

ONE FOOT IN: STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT RHETORIC IN
THE MARGINS OF AMERICAN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

by

William James Broussard

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by William Broussard entitled One Foot In: Student-Athlete Advocacy and Social Movement Rhetoric in the Margins of American College Athletics and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Roxanne Mountford Date: March 26, 2007

Anne-Marie Hall Date: March 26, 2007

Geta LeSeur-Brown Date: March 26, 2007

Debra Hawhee Date: March 26, 2007

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation Director: Roxanne Mountford Date: March 26, 2007

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Signed: William James Broussard

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ABSTRACT

In “One Foot In: Student-Athlete Advocacy and Social Movement Rhetoric in the Margins of American College Athletics,” the author explores student-athlete advocacy of black male student-athletes in revenue generating sports and educational and cultural reforms to NCAA policies and bylaws over approximately two decades (1985-2006). The author examines non-profit organizations--Black Coaches Association, Drake Group, Institute for Diversity and Ethics and Sport, and Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics--who pressured the NCAA to enact measures to restore order and balance to American college athletics. In addition, these measures are designed to increase student-athlete graduation rates, increase opportunities for minority coaches and administrators, and protect college educators who blow the whistle on institutions who commit infractions. The author begins by identifying social movement rhetorical strategies--the “Triple Front” strategy of Harold Cruse and Agitation/Control Rhetoric of Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen--to analyze rhetorical interactions between non-profit organizations and the NCAA, especially how the NCAA responds by using control rhetoric in order to protect itself from outside influences. Finally, the author ends the discussion by using autoethnography to analyze my own experiences as a writing program administrator challenging NCAA hegemony by running a progressive writing program within a traditional student-athlete study hall.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #1: JUMPING IN--THE PROBLEM

The following narrative excursus is one of six that appear between chapters in this dissertation. Each represents the varied perspectives that inform my research and are examples of the areas that I have had my ‘feet’ in over the past eleven years. I begin with a reflection on my experiences as a student-athlete, and alternately reflect on experiences as a writing program administrator, athletic administrator, student life administrator, rhetoric and composition graduate student, and rhetorician of sport culture.

“I swear I’m a put the NCAA on speed dial!” my best friend and roommate Terrell¹ muttered to me under his breath after completing the drill. It was late June, several weeks before we would report to camp, and more importantly, several weeks after, according to NCAA regulations, position coaches could run drills with players in compliance with NCAA bylaws. Such activity was forbidden in the summertime, and the only coaches who were allowed to run any kind of training activities with football players were strength coaches. However, as our coach pointed out to us, it was a common practice for position coaches to get extra training time in with their players over the summer. He often assured us that our opponents were bending the rules as much as we.

Our coach, who was a stickler for professionalism, masked his involvement with our drill by jogging around the stadium and yelling orders out to us. That way, to the naked eye, it simply appeared as if he were getting a jog in while we so happened to be running zone step drills in the 100 degree sun, on our own accord. Personally, I found his attention to detail remarkable, if not also comical. It was more than anyone else on our coaching staff was willing to do to mask their non-compliance, be it their abuse of the 20-hour rule, which limited practice, film sessions, weights and conditioning, and competition to 20 hours a week (a typical week was nearly 30 hours), their unwillingness

¹ Name changed to protect the anonymity of said individual.

to allow players to enroll in afternoon classes, or our 7:55 am dismissal from conditioning, when many of us had 8:00 am classes across campus.

During these “voluntary” workouts, we felt like uncompensated laborers with little choice but to comply. And worse still, many of us actually had to leave our summer jobs to participate in these workouts. The “payoff,” we were often told, would come months later as we would earn the opportunity to hoist a championship trophy. And the consequence would be defeats handed to us courtesy of our conference rivals.

Unfortunately, comparable discussions about future “payoff” focusing on how our involvement in athletics was connected to the acquisition of social and cultural capital, and how the discipline, work ethic, and goal-setting and achievement skills we were developing would one day be personally, professionally, and socially beneficial to us never occurred. These were lessons we would have to learn on our own. The irony which should not be lost on anyone is that such sentiment permeates the rhetoric of the NCAA’s public relations campaigns, as it does the apologies that NCAA representatives offer to university administrators and faculty when NCAA scandals emerge.

At the time, the field was the only classroom, and on that summer day, the lesson was on the Orwellian labyrinth of NCAA culture. Rules are merely guidelines. Guidelines have loopholes. Loopholes are rules. Repeat. And don’t get caught. The non-compliance. The “win at all costs” mindset. The philosophical question of labor and just compensation. I’ve debated all of these issues since graduation and come to only one conclusion which is universal and culturally transcendent: we should have talked about this more when we were playing ball. Perhaps it was difficult to hear ourselves think over the perpetual bombardment of directives issued by our coaches. “Zone step to the left! Set!” ... “Outside zone to the right! Set!” ...

CHAPTER ONE--*STEPPING THE GAME UP:*

Rhetoric, Composition, and the Redefinition of College Athletics

“Nothing is more false, in my view, than the maxim almost universally accepted in the social sciences according to which the researcher must put nothing of himself into his research.”

--Pierre Bourdieu, “Participant Objectivation”

As an undergraduate, I was a student-athlete at Northwestern State University (La.) a small, NCAA Division I/Research II institution of roughly 6,000 students. At NSU, athletics events often sold out, the stands teeming with invested and well-educated fans, and student-athletes who excelled were lauded as local heroes on campus and in the quaint town of Natchitoches, Louisiana. Student-athletes were also expected to excel in the classroom, paying tremendous dividends as we matriculated towards graduation with success equal to or greater than every institution in our conference. All in all, athletics seemed to operate well within the structure of the university, providing campus and community members with opportunities for large-scale campus participation, interaction among and with diverse student bodies and community members, and a source of pride for alumni across the United States with very little cost to the university and a high return on investment.

My sense as a student-athlete was always that the majority of the members of my campus community cared very deeply about athletics. I rarely encountered individuals who insisted that college athletics and higher education be bifurcated. Rather, most seemed to express an interest in and even fervor for attending ball games, supporting their favorite teams through their attendance and often by way of their pocketbooks. As a student-athlete, I had the good fortune of having two professors who served as Faculty Athletics Representatives for my university, as well as several other faculty members

who were avid fans of one sport or another who regularly attended competitions. Their interest in my life outside of the classroom was a constant source of substantive engagement and encouragement, and also served to challenge stereotypes of faculty being disinterested in or averse to college athletics.

My experiences as both graduate student and administrator at The University of Arizona, an elite NCAA Division I/Research I institution with over 37,000 students and nearly 500 student-athletes have been markedly different. In recent years, the Arizona State Legislature has perennially cut the budgets of the state's three large public institutions, forcing administrators at each university to trim budgets emaciatingly thin. Meanwhile, our athletics department appears to have flourished, expanding its weight room and training facilities, opening a \$14 million "Hall of Champions" wing, and paying many of its coaches six and seven figure salaries--even though tens of thousands of seats remain empty at home football games, basketball tickets are virtually unavailable because premium seats are reserved for wealthy boosters and alumni, and a general sense of distrust is perpetually aimed at our (apparently) disproportionately cash-laden and scandal-involved athletics department.

I also taught First-Year Composition (FYC) at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College for a total of seven years. The contrasts among the socioeconomic statuses of students whom I've had enroll in my classes is, as could be imagined among large, ethnically and culturally diverse student body populations, stark. Among them, I've had a student who lived out of her car for half the semester, only to be discovered sleeping in a parking lot by campus police, another who hoped her family could escape the attention of the INS for only one more semester so that she could finish her associate's degree before being sent back to Mexico, and a young man who began his

college career after making a promise to a dying friend--a victim of street violence in Amarillo, Texas. On the other side of the spectrum, I've taught a student who was only in college to obtain a degree so that investors would not sneer at the idea of a 21 year-old being named vice-president of his father's company, another who spoke of "starting another small business" the way most people talk of "ordering another pizza," and a third who decided to drop out of college after his father died and left him an inheritance from a Tontine scheme.

During this time I worked in an Intercollegiate Athletics Department for three years. I discovered that student-athlete populations are equally diverse along socioeconomic lines, from inner-city Black youth who sent home a portion of their scholarship checks and took summer school classes to receive the extra financial assistance, to gymnasts and swimmers whose families' largesse afforded them private coaching lessons from the time that they were able to walk. As a student-athlete who later became a college educator, I remember keenly my own days as a collegiate athlete. During that time, I worked 20 hours a week during the fall and spring semesters (and full-time in the summers) all while maintaining a high enough GPA to maintain my full academic scholarship while other student-athletes spent their summer breaks in countries that I, an honors college student, couldn't pronounce. Once, while walking a group of my FYC students to their vehicles after a late-night class ended, and upon realizing that among all of our cars, mine was the (ahem) least extravagant, I remembered remarking sarcastically that perhaps if I had attended a Pac-10 institution, these were the kind of vehicles that boosters would have illegally offered me for my athletic performance.

Those thoughts raced through my mind on the morning of April 11th, 2004, as I typed frantically:

From: Will Broussard <wjb@EMAIL.ARIZONA.EDU>
To: SAT-CENTER@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU
Subject: "Spoiled" Athletes - Post to WPA E-List

All,

I hope your semesters are going well. I am troubled by a post to the WPA E-List, in which a university professor with whom I have had a lengthy conversation with via email recalled her experiences working among university football players as a tutor. She had this to say about them:

*"I had a professor years later who told me, after I had mopped cafeteria floors, delivered aerial photos, stood for endless hours at a cash register, taking classes when I could, and finally went to the university full-time where I tutored **spoiled athletes**, my favorite professor whom I worshipped, he told me I had "the typical blue-collar transcript."*

In other words, she had to labor to "earn her education" while those spoiled student-athletes took yet another scholarship from a hard-working student who "deserved" it more than they.

I hope the irony of this statement doesn't fall upon deaf ears. What with all the 'earning of scholarships' that so many athletes evidently don't do, even though so many of them end up without a degree, without an education in exchange for what Bensen-Myers calls their "lucrative service" to the institution.

I wonder if your campuses' faculty and staff members share this sentiment. If so, how is it expressed? What, if anything, do we do to address this kind of ideology/hegemony - do we enter into a marxist interpretation of exploited and uncompensated labor of a dispensable work force? Or do some of us agree with the sentiment (I suppose I shouldn't assume that all of us would disagree with her statement)? What are your WPA's feelings about your working with this population? Mine, for example, seemed ambivalent. They didn't get on board with the idea of the program until they saw that it could provide an assistantship to the English Department to run the center share the "spoils" to speak

I mean, this is something we should all be thinking about. We can exchange our thoughts and ideas about practices in our writing centers and other kinds of interactions, but we should also be reflecting about how we theorize our work and what our motivations are for working with the student population with which we do, or we will be as guilty of myopia as the professor, whom I have objected to so strongly.

The confrontation between frustrated faculty and 'spoiled' athletes is as good a place as any to begin a discussion about the transformation of college athletics. After

all, any transformation of college athletics will both necessitate and affect a transformation of the entire institution of higher education--and of the interested parties therein. I employ a simple metaphor, "One Foot In," to represent, all at once, the kind of perspective-taking, multi-modal research, and diversity of experience and scholarly influence that I employ as lenses during the dissertation.

Perhaps a simple metaphor is out of place, considering that coaches often use grandiloquent metaphors about 'climbing mountains,' 'slaying dragons,' and 'taking on the world' to motivate their players. Perhaps it is equally out of place in the eyes of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who, in describing culture and cultural research, labeled the endeavor "an elaborate venture in." The redress of college athletics, daunting a task as it has proved to be, will require much more than the apt and deft utterance of metaphors, however. At least at the onset, it will require jumping into the problem with more than one foot.

The students whose plight I focus on in this dissertation are black male student-athletes in the revenue sports of football and basketball at the NCAA's most elite athletics institutions (approximately the 50 largest Division 1-A athletics departments in the country). Studies that I analyze reveal that their labor is disproportionately exploited, and that their educational quality and likelihood of successfully matriculating disproportionately lower than their white counterparts. It can be argued that the amount of revenue brought in by high-profile black college athletes warrants equity payout, though it's often contended that a college education from a prestigious institution is equitable compensation for their labor. The fact that these athletes are not compensated for exorbitantly high revenue generation *while* they continue to graduate at rates significantly lower than that of their white counterparts--at graduation rates less than 50%

on average--indicates that one issue most can agree upon is that the majority of black male student-athletes in the revenue sports come up short under either scenario.

The lower graduation rates among black male student-athletes in the revenue sports is especially egregious, given that they constitute a majority of the athletes on revenue teams in the most prominent athletics departments and are responsible for generating the sizable revenues of their host departments. This discrepancy is indicative of what I. M. Young has defined as “indirect oppression,” or, the “inequalities in American society” and “disadvantage(s) and injustice(s) some people suffer not because policies and practices are intentional (but) because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned society” (qtd. in Bennett, McWhorter, and Kuykendall 532). As I analyze the social movement rhetoric of four not-for-profit organizations (The Drake Group, The Black Coaches Association, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics), I focus on how each organization has lobbied for educational reforms in the NCAA by advocating, concurrently, for cultural, economic, and political restructuring and revisions in order to hold NCAA institutions accountable for the welfare of the student-athletes under their charge. For the purposes of this dissertation, I draw from several social movement theorists, but most notably from the “agitation and control rhetoric” of John Bowers, Donovan Ochs, and Richard Jensen and the “Triple Front” rhetoric of Harold Cruse as a means of characterizing the diverse efforts of these organizations as social movements. In doing so, I identify commonalities in the rhetorical approaches of these organizations as they challenge the hegemony of the NCAA, even though the organizations differ widely in many aspects.

College athletics’ most unabashed detractors believe that college athletics represents a kind of academic capitalism that threatens the sanctity of higher education--

the cynicism “infect(ing) the rest of student life, from promoting academic dishonesty to the loss of individual ideals” (Boyer, qtd. by Zimbalist in Unpaid Professionals, 48).

Their concerns are warranted at an institution with an elite athletics program, because such programs generally are allowed to become divorced from, if not antithetical to, the mission of the university. In such institutions, the fate of student-athletes as well as their advocates appears immaterial, as university officials are unwilling to deny themselves “current or future spoils” in order to reform the system (Byers 11). Decades of actions on the part of universities to silence, isolate, and excise campus community members who challenge the prevailing consciousness regarding elite college athletics programs has resulted in what Antonio Gramsci terms “hegemony,” or, “permeation *throughout* society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations” (qtd. in Burke 3, author’s emphasis). On college campuses, in other words, those who stand up for student-athletes live in the middle ground between the apathy which ensues from having one’s voice silenced, and the approbation which permeates the thoughts and actions of individuals fearful of reprisal by powerful university trustees, board members, and administrators.

Among the individuals who seem most indifferent are faculty members, perhaps because they have for the most part decided that their voices simply are not as powerful as those of the trustees and boosters who back powerful athletics departments. In my experience, faculty and graduate students in writing programs seem particularly reticent and resistant to having student-athletes in their classes, resigned to the fact that these students are not as hard-working or intellectually prepared as their peers, or perhaps fearful of having prominent athletes enroll in their classes and being forced to interact with what faculty perceive to be powerfully coercive athletics departments that enforce

the silence and compliance of those who suspect academic malfeasance (Bensel-Myers 1).

This sentiment is echoed by the American Association of University Professors, who in their 2002 report “The Faculty Role in the Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics” note that “advocacy of significant change in college athletics has been mostly limited to individual faculty members; the faculty as a whole has been largely disengaged or indifferent” (2). However, it should be noted that the most substantial *individual* efforts to challenge the NCAA and its impact on the education quality of black, male, revenue sport athletes, have come from faculty members--and, interestingly enough, faculty members who either are affiliated with English Departments/Writing Programs or are teachers of writing. Their efforts have yielded, arguably, the most dramatic reforms at the institutional level as well as generated the most media coverage of the need for NCAA reform.

Unfortunately, the intervention of many sympathetic Writing Program faculty is cancelled out by the scorn, derision, indifference, and apathy of other faculty who are either unconcerned with or completely jaded by the presence of big-time athletics departments on their campuses. One instance in particular illustrates the perspective that permeates one writing program regarding the academic diligence of student-athletes. On a departmental listserv at The University of Arizona for writing instructors, in which mundane linguistic spats and missteps are often deconstructed and arguments elevated to a level of importance they rarely deserve, a writing instructor once made the following comment:

I, on the other hand, have not had many students miss my class lately. Just about everyone is showing up for class [...] *even all of my student-athletes*. (emphasis added)

The point was made in the context of a larger statement about disinterested and unmotivated students. After all, if it were an innocent comment about the absences of student-athletes who miss class to attend competitions (such as baseball players, who play as many as 70 games during a season) and otherwise attend regularly, the instructor would not have spoken about these students' choice to all of a sudden attend class. I imagined that someone, at some point, would step up and note how unfortunate this generalization was (as are such generalizations when directed at any student group, e.g. students in sororities and fraternities). Not necessarily to defend student-athletes, but at least to warn against such generalizing as a common practice. Or perhaps others who had student-athletes in their sections would step up and note that laziness and a general lack of intellectual curiosity were not the sole traits of student-athletes. But no one ever did. It was as if this were the natural order of things, and whether the silence represented agreement or not, it illustrated the ignorance and indifference with which faculty regard the enterprise of college athletics, and more importantly, the student-athletes who were enrolled in their classes.

Unfortunately, in the largest institutions, divisions, conferences, and athletics departments that compete under the governance of the NCAA, the spirit of camaraderie, amity, and sportsmanship that campus community members once associated with collegiate sport in America has turned into one of disdain, distrust, and disgust among many members of the university community, and prominently among faculty and administrative professionals in university writing programs. This sense of malcontent

with college athletics among faculty is likely attributable to several high profile incidents in the past 20 years involving writing instructors/writing program administrators taking on the corruption and abuses endemic to elite college athletics--most notably the cases of Jan Kemp, University of Georgia, Linda Bensel-Myers, formerly of the University of Tennessee, and Jon Ericson of Drake University (discussed in Chapter 4). In these cases, writing program professionals faced immense personal and professional hardships as a result of their crusades on behalf of their (often) black, male, revenue sport students whom they believed to be exploited by the enterprise of organized collegiate sport.

However, faculty and professionals in university writing programs in many ways continue to become the emblems of campus initiatives to reform college athletics, their *de facto* social movement rhetoric borne both of rhetoric and composition's predilection for critical composition pedagogy and the field's historical involvement in campus-wide and even community-based social movement and advocacy. Examples of such activity include engagement in community literacy research and pedagogy, service learning, and as Barbara Walvoord notes in "The Future of WAC," even Writing Across the Curriculum initiatives represent educational reform movements with great potential to transform college students' educational experiences (61-62).

Standing Up to the Criticism: National Collegiate Athletics Association (A History)

I enter this project with a thought firmly in my mind--that the problems of college athletics are equally shared by the institutions of higher education that house athletics departments, by faculty members and administrators who are charged, ultimately, to design and implement curricula, and by athletics departments with bottom lines to meet that have little to do with the intellectual and psycho-social growth of students under their charge. The future prospect of NCAA athletics departments forging significant

partnerships with faculty and staff who in many cases perceive student-athlete advocacy as perilous or unnecessary is more important than ever considering the NCAA's recent revisions to academic progress models. These new academic progress models predicate the need for increased involvement, oversight, and support from faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, and other trustees at their host institutions. In the midst of all this, college student-athletes and professionals who face a multitude of challenging and, at times, overwhelming problems with an alarming lack of agency need the support and creativity of the Academy's best scholars and administrators, not their scorn and derision. Unfortunately, it's often all they receive.

The NCAA has received its fair share of criticism in the past two decades. For example, critics have claimed the athletic participation correlates with lowered graduation rates because the rigor of successful athletics programs weakens academic integration across the entire student body (Mangold, Bean, and Adams 542-43). Critics also hold the NCAA responsible for failing to address the pervasive lack of opportunities for black professionals as administrators and coaches (Leonard 1-2; Marot 1). Finally, NCAA athletics departments are criticized for overpaying their coaches and exploiting the labor of student-athletes.

However, while big-time NCAA Division I football and basketball athletes generally graduate less than 50 percent of the time overall, NCAA host institutions' records for non-student-athletes are worse, and some critics claim that athletics participation carries with it the benefits of "discipline, confidence, motivation, and other traits" that are tied to academic success (Long and Caudill 525). And a dearth of opportunities for black professionals in Higher Education exists, as well, as evidenced by the disproportionately low numbers of black educators at virtually every level in the

Academy outside of HBCUs (Marable 1, Carbado 2). Accusations of overpayment have also been leveled at “overpaid tenured professors” who no longer produce research², and when it comes to labor being exploited, underpaid and underappreciated graduate assistants and lab assistants on college campuses have all shed light on questionable labor practices in the Academy. Finally, regarding the notion of questionable academic content for student-athletes, a recent study conducted by the American Institutes for Research concluded that one out of every five American college graduates is “quantitatively illiterate,” which begs the question: isn’t the academic content for *all* college students an issue that should be closely scrutinized (Wood 1)?

“Hey-day of American sport” nostalgians (often older, white male sports writers) wish for a time before the over-commercialization and greed associated with collegiate sport tainted the game³. On campus, faculty members often comment on the egregiousness of funding national and occasionally international athletic competition while their departmental budgets are routinely slashed during economic downturns. Even students, though they enjoy the many benefits of nationally recognized sports teams competing on their campuses, often deride student-athletes because they perceive them as “free-riders” who take scholarships from other students and receive inflated grades. An interesting example of such resentment occurred at Rutgers University, where from 1993-2002 the “Rutgers 1000” coalition decried and vehemently resisted Rutgers’ move to Division 1-A, accusing then President Richard McCormick of placing the athletic success

² Such comments are typically expressed on right-wing talk radio and blogs, and are often based on a lack of knowledge about professorial workloads. An interesting response to this characterization was offered by John Knapp of Northern Illinois University on a TomPaine.com discussion (“A Day in the Life” <http://www.soci.niu.edu/~archives/TOMPAIN/jan06/0203.html>).

³ This often reads like coded racism to me, perhaps associated with a yearning for an age before blacks were allowed to compete in both amateur and professional sport.

of Rutgers' sports programs ahead of the intellectual reputation of the university (<http://members.aol.com/rutg1000/>).

These complaints are not completely unwarranted. In addition to recruiting violations, improper payouts, grade fixing and altering, and many other academic and financial benefits being extended to student-athletes, the NCAA suffers from a negative image associated with its inability to govern institutions and departments under its charge. In the last two decades, beginning most prominently with the NCAA's issuance of the "Death Penalty"⁴ to Southern Methodist University in 1986, the reputation of the NCAA has continued to sour as each ensuing set of violations becomes exposed and reported in the national media. Increasingly in the late 1990's, various constituent groups publicly questioned the NCAA on its policies regarding the prominence of Native American mascots, the lack of opportunities for black professionals in collegiate sport, and deteriorating roles of presidents and faculty athletics representatives at host institutions. Though the NCAA continues to sponsor research and sanction athletics programs which violate their codes, detractors continue to claim that the NCAA either does not take violations seriously enough, cannot effectively oversee the institutions under its watch, or does not need to address detractors because of overwhelming support from alumni boards and their remarkably sophisticated public relations campaigns.

Scholars believe that it's possible that all of the above stated reasons have resulted in the public's somewhat cynical perception of the governance of college sport (which

⁴ SMU was given the "death penalty" by the NCAA because, after investigation, it was discovered that football players at the university had been receiving enormous payments from boosters that would end up totaling more than \$600,000. Twenty-one players allegedly received up to \$61,000 in cash payments, with the assistance of athletics department staff members, from funds provided by a booster. Payments ranged from \$50 to \$725 per month.

The SMU football program was required to start from scratch in 1989 by fielding a team that totaled 74 freshmen. The NCAA forced SMU to cancel the 1987 season and the school itself called off the 1988 season because of failure to field a team. A two year bowl, a two year TV ban, cancellation of the '87 season, limit of seven games during the '88 season that were to be played on the road, having three fewer coaches on the staff, and the loss of 55 new scholarships over 4 years added to the sanctions. The football program at SMU has still not recovered (Sobczyk 1).

has not, ironically, caused widespread retreat among consumers of college sport). According to noted sports historian and English professor Murray Sperber in Beer and Circus, large undergraduate institutions are desperate to provide a “package deal” to incoming students because of the decline of the funding and quality of undergraduate education at public institutions of higher education. At the same time, the prominence of successful sports programs has become a pivotal part of a university’s ability to recruit future students and solicit donations from alumni (3). In Unpaid Professionals, Smith College Professor of Economics Andrew Zimbalist notes that wide-ranging reform is needed in the NCAA to address the fact that collegiate sport now has “little to do with education” and “responsible analysis is needed to [...] minimize the negative features of collegiate sport but to preserve what people love” (16). But reform begins with identification of problems, and with only a dozen or so principal investigators to police over 1,200 institutions affiliated with the NCAA, the NCAA relies heavily upon self-reporting from schools. If institutions are dependent upon the NCAA in the ways that many scholars claim--for revenue, for prestige, and for recruitment of prospective students and courtship of prominent alumni⁵--it is highly unlikely that they will aggressively report infractions. Furthermore, the NCAA has, according to Frank Splitt of the Drake Group, become “an expert at resisting reform--undermining the Knight Commission and Coalition for Intercollegiate Athletics [...] and dismissing the The Drake Group’s serious calls for reform as radical” (Splitt 6).

The NCAA argues that it has been the victim of circumstance--that the emergence of television contracts, shoe deals, and sport as a multi-billion dollar industry *happened*,

⁵ Which Sperber has termed “The Flutie Factor,” and other scholars, such as Toma in Football U, have also suggested to be true.

and they are simply dealing with the fallout. It would be negligent, however, to absolve the NCAA for its part in preserving a system that inevitably promotes the edicts it disingenuously claims to uphold. Evidence of the NCAA's complicity, even its role as progenitor of amateur sport as an industry, can be found in the increasing rhetorical sophistication of its public relations, which has evolved significantly in recent years. Instead of waiting for scandals to break and accusations of exploitation to surface and then address the fallout, the NCAA aggressively touts its overwhelming benefits to public institutions of higher education and to student-athletes, and rather than deny that violations occur, lead us to believe that the benefits more than compensate for those violations in the long run (often in their publications "The NCAA News" and "The Record," as well as in their advertisements during sporting events). Of course, the individuals most often thought of as disproportionately uncompensated and exploited for their athletic efforts are black, male student-athletes in the revenue sports of football and basketball. These student-athletes represent 47% and 58% of the players on these teams, respectively, at the Division I-A level according to the 2004 NCAA 2002 data set.

The national perception of organized amateur athletics in America has evolved radically from the time that the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was established by Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 and later became the National Collegiate Athletics Association in 1910, which was established to align athletic competition with the Academy's "mission, vision and values" (Zimbalist 3; Brand 1). Over that time, amateur competition has grown into a multi-million dollar enterprise, largely because of the emerging centrality of sport and athletic competition among leisure, working, and even impoverished classes and because of the increasing loyalty (albeit irrational and often rabid) of sports fans. This of course lies at the very heart of

the commodification of amateur sport, as television contracts, shoe deals, and other forms of corporate sponsorship have begun to figure prominently as the preservation of the traditional elements of amateur competition fade into distant memory. The desires of corporations to market their product to a larger domestic and international audience have forever altered the fan-spectator relationship, following the trends of a society that increasingly expects the amateur model of athletics to deliver professional and commercially acceptable entertainment at the expense of the traditional values of amateur sport (Washington and Karen 202).

Student-Athlete Advocacy: A Review of the Literature

An underlying purpose of writing this dissertation is to assemble research on and perform analyses that identify the practices of university faculty, college athletics apologists, and reform organizations as acts of what I term “student-athlete advocacy.” For the purposes of this dissertation, student-athlete advocacy refers to any means by which an individual or group of individuals engages in traditional social movement rhetoric/agitation (see Bowers and Ochs, 1993) to air grievances and call for reforms on behalf of student-athletes that ensure their intellectual and social as well as their athletic development. I am particularly interested in developing a rhetorical theory of student-athlete advocacy, and moreover, a rhetorical theory of athletic administration, as a counterpoint to what scholars denote as the most pernicious forces in contemporary college athletics – the hypercommercialization of college sport and wanton proliferation of athletic departments across the nation.

My research on student-athlete advocacy and social movement rhetoric in college athletics is informed by four areas of scholarly research: Educational inequality, particularly as it impacts black students in public school systems and predominantly

white institutions; college athletics, particularly cultural criticism and historical analyses; social movement rhetoric literature and theory, particularly Resource Mobilization Theory and New Social Movement Theory; and the nascent intersection between rhetoric and composition scholarship and college athletics.

Educational Inequality

Philosophers and researchers have considered the pernicious effects of racism on the social and educational experiences of black Americans extensively. These effects extend to many areas within American society, from forms of racism both overt and covert (such as “institutionalized racism,” coined by Ture in Black Power) and forms of oppression both *direct* and *indirect* (Young, 2000). From the considerations of educational sociologists and historians (DuBois’ Souls of Black Folk, Woodson’s Miseducation of the Negro and E. Franklin Frazier’s The Negro Family in the United States seem especially relevant) to cultural and social critics (Baraka’s Blues People and the incendiary yet often astute rhetoric of Malcolm X, the Black Liberation Movement, and the Black Panthers) to contemporary “cultural-ecological” theorists such as Johnathan Kozol (Savage Inequalities), John Ogbu (“Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities: A Cultural-Ecological Theory of School Performance with Some Implications for Education,” and “Minority Education in Comparative Perspective”), Angela Valenzuela (Subtractive Schooling) and Jabari Mahiri (Shooting for Excellence), the literature suggests that a collision of environmental, historical, and economic forces have led to a general underperformance among black public school students compared to their white (Caucasian) peers in formal, public educational settings. The lack of college preparation opportunities and resources available to inner-city youth in urban areas, under-resourced, and disproportionately poor rural public education systems, and the

pernicious experiences that youth of color face in many of well-resourced schools indeed converge to deny many persons of color the chance to gain entry into the academy and obtain a degree. The intersections between the institutional racism that under girds the educational inequalities in the public school system and the level of educational quality for college student-athletes will perhaps prove relevant to my discussion and will be explored throughout the dissertation.

Several scholars (Atkinson, Jennings, and Lionson, L. 1990, Hraba, Radloff, & Gray-Ray 1999, Laird, et al. 2004, Sparrow and Chretien 1993) also suggests that black students who beat the odds and successfully matriculate to college face further obstacles to their success in obtaining college degrees because of feelings of alienation, the vestiges of racism, and a lack of services to help them counteract the multiple stressors of being minorities at predominantly white institutions, often being first-generation students, and having a general lack of black faculty and staff role models. It's likely that a confluence of these experiences contributes to the disproportionately lower success rates among Black student-athletes, much of which occurs before they arrive on college campuses to begin with. Research in the areas pertaining to educational inequality suggest that though black male student-athletes at Division I-A schools share *some* degree of privilege in that they are college students, for the most part many of them suffer through various forms of discrimination as they alternately (or concurrently) are assumed to be academic underperformers either because of their ethnic or athletic affiliations (Lumas 1997; Mangold, Bean, and Douglas 2003).

Social Movement Rhetoric

Given that theorists have considered thoroughly the obstacles that black male student-athletes face while attempting to obtain college degrees, and the fact that the

NCAA has, often begrudgingly, enacted measures to ensure that a higher proportion of all student-athletes successfully matriculate to graduation in order to address those obstacles, it is interesting to consider more carefully the means by which individuals and organizations external or peripheral to the NCAA have advocated for such measures to become NCAA bylaws. Even more relevant to the field of rhetoric and composition is the means by which the not-for-profit organizations I investigate have incorporated strategies of social movements in order to accomplish their goal of stricter academic performance measures within NCAA host institutions, and in doing so, increase the chances that black male student-athletes would be more successful at obtaining college degrees and minimize (and perhaps eliminate) practices that historically exploited the efforts of these same student-athletes. Few scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition have addressed the rhetoric of social movements in their scholarship.⁶ Primarily this work has fallen into the province of communication and sociology. I highlight the collective contributions of each field to social movement rhetorical theory and describe what the scholarship offers a study of non-profit organizations' efforts to petition the NCAA to amend, revise, or create new educational and cultural bylaws to protect student-athletes.

Early studies in social movement theory examined the differences between the perception of social movements as unstructured, spontaneous actions and analyses that identified social movements as the product of calculated collective action. As social movements became more complex and accomplished more far-reaching reform (for example, during the 1960's and 1970's) methods of analyzing social movements also

⁶ Patricia Malesh and Sharon Stevens have edited a forthcoming volume on the rhetoric of social movements, illustrating the interest in this area within the field. Malesh and Stevens each wrote dissertations on social movement rhetoric, Malesh on the vegetarian movement and Stevens on an environmental movement.

evolved to focus on both the means by which social movements effected cultural, political, and economic change and the ways in which identity politics began to shape membership in social movements. Two particular theories of social movements that have emerged in the past 30 years allow us to both theorize and analyze social movement among diverse constituencies in a wide array of media are Resource Mobilization Theory and New Social Movement Theory.

Emerging in the 1960's, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) essentially focuses on the ways in which groups of individuals form coalitions and pool their resources in order to confront societal and/or political ills that they are faced with. York University social scientist Eduardo Canel defines RMT as a "conflict model of social action [...] (which recognizes) the system's sources of disequilibrium and leads to the rise of collective actors" (2). Unlike previous analyses of social movements, which tended to characterize social movement as spontaneous and disorganized, RMT theorists aimed to define social movements as rational and well-planned forms of collective resistance to established social norms (as well as institutions and political structures in which those norms are embedded) deemed oppressive by the movements' constituents (Garner 1, 4). According to McCarthy and Zald's seminal 1977 work "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," an effective means of analyzing social movements is by the ways that they attempt to impact established state systems by publicly airing grievances, increasing their membership, implementing tactics, and acquiring resources (1212-1215). An example of RMT within the Black Civil Rights movement would be the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which involved Blacks in Montgomery, Alabama banding together to boycott the city's bus lines because of their segregationist policies in the 1940's-1950's. The level of social and political organization involved with the boycott,

including the mobilization of the NAACP, black academicians, and grassroots organizing to recruit the city's black working class who most frequently used the buses indicates a rationale to social movement that social movement theory failed to account for before the emergence of RMT (Cozzens 1-2). Though effective as a means for understanding how social movements can impact political and economic reform through effective strategy, RMT neglects the personal transformation that individuals experience as they participate in some social movements, and how those personal transformations can spark widespread cultural revolution rather than institutional reform.

The New Social Movement Theorists (NSMT) pick up where RMT leaves off. Theorists such as Touraine and Habermas were central to the move towards NSMT, as they began to focus less on how social movements impacted civic change (reform) and more on how collective identities transformed as a result of membership in movement mobilizations (cultural revolution via identity politics). Touraine in particular focuses on the emerging importance of reflexivity in post-industrial societies as a response to crises that are out of the realm of individuals' control (16). In The Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas argues further that as the mechanisms of the state intrude into our private lives and attempt to instill their own system of values, that NSMs emerge as defensive reactions among collectives seeking to retain or re-create their lifestyles. These movements operate at the level of social integration and are less concerned with civic transformation. Such an example would include the Black Arts/Black Liberation Movement within the Black civil rights movement, fronted by individuals such as Amiri Baraka and the Black Panthers. Though concerned with political and economic reforms (such as agitating for better schools and social services for Blacks, as well as for political representation in city, regional, and state government) the BAM/BLM also rallied around

a call for “self-determination” through which all Blacks would refer to their own collective experiences of oppression and disfranchisement in order to determine their own paths toward inclusion and justice in American society. The emergence of cultural programs and celebrations, interwoven between and as inspiration for the struggle toward social, political, and economic justice are all trademarks of New Social Movements.

Canel defines the following distinctions between RMT and NSMT:

Resource Mobilization

Continuity
System integration
State
Political realm
Instrumental action

New Social Movement

Discontinuity
Social integration
Civil society
Cultural realm
Expressive action

For the purposes of my study, I neither want to focus solely on RMT nor NSMT as analytical lenses, primarily because doing so has distinct disadvantages. A focus on how the organizations I am examining mobilize resources in order to impact political structures potentially elides the necessity to focus on institutionalized forms of oppression that reforms simply cannot penetrate. In contrast, shifting focus from the civic impact of involvement with social movements to the personal transformation and identity reclamation from dominant cultural norms, though a relevant analytical tool for understanding certain ideological movements, can take away the focus from organizations that endeavor to create more equitable and socially just arrangements through negotiation with those in power. The nature of the organizations that have petitioned the NCAA on the behalf of black male student-athletes in the revenue sports are equal parts reform and revolution; elements of both NSMT and RMT are integrated within their visions of a culture of college athletics as an enterprise that oppresses fewer,

empowers more, and transforms institutions of higher education. As Canel calls for an integration rather than a bifurcation of these seemingly divergent ways of understanding social movement, I seek methods of social movement analysis that define social movements by how they engage in civic reform through calling for both integrationist and revolutionary shifts in the culture, economics, and politics of college athletics.

“Racing” Social Movement Rhetoric: Control/Agitation and the “Triple Front”

This dissertation, in its essence, is both an attempt to characterize a particular set of higher education reforms as the product of rhetorically effective social movements and define a theory of social movement rhetoric that will inform like-minded movements in the future. Social protest evolves alongside the technologies and innovations that social groups employ to succeed in effecting change, and as Cedric Johnson notes, the slavish application of “ideas and tactics (as well as theories) of bygone eras” yield little fruit unless we understand the “particular historical processes that create our current political conditions” (6). In praising the contemporary work of rhetoricians who have produced an “impressive body of scholarship” on social protest rhetoric, Mark Allan Steiner notes that this is largely due to “escaping the shackles of Neo-Aristotelianism [...] by emphasizing the fundamental roles that symbols and symbolic action play in the advancement of social movements” (Steiner 1). I have thus decided to approach my analysis by identifying rhetorical theories that will allow me to properly examine and evaluate organizational structures, activities, as well as communication which is rhetorical in nature. Because the organizations I am investigating arguably are engaged in social movement rhetoric, I believe it is methodologically necessary to analyze their rhetorical actions through the lens of social movement rhetoric and historiography.

Though contemporary American rhetorical theory sufficiently explains much of the persuasive discourse in the public arena, it fails to account for many elements that contribute to achieving persuasion. For example, in “The Rhetorical Situation,” Lloyd Bitzer defines rhetoric as a “mode of altering reality; not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality” (3-4). Bitzer also notes that rhetorical discourse depends upon a rhetorical situation, and that the rhetorical significance of each utterance depends upon the significance of that situation and upon the apt seizure of the kairotic moment. Unfortunately, Bitzer’s theory seems to suggest that rhetorical exigencies are somewhat out of our control, and that one must wait until the right moment presents itself in order for discourse to be persuasive, and that it is those moments that dictate rhetorical effectiveness.

The theme of altering reality through discourse is also a component of classical African rhetoric and continues to pervade Black culture. The Bantu concept of *nommo*, or word magic, proposes that the word carries with it the power to alter transform, or change reality, by impacting thought and action, and by recognizing that the word is an especially meaningful and powerful component of culture (Walker and Kuykendall 229). Though *nommo* continues to be a central rhetorical trope in the Black Arts, unfortunately, the centrality of organized politics and capitalist economics, it could be argued, subvert the power of cultural expression used in these movements. In twentieth century American history, which could easily be characterized as a century rife with successful social movements (i.e. Suffrage, the Black Civil Rights Movement, Black Arts Movement, American Indian Movement, *La Raza*, etc.), it is social movement rhetoric that won the battles that various civil rights advocacy groups waged, and in the cases of these movements, their words, symbols, and slogans created change in society as they

seized upon issues as they resonated or became relevant to the general public.

Essentially, social movements combine American and African rhetorical elements.

For the purposes of this dissertation, in which all of the advocacy groups I am examining engage in rhetorical practices akin to civil rights movement predecessors, it becomes important to identify a rhetorical theory that acknowledges the capability and downright necessity of those who engage in rhetorical discourse to create knowledge and inspire action, seizing upon kairotic moments in order to issue persuasive discourse and believing that their discourse carries with it the power to inspire the changes they sought.

Focusing primarily on a rhetoric of student-athlete advocacy that relies heavily upon the rhetoric of social movements as defined by Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen (1993) and Harold Cruse (1967) I analyze the narratives of non-profit organizations, and later, writing program personnel, who spearhead on-campus educational and social movements, and, particularly in the cases of writing program personnel, reframe their efforts as extensions of critical pedagogy through advocating for opportunities for student-athletes to seek empowerment through their education. Finally, I theorize the viability of future advocacy efforts spearheaded by writing program personnel.

In The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen develop a theory of social movement in which they focus on the use of “agitation rhetoric,” which involves highly emotional public airings of grievances (calls for reform), as well as message promulgation which can transform the identity politics of its membership (spurring, perhaps, cultural revolution). They define the institutional resistance to social movements as “control rhetoric.” The aforementioned not-for-profit organizations’ calls for NCAA educational reform, because they attempt to advocate for individuals whom they define as disfranchised by the NCAA, are analyzed through the lens of agitation

rhetoric. Meanwhile, the NCAA, a multi-million dollar not-for profit with a sophisticated public relations campaign, and the ownership of the hearts and minds of millions of consumers, serves as the establishment that impressively employs control rhetoric to redress calls for reform.

Given that these not-for-profit organizations' efforts focus primarily on advocating reforms that impact, most significantly, the campus environments and academic prospects of black, male student-athletes in the revenue sports of football and basketball, it is appropriate to analyze the efficacy of their calls for reform through the lens of civil rights/social justice motivated social movements. Because the movements I am examining represent and in many cases resemble, in a *de facto* sense, Black social movements, I analyze their efforts and future prospects by applying the movement rhetoric/rhetorical theory of noted Black cultural critic Harold Cruse and his "Triple Front" (from Crisis of the Negro Intellectual) theory of social reform, in which Cruse instructs black intellectuals to focus on addressing the intersections between politics, economics, and culture. First, I extrapolate the "Triple Front" theory as the primary means by which I evaluate the past and future efforts of social movements taking on the NCAA. Then, I explore the intersections between how these organizations use agitation rhetoric to achieve the ends of the "Triple Front," thus defining a rhetoric of social movement-driven, black male student-athlete advocacy. In addition, I historiographically reconstruct the history of student-athlete advocacy emerging from writing programs/writing program personnel.

College Athletics: Cultural Criticism and Historical Analyses

In the past two decades, a number of cultural/higher education theorists have begun to consider, specifically, the ways in which black, male, scholarship athletes in

revenue sports (primarily basketball and football) at NCAA institutions are further hindered in their ability to successfully matriculate because of the myriad stresses that elite-level athletic competition places on them. Their collective claim is that the culture of elite athletics often fails to promote academic excellence, and that media-related distractions, the time spent traveling, practicing, working out, and preparing for competitions, and the physical and mental stress athletes often incur serve to prevent many of them from focusing on schoolwork and graduating (See Zimbalist, 2001; Thelin, 1996; Sperber, 2001; and Lapchick, 2005). Their claims have been borne out by NCAA-calculated statistics over the past 20 years that suggest that black male student-athletes in the revenue sports graduate at rates substantially lower than their white male counterparts (Lapchick 2005, NCAA Graduation Rate Data 1990-2005).

Each of the non-profit organizations I am examining, all of which have advocated for the aforementioned student-athletes, has produced prodigious amounts of scholarship in their focus areas.

The Knight Commission publishes annual conference proceedings, which in past years have included panel discussions on issues such as behavior and violence among student-athletes, including rape, sexual assault, drugs, and the social climate within institutions and the community. It also sponsors and publishes commissioned studies, most recently “Challenging the Myth (2004),” a review of the economic literature on intercollegiate athletics by Cornell University economist Robert Frank; “Division I-A Postseason History and Status (2004),” a study of the history of bowl games and championship organizations in Division I-A football by John Sandbrook of the University of California at Los Angeles; and finally, two reports that become the focus of my analysis in Chapter Three, “Keeping Faith with the Student Athlete: A New Model for

Intercollegiate Athletics (1991),” the commission’s original report, which called for presidential control of intercollegiate athletics, and “A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education (2001).”

The Black Coaches Association publishes “Hiring Report Cards,” which are evaluations of the affirmative action, interviewing, recruitment, hiring, and retention practices of NCAA Division I-A institutions with head coaching vacancies in football. The report cards have been published for three years, including “Scoring the Hire (2006),”⁷ “The Score (2005),” and “The Score (2004).”

The Drake Group has a scant publishing record as an organization, which includes directors’ position statements “Jon Ericson (2000),” “Linda Bensel-Meyers (2003),” and “B. David Ridpath (2005)”; the Group position paper on paying athletes (2003); as well as a central clearinghouse for articles by Group members, e.g. Sack and Staurowsky (2005) on the term “student-athlete,” and Splitt, Duderstadt, and Ericson (2004) on faculty involvement in reforming college athletics.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport sponsors research by faculty within the institute, but primarily for the purposes of my analyses, I focus on the Institute’s director and eminent scholar Richard Lapchick, who publishes regularly on issues such as graduation rate discrepancies (Lapchick 2005), criticism of the NCAA and the culture of college athletics (Lapchick 2006), and the lack of ethnic diversity among college head football coaches (Lapchick 2003).

⁷ I am credited as an author on this publication and worked pro bono as a researcher for the Black Coaches Association/Robeson Center from September 2005-April 2006.

I consider each organization's publications thoroughly as evidence of their social movement rhetoric, considering how they use their literature to promulgate their message, form strategic alliances, air grievances, and achieve positive change.

Rhetoric and Composition Scholarship and College Athletics

Research that is particularly germane to my project but notably rare is represented by scholars in rhetoric and composition addressing the intersections, both material and historical, between writing programs and college athletics departments/student-athletes. The roles that writing program personnel have played as student-athlete advocates and the potential for writing programs to pursue collaboration with athletics departments who are committing to cross-campus partnerships at unprecedented levels suggests that such a project is critical. I attempt to fill the void in rhetoric and composition scholarship by focusing on the case studies of university writing/composition program professionals who, while they are representatives of the field of rhetoric and composition, continue to have their professional and cultural contributions to advancing ethics in college athletics ignored by rhetoric/composition, Writing Program Administration, and Writing Center scholarship.

Though the work of rhetoric and composition scholars such as Julie Cheville (Minding the Body: What Student-Athletes Know about Learning) and Debra Hawhee (Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece) attempts to redress negative perceptions about the intellectual ability of athletes and the place of/relationship between athletics in the educational curricula, neither scholar focuses specifically on how (and indeed, why) writing programs have been historically involved in, are uniquely positioned to, and must continue to engage in advocacy that reasserts the link between athletics and education. Indeed, Cheville's ethnography is a contemporary extrapolation

of Hawhee's analysis of the relationship between rhetoric and athletics in ancient Greece – which centered on, among other issues, the centrality of the *agon* as a metaphor in early rhetorical practice and teaching and the synthesis of rhetoric and athletics. Cheville's analysis, then, attempts to reassert the relationship between athletics and education, defining athletic intelligence as not necessarily opposed to or incompatible with the kinds of intelligence one needs to be successful in college.

What is left unexplored is the special role that writing program faculty and administrators have played in advocating for the educational equality of student-athletes. Given the fact that student-athletes develop knowledge about their institutions, intellectual desires, and sense of agency and citizenship on college campuses through the lenses of their athletics departments, the writing classroom/writing center/satellite offers them a pivotal counterpublic to create new public transcripts (Scott 12). In the space of the writing classroom--with its comparably low student-teacher ratios and potential for increased substantial student-faculty interaction--student-athletes are given important opportunities to explore academic interests, develop critical thinking skills, and reconsider and represent themselves as members not only of their athletic communities, but as students on a college campus engaged in scholarly as well as athletic pursuits.

The primary contributions that my project makes to the various fields of higher education and the critical study of sport culture and administration will be the development of a rationale for student-athlete advocacy, and a thorough analysis, from the standpoint of social movement rhetoric, of how successful organizations have lobbied the NCAA to enact cultural, political, and economic reforms that ultimately benefit college athletics and student-athletes.

Scope of the Project/Chapter Outlines

Throughout the dissertation, I incorporate a mixed-methods approach as I characterize the reform movements I have selected as social movements, analyze their efficacy, and reflect on my own experiences as a college athletics reformer working as a writing program administrator in the context of a Division I athletics department. In the history and theoretical framework and analysis chapters, I use rhetorical analysis to achieve a more thorough understanding of how reform movements incorporate social movement strategies. In the narrative excursions that come between each chapter, as well as in the final chapter, I incorporate autoethnography to reflect critically on my own experiences and subject them to rhetorical analysis.

In Chapter 2, I establish a rationale for and define a rhetoric of student-athlete advocacy by focusing on the specific hardships of black, male, revenue sport student-athletes in “Elite” athletics departments, citing both Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s Rhetoric of Agitation and Control and Harold Cruse’s “Triple Front” theory to examine and analyze nascent social movements in college athletics, particularly the NCAA’s effective use of control rhetoric to stifle calls for academic reform.

After outlining a rationale for student-athlete advocacy in Chapter 2, I focus on the student-athlete advocacy and social movement rhetoric of four non-profit organizations (The Drake Group, The Black Coaches Association, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics) that have focused immense amounts of effort and resources on achieving NCAA reform. After identifying the social movement rhetorical strategies and tactics of these organizations and evaluating the efficacy of their movements, and defining the rhetoric of

the NCAA's response to outside agitation, I shift my focus to the previously unexamined rhetorical intersection between university writing programs and athletics departments.

In Chapter 3, I identify early attempts (and subsequent failures) at collegiate athletics-related academic reform introduced by university presidents, faculty bodies, and athletics departments, and use Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen and Cruse to analyze what is considered the first successful wide-scale social movement in American college athletics, the efforts of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics,

In Chapter 4, I turn my focus to non-profit organizations that followed the trail blazed by the Knight Commission--The Drake Group, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, and The Black Coaches Association--defining and analyzing the advocacy efforts of these NCAA-reform coalitions as social movements using social movement rhetorical theory and introducing a method of analysis for determining the feasibility and achievability of long-term goals established by these groups.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I historiographically reconstruct the past and consider the future involvement of Writing Programs and Writing Program administrators as potent agents of social movement and educational reform on the campuses of NCAA host institutions and, in the end turn autoethnographically toward developing a fuller understanding of the successful rhetorical practices I employed (and failed to employ) in my work as a writing program administrator, educator, and advocate on the behalf of student-athletes.

To conclude the dissertation, I examine the student-athlete advocacy efforts of three university teachers of writing (Jan Kemp and Linda Bensel Myers, whistleblowers who revealed to the NCAA and the media that violations and abuses which significantly

impacted the educational quality of black male student-athletes were occurring at their respective institutions, and Jon Ericson, a rhetoric and composition professor who started an athletics whistleblowers protection organization in order to inform, empower, and protect future whistleblowers) and one university writing program (the CATSatellite Center for Learning and Writing at the University of Arizona) in order to redefine their efforts as extensions of rhetoric and composition pedagogy (particularly critical pedagogy) and define university writing programs as loci of student-athlete advocacy and social movement.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #2: THE JUMPOFF--TOEING THE LINE

In a recent conversation with a representative from legal counsel at the University of Arizona, who counts the athletics department among his many clients, I discovered how great, and possibly insurmountable in scope the project I had proposed for my dissertation would be. An intelligent, forward-thinking man with a great wealth of intelligence and professional experience, he seemed at odds with my youthful (and equally irrational, I suppose) exuberance when we came upon the topic of organizational and policy reform in the NCAA. For every suggestion I proposed--such as institution of stricter sanctions on violators, causing a widespread shift in the culture of college athletics – he proposed a more difficult supposition--such as the impending loss of marketability of the NCAA’s most marketable products, leading to radical declines in funding and booster/alumni support, leading to host institutions’ inability to continue funding competition, leading to widespread departure from the NCAA. Indeed if we could agree upon anything, it was that, as he so eloquently put it, “We are the NCAA, We need to be reformed.” And the NCAA’s problems are wholly the problems of the Academy, as it is each host institution’s charge to put into place procedures and practices which will help them align the goal of the NCAA with their own missions. Criticisms, therefore, must be measured because they are often criticisms of ourselves.

Furthermore, it is criticism I am somewhat hesitant to offer, given the ways that I have personally benefited from my involvement--as a student-athlete, as a professional, and as a scholar--in college athletics. However it is my desire to ensure that those benefits are made more widely available, particularly to black male student-athletes in revenue sports who, historically, have seen the shortest end of those benefits.

CHAPTER TWO--*UNDER PRESSURE, UNDUE PRESSURE:*

A Rhetoric of Student-Athlete Advocacy in College Athletics

"Let's talk specifics. We hear that sports is the great equalizer, that it looks beyond race and poverty. In fact, on too many campuses, the football and basketball programs have fostered, even institutionalized, racism."

--Ted Gup, Lecturer, Georgetown University

I've discovered that in my experiences working in a Division I-A athletics department as an educator, I was also an advocate, and as an employee, I was always a provocateur. Though I was allowed into the inner sanctum, as an advocate, my actions were always under discussion and subject to challenges from above and around me. Many of the black student-athletes with whom I worked, though lauded by many of their fans and peers and respected by coaches and administrators, needed advocacy. Though I had not competed as a student-athlete alongside these young men and women, I was to find that we were teammates of a sort--with one foot in bounds and the other squarely outside the power circles of the athletics department and the Academy.

Getting Into the Field

For three and a half years, while enrolled in a Rhetoric and Composition graduate program, I split my workload between teaching First-Year Composition courses and working as a graduate assistant in a Division 1-A athletics department. While splitting time between departments on campus, I learned to sympathize both with student-athletes who felt that their instructors wanted them to fail and with instructors who had disinterested student-athletes in their classes. These of course were stereotypes based on limited and unfortunately negative experiences, but for the instructors and student-athletes in question, they believed their perceptions to be infallible. During my tenure as a writing program coordinator in an athletics department academics unit, I learned very

quickly, that few opportunities exist for college student-athletes who wish to critique and confront the stereotypes that threaten their academic careers, psychological well-being, and for a select few, their future livelihood (Lumas 4). Because these myths and stereotypes represent ‘the natural order of things’ for so many, few student-athletes or faculty are willing to examine their troubled and troublesome relationship to one another on many college campuses, nor are many willing to reconsider their unwillingness to work with one another.

This is evinced by a recent experience I had with a varsity football player with whom I worked on a revision assignment from his first-year composition course. We met to discuss a paper that had been handed back to him. After receiving a D+ on his first draft, the student began the session by berating the instructor, accusing him of grading unfairly. After allowing the student to vent, and assuring the student that his misgivings were probably unfounded (the student’s paper was average, and to boot, was missing a “Works Cited” page, a key component of all research assignments), we addressed the teacher’s comments, and he later completed the revision. Weeks later, he received the revision with a score of a B+--the highest score in the class. Though he was quite pleased with the score, jubilant even, he became reticent when I reminded him that the same teacher who “hated student-athletes” had just given him a very good grade.

This is the sort of dilemma I face when I work with student-athletes who do not feel welcome in the culture of the academy. In fact, it cuts both ways. In my experiences as an instructor of first year composition, I have often dealt with instructors who make the same sorts of generalized, unfounded comments about student-athletes. As Richard Lapchick notes in “Crime and Athletes: New Racial Stereotypes for the 1990’s,” student-athletes on majority white campuses are being “characterized by white students and

faculty [...] while written about mostly by a white media for a preponderance of white fans” (Lapchick 1). As a result, the most common adjectives used to stereotype black athletes are “dumb, rapist, violent, or drug-user” (Lapchick 1). Presenting at a regional writing center conference several years ago, I opened up with the question “Who are Student-Athletes?” The unified and somewhat troubling response from the audience of college/community college English instructors was that they were:

- a) Poor students,
- b) Poor writers, and
- c) Not concerned with/interested in academics.

After directed questioning, it was revealed that these generalizations were based on limited experiences with student-athletes, and additionally fueled by resentment of the NCAA and student-athletes among the general public. “Student-athlete” also referred primarily to young Black men on football and basketball teams, as instructors claimed to never have such problems with gymnasts, golfers, and swimmers, but only “college athletes pampered with special treatment, rule-bending, and who have a low education priority” (Brown 1). This lore is informed by other elements, including media depictions of athletes who sign million-dollar contracts (again, usually Black males in revenue-generating sports) while educators and other middle and working class individuals struggle to make ends meet (Spinger 2). The result of the misperceived privilege of student-athletes and their nihilistic/apathetic reaction to this resentment is a discordant state in which there are no open lines of communication between the involved groups. As a result, a wall has been erected between athletic departments and their host institutions who are both schizophrenic with the fear that one is out to get the other, and meanwhile, student-athletes suffer because while they may be successful at athletics, in the academy,

they are often not even allowed on the field of play.

The solution, I propose, is to find ways to help student-athletes develop critical consciousness and recognize their literacies and proficiencies, rather than, as Moss and Walters suggest, continue to “evaluate our students as if there were a single appropriate way of using language and of being literate” (Moss and Walters 133). This would give student-athletes of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds opportunities to develop pride in themselves through their academic work and their relationship to the academy, and advocate their attempts to achieve these ends. Unfortunately, though it is prefaced as such, virtually all attempts to reform the culture of college athletics in recent decades have focused on rules of competition rather than the social and intellectual development of student-athletes.

My reflection and analyses in this chapter are related to professional and scholarly work in which I am currently engaged and in which I plan to remain engaged in the long term. It is important at this point in the process to share with the reader the experiences as a mid-major college athlete, writing instructor, and athletics department staff member that shaped my perceptions of advocacy, social protest, and agitation rhetoric in my professional and scholarly work. I preface the analyses in the following chapters by reviewing literature on the subjects of the student-athlete experience, the need for advocacy in college athletics, effecting change through social movement rhetoric within NCAA Division I-A host institutions, and what pitfalls lie ahead of those engaged in such work. I also perform a complex organizational analysis of an NCAA Division I-A athletics department, carefully defining individuals and groups in need of advocacy, establishment groups/entities who, by choice, dictum, or mandate intentionally or

unintentionally act as oppressors, and the methods through which advocacy groups have sought educational and cultural reforms in college athletics.

For the purposes of this chapter, “athletics department” is defined as elite Division I-A athletics departments at Research 1-designated institutions – that have in common the following traits:

- 1) High revenue-generation and prestige largely attributable to success of football and men’s basketball programs,
- 2) Teflon images that protect these institutions’ athletics departments particularly when scandals are broken in the national media, and
- 3) Powerful and remarkably wealthy boosters whose intentions to live vicariously through and enjoy the great prestige of the successful athletics programs they support leads them to bend, break, and ignore NCAA rules.

These athletics departments are different from other NCAA-recognized departments in that they wield a massive amount of control over the ways in which their exploits are regarded both on campus and in pervasive public opinion. In “The Forms of Capital,” Bourdieu differentiates between dominant and dominated groups, noting that the most powerful individuals and groups “draw their profits from the use of a particular form of capital” rather than by “deriving profit from selling services and products” (Bourdieu 6). Such a distinction is useful here, given that athletics departments that are not considered elite might, because of short-term or highly visible success, have a particularly good revenue year (not only through revenues gained from television contracts and bowl-game invitations, but also from increased television exposure, which has been theorized as

having a profound effect on university enrollments⁸). By contrast, truly elite departments (think Notre Dame, USC, Ohio State) do not have to parlay on the field success in exchange for capital, for even when their sports teams are unsuccessful for long stretches, their product is still a viable one in the national market because they possess social, cultural, and economic capital. Elite athletics departments have become so powerful that they are now, perhaps, more powerful than their governing organization and host institutions. Sanctions do not harm these departments' images in the general public, at least not enough to deter loyalty, and the NCAA even appears to sanction these institutions less stringently because of fear that overly excessive sanctions, if they do succeed in harming these departments might damage their own image even more.

Because athletics is so important to administrators, trustees, and alumni, all forms of exploitation and abuse, both subtle and overt, become subsumed by the desire to see their university's teams succeed. This desire causes many to overlook the fact that student-athletes, particularly black male student athletes in revenue-generating sports, are pulled between the competing goals of athletics and academics and, more often than not, they are robbed of their agency as students and their ability to successfully matriculate toward graduation is compromised by their athletic involvement. Meanwhile, the illusion created by student-athletes' *apparent* material and social conditions (student-athletes are often thought of as larger than life characters who are purveyors of materialism, lawlessness, and greed, akin to their professional counterparts) leads many members of the campus community to believe that college athletes are, in fact, unduly privileged, benefiting by taking away scholarships from more deserving students and receiving

⁸ Known as the "Flutie Effect," Higher Education theorists stipulate that successful sports teams increase the profile of lesser-known universities and lead directly to both increases in student applications and alumni donations. The term was coined by Murray Sperber.

leniency in terms of class attendance and evaluation. As a result, the opportunities available to student-athletes to reflect upon their experiences with peers and faculty and develop critical consciousness about their college experiences are virtually non-existent. Any complaint or reservation about the material reality of their situation is likely to fall on deaf ears. In addition, this cultural pre-text serves to limit student-athlete advocates' voice and ethos, making the notion of student-athlete advocacy appear trivial and purely political. In the following section, then, I evaluate the educational and cultural experiences of black, male, revenue sport athletes about the lives of student-athletes, identifying the elements that compose the pre-inception rhetoric of the not-for-profit organizations that advocate for them.

The Disenfranchisement of Black Males in Elite College Athletics

During the course of their matriculation, student-athletes, particularly those who are ethnic minorities and from low socioeconomic status, face the pernicious forces of cultural insensitivity, racism, discrimination based on perceived intellectual incapability. They face these forces equally at the hands of faculty, staff, peers, coaches, and athletics department administrators, as well as through embedded institutionalized control “over their bodies, movements, and desires” (Foucault 74). Thus, they often need advocates who can aid them in their navigation through their studies as well as inform them of their rights and privileges as members of an academic community so that they can maximize their experiences as collegians.

At first glance, there are two ways of evaluating the culture typically associated with black male, revenue-generating student-athletes on Division I-A campuses. The first is that their citizenship is one of excessive privilege and reward because the resources offered to student-athletes and opportunities afforded them are unavailable to most

students. Media outlets disproportionately depict black male professional athletes in America as larger than life characters who arrogantly ignore the law of the land and expect preferential treatment⁹. In turn, they are constructed as the beneficiaries of undeserved, exorbitant wealth and affluence. They often register at different times, eat in different cafeterias, work and study and spend much of their free time in one location (most often a field house or athletics center) because it is convenient and it meets all of their needs – in one place they can eat, study, visit, rehab, receive counseling, meet with coaches, and everything in between. It also promotes unity and teambuilding, aspects that two to three hour practice sessions do not focus on explicitly. And most non-athlete students consider this area off-limits, which of course exacerbates their perceptions of student-athlete privilege.

An example of this perception is noted in a criticism of the class action suit filed against the University of Michigan for its affirmative action policy in admitting undergraduates and students into its law school. In a refutation of the suit which alleged that race/color should not be a factor in admissions, Goodwin Liu notes that he finds it peculiar that an institution be accused of unfair admission practices based on color when there are more egregious characteristics for which students are admitted to university, including “legacy admits” and “star athletes” (Liu 2). In other words, Liu believes that before we criticize universities that pursue the creation of diverse student bodies, we should first criticize the far more egregious practice of admitting meritless athletes. At the very least, it points out that since universities are far too dependent upon the revenue and

⁹ The disparities between the coverage of the Barry Bonds and Mark McGwire steroids scandals comes to mind. Both men, known as home run hitters who inexplicably gained enormous amounts of muscle mass from the time that they entered Major League Baseball until the end of their careers, are accused of using performance enhancing drugs. McGwire, who is White, is private to the point of standoffishness, yet is rarely characterized as arrogant and inconsiderate when he refuses to grant interviews. Bonds, who is black, on the other hand, is equally private, but characterized as belligerent, haughty, and self-consumed.

prestige that a strong athletics program provides, or the potential donations that legacy admits may later provide, that they will never challenge those preferential admissions--and until they do, the issue of preferential race and color admits becomes moot. Liu insinuates that the admission of student-athletes is completely unrelated to a university's diversity initiative and that athletes take away scholarships from hard-working students.

The other way of evaluating student-athletes as a class, less often considered, is that student-athletes are of a much lower status than that of other students--their lives governed and controlled by factors over which they have no control, their labor inequitably compensated, and their communication with the larger campus severely limited by the rigor and unusual nature of their schedules. Kevin Foster has described this as a Foucauldian panopticon, or a means by which athletics administrators and coaches, through constant supervision and interaction, can instill values that are likely to produce athletic (and to a lesser extent, academic) success in exchange for students' autonomy and expectations of privacy (Foster 300). As Georgetown University professor Ted Gup observes:

Many Division I football and basketball programs are represented by disproportionate numbers of African Americans, in programs that have carved out for them the academic equivalent of apartheid. They eat together, live together, study together and often have little interaction with the white student majority around them. Because in many universities these Black student-athletes provide the entertainment spectacle of sports, some white students come to regard them as the citizens of ancient Rome might have looked upon the gladiatorial ranks. (*Opinion, Chronicle of Higher Education, A52*).

Even though a casual observer might believe that such amenities mark student-athletes as privileged, it is equally apparent that black student-athletes may have different psychological and perceptual opinions about such conditions.

Though many student-athletes face multiple obstacles to their academic success, those who have access to forms of social capital that would help them take advantage of all available resources tend to perform academically and adjust well socially. It is the less fortunate others, destined for a college career in which they will often experience discrimination and be forced to rely upon co-dependent relationships with advisors and tutors, who are in the most desperate need of advocacy, and not thinly-veiled preservation of commodities¹⁰. The conveniences afforded to student-athletes become problematic in a sense, because it can fail to engender in many of them the desire to develop academic competence, critical consciousness, and autonomy. The safety net that is built around most student-athletes makes the thought of life outside of it perilous to those student-athletes who enter college studies without developed academic literacies. Something as simple as the act of visiting an instructor's office hours to discuss a poor grade on a paper or meeting with a TA to discuss difficult class concepts may seem anywhere foreign or even impossible to many student-athletes and, because of the built in crutch of the academics advisor who often mediates in such situations, many student-athletes do not develop these competencies until it is much too late (if at all).

Athletics department staff members (coaches, administrators, support staff) are in a position to encourage and empower student-athletes to challenge themselves academically, countering negative assumptions and stereotypes in consistent and significant ways. However, as students on the margin, student-athletes often are relegated to a kind of second-class citizenship as a result of what I believe are

¹⁰ The National Association for Athletics Academics Advisors' (N4A) mission statement includes the language that athletics department advisors should "provide guiding principles and quality services resources and expertise in their efforts to *empower student-athletes to become more productive individuals through educational and personal development* (emphasis added). From the N4A website <http://NfourA.org>.

institutional forces--forces that many student-athletes are unaware of or that they consider to be the natural order of things.

It's often the case that many of the people in positions that could engender in student-athletes a desire to tackle head-on the hardships and discrimination they encounter are unaware of the balkanizing effect that the creation of student-athlete academics centers has created and fostered. Though these professionals may be the staunchest advocates for student-athletes, serving them in the capacities of compliance officers, life-skills coordinators, and academics advisors, they are often oblivious to the fact that their work, which is done for the student-athletes' own good "underlines the differences between students instead of building bridges" (Sargent 1). The traditional student-athlete academics center runs the risk of "protecting" students from rather than helping students learn how to navigate their way through the workings of the university. Student-athletes are separated from the activities of the rest of the campus and denied opportunities for developing a consciousness about their educations based on those opportunities. This system does a great disservice to student-athletes by perpetuating the University's misconceptions about disinterested student-athletes, leading intercollegiate athletics departments to feel the need to 'protect' their students.

Though recruited and signed to score touchdowns and make baskets, they are truly alienated from their labor in the sense that either efforts bring immense amounts of money into the university without their receiving comparable financial benefits for those contributions (student-athletes wages amount to "minimum wage" or slightly above) (Ariaza 1). A casual glance reveals that this is crass capitalism at its finest--dispensable workers with no job security who cannot unionize, working for the privileged few (coaches, AD's, administrators), many of whom earn six to seven-figure salaries, for

universities that cut academic programs and student services during economic downturns. Student-athletes, in the name of ‘amateurism,’ are forced to forego monetary reward for their athletics teams’ successes and are told that their education is their compensation for their labor. However, much of what is required of them as athletes counter-intuitively works against them in receiving an education.

The problem is often one of perception (in the cases when the problem isn’t overt corruption, which of course it occasionally is, more often at larger Division I-A schools). The result of the misperceived privilege of student-athletes and their nihilistic/apathetic reactions to this resentment is a discordant state in which there are no open lines of communication between the involved groups--intercollegiate athletics departments and university faculty. In many cases, this has created a wall between athletic departments and academics, both sides fearful that one is out to get the other, and student-athletes suffer, because, while they may be successful at athletics, the very nature of their athletics experience serves to negate quality educational experiences.

Athletics department staffs assume that athletics centers/field houses should provide opportunities for student-athletes to develop community and build teams. Student-athletes, in turn, believe that their best option is to use such resources and let their coaches, faculty athletics reps, and support staff advocate for them whenever possible because they are more familiar with the politics of the university. However, this advocacy should be instructive, so that student-athletes can develop these skills for themselves. When students are socially constructed as “disinterested” and “unmotivated” on one end and isolated from the workings of the campus on the other, what hope do they have of succeeding in their college careers? More importantly, what opportunities to grow intellectually are being sacrificed so they can advance athletically? And do

athletics departments understand that the ways in which they isolate students from the resources available to them on their campuses lead academic and student support units to assume that student-athletes do not need their support and advocacy?

Of particular importance is the fact that in many English departments¹¹, the construction of student-athletes as disinterested students has become coupled with unfortunate instances of academic fraud/plagiarism in Division I athletics programs that writing programs have been involved in exposing. As a result, an unwillingness to create “connections where linkages ought to exist but do not,” and a lack of scholarly publication in rhetoric/composition on the subject has led to a general uneasiness about working with college student-athletes, particularly in writing center settings (Farrey 1, Hall 316). Comparable to the ways in which student-athletes are regarded by the rest of the Academy, student-athletes are relegated to the periphery, either in desperate need of advocacy or resigned to the belief that the university cares little about their success off the field.

The widespread characterization of student-athletes as “intellectual imposter(s) admitted to the groves of academe under false pretenses” and the blame often heaped upon student-athletes for “subverting the mission of the University” (Cheville 7) prevents us from investigating potentially gross inequities and intervening in the lives of struggling students. The four not-for-profit organizations that I examine more closely in the next two chapters are not only charged with advocating positive change for student-athletes, but also charged with creating the need for critical examinations about the

¹¹ See my “Collaborative Work, Competitive Students – A Counter-Narrative.” This sentiment also echoed by majority of people polled in Richard Lapchick in “Crime and Athletes: The New Racial Stereotypes of the 1990’s,” where he states “middle-class, educated white professionals tend to believe black athletes are more likely to be poor students/unintelligent.”

cultural and educational lives of student-athletes to take place. These movements' "pre-
inceptive rhetoric," or establishment of a rationale for advocacy in the preliminary
confrontations between themselves and "ingrained, hegemonic social values which deny
the legitimacy of their movements," relies heavily on their ability to establish the need for
critical discourse and change (Voss and Rowland 1-2). These movements can only gain
momentum in the form of pervasive public acceptance if their initial attempts at pre-
inceptive rhetoric are successful.

Matching Up: Advocating Diversity in College Athletics

In the previous section, I focused on the need for reform in college athletics
overall. Now I turn to the issue of advocacy for diversity in college athletics, and how
student-athletes, coaches, and athletics department professionals from ethnic minority
backgrounds concurrently face challenges related to a dearth and a decline of
opportunities available to them in college athletics as well as the pervasive (and often
covert) racism that they face on large, predominantly white Research 1-designated
campuses.

Research indicates that African-American students are often unduly hampered in
their endeavors to be successful students, matriculate, graduate, and transition into their
chosen careers and professions. Researchers have identified myriad reasons for the sub-
par academic performance among students of color, including among others: (a) feelings
of isolation and alienation on college campuses, (b) the vestiges of racism and racial
discrimination, (c) the sense that public education divests students of color from
meaningful cultural capital, and (d) cultural differences between learning environments
and home/familial environments (Smith and Moore, 2000; Laird, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999;
Ogbu, 1990). These struggles have, historically, led to high attrition rates and lower levels

of student satisfaction with their college experiences, particularly at Predominantly White Institutions of higher learning.

Research on issues in areas as varied as graduation rates, job opportunities, and feelings of acceptance among minority student-athletes, coaches, and administrators suggest that the hardships that these individuals routinely face jeopardize the prospect of their success as college students. A study released by the NCAA in 2003¹² proclaims that student-athletes are more likely to graduate over a six year period than non-student-athletes, but notes that black student-athletes are not only less likely to graduate than their white peers, but that there are “fewer black athletes” competing as student-athletes than in past data sets (“NCAA Graduation Success Rate--1996-2002 Cohort” 2). This translates into a lower proportion of student-athletes having the opportunity to compete at the college level, likely because Proposition 16, a stringent eligibility standard mandated in 1996 “affects access to higher education for minorities” because the sliding scale used to determine eligibility is 50 percent based on standardized test scores (“NCAA Graduation Success Rate--1996-2002 Cohort” 2). Recent updates to the Satisfactory Progress model (the “40-60-80¹³” model) also restricts access further for junior-college transfers, which in football and basketball tend to be primarily black student-athletes. The prominence of these issues runs directly counter to the NCAA’s mission as a non-profit educational institution, which, according to the Internal Revenue Tax Code of 1986, claims that “The NCAA plays a critical role in the maintenance of a revered tradition of amateurism in college sports (and) the preservation of the student-athlete in

¹² NCAA Graduation Success Rate – 1996-2002 Cohort.
<http://www.ncaa.org/news/2003/20030901/active/4018n01.html>.

¹³ Requirement that student athletes complete 40% of their major requirements by the end of their second year of eligibility, 60% by the end of their third year of eligibility, and 80% before the beginning of their final year of eligibility to remain eligible to complete.

higher education adds richness and diversity to intercollegiate athletics” (Appendix A, page 43).

Though graduation rates for black student-athletes are slowly rising, black student-athletes are still much less likely to graduate than their white peers. In the 2003 study, black male athletes in football and basketball graduated at rates substantially lower than their white counterparts (52 percent vs. 41 percent in basketball, and 61 percent vs. 49 percent in football) (“NCAA Graduation Success Rate--1996-2002 Cohort” 3). These numbers, Lapchick claims, reinforce already-existent stereotypes about the intellectual capability and potential of black male student-athletes and substantiate them with data--even though many people are unwilling to examine the disparities of these numbers in order to determine why they exist (2).

In addition to the many struggles that confront Black student-athletes and professionals in college sport, they are also confronted by a decline in the number of opportunities available to them for participation and employment. Even though research on the 1996-2002 cohort revealed higher graduation rates among black student-athletes, the proportion of black student-athletes decreased by 3 percent from 1995. Todd Petr, the NCAA Managing Director of Research, claims that this drop is comparable to past drops where stricter eligibility measures were employed, and that the numbers will likely ease upward (“NCAA Graduation Success Rate--1996-2002 Cohort” 2). However, it’s more likely that marginal or provisionally-admitted students will need increased support and mentorship, which are both hard to provide for when there is a pervasive lack of black leadership to inspire these students, and, when state and federal bodies continue to cut budget allocations for higher education.

According to a recent analysis performed by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida, while nearly half (49.2 percent) of college football players at the Division I-A level are Black, only 4.16 percent of the head football coaches, 8.4 percent of the athletics directors, and 25 percent of the assistant coaches are Black (Fish 4). This parallels an unfortunate trend in American commerce, so it is not as if NCAA host institutions are the only places where young Blacks struggle to find opportunities. E.J. Dionne notes in “The Politics of Wealth” that nearly 1.5 million young men in this country, more than half of whom are Black, are completely disconnected from education and employment in this country (Dionne 3). The potential decrease of opportunities for black student-athletes and perennial lack of opportunities available for black professionals in college athletics are both emblematic of the wider problems and a source of it.

Even worse, the low numbers of black professionals in college athletics represent a failure to fully address the mentorship and advising needs of Black student-athletes, who benefit from Black leaders who have high expectations of them and can help them adjust to the hardships of college life (Holsendolph 23). The true need for an expansion of opportunities for Blacks in college sport is representative not only of American colleges’ and universities’ ramping up their “rhetorics of diversity and multiculturalism” and calling for an increase in diversity on their campuses, but institutional commitments to social justice on those campuses (Pratt 8). Increasing the number of opportunities for participation and employment for Black student-athletes and athletics professionals addresses the widely-held desire that student bodies and professional staffs become more ethnically and culturally diverse. Furthermore, it addresses the need to see that more Black youth are successful in their attempts to become college graduates by increasing

the number of mentors and positive role models available to them whom students may perceive as having experience and knowledge relevant to them in their struggles (Holsendorph 24). The extent to which the NCAA has gone and is willing to go in the future to ensure that minority access to college athletics is increased has become a much more significant aspect of its mission and goals in recent years. However, their investment in making college athletics a more diverse playing field must be matched by the power brokers and politically potent administrators at the host institutions. Therein, largely, lies the problem.

Though the NCAA tends to downplay and counterpersuade critics who accuse their athletics departments of failing to provide equitable educational opportunities to black student-athletes, two areas in particular which host institutions have received a fair amount of criticism for the egregiously low number of black head football coaches at Division I-A institutions and the continued use of Native American caricatures as mascots for NCAA institutions. As of February 1, 2006, only 5 out of 122 Division I-A football head coaching positions are filled by Blacks. In addition, 18 institutions that compete at the NCAA Division I-A level have mascots that depict pernicious Native-American stereotypes, including the “Savages,” “Fighting Sioux,” and the fictitious and scandalous “Fighting Illini” (Wolverton 1). This sends a negative message to Black and Native-American athletes and members of our campus communities who could benefit tremendously from a concerted effort to make NCAA Athletics, as an enterprise, more diverse and culturally aware. It also sends the message that NCAA host institutions are only committed to diversity when that commitment appeases high-powered boosters and alumni and administrators believe that embracing diversity will help their athletics departments better meet their bottom lines--winning and generating revenue.

However, there has been great difficulty and resistance in compelling host institutions to comply with diversity-enriching policies while athletics department costs continue to outpace revenue and the NCAA tightly restricts and monitors donations and contributions from outside sources. The NCAA is conflicted, because even though it desperately wants all host institutions to comply with new regulations, it still needs those institutions, at the end of the day, to field competitive teams regardless of their attention to diversity (Zimbalist 13). An even bigger hurdle is the fact that the NCAA, as merely an athletics governing organization, is at best a simulacra when it comes to sanctioning the academic success of student-athletes and cultural sensitivity of members institutions (Beaudrillard 46). Governing organizations lay out rules and oversee its members' or subjects' actions to ensure compliance. However, because of the sheer number of members, institutional claims to "academic freedom," or the right to enact academic measures and policies in the manner they see fit, and the reliance upon self-reporting and institutional buy-in to NCAA policies, the NCAA lacks the needed authority to compel individual members to revise culturally insensitive practices (Farrey 3).

The key to advocating such reform, then, lies in the ability of organizations/coalitions not tightly affiliated with or governed by the NCAA or its host institutions to press for change and represent and support individual causes of great merit and importance. The NCAA has gone to great lengths to address these issues, but it is clear that they are unwilling to use their power to enforce change, and in some cases unwilling to exercise or yield what power they have unless outside agitators and advocates of social reform can compel them to embrace change.

In the past two decades, four organizations/coalitions have sought to influence and shape NCAA policies in terms of how it governs athletics departments under its

charge, how those departments' missions relate to that of their host institutions, how those departments recruit and retain coaches, staff, and student-athletes, and how the association markets itself to a socioeconomically diverse American public--The Black Coaches Association, The Drake Group, The Knight Commission, and the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport. These organizations have accomplished (or attempted) the reforms spelled out in their mission statements through engaging in social movement rhetoric and employing advocacy strategies akin to those theorized by social movement theorists and in emulation of successful American social movements. It is also worth noting that each of these organizations is attempting to effect change with varying levels of access to the political machinery of the NCAA and a commitment, expressly stated and otherwise, to bettering the lives and leveling the playing field for black student-athletes and aspiring black professionals.

Defining NCAA Reform as Social Movement--Agitation and Control

A close examination of the political and discursive practices of contemporary social movements reveals that their forms of social critique and resistance range from the orchestrated to the improvised, from the traditionally discursive to the symbolic. Scholars often describe such actions historically and organizationally, but rarely rhetorically. For example, in Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, Doug McAdam notes that social protest is “the organized effort [...] to promote or resist changes in the *structure of society* (emphasis added)” (McAdam 25). Sidney Tarrow notes in Power in Movement that social protest is “collective changes [...] (resulting from) sustained interaction with *elites, opponents, and authorities*” (Tarrow 4, emphasis added). Though these are valuable tools for determining the nature of social protest and the historiographical work of reframing collective action as social movement, neither of

these definitions calls into question how the distinctly rhetorical elements of a social movement effect change. These theoretical frameworks could only be used to suggest that the NCAA's perpetual ability to stave off increasingly sophisticated calls to institute stricter educational reforms is due solely to its economic and political power as an organization, not attributable to the rhetorical sophistication of its public relations.

One theory of social movements is particularly useful for exploring NCAA rhetoric. The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control by Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen defines the rhetoric of social movements as a struggle between oppressed and oppressors by stepping outside of the Marxist boundaries of material condition (i.e. those who control labor vs. those whose labor is exploited) and exploring the much more complex realms of discourse that various social groups inhabit in order to air grievances and demand change or defend the *status quo* (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 7-9). Returning to Marx, Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen treat discourse and social struggle as though they are struggles for power and capital, supplementing our understanding of social movements by characterizing them as distinctly rhetorical in nature. Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen propose that we consider how social protest groups employ "more than the normal discursive means of persuasion" (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 4). They seem to leave the door open for various interpretations of what 'normal discourse' is--which seems to include various symbolic acts depicted as rhetorical in manner.

Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen give names, faces, and greater meaning to the history of social protest and offer a primer for analyzing future attempts at radical social change. They define rhetoric as "the rationale of instrumental symbolic behavior," and agitation rhetoric, or the rhetorical practices of social protest groups, as "persistent, long-term advocacy of a social change" (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 1-3). They contrast this with its

reactionary counterpart, control rhetoric, which they characterize as a rhetorical approach designed to “repel any attack on the establishment” (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 47). They proceed to outline strategies for agitation, including “petition,” “promulgation,” and “solidification,” which all involve the use of rhetorical discourse, symbolic action, and occasionally violent threat and disturbance (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 22-24). They then describe the strategies employed by establishments, including “counterpersuasion,” “evasion,” “postponement,” and “denial of means” (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 49-52). They sum up their analyses with four case studies of contemporary social protest, including the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, the student strike at San Francisco State in 1968-69, the non-violent resistance of the Black civil rights movement, and finally a series of pro and anti-abortion rallies in Wichita, Kansas. From these studies, they derive definitions for social protest methods and develop a “theoretical generalizations interface” that can be used to explain the outcomes of past social protests.

However, Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s scholarship limits us to the analyses (and thus, implied rhetoric) of past social movements and does not theorize social movement rhetoric outside of these case studies. The distinction between social movement action research which *examines agitation* and research which *theorizes agitation* is delineated by Touraine in The Voice and The Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements, in which he points out the necessity of “bifurcating the critical division of labor” involved to understand the many complexities of social movements (24). Though Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s theory serves as a tool for generalizing probable outcomes based upon well-researched historical, political, and social analyses, Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s social movement rhetoric focuses specifically on analyzing historical social movements and prospective frameworks in which social movement rhetoric may have been required. In

addition, the historical limitations of Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen's rhetorical theory compromises its usefulness in analyzing contemporary, late twentieth/twenty-first century social movements that have become technologically sophisticated.

Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen essentially offer us a grammar--a detailed explanation of the system of rules implicit in a language--that aids in the analysis of how the rhetoric of social protest has historically achieved the goals of social and cultural reform and revolution. However, they do not theorize how social movements can continue to promulgate their messages and create persuasion over time. In order to fully understand what accomplishments the four not-for-profit organizations I am examining have made in the late 20th century, how those successes are attributable to social movement rhetorical strategies, and how those organizations theorize accomplishing future reforms.

Harold Cruse and The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual

I am now left to consider how best to analyze what long-term effects, if any, the four not-for-profit advocacy groups I am examining have had on the politics, policies, culture, and economy of the NCAA, and to what extent their rhetorical practices effected desired social change/social justice. Though agitation/control rhetoric offers a useful template for determining a movement's challenges and impact on social issues as it confronts oppressive forces or policies that need to be reformed, another rhetorical theory is necessary to explain the potential for an organization to engage in long-term cultural, political, or economic agitation. For this I have decided to extrapolate the social movement theory of Harold Cruse and redefine it as rhetorical theory.

Harold Cruse, who has been hailed as "one of the sharpest minds of the twentieth century," was an autodidact and influential philosopher and social critic who is widely noted for his tome on the future of the black intelligentsia, The Crisis of the Negro

Intellectual. Cruse was born in Virginia in 1916, and relocated to Harlem in the years between the two World Wars, during which time Cruse's experiences would later shape his approach to cultural criticism and production while the wars and their fallout shaped the country, namely "the Great Migration, the depression era, World War II, and the civil rights and Black Power movements" (Cobb 4). After experiences in the armed forces introduced him to the teachings of Marx and communism, Cruse returned to Harlem during a time in which Harlem was, in his words, "the most strategically important community in Black America" (Cruse 12). During his years in Harlem, he witnessed firsthand its social movements' and intellectuals' ascent and descent into economic, cultural, and political ineffectuality, and penned Crisis of the Negro Intellectual as an attempt to guide future intellectuals theorizing on black racial and cultural uplift and steer them from making the same mistakes as their predecessors.

In Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Cruse attempts to define a theory of black intellectual leadership, through which the black intelligentsia could lead its people into a new era of cultural, economic, and political rediscovery and revolution. Cruse's approach is historiographical and written in bold, yet engaging prose. His principal aim is to critically consider Harlem as a fount of cultural production and capitol of Black America through thorough and occasionally biting criticism of the Black vanguard. He has oft been criticized for airing the 'dirty laundry' of the New Negro Intelligentsia and because of his scathing analyses of the failures of the Harlem Renaissance¹⁴ and prominent Blacks Lorraine Hansberry¹⁵ and Paul Robeson¹⁶. Such criticism, perhaps, is warranted, given

¹⁴ Cruse believes the Harlem Renaissance fails because it "existed solely for the benefit of (white) others" and was "politically fluid and aimless, and did not support itself economically" (33, 86).

¹⁵ Cruse believes that Hansberry's desire for integration and assimilation lead her to hegemonically reproduce white middle class ideology to gain the acceptance of white patrons (275).

Cruse's incessant, and sometimes needlessly blithe treatment of Black political and artistic figures and movements who, regardless of their methods and actions certainly cared deeply for and worked ardently to advance Black causes. Despite the application of his theories, which I argue are needlessly dismissive, Cruse's ideas are helpful for the analysis of social movements. Combining the Triple Front analysis with an analysis of how agitation rhetoric is used by social movements to confront the control rhetoric of establishments will not only reveal how and why the organizations I have selected fail to achieve their ultimate missions; it will also reveal how those organizations, given more time, resources, or opportunity to revise their practices, can ultimately achieve their missions.

The 'Triple Front' as Social Movement Rhetoric

In Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Cruse claims that the fundamental question that confronts the Black community is one of culture--'Whose culture do we uphold?' For Cruse, Black intellectuals must lead the community's efforts to challenge cultural hegemony, and in resolving the cultural question, Blacks will be able to "confront all other issues such as economic unity, (and) political redemption" (Asante 1). Collectively known as the 'Triple Front,' Cruse asserts that the intellectual must be a culturalist who must possess:

- 1) A commitment to cultural agency,
- 2) A commitment to economic independence and self-sustainability, and
- 3) The willingness to pursue the objectives of freedom and justice through whatever means available.

¹⁶ Cruse believes Robeson allowed his loyalty to Communism to conflict his sense of social justice for all human beings and distract him from advocating cultural programs which would unite black masses in favor of Communism, which would fail to unite workers of all races in a common cause (295).

When Cruse speaks of the responsibility of the intellectual revolutionary to employ the “triple front” assessment, he refers specifically to the theory that any effective and sustainable movement which focuses on the uplift of black people must thoughtfully assess economic, political, and cultural matters. Cruse instructs individuals or coalitions engaged in revolution or reform-minded activity that their ability to motivate masses to engage in political action is a prerequisite if they wish to inspire those whose rights they fight for to learn to value and understand their own culture. From this inspiration, the energy and impetus to examine their political and economic potential will spring forth. In turn, this will help advocates and the constituencies they serve develop the desire to compel establishments to reconsider the ways they impose themselves upon those less powerful than they and force them to reconsider how they fail to value their lives because of cultural, ethnic, or sexual discrimination. It stands to reason that they may also consider the political and economic potential of developing alliances with said people or the consequences of continuing to disregard their humanity.

Cruse’s theory, though originally directed towards black intellectuals, serves as an effective tool for evaluating all social movements. When it comes to considering populations that are especially vulnerable in a particular setting, be it in the community, the workplace, or among institutions in relation to one another, be they agitators or individuals in need of advocacy, the “triple front” theory can serve not only as a methodology for social protest, but also as a means of theorizing the potential as well as the effectiveness of any agitator/advocacy group currently engaged in social protest. Unless the advocacy group can successfully integrate these commitments into a social movement theory, Cruse claims that the movement, in the end, will not sustain itself and achieve its ends.

Combining the agitation/control theories of Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen with the ‘Triple Front’ theory of Harold Cruse, I have developed the following methodology for analyzing the social movement rhetorical theory and long-term mission achievability of the Black Coaches Association, the Drake Group, the Knight Commission, and the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport. According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s interface, the NCAA is an establishment which possesses “high referent and expert power,” “high strength of ideology,” and “high rhetorical sophistication.”¹⁷ In comparison to the NCAA, the establishment that all of these group hope to reform, I determine whether each organization possesses:

- 1) High or low *actual membership*
- 2) High or low *potential membership*, and
- 3) High or low *rhetorical sophistication*.¹⁸

These analyses are then cross-referenced with the characteristics of the NCAA, using Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s generalizations as a framework for understanding the various achievements and shortcomings of each organization’s mission. Furthermore, using Cruse’s ‘Triple Front’ theory, I ask the following questions of each not-for-profit organization:

- 1) Do the organization’s efforts significantly impact the culture of the NCAA in all of its exploits on the campuses of each host institution and in public opinion, compelling the NCAA to make desired changes?

¹⁷ See Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, Figure 1, p. 144.

¹⁸ See Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, Figure 1, p. 144.

- 2) Do the organization's efforts to critique the culture of the NCAA give them and their constituents' increased political power (civic engagement) and identity development (reflexivity) to persuade the NCAA to make desired changes?
- 3) What resources, financial and otherwise, can the organization mobilize, and, do they significantly impact the economic considerations to the point that the NCAA is compelled to capitulate to their requests/demands?

In a later chapter, I examine their bodies of work in greater detail and evaluate both their successes and failures and their potential for future viability using the Bowers/Ochs interface and Cruse's Triple Front theory. In the following chapter, "Big-Time' College Athletics, the Knight Commission, and the Rhetoric of Athletics Reform," I examine the emergence of the NCAA in the latter half of the 20th century. As sports teams gained public attention for the competitiveness of their members across a wide array of athletics events, increasing access to elite competition and engendering local and regional pride among American sport fans, college athletics also gained notoriety among academia because of the many academic integrity/recruitment violations which negatively impacted each campus' reputation and ruined the lives of many student-athletes, staff, and coaches involved. Next, I focus on relevant issues to higher education, composition programs, and reform-minded not-for-profit organizations, namely the divergence of athletics departments' and institutions' missions (as a rhetorical situation) and the NCAA's institution of satisfactory progress models as evidence of the rhetorical success of the organization that has become synonymous with NCAA-focused educational reform--the Knight Commission.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #3: JUMPING SHIP

I was late for my graduate seminar one evening, and probably appeared so disconcerted that my professor decided to take a short walk with me during the break. “You ok, Will? You looked really stressed out lately.” Over the coming weeks I would learn that I had every right to be.

A young man had just spent the last two hours in my office. He was the very avatar of what the student-athlete should be--a true ambassador for sport and an amazing representative of his university. This was a young man who came from a whole lot of nuthin' but just enough. First-generation college student. A walk-on who had earned a full scholarship. Set to graduate in several months' time. And for all of this, which should have been a source of joy and contentment, this young man entered my office on the verge of tears. One thing the reader should know about ballers--we ain't averse to yellin', tauntin', screamin', or any other 'motivational tactics' that our coaches are prone to using. So when a baller is shedding tears in my office, I know there's real drama unfolding.

This young man had grown increasingly concerned about his ability to continue matriculating at the university, because he feared he might lose his scholarship. Though he had earned a full scholarship, he watched younger players receive more playing opportunities than he had. And though he gladly participated on special teams and as a scout in practice, this did not satisfy his coaches--who of all things characterized this young man as an 'underachiever' and questioned his work ethic because he had not panned out into the star running back they hoped he would have several years ago when they signed him. He then shared with me that such assaults on character had become all too common as the team slipped from mediocrity to debacle over the course of the year.

I remember him so vividly, though he wasn't the first young man to vent in my office, which many of the players felt was a safe haven. It was amazing that this young man still had the passion and intensity he had when he entered as a freshman, even though the team had not had a winning season or competed in the post-season since he had arrived. It was equally troubling that his mistreatment--far too often written off as part and parcel of the college football experience--was beginning to break his spirits to the point that he was beyond quitting football. He was considering quitting school.

Other players had registered similar complaints with me--only behind closed doors, and only to me, which I thought peculiar, given the brevity of my tenure and the lowliness of my position in the department. Turns out that students needed someone to listen to them, not someone to bang heads for them. I began to notice, and it was hard not to, that the players who most often complained about being mistreated--not yelled at, but mistreated, abused, and embarrassed by their coaches--were young men of color and players from low socioeconomic status.

Fearing reprisal, the young men dared not address the issue with their position coaches, who often play the role of mediator between player and head coach. And other than commiserating with one another, the players felt an overwhelming lack of recourse and power to change their situation. Clearly, a remarkably insensitive group of coaches believed that the best way to motivate poor, young men of color was to berate them into submission by insulting, of all things, who they are, where they were from (barrios and hoods) and ignoring how hard they had worked to get to this point. Blatant and unadulterated racism and cultural insensitivity, and worse, no recourse, politically or culturally, for standing up to it.

I was so stressed out because I had been notified that afternoon that the players planned to stage a walkout of practice and petition the athletics director to confront the head coach, and possibly push to relieve him of his duties. Of course, I never planted the idea, though I always told players that they needed to discover solutions to their problems and not be afraid to pursue those solutions. If nothing else, as human beings, they were owed respect. I knew that over the next couple of weeks that speculation as to who helped these young men pull off such a coup would be directed at me. I had no idea.

I would find out weeks later that, after the athletics director failed to respond favorably, that those same players would walk across campus, forty some-odd strong, ride the elevator up to the seventh floor of the Administration building and present their argument to the President of the University. Within six months, the head coach would be removed, and the scandal would be replayed at the top of the hour on local and national news programs--a scar on the university's reputation for some time to come.

And I knew that when it all came down to it, my unwillingness to continue to ignore and/or defend the unethical practices of my colleagues would be my undoing. I didn't even last another full year working in athletics (I lasted slightly longer than the ousted coach), and that year was filled with tumult, distrust, and espionage. My meetings with students were restricted. I was even prevented from attending staff meetings. I resigned, under duress, and have not worked directly with student-athletes or in an athletics department since. I wonder sometimes if I ever will again.

CHAPTER THREE--“*UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT*”:

The Knight Commission and the Rhetoric of Athletics Reform

An issue left largely unexplored in contemporary research on college athletics is the wide gap that exists between the perceptions of former student-athletes and the depictions of college athletics proffered by the NCAA. Several of my former teammates, all of whom were college graduates and full-scholarship recipients during their tenure as student-athletes, voiced similar opinions, and so do many Black professionals (and professionals-to-be) in college athletics coaching and administration--many of whom appear to have benefited from their involvement in college sport. They do not share the belief that the cultural and social capital that they acquired (or stood to acquire) from their experiences as student-athletes equaled just compensation for their labor.

What they share with generations of student-athletes and historians who have studied the emergence of amateur sport in the last century is that the system of governance, oversight, and administration associated with college sport in America is a broken, flawed system designed to advance institutions over individuals and often benefit the already-privileged at the expense of the already-exploited.

In Unpaid Professionals, Andrew Zimbalist goes beyond the mere observance of unfortunate occurrences in the history of college sport and identifies problems endemic to the NCAA, which serve as the root causes of those incidents. He claims that “big time intercollegiate athletics is a unique industry” in that it “is the only in the United States that manages not to pay its principal producers a wage or salary,” unlike their “handsomely remunerated coaches, athletics directors” and other labor managers (3-4). Zimbalist asserts that the very nature of the enterprise is exploitative, whereas detractors of big time college athletics decry the admission of under/unqualified athletes who have

opportunities to receive college educations free of charge. The middle ground, of course, is the popular assertion that the free education *is* the compensation, though scholars (e.g. Zimbalist, Wimmer) vary in their estimates of how much surplus value simply paying tuition, room and board, and book costs (\$50,000-\$150,000, conservatively¹⁹) creates when highly-visible athletes can bring in literally millions of dollars in terms ticket sales and other forms of revenue. Regardless, scholars, critics, policymakers, and university administrators alike agree on one central tenet--namely, that young black men whose involvement in revenue-generating college athletics compromises their ability to graduate and earn diplomas are the individuals most likely to sense that they have been treated unfairly by their universities. In the brief history of college athletics, these black male student-athletes have been exploited by what virtually all involved parties agree is a system that is almost irrevocably corrupted and governed by the NCAA--which is virtually intractable.

As Barbara Walvoord claims in "The Future of WAC," reconsidering attempts at educational reforms as social movements provides analysts with opportunities to understand what challenges lie ahead and what resources must be mobilized to achieve the desired ends, and ultimately predict whether or not educational reforms will be successfully implemented (61). In this chapter, I define nascent attempts at educational and cultural reform in college athletics as social movements and social movement organizations by drawing from Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen's definitions of agitation and control rhetoric. I then turn to Cruse's Triple Front theory to analyze their respective shortcomings. These shortcomings, Cruse predicts, exist primarily because of these

¹⁹ Taken from Zimbalist in Unpaid Professionals and Wimmer in "Student Athletes or University Slaves."

organizations' failure to compel substantive cultural and educational reform in college athletics, favoring the advocacy of political and economic reforms instead.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct in the Ivoriest Towers

The history of college and university athletics-related improprieties can be traced back to America's most prestigious institutions. According to Zimbalist, as early as the 1850's, the Harvard and Yale boat clubs offered individuals "lavish prizes" and "unlimited alcohol" in order to attract wealthy patrons to support the event, and Harvard regularly recruited alumni to participate on their sports teams (6). By the late 1880's, sporting events were returning one hundred fold as investments (in terms of revenues generated minus up-front expenses). University presidents soon discovered that it was sport, not institutional reputations, which roused feelings of school spirit (and loosened pocketbooks and purses). Harry Barnard, president of Columbia University in the 1870's, proclaimed that "Columbia College is known and respected" not for the quality of its alumni or the prestige of the institution, but because of its athletic achievements, while Woodrow Wilson noted, when he was president of Princeton: "Princeton is noted in this wide world for three things: Football, baseball, and collegiate instruction" (7). In turn, alumni who began hinging their feelings of school pride to athletics programs began donating more money to their institutions and as a result began to wield an increasing amount of influence over the activities of their institutions.

For over a century, university administrations have been seduced by the prestige and profits generated by successful sports teams, so much so that it has served as the backdrop for a pervasive lack of credibility when it comes to institutional oversight of athletics activities. As a result, political pressure placed on university administrators by concerned constituents interested in reform have almost always resulted in failure, given

university administrations' increasing investment in the continued prosperity of their athletics programs. Each of the following university bodies--presidential administrations, university faculty, and athletics administrators--have failed at reforming the politics, culture, and economics of college athletics primarily because of their unwillingness to place student-athlete advocacy at the head of their concerns and because of a general lack of sophistication in terms of their social movement strategies according to Cruse's "Triple Front" theory.

The Failure of Reform--University Presidents

The reforms that university presidents tend to propose generally emerge as a response to events specific to their campuses rather than as preventative measures that address national trends in college athletics-related infractions. These administrative responses, which tend to include public statements²⁰ and disseminated statements via university listservs rarely if ever include calls for stiff sanctioning and reform and are widely regarded as vacuous. An interesting example of this is the case of Maurice Clarett and the Ohio State University. After leading Ohio State to a national championship in football as a true freshman in 2002, Clarett was declared ineligible for competition in 2003 after an NCAA investigation revealed that he had accepted cars, cash, and other gifts for his athletic success. During the course of the year-long investigation, it was revealed that Clarett was the only student-athlete who had benefited improperly and he was dismissed from the team. Clarett, later discredited because of his mercurial behavior and because Ohio State's media machine completely blackballed him, testified that an elaborate system arranged by head coach Jim Tressel ensured that high profile players received loaner cars, cash gifts from boosters, jobs that they did not have to show up for,

²⁰ Remarks are often tempered with calls for self-directed 'institutional review.'

and class arrangements that kept them eligible. Several of Ohio State's former players, ostensibly with little to gain for doing so, corroborated Tressel's statements. To date, Ohio State has not disciplined Tressel, nor has the NCAA, and athletics director Andy Geiger considers the case closed. In other words, once Clarett was identified as a scapegoat, the matter was considered done and no institutional actions were taken to prevent future abuses from occurring (Zirin 1-2).

In addition to public administrative responses, other activities that fall under Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen's rubric for social movement formation include invitations for participation (group formation) and dissemination of findings (promulgation), but rarely do these activities involve the airing of grievances, for fear of reprisal from disproportionately powerful and influential alumni groups (Smith 19). When calls for reform are issued, the goal appears to be to convince the public (as well as campus community) that the improprieties that occur in college athletics departments are taken seriously and that the university is always seeking solutions. Diagnoses and solutions are rarely proposed, and even when they are, rarely upheld due to cultural, political, and economic pressures.

Notable examples of failure to uphold reform on the part of university presidents actually predate the NCAA. For example, in the 19th century, the Big Ten Conference, comprised largely of universities across the Midwest, acted to curb "major abuses and prevent the use of freshmen and graduate students" on their athletics teams (Zimbalist 7). When the Ivy League's teams became more competitive due to fewer limitations on their sports teams, the Big Ten presidents were forced to retract their measures on their respective campuses in order to remain competitive. This set a precedent that in many ways remains the *sine qua non* of institutional resistance to collegiate athletics reform:

reform of any sort reduces competitiveness, which in theory drives down revenues and marketability in a climate in which education, in virtually all institutionalized public, formal settings struggle to remain funded and viable. This renders the resistance of any one, or any small cadre of university presidents, either futile or, merely as effective as competing NCAA institutions and disproportionately powerful alumni groups allow them to become. Rather than petition the Ivy League schools and challenge them to follow suit or address their issues to the governing organization (NCAA), the Big Ten schools immediately retracted to appease trustees and powerful alumni to the detriment of members of their own campus communities.

Most presidents at colleges and universities that have high-profile athletics departments understand perfectly well how important those departments are to the culture and economies of their institutions. The occasional presidential attempt at athletics reform usually coincides with the emergence of scandals *du jour*, part and parcel of the administrative response and political maneuvering (and often disingenuous if not outright mendacious). Even when presidents make proposals in earnest, they often fail to effectively propose economically feasible solutions and culturally appealing alternatives to the reigning in of out-of-control athletics departments, resulting in superficial and ultimately short-lived reforms (e.g. the occasional assistant coach whose contract is terminated, self-study or self-assessment, or a student-athlete who is suspended for a nominal period of competition).

A *laissez-faire* attitude pervades presidential responses to athletics department improprieties nationwide, with the most notable exceptions being university presidents who serve on NCAA-appointed or otherwise assembled coalitions who address athletics department-related infractions as their charge (some of which have been successful). But

for the most part, presidential reform efforts, though they occasionally generate positive press in the short term, usually fail in their nascent stages or shortly after they are proposed because the cultural importance and economic beneficence that successful athletics programs provide outweigh the experiences of a small group of student-athletes--black male student-athletes in the revenue sports--who are disadvantaged by the system.

The Failure of Reform--University Faculty

On the whole, university faculty bodies have been unsuccessful at spurring reform at institutions with high-profile athletics departments, with their indignation regarding the preferential treatment they perceive athletics departments receiving on their campuses often turning into indifferent frustration and apathy. Whereas university presidents are limited in the ways they can proceed without unwavering support from their trustees, faculties are in a unique position to “advocate adherence to meaningful academic standards” according to the “Faculty Role in the Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics” published by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (7). The paper, which was a statement issued on behalf of university faculty who had grown weary of both the overemphasis of college athletics and the exploitation of student-athletes on their respective campuses, represented an early attempt on the part of faculty to address the increasing malfeasances of big-time college athletics. Given that university administrators and NCAA officials believe (or, at least publicly claim) that American universities should be known for their achievements as academic institutions, and that it is the charge of the faculty to strengthen academic standards, the AAUP states that faculty should be at the forefront of “restor(ing) and defend(ing) academic integrity in college sports” (2).

Unfortunately, a lack of planning in organizing the committee as a social movement reveals why the document, ultimately, accomplishes little more than a strong statement that does not translate into a call for policy reform. Representatives from eleven universities (though only four of them from NCAA Division I institutions, an unfortunate oversight) stated goals and practices to be implemented by respective faculty senates, including calls for increased oversight and integration of athletic department affairs into student affairs. Unfortunately, the authors give into apathy at the paper's conclusion, noting:

It is doubtful that faculty efforts alone will be sufficient to refocus the priorities of major athletics programs. On the other hand, faculties are in a unique position to advocate adherence to meaningful academic standards. [...] Enactment and enforcement of the requisite reforms to establish a proper balance between sports and education will require members of the faculty--working as much as possible with supportive, or at least sympathetic, administrators, trustees, and athletics program staff, including coaches--to invest time and energy in this project ("Faculty Role in the Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics" 13). The paper lacks a strategy section that explains how new practices and expectations will be implemented and measured at AAUP members' respective campuses. Finally, with no feedback from student-athletes and little feedback from faculty members at institutions with Division I-A athletics programs, the success of the new strategies seem doomed to failure from the onset, though the approach undertaken to draft the paper -- including recruitment of allies and the public airing of grievances--would become a model later incorporated more successfully by other educational-reform minded organizations (such as the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, detailed later in Chapter 3).

In addition to failed reform efforts on the part of affiliated faculty bodies, faculty members on NCAA campuses assigned by the NCAA to serve as liaisons between the faculty and athletics department administrators have also been unsuccessful at advocating reform. Faculty Athletics Representatives (FAR's) are actually assigned to carry out the mission that was defined by the AAUP, but in the 1980's, as athletics became more focused on generating revenue than with attending to student-athlete welfare, athletics directors became much more involved with financial matters while FARs focused on academics and as a result, the role diminished in importance (Brown 2). But, as the Knight Commission notes, many FARs have not "fulfilled their potential as guardians of academic interests" ("Knight Commission Report" 36). In addition, advocacy of significant change has often been limited to individual faculty members, and, moreover, many of those faculty members have faced dire repercussions for whistle-blowing, silence-breaking and taking on complicit administrations and athletics departments (Miller, 1). This serves to explain why FARs are much more likely to toe the athletics departments' lines and uphold its mission over that of the institution.

However, as I suggest in Chapter Five, Writing Programs represent an anomaly in the world of inadequate faculty involvement in athletics reform. The literature in the field of Rhetoric and Composition addressing the role writing program personnel have played as student-athlete advocates is scarce. And yet, the potential for writing programs to pursue collaboration with athletics departments who are committing to cross-campus partnerships at unprecedented levels suggests that an analysis of writing programs/writing program personnel and their role as advocates of student-athletes is now perhaps more critical than ever. Given the fact that many student-athletes develop academic literacy, intellectual desires, and sense of agency and citizenship on college campuses, in many

cases, through the lenses of their athletics departments' personnel, the writing classroom/writing center/satellite can offer them a pivotal opportunities to redress the ways that faculty and peers perceive their involvement on and contributions to their respective campuses (Scott 26).

In the space of the writing classroom – with its comparably low student-teacher ratios and potential for increased substantial student-faculty interaction – student-athletes are given important opportunities to explore academic interests, develop critical thinking skills, and re-consider and represent themselves as members not only of their athletic communities, but as students on a college campus engaged in scholarly as well as athletic pursuits; hence explaining why writing program personnel have historically engaged in advocacy on student-athletes behalf. These efforts, unfortunately, have only gained prominence and achieved reform at the great personal sacrifice of individuals, such as Linda Bensel-Myers and Jan Kemp, who have struggled to gain a critical mass of allies within their institutions to push for reform (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 48).

The Reform Failures of Athletics Departments

Before the Sanity Code of 1946²¹, most collegiate athletics reforms focused on elements that stood to improve the quality of competition, enhancing the marketability of the product of amateur athletics. Early on in collegiate athletic competitions, for example, many individuals were hurt and or killed because few rules and regulations defined the best practices of each sport. Anyone who has ever seen footage of football games from the early 20th century can attest to this simply by how, because of a lack of protective gear, players often tackled other players, via “clotheslining,” punching individuals in the face, choking, kicking and scratching other players. As a result, many

²¹ More closely examined later in the chapter.

institutions began declaring temporary and permanent bans on competition until reforms were made. Years later, Theodore Roosevelt, whose son was injured in a football game at Harvard, threatened to ban all intercollegiate football until reforms on competition were made. Threatened by the loss of revenue and prestige to their institutions, all institutions complied when the NCAA was formed in 1905 and prescribed the new measures (Zimbalist 9).

And yet a survey conducted 25 years later by *The New York Times* found that of 112 member institutions, not a single institution had enacted any reforms ‘mandated’ by the NCAA regarding educational and intellectual values, and the Carnegie Commission (footnote) found nearly two-thirds of those institutions to be in violation of NCAA codes and the general principles of amateurism (Zimbalist 10). In other words, athletics department transgressions of this sort serve as a window into the rhetoric of early twentieth century resistance to reform measures on the part of high-profile athletics institutions. When institutions accepted reform measures (prescribed by a governing organization or demanded by constituent groups), it was often to placate consumers of collegiate sport and far less often because their respective institutions demanded reform.

In the most extreme case of rebellion against these new rules, players began point-fixing at their games and placing side-bets on their competitions. In a particularly scandalous example, Hall of Fame coach Adolph Rupp of the University of Kentucky was not only alleged to have *known* about his players’ participation in such activities, but that he, too, joined in with them. Even when measures were successfully enacted, it usually meant that athletics departments would work quickly to exploit loopholes, often without fearing the sanction and ire of administrators who believed that the success of their athletics teams was paramount to strict observance of any governing organization’s

edicts. Big-time athletics departments, which have identified myriad ways to ‘get around’ NCAA edicts on student-athlete compensation and stated commitments to revenue generation at virtually any cost are, at best, duplicitous and at worse downright hypocritical in their punishment of individual student-athletes who commit similar violations on much smaller scales. However, self-policing, which often involves making minor sacrifices (a loss of a scholarship here and there, or a strongly worded censure from the NCAA), also provide athletics departments with important opportunities to generate favor among consumers and campus community members. This, of course, is not so much a failure at reform as a failure to recognize the forms of deception that have become inherent to the culture of college athletics.

Tackling the Issues:

The NCAA, Counterpersuasive Rhetoric, and the Reforming of Public Opinion

The NCAA has failed in attempts to reform itself as an organization, though these ‘failures’ have resulted in positive economic and political consequences for the NCAA. Its first notable attempt at academic/governance reform was the establishment of the Sanity Code, adopted at the NCAA’s 1946 ‘Conference on Conferences’ in order to “return (the Association) to sanity" by making it more regulatory in nature (Brown 1). The Sanity Code was established to highlight best practices for NCAA-participating institutions. In it, the NCAA attempted to bring compensation for athletes above board, which was a growing problem because there were no regulations for aid to student-athletes. For the first time, the amount of money paid to student-athletes was to be limited to tuition and certain school-related fees, and all reported to a central clearing house for evaluation (Zimbalist 11-12). Furthermore, violating these rules would result

in sanctions that included expulsion from the NCAA, a death blow to any athletics department that wished to remain profitable and competitive.

The Sanity Code failed when seven member institutions, altogether known as “The Sinful Seven,”²² were found to be in violation of the Code between 1948-1951, and the NCAA failed to get the two-thirds vote it needed from the other member institutions to expel them, apparently because those institutions feared that the elimination of the seven offending organizations might lead to spinoff athletics organizations and decrease their own profitability. This sounded the death knell for the Code, which was officially repealed in 1952 (Watterson 51-52, Byers 101). Though the NCAA might be chastised for its spinelessness or ineptitude at this important juncture, many astute observers signal that the failure of the Sanity Code revealed the NCAA’s desire to establish itself as a cartel that could render decisions, impose sanctions, and structure governance to protect the marketability of its product. This move was every bit as financially clever as it was rhetorically advanced. In failing to sanction and discipline out-of-compliance institutions, the NCAA appears too susceptible to future calls for reform both from member organizations--specifically administrators and presidents within those institutions. However, as subsequent calls for reform are voiced in the second half of the twentieth century, the NCAA merely publicly capitulates²³, unevenly and disproportionately imposes sanctions, and rarely (if ever) significantly sanctions its most prominent institutions, allowing them to claim moral superiority and commitment to

²² The schools included University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Villanova, The Citadel, The University of Maryland, Boston College, and the Virginia Military Institute. All are still Division I NCAA institutions.

²³ Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen claim that ‘capitulation’ is not rhetorical because it is not symbolic and referent, but consummatory, or, it is an act that brings discussion to an end, and with it, all rhetorical considerations (19).

preserving amateur athletics while continuing to control the marketplace and product of organized amateur athletics in America.

However, the NCAA in the 21st century is characterized by the use of counterpersuasion, which Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen define as “a tactic of avoidance which is central to control rhetoric,” to either avoid fully addressing resistance to its hegemony or to persuade the public through carefully crafted messaging, that they maintain committed to reform when it becomes clear that their commitment is to stasis (49). And in the last two decades, the NCAA’s counterpersuasion tactics have become more sophisticated, as their advertisements, press releases, and other forms of media consistently tout all of the benefits that college athletics offer to college campuses and to student-athletes who compete, heading off all criticism at the proverbial pass. By its very definition, counterpersuasion indicates a defensive tactic that focuses on upholding rather than reconsidering the practices of an organization in relation to the criticism of its detractors, and in using this rhetorical tactic, the NCAA actively resists considerations of reform.

Public Relations as Counterpersuasion

The NCAA claims to have taken steps to remedy the adverse conditions for student-athletes and professionals of color in college sport, as well as to address the negative stereotypes associated with college sport. However, much like any powerful corporation or establishment that depends on a consistently loyal customer base as well as the potential to create new customers, its public relations campaigns and messaging are well-orchestrated, strategically impressive, and remarkably persuasive. In many of their marketing campaigns and advertisements seen during sporting events, the NCAA puts forth an image of diversity, inclusiveness, and equal opportunity so rich in imagery that

the mere existence of these campaigns stands to stifle critical thought and criticism of the material conditions of many collegiate student-athletes, professionals, or the hegemony of the NCAA. Of course, this is largely due to the fact that voices in opposition to the proliferation of college athletics are typically found in journals of higher education and periodicals like *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, not displayed at halftime of sporting events viewed by tens of millions of people. The various wings of public relations that the NCAA employs, from each institution's PR and media relations' departments to the central office's advertising and design departments, are responsible for continuing to convince the public that the NCAA is not a monopoly, that football and basketball players are not exploited laborers, and that racism, sexism, and crass opportunism--though prevalent in all aspects of our personal and professional lives--have miraculously failed to permeate the world of organized amateur athletics in America.

The nature of the NCAA's public relations campaign leads one to wonder what they are truly committed to positive public relations or social justice (Brown 1)? This is an important consideration, given that the NCAA, as well as its host institutions, have made numerous public commitments in recent years to focusing on increasing its diversity in terms of its workforce and the students whom they recruit. If this is a social commitment, then it means that the NCAA should perpetually commit resources and political capital to the issue towards achieving just and equitable conditions for student-athletes and athletics professionals. If this is merely a public relations campaign, then once the public believes that the NCAA is truly committed to diversity in ways permanent and significant in stature, all of a sudden, the resources may very well disappear or be diverted to more politically pressing issues. For example, throughout the 1980's, the NCAA focused much of its attention to diversity on gender equity issues,

given the emergence of Title IX. As issues of race, ethnicity, and culture have become more politically sensitive issues, the NCAA has diverted its attention (and thus its resources) to the formation of committees and the conduct of research regarding hiring and retention of coaches of color, preparation of future administrators of color, and data on graduation rates of student-athletes of color. Accusations of exploitation and institutional racism reflected in the treatment of black student-athletes in recent years have increased the NCAA's sensitivity to these issues, though only time will tell whether or not the steps they have taken will be evidence of commitment to equity and justice, or, the enacting of soft multiculturalist measures to appease a hypercritical media and general public (Spigner 146).

Educational and Cultural Reforms as Counterpersuasion

The NCAA's approach to reform mirrors the same logic of cartel establishment, publicly capitulating in order to gain sympathy or political capital and creating a platform for engaging in counterpersuasion, strengthening its claim to power over the business of amateur athletics in America. Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen label this type of tactic "avoidance," or a means by which establishments create a stage for responding to agitators in which they control the dissemination of information and create persuasion by convincing the masses that the agitators are wrong or misinformed (49). Zimbalist claims that the NCAA's response to crises is often inadequate and misapplied, often resulting in the sanctioning of the most minor infractions while ignoring corrupt, endemic practices (16). For example, the University of North Dakota (UND) decided to sue the NCAA in 2006 because it mandated a change of their mascot from the "Sioux" to a name more sensitive to the Native Americans who live in the region and are offended by the depiction (Lederman 1). When notified in 2004 that the NCAA was reviewing the use of

Native American mascots at all of its member institutions (23 total), all institutions were asked to review their practices and consider name changes. Like many other institutions, UND spoke with members of local Native American tribes to get feedback on and enlist support for their petition to retain their mascot--after all, it equates to brand recognition for college athletics departments and such drastic measures could severely impact revenues. As did Florida State (Seminoles) and the University of Illinois (Illini) UND enlisted the support of local tribal leaders and petitioned to retain their mascot, only to be overruled by the NCAA. However, higher profile institutions, such as the aforementioned Florida State and University of Illinois, have not been sanctioned for their depictions²⁴, which many believe to be many times more egregious given the national popularity of their revenue sports teams. Here the NCAA plays it both ways by appearing to sanction the misbehavior of member institutions while protecting the viability of its more precious resources. By publicly staging this exchange of information and decisions, the NCAA both satisfies consumers' desire for social justice/political correctness (respect for and honoring of Native Americans) and placates more powerful member institutional members by shielding them from sanctions.

Another example of the NCAA's ability to create persuasion via 'reform' is the recent amendment to academic standards that have resulted in its first round of sanctions since its implementation. Several months ago, the NCAA announced that institutions

²⁴ While the University of Illinois has chosen to discontinue featuring "Chief Illiniwek" who is widely regarded as the most offensive depiction of a Native American in college sport (along with Chief Osceola of Florida State, though, at least he is based on a historical figure whereas Illiniwek is a mere amalgam of racist stereotypes), during its games, they have not been ordered to change their name or alter their merchandise, jerseys, or fields/courts to reflect the ban. Discontinuing the performances by Illiniwek, though, as explained by University of Illinois Board of Trustees Chair Lawrence Epley, was a move to ensure that Illinois' sports teams can continue to host NCAA post-season events, not one that involved contrition on the part of Illinois or many of its fans.

whose sports teams failed to register Academic Progress Report²⁵ scores of 925 and above would lose scholarships for those sports until the scores were raised sufficiently. The strict application of this decision was sure to send a shot across the bow of institutions that placed the success of their sports teams ahead of their desire to successfully retain and graduate student-athletes. In the end, 43 football teams had APR scores below the 925 mark, but 20 of them were exempted for myriad reasons. Only one institution, the University of Arizona, was penalized by loss of scholarships among the major institutions, and the lion's share of sanctions for football teams went to mid-major and small market football teams such as Western Michigan, Cal State-Sacramento, Florida A&M, and the University of Hawaii-Manoa ("NCAA Division I APR Teams Subject to Contemporaneous Penalties"). The teams who bear the brunt of the sanctions with little or no consequence to the profitability of the product of organized collegiate sport unwittingly placate consumers' guilt about supporting an enterprise that exploits the labor of its principal employees. Furthermore, through publishing their sanction decisions in internally distributed "white papers" and via their own publications (The "NCAA News" and "NCAA Record," as well as through the Associated Press, ESPN, and the like), they effectively respond to any form of petition and criticism.

The NCAA has evaded addressing the problems endemic to high-profile athletics competition at Division-I institutions by diverting potential agitators in the manner of establishments around the world--by rhetorical sleight of hand. In effect, the NCAA can, on the one hand, claim to be serious about reform through publicizing sanctions (in football alone, 23 institutions were penalized by an estimated 169 scholarships) and still be able to shirk the responsibility of advocating serious reforms at more prominent

²⁵ Discussed elsewhere in Chapter 2.

institutions like Oregon State University,²⁶ LSU, Minnesota,²⁷ Illinois and Washington²⁸ (Lapchick 2; Mathews 1). These high profile institutions, when they are at the center of NCAA scandal, bring the worst kind of attention to the enterprise and cancel out any feelings of goodwill and admiration fans feel towards athletes and coaches who ‘still play for the love of the game,’ and thus, such negative publicity must be controlled, and when possible, spun positively.

Advertising as Counterpersuasion

One of the more popular ways that the NCAA disseminates messaging to its consumer base is via well-placed advertisements that appear during sporting events which tout each respective university’s commitment to undergrad education and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity in their student bodies. A sleek 2003 campaign even featured testimonials of former student-athletes (often women and minorities) who became researchers, doctors, and professionals claiming that “Many student-athletes would be turning pro this year, and 99% of them will be doing it in something other than sport” (“Going Pro,” 2006). The advertisement features a split screen in black and white, and on one side, a professional engages in his/her trade, and on the other, the same person engages in athletic training. The ad suggests that many of the skills acquired while competing at the collegiate level are transferable skills to the professional world--further suggesting that student-athletes are inherently better prepared for the rigors of their

²⁶ Where it was recently reported that their football team’s GPA among black students was a dismal 1.9.

²⁷ Who both failed to graduate any basketball players from their 1998 cohorts (while appearing several times each in the NCAA Tournament).

²⁸ Who failed to graduate half their basketball players in their 1998 cohorts (while appearing several times each in the NCAA Tournament).

professions than non student-athletes²⁹. This ad campaign fails to inform viewers, however, that half of all college football players will not graduate or turn “pro” at all, and the numbers are even worse for college basketball players, a majority of whom are Black (“NCAA Graduation Rates Report, 2005”).

However, the television advertisements, which depict the NCAA’s commitment to diversity, belie the disproportionately low graduation rates of student-athletes of color as well as the dearth of professional opportunities available for female and minority administrators at NCAA-member, non-HBCU institutions (Tiell 1). It also depicts the daily life of the college student-athlete as one that is balanced, as if the immeasurable pressure, the 40+ hour work weeks, the instances of discrimination, the burnout, and the perceived lack of compassion that keep graduation rates disproportionately low are simple urban legends.

Another of the ways that the NCAA disseminates messaging to administrators and faculty representatives is through its self-published newsletter, the “NCAA Record.” The “Record” gives a platform to administrators and NCAA personnel to discuss important developments in the organization and at the host institutions, as well as an opportunity to display the softer side of college athletics – namely host institutions’ involvement in philanthropy, campus outreach, and professional and educational enhancements for current athletes. In this way, the NCAA can set the parameters for discussion and criticism because they have a powerful means by which to disseminate messaging and create consent among its principal officials (Scott 116).

²⁹ The NCAA also supports/reiterates this messaging in other areas. In “Research Validates Value, and Values, of Athletics,” Gary Brown notes that “Ninety-one percent of former Division I student-athletes have full-time jobs, and on average, their income levels are higher than non-student-athletes.”

“The Record” often contains press releases that contain compelling statistics and talking points so that administrators at host institutions can craft and disseminate messaging which depicts the NCAA as a responsible steward of the student-athlete experience that is only concerned with revenue to the extent that it supports such stewardship. It is important for the NCAA to actively construct a positive image as not only a provider of entertainment, but also as a provider of experiences, education, and empowerment to college student-athletes. Furthermore, extensive focus on the problems commonly associated with the NCAA, including high-profile “sanctioning and violations” could only serve to feed pernicious stereotypes which already exist and for which there is much evidence to support. As a result, the NCAA’s public relations and advertising campaigns exist to educate the public about NCAA institutions and their notable accomplishments including higher overall graduation rates than non-student-athletes and involvement and encouragement of many leadership and community service initiatives (Brown 1).

In “The Record” the NCAA constructs a historical narrative in which, somehow, college athletics has become associated with greed, scandal and abuse, but that the NCAA is committed to restoring ethics, balance, and accountability to amateur sport as well as promoting the relationship between athletics and academics. Yet, when we consider that the NCAA has passed legislation in recent years allowing for extending the college football season to 12 games and scheduling athletic competitions throughout the school year, including finals, it appears that the NCAA has decided against its mission to enhance student-athletes’ educational experiences (Zimbalist 53). In addition, their articles and announcements ignore, in a manner both insincere and insensitive, the plight

of under-prepared student-athletes and overworked administrative staff that are charged with keeping those student-athletes eligible.

Consider, for example, recent analyses of APR data furnished by the member institutions to the NCAA. Enacted in 2005, the APR is a “real-time snapshot of every team's academic performance at a given time” measured by evaluating whether student-athletes are academically eligible and returning to the institution – measuring the two factors most closely tied to graduation success, eligibility and retention (Brown 1). If a student-athlete is both academically eligible and returning to the institution at the time of measurement, then that student receives 2 out of a possible 2 points. Scores for entire teams are then added up and a percentage is generated and multiplied by 1000, giving teams a possible score between 1-1000 points. The NCAA Executive Committee, chaired by University of Hartford President Walter Harrison and made up of university presidents, provosts, and upper-level administrators from all over the country, determined that this is the most accurate way to determine whether or not institutions are adequately graduating their student-athletes, with a score of 925 on the APR equated to a 50% graduation rate. Every sports team at every NCAA institution is given an APR score, and every team which scores below a 925 faces sanctions from the NCAA, which range from loss of scholarships to possible denial of post-season participation.

A third way that the NCAA disseminates messaging is via faculty and administrative responses to local constituents about their institutions' commitments to their athletes' success as students. For example, at the University of Michigan³⁰, Faculty Athletics Representative Percy Bates recently announced that the graduation rate of black

³⁰ Whose athletics department, in the last decade, was involved in a scandal wherein a former student-athlete who became an NBA All-Star was given nearly \$250,000 in under the table contributions during his career as an athlete. Subsequent sanctions led to the erasure of their basketball teams' record of success over the four-year span of his tenure.

students is proof that worries of the NCAA's "exploiting blacks ... can be put aside," suggesting that calls for reform that attempt to define NCAA practices as exploitative are misguided and poorly informed ("Black Graduation Rates on Steady Climb" 3). The fact that the liaison between faculty and the athletics department at one of the most recognizable NCAA institutions could make such a dismissive statement in the face of disproportionately low graduation rates of black male players in the highest profile sports makes an important statement about the intent of NCAA public relations campaigns. The NCAA's shortsightedness in the areas of needed improvement, and subsequent unwillingness to engage in difficult analyses that analyze the hardships that young black male student-athletes face is the most compelling evidence of a need for persistent agitation and advocacy on behalf of students who are not in a position nor have the political knowledge to fight for their own success off the field.

Finally, the NCAA issues press releases via its website (NCAA.org) and notable sports-related periodicals and television shows. Several recent press releases from the NCAA have touted both the NCAA's commitment to academic reform and the overwhelming commitment of NCAA-member institutions to the academic success of their diverse student-athletes. In "Two-year APR Data Released," the NCAA announced that fewer than 2% of the Division I teams fielded will lose scholarships due to more stringent academic progress requirements (NCAA 1). In a separate study conducted by independent researchers, we are further informed that the myth that athletics departments serve to "corrupt institutional academic missions" is a false notion (Brown 3). A third report focuses specifically on member institutions' efforts to bolster the number of black college graduates, claiming that the NCAA's commitment to "maximize graduation rates and minimize disparate impact on minority groups" has led to a remarkable increase in

the black graduation rate, from 35% in 1984 to 52% in 1998 (NCAA 1). These are undoubtedly positive results worth announcing, and barring in-depth analysis of these myopic and disingenuous messages on the part of NCAA administrators, will likely lead to an absolving of any guilt that could mar fans' fervent enjoyment of collegiate sport.

Unfortunately, the NCAA's messaging efforts fail to counteract the preponderance of evidence, or hidden transcripts, that a well-informed fan has access to in other media outlets, such as ESPN, Sports Illustrated, and various research institutes which closely monitor such issues. Offenders sanctioned by the NCAA for APR violations in 2005 were few in number; however, all of the schools in violation are small Division I-A schools that run large deficits and thus cannot provide high quality instructional and advising assistance to student-athletes (Forde 1-3). As a result of the newly imposed sanctions, student-athletes at these institutions will be less likely to receive such assistance, and furthermore, high-profile repeat offenders escape sanction yet again. And the claim that NCAA spending has not corrupted institutional missions runs counter to evidence uncovered by Tom Farrey of ESPN.com who, in a special report, made note of violations at high profile member institutions such as Georgia, Ohio State, and Tennessee going unpunished by the NCAA while those who reported the violations were met with professional and personal turmoil (Farrey, "Defining Bravery in College Sports"). Finally, Richard Lapchick of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport notes in a 2005 study that figures that announce higher graduation rates for black student-athletes ignore the fact that high profile sports teams have dismally low graduation rate numbers. In the 2005-2006 Bowl Season, which featured competitors on 56 Division I-A bowl teams, black football players graduated at rates below 50%, or at a rate more than 25% lower than their white counterparts at 40 of those schools (Lapchick 4). In other words,

as I have alluded to elsewhere, black male football and basketball players, though conditions have improved in recent years, still face myriad difficulties when it comes to competing at the elite levels of collegiate sport and graduating from college--and the NCAA remains invested in convincing us all that this is not in fact the case.

Most unfortunate is that full investigation into the claims that the NCAA regularly makes through its advertisements, articles in "The Record," faculty and administrative intervention at the local level, and press releases rarely occurs among consumers of college sport and members of the campus community in terms of spurring substantive reconsideration of the relationships of college athletics to the mission of institutions of higher education. Historical investigation reveals that past calls for collegiate athletics/NCAA reform have met a similar fate, even in our most hallowed academic institutions.

In the end, the status quo is preserved by university administrators who know all too well how athletics is among the principal revenue generators on their campuses. It is also preserved by athletics departments who are charged with remaining or becoming more competitive, faculty bodies whose indignation has been ignored for so many years that they have become indifferent. Finally, it is maintained by an increasing number of college athletes who believe that the natural order of things is to 'hustle,' even though if they are caught hustling their fate is most assuredly to be more severe than they are often willing to imagine. Coupled with its making its business synonymous with amateur athletics in America, the NCAA has largely shielded itself from sustained and persuasive political, economic, or cultural criticism by carefully manipulating each constituency to preserve college athletics as we have come to know it.

The NCAA's virtually impervious setup served as the context for the emergence of the James S. and John L. Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. In their 1991 "Keeping the Faith in Student-Athletes," the Commission aimed to respond to "highly visible scandals in college sports" through recommending "a reform agenda that emphasizes academic values in an arena where commercialization of college sports often overshadowed the underlying goals of higher education" (1). In doing so the Knight Commission has become the benchmark for an NCAA reform organization with the clout of faculty members, administrators, and university presidents who, on their own made little impact, but also lobbied the support of governing boards and trustees (Knight Commission Mission Statement). Applying methods commonly associated with social movement rhetoric, including recruitment, message formation, as well as strategies for publicly airing grievances and posing problems to the establishment, this organization has publicized the scandals associated with American college athletics, isolated many of the core problems, and formed significant alliances with on-campus faculty, staff, and administrators to address and raise concerns on behalf of student-athletes (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, Chapter 2). According to Cruse's ideology, the ultimate success of this organizations' advocacy has depended upon its ability to impact the political, economic, and cultural stasis of elite NCAA athletics departments and their host institutions over the last 15 years (Cruse 86). In the second half of chapter two, I summarize and analyze the argument put forward by the Knight Commission and attempt to identify its use of social movement rhetorical strategies and apply Cruse's analytical tool to help explain why the Knight Commission, though wildly successful in comparison to previous reformers, has failed to achieve the substantive reform of college athletics it outlined over 15 years ago.

First Down: The Knight Commission and the 1991 "Reform Convention"

In the previous chapter, I noted that the potential success of any reform-minded organization that employs a social movement strategy depends heavily upon three characteristics: its current membership, potential membership, and rhetorical sophistication. According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, analyses of these three characteristics compose a theory of agitation rhetoric that helps explain the historical successes and failures of social movements. In the second half of chapter two, I frame the Knight Commission's first attempt to push for social and educational reform in the NCAA and at its member institutions as agitation rhetoric in the context of a social movement. I conclude the chapter by evaluating the Commission's efforts using Cruse's Triple Front maxim to both explicate its shortcomings and identify the future potential and viability of the Commission's work.

The Knight Commission as Social Movement

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (hereafter referred to as "The Commission") was founded in 1989 as a high-profile spinoff of the John S. and James L. Knight Memorial Foundation. The Knight Family--of Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc. -- set up the foundation in the 1940's to fund local cultural, educational, journalistic and social service initiatives in the Akron, Ohio area. Several decades later, as both John and James Knight passed away and bequeathed substantial amounts of their personal fortunes to the Foundation, it became one of the 20 largest non-profit organizations of its kind in the country. When former Knight-Ridder executive Creed Black³¹ took over as president of the Knight Foundation, the organization's national presence grew substantially as Black oversaw the formation of the Commission in response to the decade of the 1980's, rife with college athletics related scandal and strife. The Knight Foundation charged the

³¹ A career journalist considered to be an elder statesman of anti-corruption in college athletics.

blue-ribbon body with advocating for: 1) improved academic standards for collegiate student-athletes, 2) increased presidential control over NCAA decisions, and 3) increased graduation rates of college student-athletes to a minimum of 50% (or an amount comparable with that of each respective institution's student-body) ("Knight Foundation History" 1-3).

As an organization clearly invested in issues of social justice, the Commission drafted its 1991 report, "Keeping the Faith with the Student-Athlete," with the intention of publicly airing the grievances of university presidents, trustees, board members, coaches, and university administrators as a first salvo in its attempts to achieve educational and social reform in college athletics. Though the traditional definition of social movements as grassroots organizations composed of disfranchised members of society do not apply to the excessively well-funded and influential Commission, Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen's framework for defining social movement rhetoric apply well to the organizations' efforts to impact the NCAA. In particular, the Commission engages in agitation "from outside of the normal decision making establishment," which in this case, is college athletics' governing organization, the NCAA. Furthermore, the Commission advocates significant "social change" and over the course of time encounters resistance that requires more than "normal discursive means of persuasion," which led them to publish a series of reports that both indict the culture of college athletics and call for its reform³² (4).

After the blue-ribbon committee was assembled in 1989 and began researching relevant topics, "Keeping the Faith" became the Commission's attempt to promulgate its message and generate support among NCAA-member university administrators, amateur

³² Which Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen define as "agitation based on vertical deviance" (7).

athletics administrators, CEO's, journalists and many others invested in college athletics reform. In it, they addressed the NCAA and its member organizations with a reform proposal that identified problems, proposed feasible solutions, and a plan for enacting their new measures.

Among the Commission's principal concerns stated in the document are a lack of presidential control over athletics programs and decisions, and a desire to effectively address "underlying problems" rather than squandering its energy on "symptoms" ("Keeping the Faith: A New Model" 4). However, the Commission stops short of calling for revolutionizing the governance of amateur athletics and opts to push for reformation of the current system--which of course begs the question: How is what the Commission proposes *not* merely a treatment of symptoms? A call for reform indicates, in the least, begrudged acceptance of the current system and belief in its ability to work, whereas a call to revolutionize the system focuses on the underlying problems institutionalized within the system itself. The Commission seems to err on the side of believing the system can work, though their belief in college athletics' ability to reclaim its former place as a balanced, ethical, enterprise that is congruent with the mission of the liberal arts institution seems hopelessly (and as I noted elsewhere in the chapter, erroneously) nostalgic (Stitt 6).

In fact, "Keeping the Faith" comes off as a passionate, but at times wildly idealistic screed authored and signed by a cadre of individuals with varying (and sometimes questionable) credentials. Calls for "athletic costs to be reduced," "foundations and booster clubs (to be) curbed," "coaches' income (to be) closely scrutinized," and "coaches being offered long-term contracts," read, fifteen years later, like an unattainable wishlist ("Keeping the Faith: A New Model" 5). As athletics

departments continue to proliferate, the competition between institutions has only increased, and so dramatically that economist Robert Frank notes that college athletics has become more about “winner-takes-all” than about fostering fair competition (Frank 1-3). And university presidents are as culpable as any other entity on college campuses for creating this environment.

The call for more power to be granted to university presidents ignores the ways in which students, deans/directors, and faculty/graduate students materially and philosophically constitute and construct campus culture. The impact of their call for reorganization and redistribution of power in the NCAA, from the standpoint of the individuals whom they claim to be advocating for (student-athletes) must come off as disingenuous ulterior motive, as they seek to increase their own political power at their respective institutions. Put simply, “Keeping the Faith ...” is a top-down model³³ which primarily addresses political and secondarily addresses economic reform while ignoring cultural and historical aspects of elite athletics on college campuses. As Cruse defines in the Triple Front in his theory of cultural leadership, the Commission fails to identify organic, culturally representative leaders of student-athletes and as a result their potential impact on the culture of college athletics is left unconsidered.

Beyond the makeup of the Commission, its inability to generate media coverage/attention that could be used to magnify the impact of their message may also have hindered its potential success. According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, actual and potential membership are two of the three most critical components of successful agitation (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 133). The blue-ribbon committee that drafted

³³ Cruse strictly warns against “top-down” models for social movements— such movements simply aren’t sustainable without the efforts of individuals at multiple social levels (80).

“Keeping the Faith” was composed exclusively of upper-echelon administrators and corporate officers, as is the Knight Commission itself. The fact that “Keeping the Faith” does not represent the viewpoints of student-athletes, interested individuals at small and mid-major NCAA member institutions, and athletics administrators reveals both an actual and potential membership problem for the Commission and reveals a flaw in the construction of the document. Their top-down approach to organizational theory calls for increased power delegated to university presidents while robbing faculty, student-athletes, and subordinate administrators of their agency by failing to identify how they are central to the culture of college athletics in their respective campuses.

Secondly, the Commission leaps to the conclusion that university presidents are above moral reproach (and thus not invested in the proliferation of their athletics program), and thus solely responsible for “the burden of leadership ... for the conduct of the institution ... whether in the classroom or the playing field” (“Keeping the Faith” 3). As a result they recommend presidents be made the designated arbiters of athletics governance, and fail to consider shared leadership and governance strategies that can empower various constituencies who stand to become invested in reforming the culture as well as the politics of college athletics. So, actual membership is limited to only the most influential power-brokers in college athletics and potential membership (and thus the ‘voice’ of the Commission) appears to be reserved for individuals of their ilk.

The ‘success’ of the Commission’s efforts depends heavily on one’s historical perspective. Indeed, in its 2001 follow up report to “Keeping the Faith” Commission members themselves admit “the problems of big-time college sports have grown rather than diminished,” and decide that the problem must be handled by the higher education community (“A Call to Action” 1). The Commission continues to claim victory because

several of its proposals were enacted by the NCAA, and the NCAA, who also made its own proposals for reform at its 1991 National Convention (known as the “Reform Convention”), claims the Commission “had their ears.” However, the NCAA claims that the enacting of new reforms was the product of NCAA presidents calling for a ‘restoration of balance’ and the NCAA inevitably heeded that call (Hawes 1-3). Rather than fully capitulating, in this instance (or at least in the historiographical account), the NCAA simply “incorporates part of the dissident ideology” and in one motion re-defines itself as an organization that embraces change *and* placates the agitating movement, staving off, at least temporarily, stronger calls for reform (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 63). This also fulfills the control-agitator generalization pointed out by Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen when a low actual membership/low potential membership/high rhetorical sophistication agitator meets an establishment group with high rhetorical sophistication/high power/high strength of ideology, and the establishment reacts by using the strategies of “avoidance” (143). This interface/generalization is alluded to in Chapter 1.

Even the revisions to NCAA bylaws that the Commission claims to have helped accomplish at the 1991 national convention speak to their failure to substantially redress the culture of college athletics. While the Commission’s demands that booster involvement be curbed, that presidents exercise greater control over athletic conferences and control their institutions’ involvement with television contracts have to date gone unheeded, the Commission’s calls for the endorsement of increased presidential power, for graduation rates to become part and parcel in the NCAA certification process, and for eligibility to be based upon progress towards degree completion have become NCAA bylaws (“Action on Knight Commission Recommendations of March 1991”). Though

NCAA institutions claim higher graduation rates since this measure was enacted, black male athletes are still disproportionately less likely to graduate than their male counterparts, and football and basketball continue to lag behind other non-revenue sports in their graduation rates. And even though continuing eligibility is contingent upon satisfactory academic progress, institutions can often exploit the labor of underprepared student-athletes for as much as two years with appeals to the NCAA. Clearly, these bylaws' impact on the politics and economics of college athletics is more pronounced than their impact on the culture of college athletics – which is still characterized by many as divorced from the educational mission of American higher education and predicated upon exploited labor.

Cruse's Triple Front and the Anatomy of a Failed Social Movement

A number of reforms in the past fifteen years have substantially impacted organized college athletics in America. Those reforms have had profound effects on various areas of collegiate sport--marketability, recruitment, graduation rates, enforcement, and assessment/certification among them. Several constants remain, however, particularly among black male student-athletes in the revenue sports of football and basketball at prominent institutions. Most notable are feelings of exploitation, excessive amounts of pressure comparable to that of professional athletes, and a denial of agency in terms of discovering what their education could truly mean to student-athletes if it were unfettered by the excessive restraint of athletic competition (Lumas 5-7). These feelings can largely be attributed to the fact that NCAA reforms over the past fifteen years, while addressing issues of equity, fiscal responsibility, campus politics, and increasing the responsibility of institutions to self-govern, fail to dutifully consider the corrupt practices inherent to the culture of college athletics. As Cruse points out in Crisis

of the Negro Intellectual, the failure of any such reform-minded movement to consider political, economic and cultural revision will result in the long-term failure of those organizations to effect positive change. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand how politics, economics, and culture intersect (and fail to intersect) one another in order to understand how they work in concert to achieve reform. In the next section, I analyze three Commission recommendations and how each carefully addresses economic and political concerns but fails to remedy cultural ones, leading to a failure on the organization's part to effect substantive reform.

Commission Recommendation Number One: "Presidents should control the NCAA"

The most prominent of the Commission's recommendations is that university presidents be given increased power to render decisions that will give them the "same degree of control over athletics that they exercise elsewhere in the university." The Commission claims that this means that both the NCAA and boosters and trustees will defer to presidential power in the areas of hiring/firing, evaluation of staff, financial matters, and other areas related to governance of the athletics program. The Commission makes this recommendation in the face of rising tides of influence that have all but destroyed the sanctity of amateur sport: television networks, corporations and local businesses, boosters, local economies, and die-hard fans all exerting influence over the direction of athletics programs ("Keeping the Faith: Introduction"). By centralizing the political power to oversee all areas and individuals associated with the athletics department and placing that power in the hands of the individual charged with establishing the direction of the university at large, the Commission predicts that the athletics mission will begin to converge with that of the university. Furthermore, giving university presidents the final say over all financial matters will foster responsible

economic stewardship by limiting the influence of individuals and entities solely invested in amateur sport because of potential fiduciary yield (“Keeping the Faith: A New Model”).

However, the Commission’s recommendation fails miserably at understanding how culture can act as a “precipitate of history,” and how the culture of college sport is unlikely to evolve because the culture itself, on the whole, yields favorable political and economic rewards for university presidents (Geertz 15). For example, given that university reputations are increasingly being associated with the success of their athletics programs, presidents are less likely to make political³⁴ or economic³⁵ decisions that would substantially impact athletics culture on their given campuses--regardless of how the “institutional racism” embedded within college athletics leads to disproportionately low graduation rates and exploitation of black student-athletes, or, how the current state of affairs results in widespread academic integrity issues and financial corruption (Ture, Preface). Furthermore, as state and federal budget allocations dwindle at public institutions during economic downturns, university presidents are pressured to maximize profit generating areas in order to maintain their institutions ability to secure the direct and indirect benefits associated with successful athletics programs, namely increased donations from donors and alumni and increased number of applications from prospective students³⁶. These benefits alone are enough to

³⁴ Such as firing a popular or successful coach, or sanctioning an academically underperforming team until it is in compliance.

³⁵ Namely, the pervasive belief that successful athletics programs “stimulate both additional alumni donations and additional applications from prospective students” (Frank 1-2).

³⁶ In a quick search, I attempted to verify Sperber’s and Zimbalist’s claims regarding university presidents and officials and athletics directors attributing the visibility and reputation of a university to the success of an athletics program. I discovered the pervasive issuance of statements along these lines at the following universities: Northeastern University’s Athletics Director, Southern Illinois University’s President, Stanford University’s Athletics Director, Clemson University Athletics Officials/Office of Development, San Diego State University’s President, Wright State University Athletics, Tulane University’s President,

decrease their willingness to dramatically alter campus athletic culture. Presidents continue to make decisions that render the reform of college athletics stagnant because they are bound, financially and politically, to maintain the status quo of campus athletic culture by any means--and to downplay the negative consequences and anomalous bad behavior for the sake of their sacred (cash) cows.

An interesting example of university presidents rendering decisions that fly in the face of institutional missions and ethics is the case of Auburn University President William Walker. In 2003, President Walker was in the process of filling a head football coaching vacancy when he made a series of decisions that exemplify the lengths to which university presidents are willing to go to ensure the success of their athletics programs. After assembling a search committee to begin evaluating applications for the head coaching position and a search firm to help them identify the most qualified candidates, President Walker, along with the Auburn Athletics Director and two Board of Trustee members boarded a plane and arranged a private meeting with Bobby Petrino, the head coach at the University of Louisville. They arranged and completed this meeting without the consent of the search committee and did not even bother to contact Louisville Athletics to notify them that they were courting Petrino, who was coming off of a 9-4 year at Louisville complete with a bowl win and setting several NCAA records as an offensive coordinator/head coach ("Player/Coach Bio"). Their intent, to be sure, was to make an under the table offer to Petrino to lure him away from Louisville before they could even render a counter-offer. In short, President Walker conspired to break NCAA rules, violate the trust of his counterparts at Louisville, and squander precious university

resources--all of this as the so-called responsible steward of Auburn's educational mission--To increase the capital-raising potential of his athletics program at Auburn ("Faculty Questions for President Walker").

The initial KCIA recommendation fails to predict how presidential desire to maintain key elements of the culture of big-time college athletics in exchange for political clout and financial reward bar cultural revision. Given that the culture of big-time college athletics can, when most profitable, afford university presidents enormous amounts of political power and financial resources, the assumption that presidents would fly in tradition's face seems not only hopelessly flawed, but naively nostalgic--as if the missions of the university and athletics departments have not already merged in an era of academic capitalism, the "cynicizing bonds of market application," and the corporatization of the Academy (Slaughter and Leslie 21). In sum, this measure proposes political and economic revisions while failing to understand how the presidential desire to preserve cultural status quo prevents cultural revision, thus failing to follow Cruse's rhetoric for establishing and maintaining viable social movement through pursuit of cultural revision, as well as economic and political revision.

Commission Recommendation Number Two:

"The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements"

Another recommendation that the Commission suggested in 1991 was that NCAA initial eligibility requirements be updated and improve upon the requirements made rule by the NCAA in the early 1980's. As a response to scandals of the day³⁷, the NCAA instituted a new rule entitled "Proposition 48" (more commonly known as 'Prop 48')

³⁷ A particularly onerous example is that of Kevin Ross, a Creighton University basketball player whom, upon graduation, needed to enroll at an elementary school to develop functional literacy skills that would allow him to enter the workforce.

which mandated minimum eligibility requirements for all incoming student-athletes. Prop 48 required that all incoming students score a minimum of 700 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT with a 2.0 GPA in 11 core units of high school courses. These initial eligibility requirements became stricter in 1995 when the number of core units required increased from 11 to 13, and again in 1996 when the SAT/ACT and GPA requirements switched to a “sliding scale” combination of test scores and GPA (NCAA.Org and “Keeping the Faith: A New Model”). In addition to academics and compliance unit staff members who verify this information before coaches begin recruiting prospective athletes, all prospective student-athletes must submit paperwork to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse which verifies that students meet the minimum requirements to be eligible to participate in college athletics (“NCAA Clearinghouse Online”).

The Commission’s recommendation, with a nod to the efforts of the NCAA which predated their suggestion, was for the number of core units considered for minimum eligibility to be raised from 13 to 15, and that athletics departments only consider recruiting athletes who are likely, according to academic officials, to graduate. The Commission also recommended that institutions conduct assessments that measure the effect of new eligibility requirements on matriculation of student-athletes (“Keeping the Faith: A New Model”). The goal of these recommendations is to restore academic integrity to college athletics by responsibly selecting individuals who not only excel in sport, but who can reasonably be expected to excel academically, thus reducing the likelihood of plagiarism, cheating, and academic fraud scandals of the sort that have always plagued college athletics.

The flaws are apparent not only in the logic of the recommendation, but also in the fallout as the number of academic integrity scandals in the last 15 years has not

abated, and in fact has only multiplied. The attempt to suggest a correlation between increased initial eligibility requirements and an increased future academic success and academic integrity ignores how the inequities of public schooling in America and the biases of standardized testing used to consider admission of prospective students would dramatically lessen the numbers of prospective students of color who might be admitted and given an opportunity to pursue a college degree. Furthermore, the suggestion overlooks how institutions exploit admissions loopholes to admit student-athletes and then exploit underprepared who compete in revenue-generating sports but fail to make satisfactory progress toward graduation, thus losing their eligibility (“Academic Literacy: Part 1”). Most egregiously, it completely underestimates the effects of the rigors of athletic competition at elite levels which often promotes co-dependent relationships between student-athletes, their tutors, and their academics advisors, as well as a culture that promotes cheating (Lumas 11; Hernandez “Interview”). All of these pressures conspire to toss initial eligibility standards out of the window as students attempt to balance the responsibilities of classwork, practice, conditioning, rehabilitation, and competition. Once again, as Cruse warns, the Commission privileges the political and economic over the cultural, completely ignoring the ways in which the culture of college athletics intersects and subverts the political and economic over the issue of student-athlete matriculation (Cruse 80).

Academic scandals in college athletics departments have become so common in collegiate sport that fans, peers, and faculty have become numb to it, with the exception being when those scandals impact their favorite teams. However, raising initial eligibility standards to address academic integrity issues among student-athletes is reactionary politics at its best: blaming the ‘victim’ while placating political ‘supporters.’ After all,

were the NCAA to enact the Commission's suggestions as bylaws, the governing organization and administrators on host campuses could stand to generate a great deal of political capital by reassuring fans, peers, and faculty that they are not willing to sacrifice the ideals of their institutional missions (or precious scholarship monies) simply to field elite athletics teams. The failure of such recommendations is virtually guaranteed by the fact that all campuses are different, with varying expectations and standards for incoming students and varying levels of demand for those students once they arrive on campus. Coupled with meager investigation resources at the NCAA³⁸, it becomes virtually impossible for a central organization to mandate eligibility standards for institutions and athletics departments that vary so widely in expectations of and resources to aid students.

The Commission's recommendations play into the hands of the NCAA's rhetoric of academic integrity and devotion to institutional missions. Their recommendation focuses on stricter recruitment of student-athletes deemed more likely to successfully matriculate in college and fails to acknowledge how the culture of college athletics involvement itself – including the immense amount of pressure of being affiliated with a prominent athletics program at an elite institution, and the difficulty of managing course loads with excessive time demands--produces under-performance. By periodically amending their bylaws to increase the academic expectations of student-athletes, the NCAA maintains the image of an organization dedicated to academic integrity, though, shouldering that burden falls to the institutions themselves that must meet those increased standards while attempting to field competitive teams and maintain profitability. Only the elite programs--defined in Chapter Two as large, perennially successful,

³⁸ Seven directors of enforcement and 19 associate investigators spread out among 1,250 member institutions and 1,024 active members.

nationally/internationally renowned athletics programs--can succeed in such an environment, and everywhere else, the exploitation of loopholes and labor becomes the only prescription that allows athletics departments to maintain their political and financial viability, often at the expense of black male revenue sport athletes who make their athletics programs profitable yet disproportionately fail to profit from their own efforts.

Commission Recommendation Number Three:

“Athletics eligibility should depend on progress towards a degree”

The final recommendation of the Commission that I examine is the suggestion that eligibility be based upon the maintenance of satisfactory progress toward degree completion. The Commission defines satisfactory progress as a track to degree completion by the end of the fifth year of eligibility (“Keeping the Faith: Introduction”). This suggestion is accompanied by the inference that student-athletes should graduate in the same proportion as non-student-athletes at their host institutions. The Commission takes into consideration that at this point the NCAA had already passed a regulation that all student-athletes complete 50% of their required classes to graduate by the end of their third year of eligibility. Arguably, the NCAA has revised these requirements more over the past two decades than any other area that doesn’t regard rules of competition, and as a result, graduation rates have increased substantially³⁹.

With this recommendation, the Commission goes further to charge student-athletes, compliance officials, and academic advisors with a mission, and thus the responsibility, to be more actively engaged in reforming this particular aspect of NCAA culture than in any other area. As difficult as the imposition of new satisfactory progress models can be in terms of resources required to retrain staff and update software used to

³⁹ Perennial increase in NCAA student-athlete graduation rates noted in Chapter Two.

track students' progress, the Commission's recommendations were accepted virtually without hesitation. In retrospect, the immediate revision of satisfactory progress towards a degree on the part of the NCAA suggests that the NCAA saw satisfactory progress as an area ripe for generating public support, explaining the easy acceptance and integration of the Commission's recommendations in the area.

A cursory glance at the edict seems to suggest that increasing satisfactory progress requirements will benefit everyone involved in college athletics. Satisfactory progress towards degree completion, in theory, leads to increased graduation rates and provides structure and guidelines for both student-athletes and their academics advisors (NCAA.Org). With clearly defined expectations for progress defined, students will be motivated to maintain progress because it is tied to their eligibility to play as well as continue to receive scholarship monies. In addition, athletics programs will be motivated to recruit individuals who are academically prepared for the rigors of post-secondary education, and athletics departments will be more likely to allocate resources for academic support, lest they lose their ability to field competitive teams. Finally, satisfactory progress models reassure all doubters that if student-athletes don't pass, they don't play, reinforcing the notion that academics come first in the NCAA. And when student-athletes don't pass, they bear the total burden of their failure while their athletics departments and coaches simply move on to the next recruiting class.

In reality, student-athletes who fail to meet satisfactory progress standards (now 40% of degree completion by the end of the second year, 60% by the end of the third year, and 80% as they enter their fifth and final year of eligibility) are still eligible for athletics competition, many of them contributing significantly to their teams before they are deemed ineligible for competition (NCAA.org). The KCIA notes that "this is a trend

that should be troubling not only to college presidents, faculty and athletics personnel but also to parents, high school coaches and anyone who cares about the personal development of these students,” the vast majority of whom are black male revenue sport athletes (NCAA.org). It is widely asserted that the compensation for student-athletes’ labor is, beyond receiving room and board, tuition, and books, the granting of an education and degree at a prestigious institution. Considering that over half of the black, Division I-A college football players and two-thirds of black Division I-A basketball players from the 1998-2004 cohort *did not* graduate, it becomes clear that athletics department revenues, generated in part by these individuals, are the result of uncompensated labor. Furthermore, because athletics departments are not sanctioned unless their APR scores fall below 925 (equaling merely a 50% graduation rate) this guarantees that the NCAA remains unconcerned when over half of the student-athletes who generate the revenues these departments depend upon fail to receive a college degree. Finally, recruiting methods, long the elephant in the room of discussions about satisfactory progress and graduation rates, hinder many student-athletes from making satisfactory progress towards degree completion. As long as coaches recruit four and five star football and basketball athletes and athletics and admissions departments are complicit in granting these students admission with little regard for how well they are likely to perform academically in college, thousands of student-athletes will fail to matriculate towards graduation. Though the graduation rates of black male non-revenue sport-athletes (70%) are also sub-par when compared with institutions’ overall graduation rates (64% in 2005 at D-IA institutions) and the graduation rates of white student-athletes (64%), graduation rates for black male football (55%) and basketball players (44%) are considerably lower.

In sum, the recommendation egregiously overlooks labor exploitation of first and second year student-athletes who compete on their sports teams, fail to make satisfactory progress, and then become academically and athletically ineligible. The satisfactory progress rule allows NCAA institutions to give off the appearance of redressing the culture of academic underperformance widely associated with college sports through the institution of a rule that renders underperforming students ineligible. In addition, by refusing to economically sanction rampant academic underperformance (by denial of post-season eligibility or loss of scholarships), the NCAA can generate political capital with little threat of financial fallout for excising academic underperformers (Zimbalist 38). The Commission's facile call for satisfactory progress requirements to be made more stringent in the absence of sanctions for the institution or athletics department (save for negative press, which subsides, ultimately) shows great political and economic naivete while completely overlooking the lack of impact that eliminating student-athletes who struggle in the classroom will have on the culture of academic underperformance associated with college athletics. In fact, the recommendation sets the stage for increased exploitation of academically unfit black male revenue sport athletes and a win-win situation in terms of the potential political capital that becomes acquirable by the NCAA, as it continues to claim to care about the academic and civic success of its athletes, even though as an institution this caring fails to bear out both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Conclusion

Analyzing the KCIA's efforts to advocate for policy reform in the NCAA through the lens of social movement rhetoric reveals, as Walvoord suggests in "The Future of WAC," both the challenges that lie ahead and the feasibility of the KCIA achieving its mission if it follows the agenda laid out in "Keeping the Faith ..." (60). In Chapter 4, I

discuss how the KCIA revised its plans in the wake of the failure of “Keeping the Faith ...” to impact the culture of college athletics, and how, in succeeding only partially in their first attempts, they inspired a new wave of social movement organizations to challenge the hegemony of the NCAA. As the KCIA went back to the drawing board, attempting to build on its successes as a fledgling organization a decade later in “A Call To Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education,” they would not stand alone as several non-profit organizations began to pressure the NCAA to reform and enforce its policies rather than rely solely on its ability to craft persuasive messages about the benefits of college sport. Though these organizations eventually fail to achieve their ultimate goals, social movement rhetorical analysis reveals that the ultimate success of the KCIA was not its ultimate impact on the culture of college athletics, but their provision of a model for challenging the NCAA as the progenitors of that culture.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #4: FROM JUMP STREET

“The majority of football and basketball players in Division I . . . are black, yet blacks receive only 10 percent of the athletic scholarships awarded in the division. In essence, it is the black athlete who provides the blood, sweat, and tears that support college sports.”

--Charles Farrell, qtd. by Andrew Zimbalist in Unpaid Professionals

During a recent visit to Northwestern State University, my alma mater, I couldn't help but notice that the inevitable progress and growth of my campus seemed to have accelerated noticeably in the two short years after I left to continue my graduate studies out west. The new carpet in the "Ready Room" and locker rooms, new murals on the walls, and new hospitality room on the ground level in which dignitaries, distinguished alumnae, and boosters could nosh and hob-nob in air-conditioned seclusion away from the rowdy (yet typically affable) tailgaters just outside the stadium were evidence of this. In addition, brand new "natural turf" had replaced the worn out Astroturf on which we played⁴⁰. The "natural turf" was magnificent, featuring all of the benefits of turf, such as decreased drag and lower maintenance costs, and all of the benefits of natural grass, including fewer incidents of knee joint injuries. Even the baseball stadium had been through extensive renovations. And I'd heard that they had installed a SportCourt® at the coliseum for the benefit of the basketball and volleyball teams, both non-revenue sports at our institution at the time.

"Look at all this shit we built, Broussard. Thass a goddamn shame ain't it? And what the hell we got to show for it? Man, they do us bad." Jared⁴¹ put his arm around my shoulder as we surveyed the improvements that had been made to the stadium at our

⁴⁰ Rumor has it that after they had used this turf for several years at the Superdome, the only other football field in the state which featured "turf," it was handed down to us at a discounted price. Much like several other Division I-AA stadiums in which we played, the turf was nominal – hard as concrete, bald in some areas even, and notorious for leaving "strawberries" on the legs and arms of individuals unlucky enough to go skidding across its surface.

⁴¹ Name has been changed to protect the anonymity of the individual in question.

alma mater, as he tsked half-mockingly. Jared was an all-conference caliber receiver who had been my teammate and good friend during our four years at Northwestern State, and though a brash and smart-talking individual who took shit from no one (including the coaches) he was a fantastic, enthusiastic, and hard-working teammate. Of course, he defined himself in opposition to the coaches' concept of team, looking out primarily for young black athletes whom he felt we often ignored by our predominately white coaching staff. In his opinion they either did not or could not understand their experiences, and when it all came to a head, those young black men were powerless to change their material conditions and often fell by the wayside, victims not only of the rigor and demand of college athletics, but of the cultural gulf between them and their coaches.

Jared also believed that we--meaning, black student-athletes--built up our athletics department and that those of us who did not finish with college degrees got "jacked." Jared's claim to have "built" the various improvements, of course, was a stretch. For example, the work of many individuals, including an athletics director and a university president, both of whom I think highly of, have been remarkably adept at marketing the image of our athletics program while managing to oversee the efforts of a department that can claim above average graduation rates and APR scores, even among black male football and basketball players⁴². It also took the coordinated efforts of committed donors and boosters--though their 'commitment' can certainly be scrutinized--who believe enough in the centrality of sport to the university and the surrounding community to donate their time and financial resources to supporting the competitiveness of our sports programs and the ability of coaches to attract elite athletes to those programs.

⁴² 1999-2005 cohort information available at http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/2005/d1_school_data.html.

But in a sense, Jared had a point. After all, the success of our soccer, softball, and baseball programs, and our basketball program as of late, pale in comparison to the amount of prestige, and more germane to this discussion, donor dollars and overall revenue that the success of our football program has garnered the department in the years since Jared and I were teammates. During the last ten years, our football program improved from one that had one only one conference championship in the previous ten years to winning four over the last decade, including back-to-back championships my sophomore and junior seasons and a national semifinals appearance. During this period, we played several times on regional television networks, and earned a regional contract to play two televised games every year on Fox Sports Net in addition to the playoff games we played that earned increased revenues from ticket sales and television contracts. This success also increased our profile as a competitive Division-IAA football program, which led to more “Big-Time” Division I-A programs wanting to schedule us, often leading to \$250,000-\$500,000 payouts, which were incredibly important considering that our athletics department’s operating budget in 1996 was just over \$3 million. Finally, and most importantly of all, it roused alumni from far and wide to attend ball games with their children, open their pocket books and make donations, and rekindled a long-dormant pride in the success of our athletics program as we competed, evermore, on a national stage and produced more players who would compete professionally as football players.

As I caught up with Jared and several other folks who were teammates of mine, I discovered that their perceptions mirrored his, which was peculiar for me, given that I have such fond memories of my experiences as a student-athlete. Here we were--all young black men with significant cultural capital (college degrees), gainfully employed

as educators, coaches, professional athletes, medical professionals--and yet the sense that pervaded their reflections on their lives as student-athletes was one of exploitation, abuse, social capital conferred upon some players and not others, and of our lives merely as a tax-efficient means for our athletics department to generate surplus value and increase the university's profits.

In their opinion, the only difference between us and our less fortunate brothers who failed to receive their 'compensation' (matriculation to graduation resulting in a diploma)--even though they worked on the field and produced labor in ways commensurate to all of us--is that we understood that the most important game we played didn't take place on Saturdays, but on every day in between. And the most daunting opponents to our success were not the ones we were pitted against on the field, but 'history' and 'the system.'

"Guess we had to git ovuh to git ours, right Bru?" Jared said, as he clasped my hand, wrapped the other around my shoulder, and invited me out later.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #5: JUMPING AT THE CHANCE?

AK: *“So how we change the system from the inside before it changes us, Will?”*

W: *“I ain’t guaranteeing that’s possible, AK. But, the other options are less attractive. Besides, are we really insiders?”*

In “Postmodernism and Black America,” Cornel West pronounces that black intellectuals are, by their very existence in the Academy, marginal by both the Academy’s and black community standards. bell hooks’ retort was that West’s pronouncement fails to consider the ways in which our potential marginality as scholars does not necessarily translate into the marginality of our ideas within the black community. For hooks, engagement in radical community activism by black scholars in the Academy is wholly possible, given that many of us are still, in a very real and material sense, connected to black communities outside of the Academy. After all, we’re going to discuss our ideas when we go home. Furthermore, many of us, through our scholarship, outreach, and daily experiences seek to revolutionize black consciousness--taking our radical scholarship, critical thinking, and theoretical ideas outside of the Academy’s boundaries. For many of us, our lives as educators, administrators, and researchers stand to inspire those with whom we come into contact, and perhaps those who they come into contact with. Our purpose here, as insiders on the margins of the Academy, is both to reform and revolutionize--to reform the institutional practices that deny us our civil right to be educated, should we choose to pursue it, and revolutionize the thinking of our people so that they begin to demand that they be liberally and broadly educated. The reform of the system comes first, like breaking a bone in order to come back and reset it so that it heals properly. The former takes but seconds, the latter much, much longer. And the revolution comes when we are no longer ‘outsiders’ in the communities we inhabit.

AK: “Ok, so if we push from the outside, the insiders simply lock us out.”

W: “And if we push from the inside, we risk excision – so we must be tactical. And our moral compasses must be true. ”

In Outlaw Culture, hooks broaches the issue of what Teresa Ebert has defined elsewhere as “Ludic Feminism,” or, that the feminist movement is a movement that addresses gender inequities in language, but fails to recognize and/or acknowledge the ways that it inadequately advocates the issues of real women – particularly women of color. hooks, long at the vanguard of the feminist movement, and longing for the days of the 60’s and 70’s when the feminist movement advanced the cause of all women, laments the fact that recent waves of feminism have focused almost exclusively on women who are white and privileged. Her message, of course, is instructive. Those who are driven to work for social justice must always align their mission with their actions, their theory with their practices--otherwise they will fail to serve who they claim to serve. hooks risks the further marginalization of her own feminist advocacy by openly criticizing feminist movements, but her work is crucial to defining an advocacy worth her own toil.

And her approaches to being both a black intellectual and a civil rights leader are instructive, too, advising us to think of our scholarly, pedagogic, administrative, and advocacy work as intricately woven into the souls of those of us who work for social justice from the home base of the Academy. Revolution and reform must not only occur from the inside (even if it is the margins), it must also occur on the inside of ourselves.

AK: “Yeah, peoples here depend on me for that. But I got a family, man. They depend on me, too. And sometimes it’s like these cats don’t want my help and my family don’t understand why I’m so bent on offering it.”

W: “And we just gotta have faith that our peoples and our families know we stay on the grind for them. We have to ensure that they come to know why we do what we do.”

In Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics, hooks references the chasm between lay black communities and the black intelligentsia (often disdainfully referred to as the ‘niggerati’) as she examines her own unwillingness to defend her postmodernist approaches to criticism. The situation of course is made more complicated by the fact that hooks, always the reflective and self-actualized scholar, is unsettled by her reliance upon postmodernist frames, a predominately white male approach to criticism that she has in the past espoused. I find her commentary on the distrust of intellectual aspirations in black communities to be the most compelling theme in the collection of essays, however: hooks does not merely speculate about the phenomenon of black cultural resistance to formal education, but she knows it innately, as even her own parents and family resisted her desire to move across the country to attend Stanford, of all places, for fear that it would alienate her from them. Her narratives resonate with black scholars, who often believe that they are charged all at once with representing their community and tying their research and scholarship to the advancement of those communities. For hooks, her radical, womanist, postmodern cultural criticism is rooted in what she perceives as a commitment to black liberation. Her handling of this immensely intricate rhetorical situation – all at once advancing criticisms of black complacency, white supremacy, and intellectual ethnocentricity--is a blueprint for engaged scholars and advocates of color in the Academy.

hooks shows us, in stark reality, that we are not only fighting for what we believe in. We are also having to defend our fight for what we believe in—to promotion and tenure committees, to our students, to our husbands, wives, and partners, to boosters and

critics alike. We are outsiders in our own departments, in our own fields and in our own disciplines. This, too, is the struggle, and those who are not prepared will ultimately be overtaken by it.

Ours is a pre-inceptive rhetoric and an engaged activist pedagogy because it has to be.

AK: “So, what, then? Lay it down? Move on?”

W: “C’mon man. We ain’t got ‘quit’ in us. Besides, you’re a linebacker, Say I’m a lineman. We’re killing you with the outside zone. When you bail out frontside, I cut that back leg. When you go underneath, I reverse pivot and pin you. When you try to go through me, I get you on the ground or I finish you. So, what, then? You lay it down?”

AK: “Hell naw. You wouldn’t get me like dat every time, either.”

W: “Exactly. So how is this any worse? At least the pay is better ”

AK: “G’ea. Better on our knees, too.”

CHAPTER FOUR--*REVERSING THE FIELD*:

Transforming College Athletics from the Margins--The Black Coaches Association, the Drake Group, and the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport

In this chapter, I employ social movement rhetorical analysis to examine the ways in which the Drake Group, Black Coaches Association, and Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport implement social movement strategies to pressure the NCAA to enact educational and cultural reforms. Though early on my particular focus will be on characterizing each of the organizations as social movements, I eventually shift to analyzing whether or not the rhetorical approaches of each organization address the Triple Fronts of political, economic, and cultural analysis and reform. After a brief introduction summarizing educational and cultural reforms in the NCAA in the wake of the Knight Commission's initial efforts in 1991 ("Keeping the Faith with the Student-Athlete"), each section will be organized in the following manner:

- 1) Organizational history, including information about founders, mission statements, and organizational relationship to contemporaneous developments in college athletics;
- 2) Summary of representative literature from each organization, including publications, white papers, advertisements/marketing, and websites;
- 3) Rhetorical analysis of representative literature from each organization, from the standpoint of social movement rhetorical analysis, use of agitation rhetoric, and Triple Front analysis;
- 4) Final comments on each organization's implementation of social movement rhetoric, success of each organization in terms of effecting change or compelling the NCAA to consider changing its policies so that black male, revenue sport

student-athletes are more justly and equitably compensated for their athletic contributions.

It is important to note, that each of the three organizations is significantly less prominent, has less resources, and is not as pervasive in terms of the size (both potential and actual) of its membership in comparison to the Knight Commission. It is likely that these differences have resulted in each of the organizations impacting the culture of college athletics less significantly. However, each of the organizations, as a result of the Knight Commission's efforts, are considerably less confident in the ability of the NCAA, as it is currently constituted, to administrate organized collegiate athletics in America while keeping the best interests of all student-athletes and the missions of host institutions at the core of its governance.

“Boldly Going: Social Movement from Outer Space(s), or, Resistance is *Fertile*”

NCAA Reform in the Wake of the Knight Commission's “Keeping the Faith with the Student-Athlete”

After the formation of the Knight Commission in 1988 and the publication of its first missive directed at the NCAA (the aforementioned “Keeping the Faith ...”), several organizations followed suit. The Black Coaches Association (BCA), Drake Group, and Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (IDES) capitalized off of the perceived success of the KCIA and began forming organizations that rallied constituent groups to pressure the NCAA to enact stricter cultural and educational reforms. However, toward the end of the twentieth century, the BCA (formed in 1988, and became nationally prominent in the late 90s), Drake Group (formed in 1999), and IDES (founded in 2002) began to realize that though some of the individual issues that the KCIA had addressed in “Keeping the Faith ...” had been resolved, the climate of college athletics was still fraught with

corruption, inequality, and abuses. As a result, each of these groups' formation and movement into the national consciousness coincided, at least historically, with the admission of the KCIA that its original push for reform had failed.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, articulation between the KCIA and the NCAA increased considerably, as the NCAA began to publicly show its appreciation of them as an ally in redressing the culture of college athletics. In several reports and documents published by both the NCAA and the KCIA during the 1990s, that benevolence became clearer, with the NCAA touting the KCIA as an organization that acknowledges a “share(d) belief in the significant positive impact participation in intercollegiate athletics can have on our young people” and their call for “the higher-education community to help advance reform” as well as enlisting the support of “strong presidential and trustee leadership” (Talking Points: Reaction to June 2001 Knight Commission Report?). The KCIA reciprocated their appreciation for the NCAA, specifically noting that the NCAA had made significant improvements to their bylaws that strengthened presidential control, academic integrity, and certification processes (“A Call to Action: Action on Knight Commission Recommendations of 1991”). Based on such reciprocal praise and acknowledgement, it would appear as if the implementation of past recommendations and the emerging collegiality of the NCAA and KCIA would spawn significant revisions to the culture, economics, and politics of college athletics and that the efforts of the KCIA had not gone without due consideration.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, it was clear that the NCAA's strategy with regards to addressing the reform calls of the KCIA became avoidant and their recommendations increasingly became treated as deferrable (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 51). In doing so, NCAA executives demonstrate their rhetorical proficiency as

representatives of an establishment, applying strategies of avoidance and tactics of counterpersuasion, adaptation of opposing views, and postponement with great deft. Their treatment of KCIA recommendations are representative of what Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen define as the establishment strategies of “avoidance” (51) and “incorporation of the dissident ideology” (63). For example, in a search of NCAA Athletics Directors, Subcommittee, and Bylaw meetings minutes, KCIA recommendations were often referred to as “up for consideration,” “currently under review,” “up for discussion” (“Division III Student Athletic Advisory Council Meeting Minutes, 2001,” “NCAA Committee on Women’s Athletics, 2000,” and “Report of the Football Licensing Subcommittee, 2005”). In these instances, because the NCAA is such a voluminous organization with many strata and bureaucracy involved in every interaction with outside organizations, the NCAA can simply postpone making changes because the logic of large bureaucracies dictates that immense amounts of time and effort are required to incorporate even the most logical changes. In addition, when pressure becomes too immense, or, in the case of the KCIA, the agitators propose changes that can easily be implemented and generate favor among the establishment groups’ detractors, the establishment can elect to incorporate certain elements of the agitators’ proposals and actually take credit for them. This strategy explains the NCAA’s quick amendment of the easiest proposals to enact and their lack of action on more difficult--and ultimately more important--calls for reform.

In 2001, the Knight Commission issued “A Call to Action: Reconciling College Athletics with Higher Education” and admitted what everyone in the know already assumed to be true--that corruption in college athletics had not lessened in the 1990s, and that black male student-athletes continued to graduate at disproportionately low rates

with no consequence to their host institutions, and that the NCAA had failed to duly consider their previous recommendations (“A Call for Action” 1). In fact, in addition to corruption and lower graduation rates, scholars, presidents, and faculty alike began noting how out of sync college athletics had become with the institutional missions of their host institutions, and rather than depend upon the NCAA to reform its governance and edicts, they began to charge each campus with the mission of reforming the culture of college athletics. Their study showed that incidents of corruption and malfeasance actually increased marginally during the 1990’s, and that the reputation of college athletics began to sour considerably, particularly in the ways that scandals damaged institutional credibility and reputations (“A Call to Action: Ten Years Later”). As a result, the three non-profit organizations that I examine in this chapter accepted the call re-issued by the KCIA in 2001, and in each of their endeavors, they have attempted to push forward the agendas of faculty, researchers, and sport professionals interested in bringing accountability to college sport in an era of arms races, hyper-commercialization, and academic underperformance.

Reversal of Fortune: The Black Coaches Association, “The Score,” and Minority Opportunity in American College Football

Founded in 1988, the Black Coaches Association (BCA)⁴³ is a 501 (c) (3) designated non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing opportunities and raising the awareness of issues related to ethnic minorities in professional, collegiate, junior collegiate, and high school organized sport. With the goal of manifesting its “planned positive vision for the future” of organized sport, the BCA was formed by collegiate

⁴³ As of July 1, 2006, the organization is now known as the Diverse Coaches and Administrators, or “DCA.”

assistant basketball and football coaches to address minority advancement in coaching and athletics administration (“Black Coaches Association”). The organization is engaged in significant attempts to reform hiring and recruitment practices to promote the civil rights of people of color. Most prominently engaged at the collegiate level, the BCA has historically addressed the pervasive lack of people of color in leadership positions in collegiate athletics departments by sponsoring coaches’ clinics, offering scholarships and fellowships for post-graduate study, hosting national and regional conferences, and other forms of professional and educational development to prepare individuals for job searches.

The BCA characterizes its mission by highlighting four areas, which include uniting members of the national association, fostering collaboration and sharing of resources among the membership, initiating “aggressive and persistent action to progressively achieve a positive vision,” and communicating the vision to athletics leadership and stakeholders beyond the membership of the organization (“Black Coaches Association”). Fed up with being told they were underprepared or lacked experience⁴⁴ and with the stereotypes that plague athletes who aspire to become coaches – namely that black coaches are “recruiters” and less capable of being head coaches – members of the organization rallied around the immediate and future concerns of its members who wanted to be treated fairly in recruitment and hiring processes in organized sport (Saperstein 2).

Since 2003, the BCA’s primary push has been to revolutionize recruitment

⁴⁴ Even though hiring processes are institutionally racist to begin with, rendering those who do not have the experience unable to advance in their careers while preventing them from acquiring such experience.

and hiring practices at NCAA member institutions, citing an unfortunate history of institutionalized racism and cultural elitism as the reason that only 80 out of 11,000 seasons of NCAA football have ever been led by a black head coach⁴⁵. Beyond the inequity of this statistic, the impact on black male student-athletes is perhaps more profound, given that nearly half of the student-athletes who play college football are Black and nearly 60% are from minority ethnic groups who are disproportionately underrepresented as head coaches (NCAA.org). The negative effects of this lack of Black leadership is discussed by M.I.T. Urban Studies scholar Clarence Williams, who suggests that “The lack of mentoring of black students is too often associated with faculty attitudes and behavior at white institutions. The quality of mentoring and academic advising [...] is extremely important to black students, since a college degree alone (of virtually any kind) no longer guarantees employment opportunity and economic mobility” (Williams 2). If anything, Williams’ assertion is too rosy, assuming that a majority of black collegians graduate from predominately white institutions at all. However, by addressing the lack of minority coaches in NCAA football, the BCA hopes to erase an unfortunate history, increase the mentorship available to black male student-athletes by talented Black coaches, and create paths to more opportunities in coaching and administration for minorities who can perhaps more effectively mentor future black student-athletes. Similar projects, including evaluating the hiring and recruitment practices of NCAA and professional basketball and women’s basketball teams have been undertaken by the IDES and been proposed by the BCA, all with the same goal – increasing equity and promoting minority achievement in sport leadership.

⁴⁵ Excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities, none of which compete at the NCAA’s highest level of competition (Division I-A).

In recent years, the BCA has increased its articulation with the NCAA considerably, and combined with diversity commitments made by NCAA President Myles Brand has found its efforts more well-received than ever as of late, thanks in no small part to BCA Executive President Floyd Keith, a former Division I football coach credited with proliferating the number of programs supported by the BCA, as well as increasing its membership considerably (by nearly 500%) (Floyd Keith “Bio”). Perhaps more notable than the frequency with which Keith is consulted on diversity-related issues is the fact that the NCAA has established its own “diversity” subcommittees and even mimics several of the scholarship and professional development programs originally developed by the BCA.

Under Keith’s direction, the BCA website has also become a veritable warehouse of information for those interested in issues facing black coaches and administrators in organized sport. On the website, BCASports.org, one can find the archives of the BCA Journal and monthly newsletters, the history of the BCA, its coaching programs and scholarship/fellowship programs, and even a job search function for dues-paying members. The journal and newsletter articles are light reading, primarily bio sketches of prominent Black coaches and highlights of notable achievements by members; however, the most notable literature available on the website in terms of scope, viability, and potential to effect positive change is represented by the research and recommendations that the BCA has offered to the NCAA in the area of recruitment and hiring practices at its member institutions.

Social Movement Project--“The Hiring Report Cards”

The BCA’s primary push in the area of revising hiring and recruitment practices is represented by their support and funding of “Hiring Report Cards,” a methodology

developed by University of Central Florida Sport Culture scholar C. Keith Harrison, director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess. In the last three years (the first study was published in 2004) the study has been a tool for affirmative action advocacy at NCAA member institutions and has been cited by the NCAA and IDES regularly in their reports as well as reported on by *Sports Illustrated*, *ESPN the Magazine*, and ESPN.com. The report cards, which purport to measure NCAA member institutions' commitment to diversity and affirmative action in their hiring policies, are published by the BCA and available on the website. Through balanced prose that avoids hyperbole (though post-positivists would scoff at its quasi-statistical format) while stating succinctly the inequity of the lack of black head coaches in college football, Harrison and his research team attempt to convince institutions that they can adhere to strict affirmative action criteria and successfully recruit talented coaches using a system that justly measures their potential to lead their teams successfully, and, those that ignore affirmative action criteria have reneged on their promises to uphold the mission of the NCAA and often of their host institutions, and should be penalized for doing so.

The criteria of the Hiring Report Card evaluations are based on the assumption that athletics departments hire coaches based solely on who they believe will take their teams to the highest level of competitiveness, leading them to focus on known qualities (individuals with previous head coaching experience, individuals with whom administrators and other coaches have close ties or previous experience, and current coaches with cachet) rather than considering a wide pool of candidates who could potentially succeed as head coaches. Authors of the BCA Hiring Report Cards noted that the intent was not to reward schools who simply hired Black coaches, but to reform the ways that searches are conducted by exposing and eliminating the systems of nepotism

and exclusion inherent to the ‘good ole boy’ network of college football coaching (Harrison v). As a result, the lack of openness in their search processes fails to widen the range of individuals considered for head coaching positions (often excluding young black assistant coaches and coordinators) (Harrison, et al. v). Harrison references the work of T. H. Cox on workplace integration and surmises that “institutions rarely deviate from already established norms in terms of types of employees,” and thus, if any reform is likely to take place, the NCAA would have to enact strict measures to enforce workplace integration until those norms shifted (T. H. Cox, quoted by Harrison, et al. 3-4).

The reports have had a favorable effect, in the eyes of the BCA, on upper-level university and athletics administrators, creating a ‘watchdog’ effect for some institutions, and an opportunity to advance diversity initiatives for sympathetic members within the establishment. For example, after reading the 2005 report, investigative reporter Mike Fish of ESPN.com labelled Colorado’s hiring search “not-so-impressive” and noted that Keith described it as “disappointing [...] but not out of the ordinary” in college athletics. By comparison, Fish’s evaluation of Kansas State University, a Big-12 institutional peer of Colorado who named African-American Ron Prince head coach in 2006, was fulsome by comparison:

When there is an open, wide-ranging process, as was the case at Kansas State after longtime coach Bill Snyder stepped down, athletic officials are finding the pool of viable minority candidates to be more expansive than they might have believed. [...] [Quoting KSU athletics director Tim Weiser] “Frankly, we determined early on that it was important for us to identify and consider minority candidates” [...] “in my humble opinion,

there is a better pool of minority candidates in the sport of football than I think there might be in any other sport.

“Colorado, Others, Barely Make the Minority Grade,” ESPN.com

In other words, officials at the BCA have used the report to underscore their claims about institutions that are insensitive to the lack of opportunities for minority coaches (and thus perpetuate the larger associated problems inherent to the NCAA) and to congratulate the efforts of member institutions who value the diversity of their student-athletes, coaches, and administrators and see them as assets rather than liabilities. Of course, what remains to be seen is how the NCAA goes beyond merely recognizing the BCA’s efforts, but truly incorporates the Report Card’s findings into its evaluative (and disciplinary) procedures.

Beginning in 2003 with their first Hiring Report Card, the BCA set the stage for engaging in agitation rhetoric to pressure the NCAA to introduce new measures for ensuring minority advancement for college football coaches. The ultimate success of the Report Cards would translate into recommendations for reform in hiring and recruitment practices in other sports and eventually in athletics administration, whereas failure would mean that Blacks would continue to be denied leadership opportunities in collegiate sport after their tenures as student-athletes. With the Hiring Report Cards, the BCA sought to establish criteria for recruiting and hiring of coaches that levelled the playing field for qualified minority candidates, focusing on five areas of evaluation of NCAA Division I-A and Division I-AA institutions with head coaching vacancies beginning in 2003 (see Appendices II-VI):

- 1) Number of communications with the BCA or head of the MOIC;
- 2) Number/proportion of minorities on the search committee;
- 3) Number of minorities who received on-campus interviews;

- 4) Length of time to hire a candidate; and
- 5) Documented adherence to the institution's affirmative action policy

--Harrison, et al. vii.

However, over the course of the last three years, though the reports have shown that minor improvements have been accomplished in terms of institutional adherence to their search criteria, the NCAA's unwillingness to adopt the new criteria as standard operating procedure and sanction non-compliant institutions has resulted in a continuance of the pervasive lack of minority collegiate football coaches. A closer look at both the studies and an analysis of the BCA as a social movement reveal why.

The BCA as Social Movement--Agitation vs. Establishment Rhetoric

The efforts of the BCA constitute social movement in the conventional sense, given that the mobilization efforts of the Association's progenitors both draw upon their collective economic, political, and cultural resources (Resource Mobilization theory) and focus heavily on the establishment of group solidarity and collective identity (New Social Movement theory). Furthermore, the various efforts of the BCA can be characterized as expressions of agitation rhetoric, given both the rhetorical construction and manifestation of the organization's outreach, reform, representative literature, membership (aggrieved coaches and administrators with few opportunities for advancement in the NCAA) and the progression of its engagement with the establishment group (The NCAA). According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, a social movement that uses agitation rhetoric engages first in petitioning (not agitating in and of itself, but a necessary precursor to agitation) the establishment to make proposed changes, promulgating its message, and then polarizing public opinion (20-34). The BCA has participated in the larger movement to ensure that more black coaches and administrators

have opportunities to advance by using data to substantiate claims that have been made about the lack of such opportunities for almost 20 years.

But not until 2003, when the BCA first published their Hiring Report Card, did the BCA achieve petition, promulgation, and polarization by simultaneously calling for the NCAA to demand reform in hiring practices and sharing their data with electronic, print, and television media. Finally, the BCA engaged in what could be widely perceived as agitation rhetoric by making the lack of minority coaches and administrators in the NCAA a “flag issue” with interested and sympathetic members of the American public, a qualm that continues to resonate significantly in media discussions (34). In doing so, minority advancement in college athletics, specifically college football, became an issue with which the BCA would become widely known as the spotlight began to shine both on their efforts and the perceived lack of urgency on the part of the NCAA to address the issues that the BCA brought to light.

Unfortunately, the Report Cards are methodologically flawed and thus, rhetorically unsophisticated. As Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen define in The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, rhetorical sophistication is achieved by organizations who successfully apply rhetorical principles of social movement which in this case extend to the various reform efforts sponsored by the BCA (143). For Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, rhetorical sophistication is marked by organizations who engage establishments using symbolic means to affect material change. In the case of the Hiring Report Cards, logical flaws and questionable qualitative research methods yield a product that does not allow the BCA to use the studies to compel or affect change within the context of their confrontation with the NCAA establishment.

For example, in Study #1, authors state that the results of the study will give the NCAA President the “teeth of accountability” (vi) while proving that institutions that do not perform well in the study “disregard the importance of diversity” (viii). And yet, in the reports, there is no explanation given as to why the suggested criteria are selected, why they are weighted as they are, and how those criteria, if met, will lead to a dramatic increase in the number of opportunities made available for minority coaches (or what benefit this would provide to athletics departments if accomplished). Furthermore, the studies show that the number of schools who received the grade of “A” after their evaluation rose dramatically (from 28.5% in 2003 to 46% in 2005), even though the author states that the hiring situation for minority coaches in college football has not improved noticeably (Harrison “Hiring Report Card 3”). Finally, regarding the study’s potential impact on the politics of the NCAA, the study’s principal investigator observes that the number of “F” grades was the highest in the final study – six “F’s”--given out in every case because those six schools did not participate in the study or submit any materials (Harrison 8).

The rhetorical weakness of the study has resulted in it receiving zero backing from the NCAA, so it lacks the teeth of economic sanctioning, unlike its NFL counterpart “The Rooney Rule,” which fines teams \$200,000 and earns censure from the NFL Commissioner if teams fail to take defined measures to identify minority head coaching candidates (SportsLine.com). Without the backing of the NCAA, sanctions introduced in conjunction with the study’s findings, or even the compliance of NCAA athletics directors involved in hiring searches, the study is largely rendered impotent by the NCAA and its members.

The Hiring Report Cards are also rhetorically weak in other areas. As Cruse notes in his analysis of the eventual failure of the Harlem Renaissance as a cultural movement, when a movement lacks, or fails to make known its cultural philosophy, it is doomed to historical irrelevance and insolvency. Just as the Harlem Renaissance failed to resonate among black Harlemites because an artistic movement did nothing to improve their material reality, the BCA's efforts to reform hiring practices have largely failed to resonate with NCAA institutions because the BCA does not convincingly argue that such a cultural reform would be politically and economically beneficial for all parties (38). Thus, the BCA's cultural philosophy fails to materialize. The study fails to assert the link between increasing minority coaching opportunities and its impact on the culture of college athletics, namely, providing more culturally and ethnically sensitive leadership and mentorship to black male, revenue sport student-athletes. Nor does the study duly consider the fact that according to the latest APR measures, many of the institutions with football teams labeled as underperforming are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) with black head coaches (NCAA.Org). These are unfortunate fumbles, because they represent crucial missed opportunities to delineate a cultural philosophy that serves as a foundation in their quest for social and economic justice.

At the end of the 2006 season, for example, football teams were already firing their coaches in preparation for spring recruiting and at least six Division I-A teams had already named new head coaches within weeks of announced firings. This signals a complete eschewing of BCA recommendations, which include, among other things, the careful construction of search committees and assemblage of candidate lists, suggesting that many athletics directors and college presidents either simply ignored the study because they did not feel pressured to cooperate with the BCA, or, that university

administrators do not regard the BCA study as useful, characterizing the BCA as did Kansas State AD Tim Weiser, who called them “A group of people that might not know the details or what (a collegiate coaching search) requires” (Fish 2). The lack of methodological soundness decreases the study’s rhetorical sophistication and face validity, and as a result, the NCAA members have not regarded the studies with much seriousness, especially considering that the NCAA has conducted its own feasibility studies with a great deal more rigor, diligence, and rhetorical sophistication than the Hiring Report Cards⁴⁶.

However, the lack of impact of the Hiring Report Cards has not spelled the doom of the BCA’s mission. The issue of disproportionately low numbers of minority coaches in college football remains a prominent issue in sports media, which has given BCA ample opportunities to add to their base of support and membership. With such a narrowly defined purview at its onset (advocacy of black college coaches and administrators) actual and potential membership remained low. However, with recent shifts towards advocacy of all minorities in college sport in recent years, the BCA has successfully recruited several high powered college athletics administrators to its membership, translating into members who have the potential to impact individual departmental practices. According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, the BCA as an agitator possesses low actual membership, high potential membership, and low rhetorical sophistication, signalling that the NCAA’s response to its attempts at social change will be “avoidance” until their membership or their sophistication increases, indicating that

⁴⁶ e.g. the “Academic Performance Rate” (APR) feasibility study, which instituted a system of measurements that now determine satisfactory progress for NCAA member institutions, was a product of many years of discussions and analyses spearheaded by university presidents and members of the NCAA’s Committee on Academic Performance (which gives them credence in academic as well as athletics circles). After dutiful consideration, the committee decided upon retention and GPA as the key measurements of academic performance, replacing the long-considered graduation rate (NCAA.org).

the group's full potential has become clear (146). However, signs of "adjustment," or, of compromise on the NCAA's part, are already materializing as the BCA increases its membership. The most prominent examples include the NCAA's incorporation of the dissident ideology in the form of introducing scholarship, mentoring, and coaching programs modeled after the BCA's as well as the NCAA's introduction of the Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion to address matters such as those raised by the BCA (NCAA.Org). Of course, the creation of committees to address movement concerns is a common response of state agencies to social movements, and often their responses are symbolic rather than substantive (Walvoord, quoting Edelman in "The Future of WAC").

By adjusting to the BCA's demands before they became so sophisticated that they had the potential to damage their reputation significantly, the NCAA has both appeased the BCA's membership and taken control, rhetorically, over the issues of diversity and inclusion that have proven to undermine less sophisticated organizations time and time again. Whether or not this translates into positive change remains to be seen, but the problem of minority coaching opportunities still remains and no solutions have emerged as of yet.

Triple Front Analysis

From the standpoint of Cruse's edicts, the long term prospects of the BCA as a social movement, specifically regarding their efforts to reform hiring practices, are poor because they do not define sufficiently what the overall benefits will be to institutions of higher learning and athletics departments if more head coaching vacancies are filled by people of color. Having failed to address, in detail, through referencing substantive data and research what Black coaches can bring to the table means that the issue remains one

of Black civil rights, which has proven among the least compelling issues in college sport (not even as important a civil rights issue as is, say, Title IX for women's rights).

According to Cruse, this oversight represents a failure of the BCA, as “creative intellectuals,” to “create new ideas” in the public's imagination and not simply relegate that work to politicians, race leaders, and civil rights entrepreneurs (96). The studies do not sufficiently explain why the lack of minority head coaches has deleterious effects on the culture of college athletics, or how the lack of minority coaches impacts the economics of college football, and finally, they do not inspire the kind of widespread public backlash that would lead to increased agitation and, perhaps, substantive change.

As long as the BCA fails to argue these points compellingly, the “win at all costs” approach to hiring and recruiting college head coaches will continue to marginalize the importance of the only organization that publicly touts the increased hiring of aspiring minority head coaches and the potential increase in leadership and mentorship for black male football players will remain unchanged. BCA proposals to change the politics and economics of college football are naïve in assuming that a lack of preparation, training, and experience – rather than embedded institutional racism and the pervasive belief among administrators and boosters that blacks cannot hold leadership positions in college football – are the root causes of a lack of opportunities for black coaches. In other words, the problem is primarily cultural rather than political or economic, and BCA's inability to argue that point through a well-defined cultural program spells its own demise. As a result, their proposals inadequately address the complex political and economic decisions involved with selecting head coaches, and their ineffectiveness at engaging a critical mass of sympathetic populations through education and organization have inspired little

change in hiring and recruitment practices, primarily because the study does not impact the politics, economics, or culture of college athletics.

Sport Culturist Activism: Richard Lapchick, the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, and the Restoration of the Racial Conscience of Sport

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (IDES) was launched in 2002 as a collaboration between the University of Central Florida's DeVos School of Sport Business Management and Richard Lapchick, a noted civil rights activist and international expert and scholar on the intersections of sport and society. The goal of the Sport Business Management Program and IDES is to give opportunities to students who want to develop business skills as they consider future careers in the sports industry, while balancing those aspirations with an "emphasis on diversity," "community service and philanthropy," and "ethics" in sport and social issues ("Richard Lapchick: Biography"). With Richard Lapchick as their endowed chair, the IDES program has become known for its work in two broad areas – namely, diversity in sport and society, and ethics in critical issues in collegiate and professional sport. Unlike the BCA, whose primary aim is to prepare members for successful futures in the sport industry through scholarship and internship programs and coaches clinics, the IDES is an institute whose primary aim is education and outreach through publications and curriculum development⁴⁷. Through the dissemination of Lapchick's scholarship (Lapchick is incredibly prolific and has published 12 books and 450 articles, in addition to regular appearances on ESPN, as a guest columnist on ESPN.com and the Sport Business Journal, and over 2,500 public appearances) and programs he has overseen the

⁴⁷ Through a substantial partnership with the National Consortium of Academics and Sports, a coalition of 215 colleges and universities have adopted and participated in outreach programs developed by Lapchick during his tenure as the executive director of the Center for Sport and Society at Northeastern University (1984-2001).

development of, the IDES has become known as the vanguard of the study of sports ethics in America. The son of former Boston Celtics icon Joe Lapchick, himself an early advocate of Black civil rights, Lapchick has become an advocate for the power of sport to bring out the best in societies, and through IDES, he has invested his efforts in ensuring that collegiate sport has the same impact on host campuses.

It is important to note that even though the researchers at the IDES envision a system in which elite collegiate sport is aligned with academic pursuits, their research rarely reflects this vision. In monitoring critical ethical issues in college sport, such as the exploitation of student-athlete labor in revenue-generating sports, IDES reports often note that NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and Bowl Series participants not only failed a majority of the time at graduating at least 50% of their student-athletes, but also recorded substantially lower graduation rates for their Black student-athletes than their white student-athletes according to NCAA statistics. Playing watchdog and clarion, the IDES attempts to fuel debates about the true mission of college athletics by providing data, compelling and innovative analyses, and serving as the moral compass of collegiate sport.

Like the BCA, IDES has published Racial and Gender Report Cards that have investigated hiring and recruitment trends as professional and collegiate sport teams (e.g. NBA, WNBA, Major League Soccer, among others) filled head coaching vacancies. Lapchick conducted these studies in his role as director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society for nearly 20 years. However, since the topic of the egregiously low numbers of Black head football coaches has become a hot-button issue for which the BCA has gained prominence, the IDES has become more prominent for studies that it publishes regarding minority student-athlete graduation rates at institutions that compete

at the most elite levels of collegiate competition, e.g. “The Final Four” and “The Bowl Championship Series” (“Richard Lapchick: Biography”). In these reports, made available at The University of Central Florida’s DeVos Sports Business Management home page and disseminated through television and print media, IDES analyzes the graduation success rates of elite sports teams, exposing institutions that value the athletic performance of their revenue generating sports teams more than the academic success of their student-athletes (“Keeping Score When it Counts”). Findings in the IDES studies have spurred public debate regarding the divergence of athletics departments’ missions from that of academic institutions. As Elaine Wise, Chair of the College of Humanities and Faculty Athletics Representative at Louisville puts it, the term student-athlete is not inherently oxymoronic, and in fact, reminds us that “Competition in the athletics arena and competition in the classroom are associated enterprises, a merger of physical prowess and mental preparation” (Wise 2). The IDES recommendations are as simple as they are succinct – an institution can promote scholar-athletics and win, and IDES’ reports shine the light on institutions whose high graduation rates and excellence on the field of play represent the ideal of competitive college.

Social Movement Project--“The Graduation Rate Studies”

The IDES project that has both the most promise in terms of impacting the culture of the NCAA through social movement and is most representative of Lapchick’s push to intersect research, activism, and educating the public about the ethics of sport are their Graduation Rate Studies (GRS). The GRS focus on the unethical capitalism that now pervades collegiate revenue-generating sports, specifically focusing on the disproportionately low graduation rates of Black males who compete in these sports and noting that the NCAA’s lack of sanctioning for underperforming schools signals

complicity on their part. Lapchick places his faith in the American public that through the persistent public airing of such grievances, a groundswell of negative public opinion and press will eventually force action by the NCAA that shows that it governs college sport in accordance with an informed public's perceptions of sport in the context of higher education. In this sense, the IDES operates as both a think tank (in terms of the ways that it provides data from study's which influence policy decisions) and traditional institute (where Lapchick works with emerging and aspiring scholars towards solving the most complex problems in higher education and society⁴⁸).

Beginning in 2002 with their first GRS, entitled "Keeping Score When it Counts," the IDES began assailing the notion forwarded by the NCAA that elite athletic competition and academic achievement go hand in hand in collegiate sport. For example, in the 2002-2003 study that focused on bowl-bound college football teams, IDES notes that a national championship pitting teams based on their graduation rates (Tulane and Notre Dame) would have looked very different from that of the actual national championship game (Miami and Ohio State). However, as Lapchick notes, high graduation rates are not synonymous with athletic underperformance, and that when athletics departments recruit scholar-athletes who are prepared for the rigor of college level work and provide support so that they can achieve those goals, they can still win ("2002-2003 GRS" 2). Furthermore, disturbing statistics regarding the poor performance of many institutions participating in the bowl season serve to suggest that when the NCAA allows these teams to participate in bowl games, it sanctions their underperformance by turning a blind eye to it⁴⁹. Were these studies to gain traction

⁴⁸ One of those scholars is the aforementioned Keith Harrison, who now works for IDES.

⁴⁹ A particularly egregious example is the University of Arkansas, who by participating in the 2002 Gaylord Hotels Music City Bowl earned a \$780,000.00 payout, a national television appearance, and free

among policymakers, the economic, cultural, and political consequences that the NCAA and its member institutions would face would be unprecedented.

In the GRS, IDES criteria for the studies include statistics on graduation rates intended to provide a snapshot of how NCAA institutions perform in terms of graduating their student-athletes in revenue generating sports. Focusing on three areas – overall student-athlete graduation rate, football/basketball graduation rate, and white vs. minority graduation rates--IDES attempts to deconstruct NCAA messaging about the balance of athletics and academics and create a backdrop for policymakers and higher education administrators to push for redefinition of the enterprise of college sport (see Appendices VII-VIII). The GRS, in and of themselves, make for interesting and even compelling reading. Each includes an executive summary that highlights the main points of each study, and the criteria are explained clearly and the data sources are reliable (based on graduation statistics submitted to the NCAA by member institutions' compliance offices). The studies show, in painful detail, that elite performing college football and basketball teams are not performing comparably well in the classroom. In the words of Lapchick, “student-athletes on (many of) these teams do not make the grade [...] especially African-American student-athletes” (“2002-2003 GRS” 2).

One of the strongest suppositions of the GRS is that they forward the idea that successful athletics programs can also graduate above average numbers of their student-athletes; noting all of the most positive attributes of athletics and their intersection with academic success (e.g. work ethic, diligence, goal setting, time management). For example, in the 2002-2003 Bowl-Bound teams study, Lapchick notes that the top ten

advertising for the university during the course of the game while only managing to graduate 16% of its Black football players in the 1996-2002 cohort.

teams in the country in terms of graduation rates among bowl-eligible teams were Tulane, Notre Dame, Penn State, Virginia, Boston College, Wake Forest, Mississippi, USC, Iowa, and Oregon, who all graduated at least 63% of their football players in the 1996-2002 (2).

In sum, these teams were collectively 90-43 (.676 winning percentage) and two of them, Iowa and USC, participated in the Bowl Championship Series, the highest level of competition in college football, and USC won its conference championship. In the “2003 Sweet 16 Men’s Basketball Teams GRS,” Lapchick notes that six of the sixteen teams graduated at least 50 percent of their Black basketball players, including Final Four participants Marquette and Kansas (2). As Lapchick notes, in a sport widely known for having the worst graduation rates among student-athletes (only 28% of all Black basketball student-athletes graduated from 1996-2002), these six teams (Butler, Notre Dame, Duke, Kansas, Marquette, and Michigan State) proved that there are basketball programs “that can play at the championship level and still assure the meaningful and complete education of their student-athletes” (2-3).

While these statistics provide the impetus for the consideration that academic and athletic excellence need not be inversely related, Lapchick’s data also indicts both the NCAA and member institutions who are heralded for elite athletic performance while their student-athletes graduate at egregiously low rates. And unlike the BCA’s Hiring Report Cards, Lapchick’s analysis is much more in-depth. For example, in the 2004-2005 GRS of Bowl-Bound College Football Teams, Lapchick notes in his analysis that “race remains a persistent academic issue reflected in the continuing gap between graduation rates for white and African-American student-athletes [...] (with) the gap between rates for white and African-American football players (growing) slightly wider” (1). Lapchick addresses the gap between Black and white student-athletes, which are

consistent with graduation rates of Black and white non student-athletes, noting that the pervasive lack of Blacks in leadership positions and lack of diversity and inclusion on NCAA campuses translates into social and educational experiences that are unwelcoming “for all students of color, regardless of whether they are athletes” (2). In doing so, Lapchick notes that the problem of unimaginably low graduation rates for Black football players at the NCAA’s elite programs⁵⁰ is one shared by athletics departments and their host institutions, and this characterization establishes issues such as minority recruitment and hiring and student-athlete retention as ones for which the entire university community must develop solutions. Furthermore, the data in these reports represent a kairotic juncture for all sports culture critics who examine the intersection between the NCAA’s rhetoric of academic excellence and the practices and policies that it apparently fails to implement in order to manifest that rhetoric.

The GRS are not without their flaws, particularly in later versions in which the data analyses are expanded and lack sufficient contextualization and rhetorical sophistication. The GRS for 2004 Men’s Sweet 16 participants is, unfortunately, such an example. In the executive summary of this study, Lapchick notes that the analysis is expanded, not only considering graduation rate data, but also the “gender and racial backgrounds of campus leaders” for teams that have reached the Sweet 16 (1). He notes that of the 49 positions considered (university presidents, athletics directors, and faculty athletics representatives), there are no African-American presidents, no African-American athletics directors, and only three African-American FARs (1). Lapchick then attempts to

⁵⁰ Of the 56 teams participating in the 2004-2005 bowl season, nine schools had Black graduation rates more than 30% lower than that of white athletes on the same team. Furthermore, eight of the schools had overall graduation rates of 30% or less for Black athletes.

suggest this data is a predictor of disproportionately lower graduation rates as a result of the lack of administrators of color at their institutions.

At best, Lapchick stretches too far, and at worst, he overlooks crucial variables in determining why Black student-athletes underperform academically at these schools. He fails to analyze the effects of embedded institutional racism and the pervasive forms of segregation in society and education that significantly contribute to graduation rate discrepancies--regardless of the ethnic backgrounds of upper-level administrators. In addition, many of the teams that he notes that had higher graduation rates are private institutions (e.g. Duke and Vanderbilt), and Lapchick fails to consider how Black student-athletes' socioeconomic backgrounds, for example, may have provided them with experiences and opportunities that would later translate into post-secondary success, or, how the resources at high-endowment private institutions may be better able to support student-athletes' academic and social growth, even in the absence of upper-level administrators of color (2). Certainly, low graduation rates among Black players on Sweet 16 teams⁵¹ and a lack of people of color in leadership positions in our universities is an unfortunate problem, but Lapchick's argument is incomplete and the issues seem, at best, unrelayedly egregious. None of Lapchick's data explains exactly how increasing the number of administrators of color at these institutions will increase graduation rates, rendering his argument about campus politics intersecting economics and culture moot.

IDES as Social Movement--Agitation vs. Establishment Rhetoric

The GRS occasionally exemplify the potential of an institute/think tank to overreach when it crosses the line and decides to engage in agitation rhetoric rather than

⁵¹ If the Sweet 16 participants in this given year were required to have had 50% graduation rates, only four of the teams would have remained eligible (2).

simply inform the debate. Engaging in *ad hominem* attacks and leveling accusations of exploitation and abuse directed at the NCAA are simply not effective ways to challenge its hegemony because the NCAA is likely to regard such statements as “radical” (Splitt 3). The data in the study can be easily confronted, and an organization as resource rich as the NCAA has both the media access and rhetorical sophistication⁵² to promote its mission in spite of such data in the event that it would need to--but fans and consumers of collegiate sport have not historically (nor will they in the future) stop following their sports teams because the players fail to graduate. So in terms of impacting the culture of collegiate sport, IDES’ potential is relatively low if they act on their own. Strictly speaking, institutes typically promote causes via the production, sponsorship, and dissemination of research; however, Lapchick’s activist leadership tendencies has resulted in IDES, for the most part, understanding that the role it plays in promulgating the message of the larger social movement to curb abuse and end exploitation in college athletics is more crucial than any other role that it can play.

Because of IDES’ relative rhetorical weakness, the NCAA can simply practice avoidance (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s term for the establishment rhetorical strategy of deferring responses to agitation groups until the messages gain traction) in dealing with the publication of the reports that IDES produces because of its low actual and potential membership. As it has responded in the past to negative media, the NCAA can simply ramp up its efforts if data reproduced in those reports cause concern or achieve media-worthiness, and promise to dedicate resources to research and innovation to address less-

⁵² Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, when they speak of the rhetorical sophistication of establishments, refer to the strength of their ideology, or, the pervasiveness of their ideology outside of the establishment itself. In this particular case, the NCAA is able to achieve high strength of ideology with university policymakers who are unwilling to characterize the enterprise of college athletics as exploitative, for various reasons that I have listed throughout (142).

pressing concerns. For example, the NCAA's implementation of the APR scoring system, and the ensuing media coverage that the system garnered, sufficiently addressed all concerns raised by critics who claimed that low graduation rates were a scourge of college sport. Now that the APR evaluations consider satisfactory progress and retention data, the NCAA has effectively distanced itself from any negative publicity that graduation rate studies may have generated (graduation rates are now moot) and they have been able to do so with little casualty.

However, as social movements go, the IDES is remarkably well-resourced in terms of its economic support, political connections, access to media, and potential to impact society through education and outreach. Funded by an undisclosed donation from Richard and Helen DeVos⁵³, the University of Central Florida founded the DeVos School of Sports Business Management (of which the IDES is but one of many programs) after receiving matching funding from the State of Florida ("About the DeVos Foundation"). As a result, the work of the Institute is funded by an endowment, and dissemination of their research findings, no matter how controversial and counter-cultural in the NCAA's eyes, have unrestricted access to media outlets because of DeVos' considerable wealth and connections and Lapchick's near-celebrity status being conferred upon the program. Consequently, the IDES has not had to venture beyond normal discursive means and engage in agitation rhetoric in order to disseminate its message widely (9), nor has the Institute aggressively promulgated its message or engaged the NCAA in any protracted and highly emotional arguments. And yet, the leadership of Lapchick, a formidable civil rights leader well-versed in social movement strategy, has given the IDES a social

⁵³ Richard DeVos founded the Amway Corporation and is the owner of the Orlando Magic.

movement/social justice identity that has transformed the think tank into an actively engaged participant in redressing college athletics.

Perhaps Lapchick believes that it is possible to achieve the kind of cultural, political, and economic transformation in American college athletics as he achieved during his tenure as the chair of ACCESS (American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society). In the 1970's, at the height of international media coverage of South Africa's apartheid socio-political policies, Lapchick and ACCESS campaigned to dissolve all sports connections between the United States and South Africa so long as sport and society there remained segregated (Lapchick 4). Lapchick, already a respected scholar in international relations (his first book, The Politics of Race and International Sport had been published in 1975) used his credentials as a university faculty member and scholar, his connections to the NAACP, and access to the media to lead a committee of individuals who would work in concert to educate the American public about the cancer of apartheid (4-5). The apex of Lapchick's success was a boycotting of the South African National tennis team, who intended to participate in the 1975 Davis Cup, but had its financial backers pull out at the last minute causing a media circus to cover the boycott. Though apartheid would not be repealed in the South African government until 15 years later, Lapchick's success at raising the awareness of the American public, the boycott's economic impact on south Africa, and the Davis Cup's political decision to deny participation to the South Africans followed in the footsteps of the Black Civil Rights Movement, which had previously established unrecognized civil rights for people of African decent.

In fact, Lapchick's experiences as an activist are likely the reason that IDES' prospects for engaging in long-term, transformative social movement are as encouraging

as they are. During his career, Lapchick has been guided by two theories that have defined his career as a sports culturist and civil rights activist, namely 1) the belief that sport--both participation in it and following of it--carried with it the potential of unifying disparate elements in contemporary society, and that the specters of racism, sexism, and discrimination, as they intersect with professional and amateur sport, reduces sport's ability to serve as panacea in a troubled world, and 2) the development of a critical theorist's approach to engaged pedagogy and activism, including a praxis of theorizing the ethics of sport in society and a fundamental belief that an educated society is an ethical society. However, turning these beliefs into a compelling program for cultural revision--including transforming the ways in which consumers of college sport, trustees, university administrators, and the media see collegiate sport--will ultimately dictate if that vision becomes pervasive enough to impact social change in the NCAA.

Triple Front Analysis

Just as Cruse criticizes movements who espouse political and economic reform and neglect the consideration of cultural reform, so would a Triple Front analysis indict the thrust of IDES and other such institutes for lacking a persuasive, culturally relevant cultural component. In a related example, Cruse harshly criticized "The Messenger," a socialist magazine founded for Black readers in 1917 by A. Philip Randolph, for advancing socialist economics⁵⁴ and politics as a salve of black Harlemites laborers without considering how a European economic and political system would fail to find traction in a native American Negro culture. The incompatibility of their politics and economics with Negro culture became apparent by 1928 when the magazine was

⁵⁴ Not to mention that the magazine was funded by white labor unions seeking to increase their base of members (rather than further causes of Negro civil rights).

discontinued after failing in its social program (42-43). Cruse believes movements that focus on economics and politics fail because they ignore the ways culture intersects them, or, because culture subverts economics and politics in the long run.

Similarly, the biggest threat to IDES long-term success as an engine within the movement to spur athletics reform is threatened by its unwillingness to consider how economic and political reforms alone will not necessarily allow them to achieve their cultural ideals for sport and society. The cultural program of IDES simply does not resonate widely enough among the general public or within college athletics to spur political and economic changes they encourage. IDES lacks a sufficient methodology for addressing the intractability of elite competition in the culture of college sport. Rather, IDES relies on their studies' potential to establish an idealistic socialism of college sport, wherein graduation rates and student success become every bit as important as wins, losses, and championships on both college campuses and in the hearts and minds of the general public. Though the end game of IDES is to promote a more well-informed and engaged debate among policymakers and powerbrokers about college athletics, it's safe to say that institute studies do not speak to the general public, consumers of college sport, and financial backers and local/regional beneficiaries of the proliferation of college sport, but rather to politicians and policymakers. Perhaps the conclusion is foregone--but Lapchick and IDES cannot possibly impact college athletics without understanding that competition is the crux of college athletics, and that any reforms that threaten athletics teams' ability and opportunity to compete will likely be rejected on all fronts.

Though IDES can inform political debate that may spur reformative action in the NCAA, it is not a powerful enough player to impact such politics on its own (hence the lack of interaction between Lapchick, IDES, and NCAA officials). IDES remains highly

dependent upon more powerful bodies to advance the causes of athletics reform and thus must focus on allying themselves strategically to impact the politics and economics of high-profile programs who fail to graduate their student-athletes⁵⁵. And while its position as a reputable sports institute is considerable, its lack of impact on changing the debate on the culture of college athletics from focusing on the academic success of the competitors rather than solely on the quality of the competitions themselves keeps their particular involvement in the movement peripheral, operating more like an interest group than a viable social movement organization (Walvoord 60).

Ending the ‘Madness March’: The Drake Group and the Defense of Academic Integrity in the Face of Commercialized Sport

In 1999, former Provost and Drake University Emeritus Professor Jon Ericson was chosen to participate in Drake University’s ‘NCAA Institutional Self-Study Group,’ a program designed by the NCAA to “sensitize institutional administrators and key campus constituencies to questions and areas of concern within athletics programs ... (serving) not only as an information-gathering tool, but also as a checklist to help ensure a comprehensive review” of the athletics program (“Institutional Self-Study Guide”). NCAA member institutions are required to complete self-studies once every five years in order to retain membership. During this process, in which a cross-section of university administrators and faculty are asked to assess the state of athletics in the context of higher education on their respective campuses, Ericson was alarmed to discover the pervasive negativity regarding the faculty’s perceptions of athletics, athletes’ academic integrity, the exploitation of student-athlete labor, and their own ability to curb abuses and corruption.

⁵⁵ Lapchick believes heavily in the potential to use his connections within state and federal legislative bodies (political) establish sanctions that would prevent academically underperforming schools from participating in post-season tournaments and competitions (economic).

He was even more alarmed to discover that many of those who participated in the self-study were “sickened, shocked, and angry” to discover the lack of academic accountability exercised by Drake’s athletics department, particularly in their revenue-generating sports (Ericson 5). Noting the overwhelming reservations, concerns, and doubts regarding the compatibility of athletics with Drake’s institutional mission, Ericson submitted his minority report to the self-study committee and awaited the worst--the fallout that would be associated with Drake losing its NCAA status, in no small part due to research and data he had collected and presented to the NCAA.

However, weeks later, Drake University received a press release announcing that the NCAA found Drake to be fully certified, and then NCAA President Cedric Dempsey noted that the NCAA’s record regarding the self-studies was “a good one” (Ericson 4-5). Rather than share his outrage, administrators and the faculty senate who had participated in the study went about their way, and Drake Bulldog athletics--known for hosting the “Drake Relays,” one of the nation’s most prominent track and field meets--continued on unfettered by the report.

At the end of a decade overwrought by college athletics scandals across the country, Ericson believed he had discovered the source of the corruption. And that source was a dangerously permissive and exploitative governing organization--the NCAA--interested only in increasing its profit margins and a nationwide cadre of accomplices on each and every member institution’s campus every bit as interested in (or apathetic about) maintaining athletics programs on their respective campuses.

Months later, the Drake Conference on College Sports Corruption and the Drake Group were established. Ericson recruited faculty and administrators across the country who shared such frustrating experiences on their respective campuses and charged them

with a mission at the initial conference in October, 1999, in Des Moines, Iowa-- identifying the role that faculty and administrators on each NCAA campus must play in ending the corruption in college athletics, the exploitation of black (primarily male) athletes and admitting that past reform attempts had failed soundly, meaning that nothing short of completely transforming the culture of college athletics would bring an end to the duplicity and fraudulence of the NCAA (“A Season for Change”).

Ericson’s charge is relatively simple enthymematically. University faculty are principally charged with upholding the academic integrity of their institutions, and if athletics runs counter to that mission by denying educational opportunities to a segment of the population, faculty are also charged with challenging those who would advance the cause of athletics to the detriment of the institutional mission. It is thus the faculty’s responsibility to persistently uphold that mission in the face of the growing importance of college athletics, and not the responsibility of an abstract governing organization mendaciously protecting its tax-exempt status by proclaiming its compatibility with educational missions.

In order to achieve this mission, Ericson founded The Drake Group (TDG) and began relentlessly recruiting members who were interested in TDG’s mission:

“[...] To help faculty and staff defend academic integrity in the face of the burgeoning college sport industry. The Drake Group's national network of college faculty lobbies aggressively for proposals that ensure quality education for college athletes, supports faculty whose job security is threatened for defending academic standards, and disseminates information on current issues and controversies in sport and higher

education. The Drake Group seeks to form coalitions with other groups that share its mission and goals.”

“Mission Statement,” – The Drake Group

What Ericson perhaps may not have realized was that he was not alone in this struggle, and that the sacrifices that he called on faculty to make in the face of the juggernaut of college athletics would often constitute career suicide--but that this was indeed the only way to confront the irresponsible proliferation of college athletics. Thus the faculty movement to revolutionize college athletics was born.

Social Movement Projects – Anti-NCAA Essays and Speeches

Though the organization does not disclose total membership (current membership coordinator Jim Reese notes a total membership “of over 200” in a personal email), it boasts the membership of individuals whose names are synonymous with college athletics reform and the most respected leaders in the debate. Their membership includes individuals such as Linda Bensek-Grey, fired by the University of Tennessee because she blew the whistle on the improprieties she observed (including papers being written for student-athletes) while she was an English department faculty member (Farrey 1). And former University of Michigan President James Duderstadt, who in his memoir Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University tells of his undoing as president as a result of firing a popular and successful head football coach for his improprieties (Dowling 7). And former Northwestern University McCormick Faculty Fellow in the School of Engineering Frank Splitt, who has alleged that he had his title stripped of him because of several public pronouncements lobbying leaders in the U.S. Congress to impose disclosure mechanisms to ensure the accountability of college sports programs (“The Drake Group Concerned over Apparent Northwestern University Fumble”). In

short, these faculty members have endured personal hardship and exhibited admirable self-sacrifice in their desire to maintain academic and institutional integrity, and TDG offers a platform for them to share their frightening, frustrating, yet ultimately inspirational narratives of battles won and lost against the unabated advance of college athletics in their campuses.

TDG members come from a variety of disciplines, represent institutions across the entire spectrum of NCAA membership, and are decorated and well-respected faculty and administrators in their own right, ensuring that their demands and proposals for transforming college athletics are widely held in high regard. In addition to holding their own annual conference to draft new proposals to affect change⁵⁶, the TDG home page (www.theDrakeGroup.org) acts as a storehouse, collecting the essays and speeches of its members and proceedings from past conferences. These essays and talks, which have been published in diverse journals of sport culture and higher education and popular periodicals, represent the diversity of the group's membership. Topics range from analyses of the myth of amateurism and the NCAA's construction of the "student-athlete" as a means of escaping the formation of labor unions, to TDG's director's remarks to the Knight Commission, where they have been invited to speak at every conference since 2001.

Notable in this collection is a salvo of essays and speeches penned by Frank Splitt. The "Splitt Essays" were published in venues as diverse as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, InsideHigherEd.com, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Daily Herald*.

⁵⁶ The 2007 conference will focus on advocating the federal government to ease restrictions related to the Buckley Amendment/Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act which in turn could force institutions to release academic data to the public, once and for all establishing the lengths that institutions are willing to go to ensure that student-athletes remain eligible to compete (including the eschewing of admissions standards, enrolling student-athletes in "dummy" classes, and tracking student-athletes, en masse, into majors offered by departments that are sympathetic to student-athletes).

The running theme of his articles is an indictment of college athletics that no reform movement has dared advance--that commercialized athletics has been “a destructive force in American higher education” (Dowling 1). Blending sensible institutional analysis with an encyclopedic sense of history and penchant for emotionally charged speech and evocative metaphor, Splitt examines the growth of commercialized sport in “Are Big-Time College Sports Good for America?” In it, Splitt hearkens back to a time when university officials stood up to corruption in college sport and contrasts that with contemporary administrators who are all too unwilling to challenge the political, economic, and cultural stronghold that the college athletics industry maintains over higher education (1). Splitt offers an intriguing analysis of NCAA establishment rhetoric, as well, defining it as an organization that “exploits college athletes while making huge amounts of tax-exempt money under the guise of an institution of higher education” and thus, is uninterested in reforms that would lessen its ability to exercise such a monopoly (2). In order to accomplish this, the NCAA “co-opts external reform efforts,” “provides weak rules enforcement,” and cites the Buckley Amendment to operate “the least transparent business in America” (2-3). Whereas critics such as high-profile detractors of college sport such as Zimbalist, Sperber, Thelin, and Toma level equivalent polemics as lone scholars, Splitt’s analysis is given further credence and substantiation by TDG members at other NCAA member institutions that also share his views.

Bensel-Myers and current TDG Executive Director David Ridpath of Mississippi State University have offered similarly ominous analyses of the proliferation of big-time athletics on college campuses in their remarks to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in 2003 and 2005, respectively. Following in Ericson’s

footsteps⁵⁷, each offers an analysis of the roles that the NCAA, reform-minded organizations, and university administrators and faculty have played in failing to reform college athletics. In “Breaking Faith with the College Athlete,” Bensel-Myers assails the quality of education offered to high-profile athletes, labelling it as “tantamount to institutionalized slavery” and claiming that NCAA institutions do not “provide an education nor reward the athletes for their lucrative service to the university” (Bensel-Myers 2). In addition, reflecting on her own experiences at Tennessee, she brings attention to the exploitation of the college athlete done in the name of the so-called “student-athlete⁵⁸” and the “institutionally-sanctioned fraud” and “institutional coddling” that undergird the assumption that elite athletes neither have time nor interest in academic pursuits, so they must be allowed to take “shortcuts”--in this case, plagiarized essays, but in others, tracking into majors, and independent studies (Bensel-Myers 3). Ridpath is even more acerbic in his comments before KCIA in 2005, drawing from his experiences as a former student-athlete, Division I wrestling coach, athletics administrator, and faculty member. In advocating for more disclosure and transparency to solve the problem of academic corruption, Ridpath dismisses mendacious NCAA reform rhetoric regarding the establishment of the APR system, which he believes is undermined by allowing schools to “report themselves,” weakly enforcing its own rules, and allowing schools to file waivers and petitions to escape sanctioning (Ridpath 2). He also challenges faculty who refuse to inform themselves about issues related to college athletics to become informed, lest they become “enablers of academic mediocrity” (3-4). Finally, in a

⁵⁷ In a 2000 address to the KCIA (“Remarks Before the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics”) Ericson lambastes the NCAA, the KCIA, and university faculty and administrators for “a century of failed reform” in college athletics (1-2).

⁵⁸ A term coined strictly for the purposes of preserving the myth of amateurism among revenue generating athletes and preserving the NCAA’s tax-exempt status during Walter Byers three decades-long reign as NCAA President.

decisive distancing from the KCIA, he charges them with “defending the status quo,” because they have allowed the NCAA to co-opt their mission (3). Both in their comments to the KCIA and in the scholarship that TDG members produce, disseminate, and cite when they lobby Congress to engage the NCAA on new terms, the rhetoric of TDG is marked by the brand of highly emotional rhetoric, public airing of grievances, and engagement beyond the normal means of discourse that are the very benchmarks of agitation rhetoric.

TDG as a Social Movement--Agitation vs. Establishment Rhetoric

From its inception, TDG has engaged in social movement via the incorporation of agitation rhetoric. However, instead of engaging the NCAA and then pushing forward on to more pointed calls for reform after those initial attempts failed, TDG has avoided engaging the NCAA, acknowledging that its vast infrastructure, bottomless well of resources, and resonance with the general public⁵⁹ would likely thwart its attempts at reform before they were able to gain any traction. Acknowledging the pervasive corruption, TDG instead mobilized and pooled its collective resources and sought allies in other reform-minded organizations and recruited at-large members at NCAA-member institutions so that they could promulgate their message through grassroots methods. In addition to this, they have begun lobbying Congress so that confrontations with the NCAA would be more evenly matched when the NCAA could not rely upon the rhetorical strategies of avoidance and counterpersuasion when confronted. Waving flag issues such as “Full Academic Disclosure” and “Quid Pro Quo” have not, as of yet, gained national publicity among the general public as these conversations are highly esoteric in nature, but in general, TDG’s strategy of aggressive, representative

⁵⁹ What Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen term “strength of ideology.”

recruitment of faculty and administrators across the NCAA membership and lobbying of Congress through agonistic rhetoric and compelling narratives have yielded a polarizing effect heretofore never acknowledged across such a critical mass of higher education officials.

TDG's success at penetrating a number of media outlets has given them the ability to promote public debate via the dissemination of its research and stimulate discussion about its compelling data, providing allied organizations with the information they need to advance reform movements. Among those most heavily impacted by their messaging are individuals whom they have lobbied in the U.S. Congress, who have taken on college athletics reform head-on. One such example is Congressman Cliff Stearns (R-Fl.) who proposed that NCAA rules regarding recruitment of student-athletes be revised due to a scandal at the University of Colorado, Boulder, which involved, among other things, the use of paid escorts to woo prospective football players (Powers 5)⁶⁰. Stearns, following the lead of TDG officials, has suggested a *quid pro quo* relationship between the government and the NCAA with regard to its tax-exempt status (Powers 5). Congressman Bill Thomas (R-Ca.) has taken up this issue, and in a recent letter to NCAA President Myles Brand, requested that Brand defend the NCAA's tax exempt status by defining how it upholds the mission of "maintaining the student-athlete as an integral part of the student body" when so many student-athletes, particularly Black male revenue sport athletes, fail to matriculate successfully (Brand 3).

In the end, it is their rhetorical sophistication that has the most potential to effect changes in NCAA governance and policy, and organizations like TDG play a pivotal role

⁶⁰ Another excellent indictment of this University of Colorado scandal was penned by IDES Executive Director Richard Lapchick in "Bad Decisions Follow Bad Conduct." In it, Lapchick indicts the University of Colorado, and by extension the NCAA, for failing to level stricter sanctions in order to prevent such abuses from occurring again at any member institution.

in ensuring that members of legislative bodies, as well as members of the general public who elect them to office, are educated about the darker side of college athletics.

Certainly, the political and economic consequences that the NCAA would face were it to lose its tax-exempt status would cripple the organization and its members, which explains Brand's prompt and thorough response to Congressman Thomas' query (a 25 page, abundantly sourced treatise defending the NCAA's tax-exempt status and its importance to the mission of higher education, found here:

http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2006/november/20061115_response_to_housecommitteeonwaysandmeans.pdf).

Unlike the BCA, towards which the NCAA has practiced avoidance because the potential of their cultural program has not crystallized, the NCAA cannot afford to respond similarly to TDG, which boasts low actual membership, but high potential membership and rhetorical sophistication. Instead, the NCAA must "adjust" its practices as an establishment so as to avoid complete defeat, so long as TDG continues to proliferate its message, recruit vigorously, and obtain powerful allies (Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen 68-69). In the past, the NCAA has adjusted to agitation by "incorporating the personnel (or) parts of the dissident ideology," regularly consulting with agitation groups and providing them a spot at the table while maintaining their image of strength and avoiding capitulation (62-63). However, as noted in TDG's mission statement, officials find the NCAA's mission incompatible with their own and seek to replace the goals, beliefs, institutions, and policies of the NCAA with a new mission that converges with the educational mission of higher education--in other words, complete capitulation (63). Though TDG officials note that reforming the practices of NCAA administrators, university presidents, governing boards, and trustees who "love sports more than they do

education” may be impossible at this historical moment, they also understand that the time for compromise has passed and the institution of college athletics must be completely rebuilt (Splitt 1). As far as TDG is concerned, this must be done not only to restore order to institutions of higher learning, but to end the exploitation of student-athletes who exchange their cultural, political, and economic agency in order for the all-too-often undelivered promise of fame and fortune down the line.

Triple Front Analysis

From the standpoint of a Triple Front analysis, TDG has engaged in social movement that has the potential to yield positive change for the benefit of black male revenue sport athletes, as well as across higher education. In his chapter entitled “Mass Media and Cultural Democracy,” Cruse informs us that white banking, business-commercial, and real estate ownership of black labor and production left post-depression Harlemites feeling like victims of a kind of cultural scavenging that rendered residents politically inert, economically superexploited, and existing for the sole benefit of others (86). The relationship of university administrations who feel pressure to appease governing board members, trustees, and boosters, and student-athletes who must place the importance of sports prowess over their own academic pursuits are in similar scenarios and thus unable to act in their own best economic, institutional, and educational interests. In order to revive the collective sense of autonomy and self-determination shared by student-athletes and faculty and administrators who resist the hegemony of commercialized sport, any social movement must recognize economics, politics, and culture as inseparable elements of social change and restore autonomy and agency (94). Unfortunately, due to the lack of economic and political agency of student-athletes whose compliance with all NCAA rules is required in order to receive a scholarship, and

because the individuals associated with the Drake Group are generally regarded as radicalized, the cultural program has failed to gain widespread support.

On the other hand, given their comparably radical scope, its proposals stand to begin establishing such a restoration⁶¹. Black male revenue sport student-athletes would be protected economically by being given the choice to compete on amateur or pre-professional levels, incentives for university administrators to bend and break the rules in order to develop competitive teams would virtually disappear if the political payoff dwindled, and consumers of sport would all benefit knowing that their hard-earned money did not support the exploitation and degradation of higher education. And it just might transform the NCAA into an institution of higher education and amateur athletics organization once and for all.

Conclusion

What marks the BCA, IDES, and TGD movements as most unlike traditional social movements is that many of their members are also “insiders,” or, they also have positions within and referent power within the establishments they seek to reform. Through critical self-reflection and engagement in the pursuit of social justice, many university faculty and administrators work tirelessly to ensure equity and opportunity for the increasingly diverse constituents of American higher education, and those who work toward college athletics reform are no different.

Each of the not-for-profit organizations reviewed in this chapter, though varying in success and ultimately failing to achieve their prescribed reforms, have promoted a

⁶¹ This includes annual reviews of NCAA members' graduation rates, APR, and other educational data in order to guarantee tax-exempt status, the establishment of pre-professional/minor leagues in order to bifurcate professional from amateur sport, stricter sanctions for member-institutions who commit recruiting infractions or academic fraud, and increased protections for faculty and administrators who take on athletics corruption.

vision of the convergence of sport with higher educational institutional missions that are admirable fusions of social justice work, progressive higher education policy, and social movement and advocacy. In the following chapter, through auto-ethnographic reflection and analysis, I turn the lenses of social movement rhetoric and Triple Front analysis on my own engagement in student-athlete advocacy as university instructor, writing program administrator, and athletics department staff member. In doing so, I define a theory of student-athlete advocacy, emerging from the aforementioned experiences, that draws heavily from theories of agitation rhetoric and social movement theory.

NARRATIVE EXCURSUS #6: JUMPING IN THE DEEP END

Tonight is as any other. An inordinate number of students have walked through the double doors down here, Room 109F, in the McKale Athletic Center, home of the University of Arizona Athletic Department. The students walking through those doors are student-athletes: football players, gymnasts, golfers, tracksters. Instead of carrying balls and shoes, they are toting textbooks and classnotes. Instead of inquiring about snap counts and court presses, they raise questions about Plato, the Big Bang, and social construction. Other than the occasional jog to the computer lab, or the adroit catch of a pencil as it falls from the table, this space does not require these students to be particularly athletic, though its construction instills the identity. And I can be quite sure that athletics is a part of their identity that is never far from their minds, tackling Descartes, Dante, and Dadaism along the way.

I run a writing center satellite for student-athletes, under the aegis of the English Department and the Writing Program, and under the sponsorship of the Athletics Department. Four days a week, from 5:00 to 9:30 pm, we (two writing tutors and myself, the coordinator of the program) work with the student-athletes on their writing assignments--from invention to revision. Though that's not particularly interesting or out of the ordinary, the space in which we do this work certainly is interesting.

Our writing center satellite is in the basement of the McKale Sports Arena. To get there, I walk by the football team's locker room, then the training room, and all the while, my walk encircles the basketball arena that is often packed with nearly 15,000 for our nationally ranked team's home games. My room is directly across from the football team's "ready room," and I've occasionally been displaced by the media for post-game interviews. In fact, at least a half a dozen times this semester, we've cancelled hours

completely because of home basketball games. It wouldn't matter if we didn't cancel hours...finding a parking space would be impossible on those nights anyway.

I have a meeting with a young man, a member of the varsity football team, in a position meeting room. Probably the offensive line's. Eight tables and twenty four chairs evenly spaced throughout. Just over my student's head I see the outlines of football players ... a mural on the wall in red, white, and blue. The mural is nearly seven feet high and depicts a football player making a block while the running back cuts judiciously against the grain to make an extra yard. His number is 26.

As I diagram sentences on the DryErase board, I clearly observe outlines of the X's and O's one regularly associates with football plays being drawn up. I erase them and begin to explain the receiver of action in a sentence with passive voice. In the front of the room, there is a VCR and a box full of tapes. The labels on the tapes say things like "Cutups: NMSU v. UNLV." And protruding from the ceiling is a film projector. "Ok, I get it ... 'the ball was kicked,' but we don't know who kicked it." I vaguely remember difficult concepts setting in as I sat in my offensive line's meeting room, several years before and nearly 1,500 miles away.

It's late and I understand why my student is having trouble concentrating – conference opener, an All-American nose guard to contend with, and because he had to come straight to study hall after practice, he hasn't eaten in nearly 8 hours. After mentioning this to me, he commented "That's big time college football!" I responded "And this is the student-athlete in all his glory! Parsing sentences on a dry-erase board in the football team's meeting room!" I can forgive him for not finding that funny at all.

CHAPTER FIVE--INSIDE AND OUTSIDE (CONTACT) ZONE:

An Autoethnography of an Elaborate Venture in (and Out) of College Athletics

In my previous chapter, it was my aim to analyze the social movement strategies of non-profit organizations who, as part of their missions, have attempted to challenge the NCAA to amend its best practices to reflect a mission that advocates the academic success and social well-being of student-athletes. In the end, I determined that the lack of well-defined cultural programs that resonate both on host campuses and at the NCAA headquarters have led to the failure of the non-profit organizations to effect long-term change in college athletics. In this chapter, I aim to analyze my own involvement in founding and coordinating a writing center satellite in an athletics department setting, attempting to effect change at one NCAA institution rather than globally in order to consider the differences between social movements that work from outside the margins of NCAA athletics departments and those that operate within them.

Admittedly, the great complexities involved with any form of cultural analysis, especially cultural analysis based off of reflections, recollections, musings, and asides has been quite complicated. As I attempt to analyze my own actions and inactions through a particular theoretical or philosophical lens, difficulties arise because of my desire to defend my actions as a protagonist in the text while accurately recalling the most salient and significant events--events in which the author acts judiciously as often as he acts in folly. Reflecting on my own administrative and instructional theory and practice, particularly with an aim to interpret the cultural significance of those experiences, has been plagued with difficulty, dead-ends, and diminished returns. However, believing such interpretations can lead to the discovery of much more that needs to be interpreted, or as Weber has labeled them, the “webs of significance in which we ourselves are

woven” (qtd. in Geertz 5) I am confident that I will be able to interpret my administrative work and potentially reveal solutions that I was not able to discover while suspended in moments that can be interpreted, in retrospect, more accurately. To do so, I go beyond the offering of “practitioner lore,” Stephen North’s term for traditions of teaching and research that rarely become formalized in published writing, and yet not rely heavily, either, upon data-collection methods that can reveal an overly narrow scope. To achieve a balance between these two poles, I have chosen autoethnography as the mode of cultural analysis I apply to interpret my administrative work through the lenses of student-athlete advocacy and social movement rhetoric.

Throughout the dissertation, I have offered accounts (as digressive *excurses*) of my own experiences as a student-athlete, instructor, and administrator in hopes of providing the reader snapshots of life within the well-guarded walls of college athletics. Those fragments, personal stories of import that substantiate claims as well as contextualize my analytical approach, are also products of autoethnographic reflection. My ethos, then, is not only generated by research and the offering of perspectives that can be duly substantiated, but also by my willingness to delve deeply into the workings of my own psyche (exposing my initial errors in analysis as well as my successes), and by my willingness to dive further into explicating the webs of significance that constitute the culture of college athletics.

Because these narratives reveal my bias toward ‘big-time’ college athletics – namely, a belief that it is bottom-line centered rather than student-success centered – they are likely to come off as myopic, incomplete research, or worse, snarky editorializing. However, autoethnography often emerges from narratives of opposition and struggle, revealing the very moments in time and rhetorical spaces in which cultures clash and

oppose one another and exposing them for analyses. Of autoethnography, Susan Bennett says that it is not simply the recounting of simple personal stories, but “analytical/objective personal account(s) about the self/writer as part of a group or culture,” “a description of a conflict of cultures,” and “often an analysis of being different or an outsider written to an audience not a part of the group ... (and/or an) an explanation of how one is "othered"” (“Susan Bennett on Autoethnography” 1). In the particular case I am recounting, I count myself as an outsider, given the fact that I was viewed by athletics administrators as a writing program administrator rather than as fully recognized member of athletics administration staff. The insiders, then, are the athletics administrators with whom I attempted to collaborate during my time working there. However, throughout I imagine myself writing for both audiences.

Recollections of experiences, set under the lens of cultural analysis in which individuals attempt to interpret action and symbolic action in their context, constitute autoethnography. And in my analysis, which will often cite discordant exchanges with writing program administrators and athletics administrators as well as internal conflicts over job responsibilities and ethical commitments, I am not only defining points of resistance that Bennett and Pratt identify as areas from which autoethnographies often emerge, but defining points of conflict that emerge between agitation groups and establishments during the course of social movement.

In order to analyze my own engagement in student-athlete advocacy, I have chosen the methodologies of autoethnography and social movement rhetorical analysis so that I can characterize my work and scholarship in the areas of writing center theory and pedagogy, both chronologically and theoretically, in terms of a social movement. Later in the chapter, this will enable me to analyze, using Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen’s social

movement theory and Cruse's Triple Front theory, the successes and setbacks of the program as social movement in order to identify challenges and potential solutions for the continued viability of the writing program I founded.

During the course of my final chapter, my goal is to identify a theory of autoethnography, drawing from the scholarship of Clifford Geertz, Mary Louise Pratt, and Kevin Foster, that will guide my reflections on my own engagement in social movement and student-athlete advocacy while working in a university writing program and athletics department. In addition, I draw from the scholarship of Barbara Walvoord, who in "The Future of WAC" defines writing program administration through the lens of social movement theory. In closing, I offer an analysis of my own engagement in a social movement and apply Cruse's Triple Front theory to analyze the efforts of my own program, The CATSatellite Learning Center for Learning and Writing (CATS CLAW⁶²), evaluating the program's impact on the social and intellectual development of student-athletes at the University of Arizona as well as its viability as a social movement.

Geertz, Pratt, Foster, and the Autoethnography of College Athletics

In this chapter, as with the narrative *excurses* between each chapter, I am attempting not only to recollect significant moments of interaction that are relevant to the rest of the project, but also reveal the structures and politics of the culture of college athletics, and particularly athletics administration. In doing so, I hope to explicate the ways in which traditional approaches to athletics administration minimize (and even marginalize) black male student-athlete advocacy and social movement in ways comparable to the marginalization of agitation groups achieved by establishments. In

⁶² Part of the CATS (Caring About the Total Success of student-athletes) Program, an NCAA designated "Program of Excellence" established in 1991 at the University of Arizona. The innovative design emerged from the scholarship of Jeff Jansen, a world-renowned motivational speaker and sports psychologist.

“Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” Clifford Geertz, celebrated Princeton anthropologist, notes that culture is a “semiotic” concept, involving a search for meaning through interpretation of symbols (1). Geertz borrows the term “Thick Description” from Gilbert Ryle and applies it to his own anthropological approach, moving beyond “textbook” definitions of ethnography and extending ethnography to include explication, interpretation, sorting “structures of signification,” and “reading manuscript(s) of [...] transient examples of shaped behavior” (2). In other words, Geertz extends the responsibilities of the ethnographer beyond the careful collection of data to include the dutiful interpretation of how actions and behaviors constitute culture, and what those actions and behaviors mean as symbolic cultural behavior.

For the purposes of this dissertation, and this chapter in particular, my personal narratives represent challenges to the hegemonic practices and discourses of traditional athletics administration that, at its worse, reveals models of student advocacy which focus on keeping student-athletes eligible for participation rather than on ensuring that their athletic participation rounds out, or otherwise substantially contributes to their whole education. Mary Louise Pratt applies Geertz’s approach to ethnography in an analysis of the cultural significance of her own pedagogy, particularly in settings where narratives of the colonized and the colonial engage one another. In “Arts of the Contact Zone,” Pratt defines the contact zone as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (2). Along with “critique,” “collaboration,” “imaginary dialogue,” and “vernacular expression,” Pratt lists autoethnography as a “literate art of the contact zone” (6). For Pratt, arts of the contact zone represent methods of challenging and resisting the colonial translation and recoding

of the narratives and experiences of the oppressed, thus revealing autoethnography (among other approaches) as effective tools for representing marginalized and disfranchised voices – which are often oppositional forms of discourse.

Theories of ethnography, according to Geertz and Pratt, must be extrapolated and applied to the analyses of different cultures--in this case, the well-guarded world of big-time college athletics, so difficult to perform detailed analyses of because student voices are silenced by compliance and outside researchers and media are often either denied access, or, given only access to student-athlete representatives whose well-crafted oration best represents the department's image. A potential means around the limited access to student-athletes for research purposes is the philosophical and ethnographic analyses and reflections of former student-athletes and athletics administrators. In "Panopticonics: The Control and Surveillance of Black Female Athletes in a Collegiate Athletics Program," Kevin Michael Foster offers a model of literary and ethnographic analysis in an athletics department setting based on his experiences as and interactions with collegiate athletes. Going beyond the analyses of graduation rate data and comparable empirical figures, Foster focuses on survey methodologies and revealing personal reflections to tell a story of domination, control, and surveillance as experienced by female collegiate athletes – a narrative oft not even expressed even by the notable athletics reform scholarship of the organizations I have detailed thus far, and when so, certainly not as compellingly as Foster's ethnography.

Foster's claim is as complex as it is compelling. Citing Foucault's theory of the 'panopticon,' Foster characterizes the infrastructure of college athletics--the training and preparation as well as the near constant surveillance achieved through curfews, supervised study hours, and self-contained facilities--as one that "ensures the

transformation of elite athletes into successful women, with success defined in terms of their athletic achievement, degree attainment, and preparation for life after graduation” (301). Success, however, is ensured at the expense of these young women’s independence, autonomy, and agency, even though the ultimate result is often their empowerment. Whereas Foucault’s metaphor of the panopticon, and the discipline it creates via coercion, connotes negatively, Foster also considers Durkheim’s optimistic views on the benefits of discipline and “moral education,” leading to “self-mastery” (302). Foster, himself a former student-athlete, understands that the benefits of participating in organized athletics are numerous; however, he also understands (perhaps contrasting theirs with his own experiences) that administrators’ “racialized expectations of behavior” led them to exercise greater surveillance⁶³ over their black athletes, which would suggest that their autonomy in decision making is hindered considerably (302).

Foster understands this world innately and via his experience as a fellow student-athlete peer, tutor, mentor, and eventually researcher among the female athletes whom he writes about, and yet, as a social scientist, only obliquely acknowledges this fact lest he compromise his objectivity as a researcher. His arrival story, as a result, insufficiently exposes readers to the lenses he applies to his analysis, and the account reads much more like a literary and philosophical analysis while Foster leaves the ethos he could generate by frontloading his experience and perspective on the table.

Where Foster’s account leaves off is where I hope to begin my analysis. Foster is a white male ethnographer who competed in a non-revenue generating sport (wrestling), and thus, his own experiences and perspectives are of limited importance to the analysis

⁶³ Foster notes that these forms of surveillance are often informal and not necessarily department-approved, including checking in on some athletes at curfew while trusting others to meet the deadline, issuing academic progress reports on some players while trusting the testimony of others, and requiring more study hall hours for some players than others.

he offers in “Panopticonics” because he shares only one meaningful cultural trait with the student-athletes he writes about: the fact he was a student-athlete. By contrast, as a black male, former student-athlete in a revenue generating sport (football)-turned writing program administrator-turned athletics administrator, I not only share several meaningful cultural traits with the students about whom I am writing, but I continue to work with those students in a professional capacity--hence my move towards autoethnography.

Writing Program Administration as Social Movement – “The Future of WAC”

In “The Future of WAC,” Barbara Walvoord identifies social movement theory as a means by which composition historians and writing program administration theorists can frame the long-range planning of WAC programs at American institutions of higher learning. Walvoord, operating from the assertion that a social movement is any “collective attempt to promote or resist change in a society or group” (60) and that social movements spawn social movement organizations, rewrites the history of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) as a collective of writing program professionals that identified Mina Shaughnessy’s assertion that writing be taught across college curricula (articulated in Errors and Expectations) and mobilized resources to achieve institutional change. For Walvoord, reconsidering WAC as a social movement reveals its “characteristics, strengths, and problems in ways that may help us think creatively about them,” namely, how WAC as a movement has enabled writing program professionals to address questions about “the meaning of education [...] literacy [...] knowledge, power, and liberation” in their respective institutional settings and across the nation (60). According to Walvoord’s analysis, WAC has thrived in many institutional settings because once the movement decentralized, “goals and philosophies that arose meant that each campus” could exercise ownership and decide which societal changes were most important (61). This meant that

individual organizations could determine their own cultural programs according to the different cultures and needs of their institutions (62). Re-interpreting the history of WAC in this manner allows Walvoord to aptly describe WAC as a social movement and apply the rhetoric of social movement theory to an analysis of what the movement has and has not been able to achieve.

Though Walvoord identifies the potential strength of WAC's cultural program on individual campuses, she also identifies the political and economic difficulties related to establishing and maintaining viable WAC programs--an analysis predicted by Cruse's Triple Front. For example, Walvoord first identifies the difficulty associated with recruiting faculty to join their workshops--a primary means by which the organization disseminates its message. Recruiting primarily through "word of mouth" and "arm-twisting," and finding that many faculty failed to return after initial workshops, Walvoord claims that many WAC programs fail to proliferate and maintain validity because the programs are optional, and many colleges and departments do not require their faculty and instructors to participate. Furthermore, WAC budgets are often funded through "discretionary budgets" by sympathetic administrators or grants, which retire and expire, respectively (64). Either can result in the suspension or discontinuance of WAC programs, contributing further to their potential dissolution. Both the political and financial difficulties associated with establishing and maintaining WAC programs are considerable; however, identifying the problems can lead to solution generation that may allow WAC programs to avoid the damning fates of insolvency, co-option, or other ends without achieving movement. Walvoord's analysis of WAC programs, then, is instructive in that analyses of writing program administration from the lens of social movement can help the analyst identify important political, economic, and cultural problems that

confront their long-term viability and understand, ultimately, what progressive writing programs can accomplish in diverse and challenging institutional settings.

My autoethnographic reflections about my experiences as a student-athlete, writing program administrator and athletics administrator will often reflect the ways that I and the students with whom I worked resisted the stereotyping of college athletes as uninterested/incapable students in our actions and in our engagement with athletics department personnel. Because these discourses are not sanctioned by coaches and athletics department staff, the resistance to them was significant and created great risk for those who engaged in it. However, autoethnography gives me an opportunity to, in a manner *a propos* to this project, cast my engagement in practices that I believe challenge unjust institutional and individual practices as social movement rhetoric, and those institutions as establishments engaging in control rhetoric to counteract the alliances I established and resources I was able to mobilize. Furthermore, by interpreting my administrative work as the founder of a writing center for student-athletes as social movement, I can then more seamlessly apply social movement rhetorical analysis and Triple Front analysis to my own social movement efforts. As the analyses in previous chapters instructs, engaging in social movement analysis reveals the challenges these movements face, the resources they must mobilize and the strategies they must incorporate to achieve social change, and leaves analysts with a concurrent sense of the daunting trials of impacting social practices and beliefs and hope that those challenges can be surmounted.

Student-Athlete Advocacy and Writing Program Administration as Social Movement: A History of The CATSatellite Center for Learning and Writing at the University of Arizona

One of my most treasured memories from my undergraduate experiences as a scholar-athlete was time spent in the locker room after tough practices, commiserating, shit-talking, and bonding with my teammates. During this time, as we iced our muscles and joints, dressed fresh “strawberry” wounds, and cooled down after difficult practices in the relentless humidity of the American South, we often learned much about the young men with whom we spent so much time, despite our sport’s excessive demands on our time and energy. These moments were short, given that our practices generally ended around 6 pm and the school’s cafeteria closed at 7 pm, but they were memorable moments, nonetheless.

Occasionally after practice, teammates would approach me and ask for advice on their essays and job and scholarship applications. Most of my teammates knew that I was an English major because the coaches found it quite interesting (and often harmlessly made jest of the fact) that I, an all-American offensive lineman known for a cerebral and calculating approach to manhandling opposing defenders, was also an English major with a keen interest in poetics. Since I am generally an affable person, and that I wanted the opportunity to hone my skill as an English instructor, I almost always obliged teammates who sought my help. There we’d sit, often with ice bags strapped to our legs and arms, smelling of medicated analgesic rub, parsing sentences, explicating literature, and exploring invention and revising strategies. I imagined my success at reaching my peers in this setting was due to the setting in which the instruction took place as well as their feelings of kinship with me as a tutor; however, I took great pride and encouragement from the work I did with these student-athletes, and it is one of many

experiences that led to my eventual decision to pursue a graduate degree in Rhetoric and Composition.

Exhausted, yet gratified, I would emerge from the Field House with a great sense of accomplishment and service, and often wondered if, as an athletics administrator or professor, I'd have such rich and meaningful opportunities to teach writing and work with student-athletes. I also imagined, sans the aches and pains from pummeling opposing defensive linemen for two hours during practice, how much better a teacher I would be and how much more energetic I'd be about the work.

In August, 2000, after completing my B.A. with distinction in English and Professional Writing at Northwestern State University, where I was also a two-time All-American offensive lineman and captain of the varsity football team, I headed west to the University of Arizona to attend graduate school. I began my first year with a seven hour graduate course load in Rhetoric and Composition and 1-1 First Year Composition (FYC) teaching load and felt confident about my adjustment to the rigors of teaching and researching even though I was only twenty-one years old at the time. Midway through the course of my first semester, a professor in my graduate program who assumed I might be interested in pursuing research or work to supplement my pay at the athletics department introduced me to the university's head football coach, a personal friend of his. After a friendly chat, I offered the head coach my resume, and after reading my credentials, he put me in touch with staff members in CATS Academics – a department in Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) charged with overseeing academic counseling and tutorial services for all student-athletes. After a brief meeting with the Associate Athletics Director of Academics and the academics counselor who oversaw the tutorials program, I

was offered a position as a writing tutor in their study hall program. Eager to work with student-athletes and professionalize myself as a writing specialist, I accepted the position and began working twelve hours a week during study hall hours. Though this series of events transpired with preternatural speed, I'd had no designs on pursuing anything more than part-time work and perhaps exercising some altruism and giving back to student-athletes, considering myself quite fortunate to have had a significant support system at my previous institution.

On weeknights, Mondays-Thursdays, I typically spent three hours an evening working with student-athletes who were logging their mandatory study hall hours and could choose to either study quietly in designated commons areas or work one on one with tutors who were hired by the athletics department. I quickly developed rapport with a number of the students with whom I worked, partly because as a former student-athlete and young black male, I shared certain cultural proclivities with many of the students, and also, I imagine, because of the fact that as an undergraduate writing instructor, that their academics advisors recommended that they seek me out. Unfortunately, because I was only one of two writing tutors the first semester I worked in athletics, I often turned away many more students than I was ever able to work with, often referring them to either our main university writing center, or, to our University Learning Center, which provided tutorial services and academic advising.

Though I enjoyed working with the student-athletes and continued to ingratiate myself with their advisors and coaches, I quickly discovered that the majority of student-athletes with whom I worked were Black men, and primarily football players. When I shared this information with academics advisors, they revealed to me that they often suggested that these young men contact me if they needed help, and I eventually

discovered that virtually all of the young men who consulted with me were directed to do so. Even though we accomplished much during our sessions, their lack of skill and time management often led to unproductive sessions that required them to set up follow-up consultations. Seeing this as an opportunity to recommend that students integrate themselves more fully and avail themselves of resources available to them on campus, I recommended that many of them visit the main Writing Center and even set up the appointments for them.

Unfortunately, they rarely took advantage of many of the university resources made available to them, from supplementary tutoring to visiting their instructors during office hours. As a result, a handful of the students whom I tutored regularly (at least once a week) were still struggling mightily to pass their writing courses and also wrestled to keep pace in their general education courses that required substantial amounts of writing. To make things worse, because of the limited number of writing tutors available at the athletics department, many student-athletes were left unable to take advantage of academic resources that were supposed to be provided for them by the athletics department. For student-athletes who needed to keep their GPAs up to maintain their scholarships, the availability of such academic support was absolutely critical.

After a semester of frustration related to turning away students who sought my help progressed, I approached administrators in the Academics Department at ICA about developing an on-site writing program. The academics counselor who oversaw the tutorials program repeatedly responded to my frustration with a refrain of “there’s no money in the budget for more support” and refused to consider creative solutions to the problem. Given his disproportionate workload and lack of credentials for the position, it often appeared to me that his unwillingness to approach his supervisor for increased

funding was directly related to his irrational fear that he could be fired at any time. Once I determined this to be the root of his hesitation, I acquired his permission to speak to his supervisor, having much less to risk personally if the idea was shot down.

The Associate Athletics Director was thrilled with the idea of increasing academic support available for student-athletes in an area where so many of them struggled. However, he was also concerned about how to accomplish this without increasing expenditures. My concerns at this point, however, were not strictly fiduciary. Early attempts on my part to characterize the satellite as a learning community, for example, were deferred and thwarted as I was told, alternately, that the writing lab⁶⁴ would fold into one of the two remedial programs for student-athletes on probation, which would confine the student-athlete body with whom I worked to students on provisional or academic probation. Whereas the Director believed that academically capable student-athletes were resourceful enough to access the resources when they needed to and he sought remediation for those who remained, I envisioned a center that revolved around the idea of educational equality for all student-athletes regardless of their race, gender, or sport, and that all of them would be allowed to pursue intellectual and social development in a learning community consisting of their peers across the department.

Though the Director of Academics was familiar with my characterization of the program as a learning community, his parry was that in the context of the academics program, the center would serve as a writing lab/clinic for remedial students, and that this was the only way to justify the expense. Considering that so many of the students whom he intended for me to work with were black male football and basketball players who

⁶⁴ A characterization I resisted from the onset, given its medical connotation and the idea that the metaphor of a “lab” suggests that we are analyzing students problems and diagnosing them rather than working with students collaboratively in a learning community.

were either provisional qualifiers or on academic probation, it became clear to me that he had no intention of supporting my push to establish a learning community for student-athletes, but rather, offer tutorials and skill-building sessions to underperforming students.

Naively, I accepted the offer to pilot the program, intending the entire time to push forward the agenda of the writing center as learning community model and as an alternative to programs that I thought served altogether different needs (such as the needs of student-athletes with documented learning disabilities or Prop 48 students, who were not necessarily the target audience for a progressive writing center).

Though I'd hoped that the center would integrate easily into the CATS Program, I met resistance in many forms. Program coordinators from other areas were rarely encouraging of my ideas, claiming that at the end of the day that coaches and administrators would only care if I kept these black male student-athletes eligible for competition, and if I ever lost sight of that fact, it would likely be my demise. They added that administrators would not stand up for me if I challenged coaches, and that program coordinators who challenged athletics department hegemony would be radicalized, isolated, and removed if necessary. Virtually every staff member shared these notions, having had encounters with upper-level administrators and coaches which suggested to them that, at the end of the day, keeping student-athletes eligible for competition was the most important aspect of our jobs. Warnings that I received ranged from cautionary tales from mentors-to-be to the desultory rants of frustrated employees. The environment was as anti-intellectual as it was paranoid, and I was determined to challenge both. Fortunately, a handful of graduate assistants in the athletics department, two academics advisors, the Associate Athletics Director, and several football coaches to

whom I pitched the idea were willing to support it initially, and the citation of their support enabled to me to enlist further support from writing program professionals.

To secure the funding and time necessary to pilot a writing program, I discussed funding opportunities with writing program and Rhetoric and Composition professors and administrators and secured a quarter-time course release in order to spend more time working with student-athletes in a writing center setting and have more time to collect and analyze data about those sessions. The course release was offered with many caveats, however, and I quickly discovered that there was as much resistance to my efforts on the English Department side as there was in Athletics. Professors mentioned to me that such work was better left for post-tenure, which might be the only thing to save me, politically, if I were ever on the outs with ICA. They also remarked, often, about problems they'd encountered with students of their own who were athletes, who were often disinterested and unwilling learners, and their coaches, who demanded institutional forgiveness when their players cheated in or did not pass their classes. Fortunately, I was able to generate support from the Director of the Writing Program and the Director of the Writing Center, who believed that the project had great promise, both theoretically and as a means of financially and professionally supporting graduate students in the future. They were also pleased with the fact that I was able to take advantage of renovations to the academics center and negotiate a new space for the center, which meant that we would no longer have to negotiate space with other tutors, or be kicked out by media on evenings when there were basketball games. Having made these arrangements, my next step was to begin searching for precedent for such programs and also grounding my work in the center in writing center and writing program administration research.

The McKale Center Athletics Writing Lab Pilot

As I piloted the program⁶⁵ in Spring 2001, I ensured that my administrative work as coordinator of the writing center satellite was informed by my collaboration with writing program and athletics administrators across the country at peer institutions. I first contacted athletics administrators at the University of California-Berkeley and Arizona State University (PAC-10 institutional peers), who had decided to increase their tutorial staffs by three to five employees, all of whom were writing specialists. They had not, however, established any formal relationship with their university writing programs, nor had any other of the PAC-10 institutions whom I contacted. Such a relationship was critical not only to the Director of Academics, but to the Athletics Director of Compliance, who cited the events that unfolded at the University of Minnesota half a decade before as a cautionary tale about writing tutorial programs in athletics departments that lacked sufficient oversight⁶⁶.

I proposed to WPAs and Athletics Administrators that an effective way to appease the conflicts of interest associated with athletic department tutorials (with regards to the teaching of writing) is to have English department faculty and graduate assistants assist with writing center work within the athletic department's context. In doing so, the athletic departments can be sure that the tutorial program is closely aligned with the English Department's mission statement about academic writing, and that they are receiving quality assistance from writers and writing teachers at their university, within their own academic community. Creating this relationship will also provide the athletic department with the academic integrity and responsibility of the English Department

⁶⁵ The pilot program was called the McKale Center Athletics Writing Lab.

⁶⁶ A 1995 NCAA investigation revealed that Clem Haskins, former University of Minnesota head basketball coach, had arranged for athletics department academics counselor Jan Gangelhoff to write papers for and tutor his players. Gangelhoff became the primary whistleblower in this case, and sanctions were issued by the NCAA for academic fraud.

(whereas in previous mishaps, writing tutors were privately sponsored by the athletic department and had no connection to the English Department). In addition, this relationship would also benefit English Departments/WPAs by providing another arena for the teaching of writing--which could offer opportunities for writing center and Writing Across the Curriculum research initiatives, as well as opportunities for course releases for graduate students, supplemental funding for non-funded graduate students, and opportunities for professionalization (teacher training and work outside of the English Department).

As I obtained further support for the program, my search for programs after which to model the center led to a program at Michigan State University, the SASS Writing Center Satellite. The SASS Writing Center Satellite, located in the Clara Bell Smith Student Support Center, was established in 1997 for student-athletes at Michigan State University. Tutors at the center undergo the same training and preparation as all other tutors associated with Michigan State's main Writing Center and other satellites and work exclusively with student-athletes during their regularly assigned "study-table" times in the late afternoon and evening hours. The satellite center also has a graduate assistant coordinator who is appointed by the MSU writing program who supervises and evaluates tutors. The center, in addition to extending writing program services to students who might not otherwise be able to because of their schedules, also allows for collaboration between the athletics department and an academic department (<http://writing.msu.edu/about/hours.php>). In my search to identify such programs, I did not come across another program that merged inter-departmental goals so seamlessly. This was an impressive development considering the closely-guarded nature typical of athletics departments and the indifference with which most faculty and academic

departments regard athletics and student-athletes. As I envisioned developing a writing program for student-athletes at the University of Arizona, I imagined that the program would closely mimic the program I'd discovered at Michigan State. Furthermore, the center's director and student workers would serve as important collaborators and as an important resource for information, strategies, and perspectives on running a writing center satellite in a Division I-A athletics department.

I ensured that my plans for the design of the program were informed by research on writing center theory and pedagogy. Rather than accept a role as remedial tutorial service in the context of the athletics department's academics unit, I pressed, with the support of the Writing Program and Writing Center, to establish a program that would revise traditional thinking about the function of the traditional study hall and tutorial services in athletics department settings, and rhetorically embody the establishment of a learning community for student-athletes. Drawing from North's groundbreaking article "The Idea of a Writing Center," I built upon the potential of the writing center to become a transformative learning community rather than a place where remedial teachers work with sub-standard writers (433). Referring to Peter Carino's analysis of the history of writing centers in "What Do We Talk about When We Talk about Our Metaphors?: A Cultural Critique of Clinic, Lab and Center," I also carefully described the program to the academics counselors who would primarily refer students to ensure that they would not only refer students who struggled in their writing classes, but all students who were interested in being members of a learning community. Further, heeding Kenneth Bruffee (in "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'"") I developed a curriculum for writing tutors that focused on encouraging the development of a sense of community and collaboration among students with whom they worked, citing Bruffee's

claim that individuals sharpen their skills as they converse and share their ideas (88). Finally, citing Andrea Lunsford in “Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center,” tutors were advised to privilege collaboration over instruction, encouraging students to work with (rather than be directed by) tutors, developing their own writing and critical thinking skills while working in teams to facilitate knowledge attainment (41).

Few obstacles stood in the way of the pilot program. I worked with the tutorials coordinator to recruit, hire, and train three undergraduate tutors and enlisted the support of athletic academics advisors in a general staff meeting and asked that they inform their students about the program. I also spoke with first-year, sophomore, and transfer student-athletes and introduced our services to students in a general assembly at the beginning of the semester. Writing program administrators continued to offer their support, feedback, and guidance. As the Spring, 2001 semester began, we signed up students for one-on-one sessions and working with walk-ins, as well, and I was pleased that the population of students with whom we worked was as diverse as the student-athlete body. Throughout the semester, based on weekly memos that I circulated providing updates and reports on students who worked with our writing tutors, athletic academics advisors and the Associate Athletics Director of Academics learned that many student-athletes accessed the new writing support services. Word of mouth feedback from students was generally positive, and coaches occasionally stopped by the center to inquire about their athletes’ progress. Given the support that the program drew from faculty, athletics administrators, and the student-athletes, I secured an agreement from the Associate Athletics Director of Academics to establish a full writing center satellite, with a line item that included the allocation of a graduate assistantship/internship for a program coordinator, office space,

and copy budget, and a designated area for the satellite in the newly redesigned Hillenbrand Meeting Center. The plans for the center were announced to the University of Arizona Board of Regents in March, 2001, and in Fall, 2001, the CATSatellite Center for Learning and Writing (CATS CLAW) was officially established.

The CATS CLAW as a Social Movement

In retrospect, much of the work I performed in designing and coordinating the satellite was akin to that of a social movement organizer, engaging me in the kinds of political debate, financial negotiations, and culture-shifting that Cruse designates as the Triple Front. In order to accomplish the program's goals, I was required to determine problems, mobilize resources, establish strategic alliances with supporters of my program to address those issues while allowing others feedback and ideas to guide my problem-solving approaches, and continually address coercive, counterpersuasive⁶⁷, and reactionary practices within a rigid institutional establishment with non-violent discursive and non-discursive subversion. Engaging in these processes--which at the time I would have characterized as the typical administrative engagements of an underfunded and poorly understood though well-received pilot program coordinator, but now choose to interpret as social movement--allowed me and my collaborators to establish a writing center that progressively challenged misconceptions of writing centers in the academy while providing learning services to a group of students oft characterized as disinterested and unwilling by both the academy and athletics departments. In my last days as program coordinator, as I sat in the center and observed organically formed writing and discussion groups, lively conversations, and students teeming from one end of the

⁶⁷ Put simply, this is when the establishment tries to convince agitators that they are wrong.

classroom to the other with intellectual curiosity, I knew that the goal of providing a learning community for student-athletes had been accomplished.

The CATS CLAW represents the hope shared by the non-profit organizations to which I have alluded--that the airing of grievances, recommendations for change, and pursuit of equality in education has the potential to transform institutional practices, even if on the smallest of scales. In other words, a movement based on a theory of student-athlete advocacy motivated to provide services to student-athletes that contribute to their development as athletes, citizens, and learners. It also represents the manifestation of goals I developed through consultation with faculty, staff, graduate students, and athletics administrators after the acquisition of resources from and confrontation with athletics department personnel who frequently resisted the idea of the writing center I aimed to develop. The center continues to represent an important collaborative relationship between the University of Arizona Intercollegiate Athletics Department (ICA) and the Writing Program--a noteworthy mission convergence⁶⁸ between athletics and academe. The satellite center, one of only three in the Pacific-10 conference when it was founded in 2001, represented the most rare of synergies on a college campus--the kind of collaborative between athletics and academics unit that cynics would be hard-pressed to write off as subterfuge and that supporters would cite as an exemplar of a progressive athletics department and institution.

That is not to say that the work was not personally rewarding, as well. Running the center afforded me important opportunities as a writing program administrator, researcher, and scholar. For three semesters as the writing program coordinator, I

⁶⁸ A theory advanced by former University of Arizona baseball coach Dr. Jerry Stitt, in which he suggests that the missions of athletics departments and institutions of higher education should be aligned with one another in order to ensure student-athletes' success.

managed to successfully administer the program's affairs, assess the program and its staff, articulate the program with the athletics department student services programming, integrate myself into the athletics department staff, and publish and disseminate research related to my administrative work in the center. In three full academic semesters and one summer session, my tutors and I conducted 627 one-on-one, peer review, and group tutorial sessions with 416 student-athletes representing every scholarship sport in the athletics department. I published a weekly memo that was issued to academics counselors and the Associate Athletics Director that kept them informed with regards to which student-athletes we met with and at what times. Collaborating with the tutorials coordinator, I evaluated tutors by observing them, having them submit self-evaluations, and helping them set goals for the following semester. I developed a web page to further advertise services offered through the program, and the program increasingly became associated with the permanent programs offered in the academics area--including Life Skills, Academic Support, and the Integrated Learning Program. During that period, I also presented at three national conferences, a regional writing center conference, and a local conference on writing programs addressing writing program administration, program development, graduate student professionalization, and writing with student-athletes, culminating in three publications.

The commitment of ICA to fund the position and provide in-kind contributions to staff and support the center, coupled with the Writing Program's commitment to a professional development position for a graduate student to run the center speak to the movement's impact on the politics and economics of both the Writing Program and ICA. Rather than simply commit 'soft money' in the budget to developing the center, ICA's creation of a graduate assistantship for the writing center coordinator established the

center's permanence. And the Writing Program's commitment to release graduate students from teaching responsibility to run the center was also evidence of their economic and political commitment to changing the culture of student-athlete services.

The center also impacts campus culture, particularly the culture associated with college athletics, significantly. The center addresses a gap in services that the university previously overlooked, considering that tutorial services and programs that are available to many university students are simply not practical options for student-athletes, whose rigorous and regimented schedules preclude their taking advantage of such resources. The establishment of this satellite allows ICA, which touts itself as a leader in "Academics, Athletics, and Community Service" to provide supplementary writing instruction and a writing-based learner-centered community for its student-athletes. In doing so, ICA holds itself accountable to its claims about the culture of college athletics at the University of Arizona – the student-athletes are expected to excel in diverse endeavors beyond the field of play. At the same time, the program allows for the Writing Program to extend its influence on campus and further substantiate its importance to the university community and also gives credence to the athletics department's claims regarding the importance of supporting the development of the whole student through innovations in coaching, training, and psychological and instructional support. I continue to hope, as well, that the continued existence of the center will, in addition to promoting collaborative learning and offering a learning community to student-athletes, will continue to heal the rift between academic departments and ICA, promoting their cooperation and partnership well into the future.

However, achieving the mission of significantly augmenting the student-athlete support services offered to student-athletes at the University of Arizona did not come

without great difficulty, and ultimately, the mission of the center is one that is ongoing and perpetually subject to co-option, distortion, and marginalization. According to Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen, social movements that have low actual membership and low potential membership combined with rhetorical sophistication generally encounter immense difficulty when they confront establishments. A common result of such a confrontation is “avoidance,” wherein the establishment simply uses its bureaucratic infrastructure to prevent the movement from achieving its mission (51). Examples of avoidance that I encountered as I sought to develop an athletics department writing program included evasive tactics, which include the use of “buck-passing” and deferment to other areas in order to discourage agitators from pursuing their ends (49). Examples included sitting in on numerous staff meetings to pitch the idea, being required to obtain buy-in from athletics and writing program administrators, having to convince Writing Program and ICA administrators to approve a $\frac{3}{4}$ assistantship so that I could run the center, and negotiations for space. Each of these assignments alone required hours of research and phone calls and dozens of walks across campus in between the classes I was teaching and the seminars I was attending as part of my graduate school course load. Even as I successfully recruited individuals to support the development of the program, it translated into more work for each of them as well as I increasingly consulted with all of them--amounting to a considerable commitment of their time.

Whereas many establishments successfully thwart social movements in this stage because the movements run out of resources and/or patience while completing these diversionary tasks, I pushed the program’s agenda forward, forcing the athletics administrators into another stage of control rhetoric called “adjustment”--accomplished by the incorporation of the dissident ideology and accepting some of the means of

agitation (63). Though the center epitomized a learning community for student-athletes, in the context of the CATS program, it also served the needs of the academics unit. Student-athletes (again, primarily black male football players) with learning disabilities, provisional qualifiers, and students on academic probation were still assigned to meet with writing tutors for consultations. The sheer number of students assigned to meet with writing specialists violated two fundamental tenets of the mission statement; namely, that the center was available to all student-athletes, and that the center was not to be reduced to exclusively providing writing clinics for remedial writers. However, because the athletics department funded my graduate assistantship and provided in-kind funding in the form of office space, copy budget, and access to facilities, it was understood that they could determine the parameters and responsibilities of the assistantship. I continued to pursue the agenda that I sought from the onset, and was allowed to do so begrudgingly. However, in order to placate my supervisors, I was required to delegate tutors to fulfill the vision of the center that the Academics unit envisioned, and thus the unit was able to incorporate the center and determine its course.

In the final stages of my tenure as the center's coordinator, administrators became desperate as other means of control rhetoric did not force the mainstreaming of my agenda for the center. At this point, their means became suppressive, or, their main goal was now to stop the spread of the ideology by any means (54-55). Quite often, this can include the removal of or cessation of funding, but there was no breach of contract or malfeasance that could be cited. In the final year of my tenure, athletics administrators began using strategies of harassment, which Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen define as a "rhetorical strategy of suppression," to deter my work. This tactic proved to be the most successful. Their tactics of harassment included removing me from staff meetings so that

I had no voice in the affairs of the office, restructuring of my schedule so that I was forced to work extremely early (7:30 a.m.) and late (until after 10:00 p.m.) hours, subjection to constant spying and supervision, denial of rights and privileges extended to other staff members (travel funds and copy budget) and, on occasion, confrontations with staff that led to shouting matches and nearly, a physical altercation. The most egregious instance involved an accusation that I assembled and led a coup involving football players who eventually mutinied and walked-out of football practice and demanded the Athletics Director and University President fire the coach, causing a national scandal. After a full year of encountering near persistent and inexplicable harassment, I left my post mid-year and established a deal that the center be maintained under new direction.

Ultimately, the center failed to significantly alter the culture of college athletics, with few exceptions, for many of the black male student-athletes with whom I worked, even though, superficially, the impact appeared far greater. The movement was easily overpowered and co-opted by a change-resistant ICA unit and because of an unfortunate lack of sophistication on my part as the movement's organizer, which led to an uneven and ultimately inadequate consideration of political, economic, and cultural considerations that pertained to the success of the movement. Granted, even with a sophisticated understanding of campus politics, economics, and culture, larger, better funded, and more politically adept organizations have failed to impact the culture of college athletics significantly on a long-term basis. Analyses of the four non-profit organizations that are the focus of Chapters 3 and 4 bear this assertion out.

The aforementioned rhetorical confrontations represent the struggles of social movement, and it could be argued, the demise of a social movement. Though the center still exists (a fellow Rhetoric and Composition graduate student took over as coordinator

and has run the center for the past three years) and the infrastructure--physical and otherwise--of student-athlete services at the University of Arizona is permanently altered by the presence of the center, the center's ultimate impact on the culture of college athletics at the University of Arizona is worth speculation. Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen's rhetorical framework reveals the ways in which the movement was susceptible to the control rhetoric of ICA, and given the small size of the number of individuals involved with the movement, ICA easily co-opted the writing center for its own designs. In addition, given recent financial cutbacks experienced across the State of Arizona in higher education, graduate students within the Writing Program seeking an opportunity to earn a fully-funded professionalization position are unlikely to challenge ICA's hegemony if it ultimately means that they will lose graduate support. Once ICA successfully removed me from the equation, they were able to minimize the impact of a student-athlete advocacy driven social movement and, in turn, establish a program that superficially evokes their student-support mission while fulfilling an ultimately utilitarian and capitalist role within the structure of the department – i.e. keep remedial students eligible for competition by tutoring them through their writing classes. Though the center remains, its once social movement-driven mission is a shell of its former self, full of potential rather than kinetic social movement energy.

EPILOGUE: ...MUST COME DOWN

I sit across the table from the Director of Academics in his office, behind a closed door. His large oak desk places a comfortable distance between the two of us; a distance that he attempts to bridge by leaning forward in earnest, lowering his voice as an august look comes over his face. I prepare to ask the question he knows I will ask. He prepares the answer I know he will issue. And the dance begins.

“What happened to Isaiah?”

Isaiah was a conscientious, friendly, and promising young black male student-athlete from Los Angeles. He was a first-generation college student who earned an opportunity to play big time Division I-A football as a defensive tackle. At 6’3, 285 lbs., he was undersized, and it was expected that he would redshirt, put on a few pounds, and acclimate to a new city, a new university. However, as the defensive line became snakebitten by injuries, Isaiah filled in. And he acquitted himself quite well, leading the defensive line in hits for losses and recording two sacks. Yet, for someone as imposing in size as he was, Isaiah was courteous and always smiled and laughed heartily. And belying his jockish exterior, he was serious about his schoolwork. We ended virtually every writing consultation over the course of his freshman year talking about how he was finally doing it – breaking the cycle, making his parents proud, earning a college degree. He made a B in 101 and an A in 102. His instructor, a friend of mine, told me he was one of his favorite students in his 20+ years of teaching. The spring semester ended and Isaiah had survived—barely—but with a summer course or two, he would lift his GPA over 2.0 and remain eligible for competition. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts and reductions, tutorial services were cancelled for the summer, and I would not have

opportunities to interact with Isaiah, but I remained confident that he would prevail and we'd catch up next fall.

“What happened to Isaiah?”

Isaiah struggled that summer, making C's in both of his courses and failing to bring his GPA up to the minimum he would need to remain eligible for competition. Disappointed by his performance, he returned to Los Angeles, and stopped returning phone calls from academic advisors and coaches alike. He was never heard from again. Coaches scurried to sign a junior college transfer to fill the void and academics advisors continued to prepare for the oncoming semester.

No one dropped the ball on Isaiah. Sure, there were budget cuts that led to the academics area's budget being cut, but there were campus resources available. Coaches and advisors offered constant encouragement. Advisors checked on his grades on a weekly basis. He just didn't make it. Not because of negligence or inattention. If it were explained to me that way, that day, in that office, I could have swallowed it.

“What happened to Isaiah?”

What I heard in the next two minutes forever changed the way I viewed and continue to view big-time college athletics and the way it manages, exploits, and disposes of the labor of young black men in the revenue generating sports. *“William, only half of our student athletes graduate in a six year period, and we lose about one out of three during their first year of college. Think about that. I know that you and Isaiah were close, and it's unfortunate that he didn't make it, but you get used to it. A lot of these kids come into our lives for a short time and then you never see them again.”*

What he neglected to mention was that an inordinately high percentage of those students who just so happened to fail to matriculate were black male football players.

When he looked at the matrix, he saw numbers and slots to be filled. I saw and still continue to see Isaiah. From that day, I began counting down the number of days I'd work there, and imagining an approach to athletics administration that would characterize Isaiah's demise differently – and ultimately work toward reducing such attrition rather than writing it off as the cost of doing business.

And that's what happened to Isaiah.

While in San Antonio presenting at CCCC's in 2004, I took a cab out to Trinity University, a small, independent liberal arts university of about 2,500 undergraduate students with a fantastic academic and athletic reputation. Situated on the San Antonio River just outside the metropolitan area, Trinity University is verdant and quiet, and in the early spring warmth the smell of azaleas and magnolias permeated the air with a sweet aroma and the entire campus seemed to move along at a slow and steady pace as if it were the setting of a movie featuring an erudite student as the protagonist. The athletics facilities were modest, but embedded with the fire and pride of Trinity Athletics. A two story building contained all of the athletics offices, weight rooms and training facilities, as well as the locker rooms of the student-athletes. Shiny trophies and plaques covered the walls in the foyer, including their most recent addition, a six foot tall sterling silver trophy depicting a young woman volleying a serve, representing their recent victory as national champions in Division III women's tennis. Faculty offices, racquetball courses and dance studios filled out the bottom floor, as the Physical Education department also used the facilities. It was quite common to see student-athletes, faculty, coaches, and Trinity students and staff crossing one another in the halls, convening with one another, and using the same facilities. The ancient Greek

gymnasium, where athletic and intellectual training and development happened in the same spaces and were considered equally pivotal to a young man's education, seemed fully embodied and replicated in these spaces.

That afternoon, I had an opportunity to speak for a few moments with their men's soccer coach, who had also won a Division III national championship during his tenure at Trinity. We spoke about his players, who included National Merit Scholars and full academic scholarship recipients that majored in Geopolitical Science, International Business, and Organic Chemistry. We spoke about their road trips for matches and how tutors in their athletics department would accompany the team to help them study while on the road. We talked about faculty liaisons who worked with athletics administrators to devise schedules and degree plans that would allow student-athletes to choose their majors, remain compliant with NCAA satisfactory progress statutes, and meet the rigor of matriculating successfully in a challenging intellectual environment.

I asked the coach to sum up his years at Trinity, in the context of a larger conversation we were wrapping up about the abuses, distractions, and negative perceptions oft associated with college athletics. He leaned forward across his desk, smiled curiously, and noted that his answer would have to be brief, because he'd scheduled a meeting that afternoon across campus. He explained that the head of the History Department was joining him for lunch so that they could talk with an incoming prospect and his family. The prospective student-athlete, a Nigerian-born young man who'd turned down Rice, Tulane, and Southern Methodist in favor of Trinity, had a 1300+ SAT score and fully intended to redshirt his junior year in order to spend it fulfilling an internship in Africa. They were going to spend the lunch hour learning about the internship opportunity and determining how the student would go about training and

competing while in Africa in ways that did not violate his amateur status yet still allowed him to remain in shape when he returned for his senior season. And the history professor was going to discuss how the internship would transfer as credits towards his degree.

The coach didn't realize it, but in cutting our meeting short, he'd provided me with the answer to my question about characterizing Trinity Athletics. Of course, I was left with as many questions about Trinity as I had about Arizona. Certainly the experience of student-athletes at Trinity was more ideal than that of the student-athletes with whom I'd worked at Arizona. But at what cost? Trinity is an expensive, private, liberal arts institution. Because it is a Division III NCAA competitor, it does not offer athletic scholarships for competition, meaning that to compete at Trinity University, a student would have to have both a stellar academic record, complete with high test scores, GPAs, and a vita chock-full of relevant civic experience *and* come from a family who can socially prepare and economically afford to send a student for matriculation there. Simply put, Trinity, as do most small private liberal arts institutions, inadvertently exclude young black men who are academically underprepared for college. As a result, they do not receive the kinds of support and advocacy that they so desperately need. In other words, Trinity provides an ideal amateur athletics experience that balances intellectual and athletic pursuit, but is able to do so because it works with a carefully selected cadre of young men and women who, because of their academic and socio-economic backgrounds, thrive in these settings.

By contrast, the big-time athletics model at a school like Arizona works with a carefully selected cadre of young men, particularly in the revenue generating sports, who they believe will compete at the elite level and lead their teams to victory. The student support model, then, does not focus on balancing intellectual and athletic development,

but rather on managing their academic maintenance and progress so that their athletic success is maximized. The Trinity model is not only reserved for a select group of athletes, excluding millions of black youth in the state of Texas alone, it cannot be replicated at large public institutions' athletics departments because of the variance of incoming student-athletes' intellectual ability and academic literacy as well as because of the lack of balance between intellectual and athletic development characteristic of elite amateur competition in the NCAA. If Arizona was a nightmare, Trinity was a pipe dream.

Northwestern State University is a mid-major Division I/Research II designated college situated in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Natchitoches, the same city where the movie "Steel Magnolias" was set, is known for its' iron-wrought fenced homes, century-old oak trees, and historic plantations, set within a rural town in north-central Louisiana. I'd accepted a position as Assistant Athletics Director there, working directly beneath the same man who was the Athletics Director when I was an undergraduate student-athlete. We'd had several conversations over the span of the two months between the time I'd accepted the offer to take the position and the day I'd reported to begin my tenure there. We'd been talking over the phone for about twenty minutes about the recent inconsistent play of the men's and women's basketball teams and the progress of the talks with the Student Government Association regarding the imposition of a student fee for athletics when he mentioned that the Senior Women's Administrator and Academics Advisor wanted to speak with me as soon as I got into town. She'd been in his office earlier sharing with him the academic stats from the previous semester and noted that over forty percent of the 312 student-athletes, including more than two dozen football players, were

3.0 and above for the semester – a remarkable statistic by all measures (<http://www.nsudemons.com/story.asp?ID=2602>). In the midst of their celebration, however, they'd discussed one particular sour note that troubled them considerably.

Trent was a true freshman who, after walking on and making the travel squad during summer drills, earned a role as a special teams player and backup outside linebacker and played in 10 games. By most measures, this was quite an accomplishment, and coaches are thrilled about his prospects for the future given his talent, innate leadership skills, and high learning curve. However, Trent was concerned after his first semester in college, in which he made three C's and a B in only 12 units, after having to drop six units because of the unexpected rigor of traveling to all the team's games. Normally, a 2.25 GPA would not be cause for alarm considering that student-athletes need only maintain a 2.0 to remain eligible. But Trent was a salutatorian at his high school and had never made so much as one C in his life. And coaches and administrators alike grew worried that his sense of disappointment and self-doubt would carry over into the spring semester, threatening his ability to perform well on and off the field.

I was asked to speak to Trent upon my arrival. Not about time management and study skills, because he'd cover those things in orientation and with his tutors. And not, *per se*, about my own experiences as a walk-on who made travel squad and survived, because its important that he not be lectured to or told that he just needs to 'buckle down,' 'straighten up and fly right,' or any other useless clichés. And certainly not so that I could engage in psychoanalyzing him. I was asked to speak to Trent because that is the culture of Northwestern State Athletics. Athletics administrators at Northwestern tout student-athletes academic accomplishments as excitedly as they do their athletic ones.

Northwestern's student-athletes graduate at higher rates than virtually all conference competitors and at higher rates than its in-state institutional peers, and place as many student-athletes on the Dean's List and academic all-conference teams as any other school in the Ark-La-Tex. Northwestern is not only home to one of the winningest Division-I athletics programs in the south, but it can boast of well above average graduation rates for both its men's football and basketball teams. And all of this is accomplished with one of the most meager budgets in the conference and a tremendously short-staffed academics unit. This was the case when I competed there as an undergraduate student-athlete, and I am charged with a mission to maintain that rich tradition of academic and athletic excellence that has defined Northwestern State Athletics for decades.

So that is what I was asked to speak with Trent about. Culture and Tradition. And that the drive to maintain them will come not only from within, but from the support of the entire athletics department, which believes that student-athletes' athletic, intellectual, and civic excellence are not only expected, but demanded.

I share with the members of the Drake Group, Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, Black Coaches Association, the Knight Commission, and many sympathetic educators and administrators across the country a desire to maximize all of the positive traits about college athletics and identify and excise those that cause or have the potential to cause the most harm. I believe, particularly, that minimizing the kinds of exploitation and abuse that big-time college athletics, as an institution, visits upon far too many disfranchised black men is the single most important issue that unifies and drives college athletics' most ardent critics and detractors. As a rhetorician, I believe it is important to

direct my energy towards the analysis of institutional racism in collegiate sport. The ultimate question, then, is how institutional racism manifests itself in the contemporary institution of higher education as the Athletics-Industry Complex continues to proliferate exponentially in economic, political, and cultural importance--at the expense of thousands of young black men.

In this dissertation, I have analyzed social movements that endeavored to compel the NCAA and its host institutions to enact educational reforms that would, in a *de facto* sense, enhance the educational and psychosocial development opportunities for young black male revenue sport athletes who graduate at disproportionately lower rates while their labor serves as the engine that drives their athletics departments' money-making machines. In my analysis I have discovered that it is the failure of each movement's application of social movement rhetoric that leads to their collective demise, suggesting that wide-scale reform measures, especially when suggested by entities outside of the institutions, may be impossible when those entities fail to account for the importance of a stable and proliferating sport culture in many American institutions of higher education.

For on-campus movements as well as off-campus based movements, Bowers, Ochs and Jensen's and Cruse's dictums hold true--all non-violent social movements must consider, and ultimately impact, political, economic and cultural considerations in order to achieve their ends, and they must successfully use agitation rhetoric to combat the control rhetoric of establishments that will resist social change with all available resources. Though it appears intuitive that the advantages of being on a host campus and having inside knowledge about that campus' political and economic infrastructure may offer a unique advantage to campus-based social movements, at least in the case of the writing program I coordinated and the *de facto* social movement I spurred on my campus,

those particular characteristics were minimally helpful. Movements from inside the institution meet fates similar to that of off-campus social movements, suggesting that their knowledge of unique campus infrastructures offers them little in the way of advantage over external non-profit organizations, as members of on-campus contingencies are also quickly marginalized and radicalized even within the culture of the Academy.

In the end, I have discovered that the insidiously corporatized model of college athletics overseen by the NCAA has been, to date, largely impervious to social movement because of its inherent rhetorical and organization strength as an establishment and the failure of smaller, weaker agitators to win over widespread support for radical educational reform. As with all successful social movements, two elements may ultimately dictate the success of the movement to redefine the culture of college athletics in American culture – the passage of time and the ability to seize kairotic moments in the future where such reform will seem more feasible and necessary.

This does not mean that the aforementioned organizations will cease their efforts in the meantime, or that Writing Program faculty--as well as concerned faculty across the host campuses departments and divisions--will discontinue their own efforts to reform college athletics when their professional duties call for such intervention and advocacy of student-athletes. As Jackie Robinson, the first Black to break the color line in professional baseball once noted, “the right to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time” and it is not an issue that will allow those interested in pursuing it to wait for the right time. Furthermore, rhetorician Adam Banks asserts, in Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground, that “questions of race and racism are the most important questions of our field” and calls for rhetoricians, compositionists, and all

writing program professionals to reconsider the ways in which our professional obligations should also involve us in quests for social justice (42). For too many student-athletes, their membership on athletics teams guarantees them first-class treatment while they remain eligible for athletic competition but ensures their marginalization and disfranchisement as students. Statistical and qualitative studies have shown that this particularly impacts black male student-athletes in the revenue-generating sports who are academically and socially underprepared for the rigors of college, and many of whom are not even prepared for the rigors of the professional world and citizenship upon graduation. Because the same athletes who drive the engine of collegiate sport in America reap a disproportionately small benefit, it is an issue that should be redressed *post haste* by higher education administrators and faculty. And yet, the low graduation and retention rates of black male revenue sport athletes remains a central problem in collegiate sport--an 800 lb. gorilla seated next to an elephant on the “Front Porch” of the Academy⁶⁹.

Next Steps

Researchers across various fields in higher education are beginning to examine the cultural, political, and economic issues surrounding the place of college athletics in the Academy. Various issues and questions remain to be investigated, and many pertain to NCAA governance and institutional responses to growing problems in major college athletics *vis-à-vis* graduation success rates of revenue-sport athletes, Title IX/Gender Equity policy interpretations, the unchecked proliferation of college athletics departments (otherwise known as the “Arms Race”), and the role that external agitation will play in

⁶⁹ College Basketball Hall of Fame Head Coach Dean Smith, UNC-Chapel Hill, once famously quipped “Athletics is to the university like the front porch is to a home. It is the most visible part, yet certainly not the most important.”

shaping NCAA policy in American colleges and universities. Of particular interest to university writing program professionals and writing program administration theorists is the role, historically and in the future, that writing programs play in advocating for educational equality for student-athletes. Given the university writing program's role in the past as progenitor of social movement on college campuses (e.g. "Students' Right to their Own Language" movement, "Community Literacy" movement, "Writing Across the Curriculum," etc.), why doesn't rhetoric and composition scholarship acknowledge that role? Will writing program professionals continue to engage in student-athlete advocacy on college campuses, and if so, will the issue become a special interest within the field so that more scholarship and creative administrative responses follow suit? Finally, will more rhetoricians turn their analytical lenses toward the behemoth that is college athletics, attempting to gain a greater understanding of how the NCAA's intractability in American society is the result of rhetorical construction as much as it is financial, political, and cultural strategy?

I will continue to research and develop a theory of athletics administration that centers on notions of student-athlete advocacy rather than capitalist athletics proliferation and to employ means both traditional (scholarship, administrative work, pedagogy, consultation) and revolutionary (non-violent social movement) in order to redress the most pernicious elements of college athletics culture and advocate for those made most vulnerable by its embedded forms of institutional exploitation, exclusion, and disfranchisement. I know that in this endeavor I have much to draw from and am confident that I have much to contribute to the field of rhetoric and composition, to the critical study of American sport culture, and to the redress of American college athletics.

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