded with comments associated with Themes 2-6, with Theme 2 being the most prominent.

Summary

Useful demographic data was collected that shows us that 86.7% of the student-athletes surveyed are interested in pursuing their sport at the college level. Although a high percentage of students wish to do this, they have little knowledge about the recruiting process. When asked how students would like to receive college athletic information, fifty seven percent stated that they would like to get information individually and 49% stated that they would like to receive college recruiting handouts.

A one way between subjects ANOVA was used to calculate the difference by student grade level on the measure of recruiting knowledge. This test was completed with all students, students who stated they may want to participate in college athletics, and
students who stated they want to participate in college athletics. Although the overall ANOVA test statistics were not statistically significant, post-hoc comparisons indicated that there are differences in test scores between grade levels among students who may want to participate in college athletics and students to want to participate in college athletics. Test scores increased by grade level for both the students who stated they may want to participate in college athletics and for students who stated they want to participate in college athletics. A moderate effect size was also found in the correlation for desire to become a student-athlete and score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the survey.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Study

The chapter is divided into 3 major sections: summary, conclusions, discussion and implications. The first section, the summary, gives a brief restatement of the problem, procedures, and hypotheses tested. The second section, the conclusions, includes the major demographic and specific research hypotheses. The third section, the discussion, includes the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Statement of the Problem

The research investigated the demographics, goals, and knowledge of the student-athletes at one Arizona high school. Additionally, the students were asked about the role their school counselor played in helping them with the recruiting process. The survey results measured the following information:

1. The future academic and athletic goals of high school student-athletes
2. The knowledge that high school student-athletes have about the recruiting process
3. The role that student-athletes feel their school counselor plays in the recruiting process

Statement of the Procedures

Four hundred fifty student-athletes at one Arizona high school were given a 23-question survey that contained 3 sections: Demographics, Recruiting Knowledge, and Role of the High School Counselor. The researcher went into the advisory base and cluster classes of all selected students and asked them to fill out the survey and return it
to the school counselor’s office. All selected students had approximately two weeks to return the survey and were reminded one time of the upcoming deadline. Ninety eight student-athletes returned their survey to the school counselor’s office by the final deadline.

*The Specific Research Hypotheses*

The four specific research hypotheses were:

1. There will be significant differences by student grade level on the measure of the level of knowledge about the recruiting process.

2. There will be significant differences by student grade level and the extent to which students perceive the school counselor to be a helpful resource in the process.

3. There will be a significant positive relationship between desire to become a college student-athlete and score of Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge on the student survey.

4. There will not be a significant relationship between score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the survey and student comfort level with high school counselor.

Additionally, the demographic information of the participants was investigated to understand their future goals, how they have researched the recruiting process, and how they want their high school counselor to aid them in this process.

*Conclusions*

This section will be divided by the types of data the researcher collected. The first section will discuss student demographic data, the second section will discuss the research hypotheses, and the third section will discuss the students’ feelings about the role of the school counselor in the recruiting process.
Approximately 87% of the student-athletes surveyed stated that they are interested in participating in college athletics. This finding is similar to the results found by the Pennsylvania New Study-Based Handbook (2009), which states that 70% of student-athletes wish to participate in college athletics. Although such a high percentage of students state that they wish to do this, only 6% will actually transition onto a four year college athletic team (New Study-Based Handbook). This leaves a drastic number of students without the opportunity to fulfill their athletic and academic goals. However, many of these students have not researched their college options and do not understand the recruiting process. Forty six percent of the students who stated that they are interested in participating in college athletics responded that they have spent “just a little” time researching college athletics, with only 10.4% stating that they have spent “a lot” of time researching college athletics. This shows that although the majority of students have the goal of competing their sport in college, they perform little or no research on their college options. Additionally, when asked to name a Division 1, Division 2, and Division 3 college, students overwhelmingly had incorrect responses for Division 2 and Division 3 colleges. The majority of students believed that Division 1AA colleges were Division 2 colleges. However, Division 1AA colleges are smaller than Division 1A colleges, but have similar scholarship money to give student-athletes. These colleges differ from Division 2 colleges, as Division 2 schools often have fewer sports and less scholarship money. Both Division 1AA and Division 2 colleges do not often have televised athletic competitions as many Division 1A schools do, causing them to be less well known. The
majority of students also believed that Division 3 colleges were community colleges. However, Division 3 colleges are 4-year undergraduate programs that have a smaller population than Division 1 and Division 2 schools. The lack of knowledge about Division 2 and Division 3 colleges shows that student-athletes are unaware of options that may fit their athletic and academic abilities better than a Division 1 college. Additionally, these colleges do not have the same amount of funding allowing them to recruit students at the same level that Division 1 colleges do. Because of this, many students may pass up the opportunity to participate in college athletics because they are unaware of their options and do not know how to advertise themselves to these schools. The lack of information that high school students have about the recruiting process is in direct opposition to their stated goals, which leads these students to not take advantage of all of their opportunities.

**Research Hypotheses**

The first research hypothesis was found to be significant when looking at recruiting knowledge by grade level and stated athletic goals. A significant difference in recruiting knowledge was found between 10th grade students (M=3.8, SD=.45) and 11th grade students (M=6.17, SD=2.64) among those stating that they may want to participate in college athletics. This finding is similar to that made by Bell, Rowan-Kenyan, and Perna (2009), which found that 11th grade is the first year that students begin actively researching their college choices. Additionally, a significant difference was found between 9th grade students (M=4.89, SD=2.42) and 12th grade students (M=7.15, SD=1.52) among those stating they want to participate in college athletics. Although results were only significant among specified grade levels, mean scores generally
increased from 9th to 12th grade among students stating that they are interested in college athletics. This shows that students are learning more about the college recruiting process as they age. Although this is the case, students generally did not perform well on this section of the survey.

The second research hypothesis was not found to be significant. The students generally did not find their counselor to be a more helpful resource as they aged. At this specific school, students change counselors after they complete their 9th and 11th grades, therefore not being afforded the opportunity to increase their comfort with one specific counselor. This may have caused comfort level to stay at a constant level during grades 9 through 12.

The third research hypothesis was found to be significant, as students who desire to compete their sport in college had more knowledge about the college recruiting process. Although the Pearson correlation coefficient was not significant, a moderate effect (.06) was found in an independent samples t-test computing desire to become a college student-athlete and score on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge. This result is similar to the results found by Bell, Rowan-Kenyan, and Perna (2009), which state that the more information students have about college, the more likely they are to enroll in college. Although these results are not as significant, they show that student desire has an effect on the amount of knowledge students have about the recruiting process. Again, although student-athletes who are interested in athletics were found to have more information than student-athletes who are not, all scores on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge were poor.
Lastly, the fourth research hypothesis was not significant as comfort level with the school counselor was not found to be related to recruiting knowledge. This was hypothesized as school counselors are not generally used by student-athletes during this process.

*Role of the High School Counselor*

High school counselors have the opportunity to assist student-athletes in their quest to play their sport at the college level. However, 53% of students stated that they were only “somewhat comfortable” or “slightly comfortable” when coming to their counselor with questions about college athletics. In order to increase comfort level among student-athletes, the researcher asked how students would like to obtain more information from their school counselor about the recruiting process. Fifty seven percent and 49% of students stated that they would like to get more information individually and be given handouts containing NCAA rules and regulations. School counselors can advertise their knowledge to these athletes by attending athletic practices and giving students presentations on this information. This will show students that their school counselor is a knowledgeable source who is willing to help them succeed in this area. Additionally, school counselors can keep NCAA handouts in their office for students to pick up at their leisure.

*Discussion and Implications*

This was one of the first research studies that has surveyed high school student-athletes about their recruiting knowledge and the role of the high school counselor in this process. Although there has been little research done in this area, the results of this
research study coincide with the past literature that has been completed. The high school student-athletes surveyed have little knowledge about the college recruiting process and generally do not feel as though their school counselor is a reliable source. Results of the study show that there is a significant lack of knowledge among high school student-athletes. This causes them to be unaware of the rules and regulations needed to enter college athletics. It may also effect their decisions about college choice, as they may not choose the best option for themselves. Because of this, students are asking school counselors to reach out through individual counseling sessions. Although students are usually responsible for making appointments with their counselor, the counselor can attend athletic practices and make announcements to show students that they are a knowledgeable resource. They have also asked school counselors to have handouts available that contain the NCAA rules and regulations. By having these options available to student-athletes, they may be more likely to take advantage of their school counselor as they navigate through the recruiting process. When students have a relationship with their counselor, they may also be more likely to come to them when they are facing the difficult decisions of college choice, thus lowering their stress level. The school counselor has the ability to be a useful resource to this group of students if he/she has the knowledge needed to understand both the NCAA regulations and the unique nature of student-athlete role.

Important information from this study about the student-athlete population can be used by school counselors, coaches, and administrators. This information can be taken to help student-athletes be more prepared for college athletics, make better decisions, and
feel less stress when making these decisions. The researcher recommends that school counselors learn more about the college recruiting process and work to create relationships with the coaches, athletes, and parents. School counselors can learn about the recruiting process by researching the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse and NCAA websites. They can also talk to high school coaches to establish a working relationship. This has been shown to be effective during past research, as the school counselor can foster a better relationship between coach, parent, and athlete.

Overall, both the past and current research findings show that high school student-athletes do not have the knowledge needed to take advantage of the many opportunities that exist. This is further compounded by the specialized nature of the recruiting process, as the school counselor is not currently a reliable resource for them.

Limitations

There were many limitations associated with this study. First, the researcher had no way of tracking all of the absent students. During advisory base classes, students have the option of going to math tutoring. Because of this, students who were absent and students who were at math tutoring were gone when the researcher asked students to participate. The absent students were not tracked, as the participant pool was large. In order to control for the large number of absent students, all selected participants were sent a reminder that the survey was due within the next five days. Although this reminder was sent, it is likely that a lower percentage of absent students came in to pick up their survey. Students who were absent when the reminder was sent out were not reminded
again. This may have skewed data, as students at math tutoring and absent students did not have the same likelihood of participating.

There were also sampling limitations associated with this study. Student-athletes who stated that they want to participate in college athletics were asked to answer 22 questions, while student-athletes who stated that they do not want to participate in college athletics were asked to answer 19 questions. A small number of participants did not answer one or more of the questions in Section 1: Demographics. Additionally, approximately 10% of the participants did not answer one or more of the questions in Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge. Many of the questions were multiple choice and did not give students a choice when they did not know the answer. Consequently, students may have skipped a question when they did not know the answer.

Another limitation was the low rate of student participation. The researcher was unable to offer incentives to the student-athletes, thereby decreasing the likelihood of returned surveys. Students were reminded one time to turn in their survey by a given date, however, there was still a high percentage of unreturned surveys. This may have skewed the results, as students interested in being a college student-athlete may have been more likely to return their surveys. Students ages 18 and over may have also been more likely to return the surveys, as they did not need a parent signature.

Suggested Further Research

This research was pursued as there has previously been little research done with the high school student-athlete population. Consequently, it serves as a starting point for future research to be completed on high school student-athletes. More specifically, the
following areas need to be further examined: the goals of high school student-athletes, the relationship of high school student-athletes and their high school counselors, and the knowledge that high school counselors have about the recruiting process. It is recommended that the relationship of high school student-athletes and their school counselors is investigated at a high school where the students have the same school counselor all four years of high school. It would be useful to understand if students feel more comfortable with the same counselor throughout their high school years than they do with changing counselors on a regular basis. It is also recommended that the knowledge of school counselors is further investigated, as their level of knowledge is imperative to student success in this area. Lastly, it is recommended that interventions with prospective college student-athletes be conducted. This will give us further information about the success of these interventions in helping student-athletes become more knowledgeable about the college going process and in their future success in college athletics.

Summary

Significant differences were found across specific grade levels, in that students’ knowledge about the college going process in relation to sports, increased from 9th to 12th grade. Additionally, students who stated that they wanted to attend college and play sports had greater knowledge about the recruiting process. Although college recruiting knowledge increased throughout the grade levels, all students performed poorly on Section 2: Recruiting Knowledge of the student-athlete survey. Another significant finding showed that students who were interested in college athletics wanted aid from
their school counselors in the forms of individual counseling and handouts. Lastly, students noted that they wanted to feel more comfortable coming to the counselor about the college going process.

Many recommendations were given for further research, such as the recruiting knowledge of the counselor being investigated and interventions with student-athletes being performed. This research will help us to better understand the needs of the student-athlete population.
APPENDIX A: LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH

VAIL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 20

"Where Education is a Community Effort"

Calvin Baker
Superintendent

August 25, 2009

Ms. Carrie Lujan
University of Arizona Graduate Student
Cienega High School Counseling Intern
Vail, AZ

Dear Ms. Lujan:

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study for your Master’s thesis on student-athletes’ knowledge about the college recruitment process at Cienega High School.

As part of this study, I authorize you to invite selected students to participate in the study as subjects. Participation of the participants will be voluntary and at their own discretion as your survey asks general questions and poses no threats to students.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and will not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the University of Arizona IRB. Analysis of the data may be shared with parents, teachers, staff, students, and school administrators.

The Vail School District reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

Sincerely,

Calvin Baker
Superintendent
APPENDIX B: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM

CORRESPONDENCE FORM

The University of Arizona
Human Subjects Protection Program
6101 E. Helen St.
P.O. Box 24527
Tucson, AZ 85726-5337
Tel: (520) 526-9721
http://www.irb.arizona.edu

HSPP Correspondence Form

Date: 02/16/10
Investigator: Caroline Lujan, Undergraduate Student
Department: Disability and Psychoeducational Studies
Advisor: Sheri Bowman, PhD
Project No./Title: 09-0956-02 High School Student-Athlete Recruiting Survey
Current Period of Approval: 12/22/09-12/21/10

IRB Committee Information
☒ IRB 2 – IRB00601751
FWA Number: FWA00004218
☒ Expedited Review – 02/16/10

Nature of Submission
☒ Amendment

Documents Reviewed Concurrently
☒ Request for Amendment Form - PI Initiated Changes (dated 02/09/09)
Appr
☒ Consenting Instruments:
Appr
☒ Parental/Guardian Permission Form (version 02/09/10)
Appr
☒ Surveys/Questionnaires: Student-Athlete Survey
Appr

Description of Modifications
Protocol change [PI will visit classes one week after surveys are passed out to remind students to return them]. Parental Permission form [remove the number of questions on the Student-Athlete Survey] revised study document [add questions regarding high school sports to the student-athlete survey].

Committee/Chair Determination
Approved as submitted effective 02/16/10

Not Applicable

Elaine G. Jones, RN, PhD
Chair, IRB 2 Committee
UA Institutional Review Board

02/16/10

EGI: les

Reminder: Continuing Review materials should be submitted 30-45 days prior to the expiration date to obtain project re-approval
• Projects may be concluded or withdrawn at any time using the forms available at www.irb.arizona.edu
• No change to a project may be made prior to IRB approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazard to subjects.
• Original signed consent forms must be stored in the designated departmental location determined by the Department Head.

Arizona’s First University – Since 1885
Form version: 12/07/09
APPENDIX C: PARENTAL/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM

Introduction: Your child is being invited to take part in a research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not you wish to allow your child to take part. The researcher will be available to answer your questions and provide additional information. If you decide to allow your child to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. You may keep a copy of this form.

What is the purpose of this research study? The purpose of this study is to obtain more information about high school student-athletes and their future plans. For example, students will be asked about their future athletic plans, their amount of knowledge about the recruiting process, and the role of their school counselor in this process.

Why is my child being asked to participate? Your child is being asked to participate because he/she is a high school student-athlete. All high school athletes at Cienega High School had an equal chance of being recruited for this study.

How many people will be asked to participate in this study? Approximately 450 students will be asked to participate in this study.

What will happen during this study? Students will be asked to complete a 23 question survey about college athletics on their own time. They will have approximately two weeks to turn the survey and the consent form into two separate locked boxes in the counselor's office.

How long will my child be in this study? It will take your child approximately 10-15 minutes to complete this study.

Are there any risks to my child? I do not expect there to be any risks associated with this study.

Are there any benefits to my child? Your student will not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study.

What are the alternatives for participating in this study? The alternative is not to participate in this study.

Will there be any costs to my child? Participants will only experience a small loss of time. Students will lose approximately 5 minutes of advisory class time when they are asked to participate in the study. They will also lose 10-15 minutes of their own time when they complete the study.

Will my child be paid to participate in the study? Your child will NOT be paid for their participation.

Will video or audio recordings be made of me during the study? No.

Will the information that is obtained from my child be kept confidential? Your child's records will be kept confidential. The Principal Investigator, Carrie Lujan, has obtained the list of student-athletes from the school counselor. Because of this, the school counselor knows who has been asked to participate in the study. Although it will be known who has been asked to participate in the study, student names will not be written on any part of the survey. Because of this, there will be no
identifying information from your student once the survey has been turned into the locked box. This means that your child will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

What if my child is harmed by the study procedures? I do not expect any students to be harmed by the study procedures. However, if something harmful were to take place, I would alert the appropriate school personnel.

May I change my mind about my child participating? Your student’s participation in this study is voluntary. He/she may decide to not begin or to stop the study at any time. Refusing to participate will have no effect on their student-athlete status. They can also discontinue their participation with no effect on their student-athlete status. Also, any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to allow student participation.

Whom can I contact for additional information? You can call the Principal Investigator to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Carrie Lujuan, can be called at (631) 578-2047. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator; or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office. If you would like to contact the Human Subjects Protection Program via the web (this can be anonymous), please visit http://www.izb.arizona.edu/contact/.

Student Signature
By signing this form, I state that I have read the information contained in the form, that the study has been explained to me, that my questions have been answered and that I agree to participate in this study.

Student’s Name (Printed) Student’s Signature Date Signed

Parent Signature
By signing this form, I affirm that I have read the information contained in the form, that the study has been explained to me, that my questions have been answered and that I agree to allow my child to take part in this study. I do not give up any of my legal rights by signing this form.

Parent’s Name (Printed) Parent’s Signature Date Signed

Statement by person obtaining consent
I certify that I have explained the research study to the person who has agreed to participate, and that he or she has been informed of the purpose, the procedures, the possible risks and potential benefits associated with participation in this study. Any questions raised have been answered to the participant’s satisfaction.

Name of study personnel

Study personnel Signature Date signed
APPENDIX D: SCRIPT OF INTERACTIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS

1. Introduction of Myself
   a. Name
   b. Time at Cienega
      i. 1 year
   c. Graduate Student at University of Arizona
      i. Graduate this May
      ii. Need to do research in order to graduate

2. Research with the high school student-athlete population
3. Asking for participation
   a. Voluntary
   b. Parent signature if under 18 years old
   c. Return the survey within one week to Mrs. Carrier’s office
      i. Two boxes to turn surveys in
      ii. Separate consent/assent form
   d. Participation is very important
      i. Help the student-athlete population
APPENDIX E: STUDENT-ATHLETE SURVEY

Student-Athlete Survey

SECTION 1
Please circle the answer that best represents you. Please complete the entire survey, regardless of your college plans:

1. Grade level:
   a. 9th grade
   b. 10th grade
   c. 11 grade
   d. 12 grade

2. Gender:
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. Cumulative GPA:
   a. 3.5-4.0
   b. 3.0-3.5
   c. 2.5-3.0
   d. 2.0-2.5
   e. Under 2.0

4. What sport/s do you play in high school? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Football
   b. Soccer
   c. Baseball
   d. Track
   e. Cross Country
   f. Golf
   g. Basketball
   h. Tennis
   i. Softball
   j. Volleyball
   k. Wrestling
   l. Swimming/Diving
   m. Other:_________________

5. Do you plan to participate in college athletics?
   a. Yes (Go to Question 6)
   b. Maybe (Go to Question 6)
   c. No (Go to Question 10)
6. What sport do you want to play in college?
   a. Football
   b. Soccer
   c. Baseball
   d. Track
   e. Cross Country
   f. Golf
   g. Basketball
   h. Tennis
   i. Softball
   j. Volleyball
   k. Wrestling
   l. Swimming/Diving
   m. Other:_________________

7. How much time have you spent researching different colleges?
   a. A lot (Go to Question 8)
   b. Quite a bit (Go to Question 8)
   c. Just a little (Go to Question 8)
   d. None (Go to Question 9)

8. If so, what have you done? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Looked at different schools online
   b. Looked at college rules online
   c. Emailed college coaches
   d. Talked to college coaches on phone or in person
   e. Visited college campuses
   f. Talked to my high school/club coach
   g. Talked to my high school counselor
   h. Talked to family/friends about college athletics
   i. Other:_________________

NOW GO TO SECTION 2

9. If not, why have you not researched college yet? (Circle all that apply)
   a. I am too young
   b. I don’t know what to do
   c. I just haven’t gotten around to it yet
   d. I am not sure that I want to do college sports
   e. Other:_________________

NOW GO TO SECTION 2

10. Why aren’t you interested in college athletics? (Circle all that apply)
    a. My grades aren’t good enough
    b. I am just doing high school sports for fun
c. I don’t think that I can get into a good college for my sport

d. I want to focus on academics in college

e. Other: ____________________________

GO TO SECTION 2

SECTION 2: The following questions will assess your knowledge about college athletics.
Please circle the best answer:

11. Athletic scholarships are given at what colleges?
   a. Division 1
   b. Division 2
   c. Division 3
   d. A and B
   e. All of the above

12. Name a Division 1 college: ____________________________

13. Name a Division 2 college: ____________________________

14. Name a Division 3 college: ____________________________

15. If you want to play your sport at a Division 1 or Division 2 school, when do you need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse?
   a. 12th grade
   b. 9th grade
   c. 11th grade
   d. Never

16. What is a National Letter of Intent?
   a. A binding written agreement between the college coaches and the prospective student-athlete stating that they will be attending their school
   b. A letter that the prospective student-athlete sends to the college coach, stating their intent to come to their school
   c. A spoken agreement between the college coaches and the prospective student-athlete stating that they will be attending their school

17. What are the high school academic requirements that you need to complete in order to be considered for Division I college? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Pass 16 core high school courses (4 English classes, 3 math, 2 science, 1 additional year of English, math, or science, 2 years social science, 4 additional courses)
   b. Have a GPA of 3.0
   c. Pass 14 core high school courses (3 English classes, 2 math, 2 science, 2 additional years of English, math, or science, 2 years social science, 3 additional courses)
d. Take the SAT OR ACT
e. Fulfill the sliding scale requirement for GPA and SAT/ACT score
f. Have a SAT score of 820 OR an ACT score of 68

18. True or False: It is your responsibility to begin talking to college coaches.

19. True or False: An official visit is one where the college pays for the prospective student-athlete to visit, while an unofficial visit is one where the prospective student-athlete pays to visit the college.

SECTION 3: The following questions will ask about the role of your high school counselor.

20. How comfortable do you feel coming to your school counselor to find out information about the recruiting process?
   a. Very comfortable (Go to Question 22)
   b. Somewhat comfortable (Go to Question 21)
   c. Slightly uncomfortable (Go to Question 21)
   d. Very uncomfortable (Go to Question 21)

21. What might help you feel more comfortable going to your school counselor? 
   (Circle all that apply)
   a. If I knew that he/she is knowledgeable about the recruiting process
   b. Nothing. I am getting this information from another source
   c. If I knew my counselor better
   d. If I had more experience talking to my counselor about my athletics in the past
   e. Other:____________________________________

22. How would you like your high school counselor to help you prepare to be a college student-athlete? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Give me more information about this process in a group setting
   b. Give me more information individually
   c. Have information sessions after school with student-athletes and their families
   d. Give me handouts about the general college rules
   d. Other:____________________________________

23. Please tell me anything else that you feel is important to student-athletes as they think about the college application process:
APPENDIX F: FOLLOW-UP REQUEST

Hi Student-Athletes! If you recently received a Student-Athlete Survey, please turn it into Mrs. Carrier’s office in the 500 house by April 15th. If you lost your copy or have not received one, please come by to pick one up! Your participation is very important, as it will help schools provide better assistance to student-athletes. Thank you! –Mrs. Lujan
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