



Special Issue Editors' Note: High Impact Practices in Intercollegiate Athletics

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The relationship between athletics and academics represents an ongoing preoccupation for researchers and public policy makers. The question of whether college athletes receive the full benefit of the educational opportunities promised to them at the time of their recruitment and enrollment is one that has endured for well over a century. The impetus for this special issue emerges from two bodies of research, one dealing with high impact educational practices (HIPs) and student engagement (Kuh, 2008; Finley & McNair, 2013) and the other focusing on college athlete academic success in its myriad permutations in academic clustering (Houston & Baber, 2017; Paule-Koba, 2019), graduation rates and graduation gaps (Harper, 2018; Turner, Southall, & Eckard, 2015), time demands (Penn Schoen Berland, 2015), and absences and missed class time (Carter, 2017).

This special issue sought submissions from scholars who were exploring college athlete academic engagement and success through the lens of HIPs as conceived by Kuh (2008), meaning active teaching and learning practices that have been found to support student success. High impact practices that have been found to increase rates of student retention and engagement include first year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, e-portfolios, service learning, community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects (Kuh, 2008). The timing for such a focused conversation on college athletes, academics, and access to high impact educational practices coincides with a need identified by Schneider and Albertine (2013) to pursue more nuanced research about HIPs and specific student cohorts.

College athletes, as an identifiable cohort, offer an opportunity to expand on the literature. They also provide a unique grouping that is known to encounter challenges that undermine their educational interests (Paskus & Bell, 2016). In one NCAA study, 40% of Division I athletes reported that they did not feel positive about their ability to keep up with their classes while in-season. In that same study, more than a third of Division I athletes indicated that a commitment to their team prevented them from studying abroad, while only 10% of Division I athletes reported they had either studied abroad or would have an opportunity to do so. Further, more than a third of Division I athletes reported that they were unable to take a desired course because of their athletic commitment (Paskus & Bell, 2016).

Our call generated robust interest from scholars around the country and in this volume we are pleased to share eight articles. Each of these articles speak in quite interesting and, at times, very different ways to college athlete academic engagement. In addition, they suggest how HIPs are employed, or could be employed, in helping athletes both access and traverse educational opportunities available on campuses. The collection of articles covers the trajectory of the college athlete's experience from transition into college through the end of their careers, highlighting the subtle and overt barriers that college athletes experience in pursuit of their academic aspirations; the racial dynamics embedded in athletic and academic programs that affect Black athlete academic engagement; the role of HIPs in unlocking educational opportunity; and the role of HIPs in support of college athlete transitions out of sport.

Inside the Issue

"There's no way I can do all of this": The Perceived Impacts of Stress Exposure on the Academic Development of Collegiate Athletes

We begin with an exploration of the difficulty college athletes have in reconciling role conflicts between athletics and academics. Findings from a qualitative study conducted by Sarah Hatteberg (n=56 college athlete interviews) are reported in the article entitled "There's no way I can do all of this": The Perceived Impacts of Stress Exposure on the Academic Development of Collegiate Athletes. In sum, athletes had a difficult time accessing HIPs because of the emphasis on their athletic role obligations, time and energy demands due to athletic scheduling, and academic oversight that put athletic considerations above academic concerns. The athletes in this study believed greater opportunity to participate in HIPs would prepare them better for life after college.

I am not only a Student-Athlete: Investigating Social Identity Complexity as a Stereotype Threat Mitigation Strategy to Reduce Barriers to Academic Engagements

While the practices of the college sport environment can create barriers to the academic success of athletes, Jacob English and Ann Kruger, in their article "I am not your Student-Athlete:" Investigating Social Identity Complexity as a Stereotype Threat Mitigation Strategy to Reduce Barriers to Academic Engagement explore the harmful stereotypes college athletes encounter that cast them as unintelligent or intellectually lazy that require mitigation strategies to enable college athletes to access high impact educational practices.

Antiblackness in College Athletics: Facilitating High Impact Campus Engagement and Successful Career Transitions among Black Athletes

When examined through a racial lens, the persistent gaps in degree attainment for Black athletes compared to other athletes and the undergraduate population has drawn numerous calls for reform. As Eddie Comeaux and Sara Grummert note in *Antiblackness in College Athletics: Facilitating High Impact Campus Engagement and Successful Career Transitions among Black Athletes*, campus racial climate and antiblack racism in the college sport industry have served as significant impediments to Black athlete success in the classroom. They introduce the Career Transition Scorecard, "a mechanism and process designed to shift cognitive frames among practitioners, foster evidence-based practices, and improve campus experiences and subsequent outcomes for athletes".

An Examination of Culturally Responsive Programming for Black Student-Athletes' Holistic Development at Division I Historically White Institutions (HWIs)

In Shannon Jolly, Joseph Cooper, and Jepkorir (Rose) Chepyator-Thomson's piece entitled *An Examination of Culturally Responsive Programming for Black Student-Athletes' Holistic Development at Division I Historically White Institutions*, the authors delved into existing literature on culturally responsive programming efforts designed to address the unique experiences and needs of Black college athletes who attend historically White institutions

(HWIs). The authors found that while programs supported by the NCAA or athletic departments designed to generally support athletes held some benefit, programs tailored to the needs of Black athletes led by faculty were more likely to incorporate culturally responsive programming. This programming created a space for Black athletes to experience their lives holistically, resolving in part the tensions that arise between the competing demands of their athletic and academic roles and the pressures that Black athletes experience on majority White campuses.

Collaboration Between Athletic and Campus Advisors: Ensuring College Athletes' Success

Shifting from a focus on college athlete academic experience to those who provide academic support to athletes, Lisa Rubin and William Lewis shed light on the need for a nuanced discussion of the relationship between athletic and campus advisors. In *Collaboration Between Athletic and Campus Advisors: Ensuring College Athletes' Success*, Rubin and Lewis report findings drawn from interviews with 28 athletic and campus advisors indicated that there was confusion about the roles that each play, translating to confusion among athletes; the need for greater collaboration so that athletic advisors were more informed of developments in academic curriculum and campus advisors were more informed about the realities of the lives of athletes as well as NCAA rules compliance issues.

Connected at the HIP: Exploring Quality Dimensions in First-Year Seminars for Student-Athletes

The content and design of first year seminars offered to athletes through document analysis as reported in *Connected at the HIP: Exploring Quality Dimensions in First-Year Seminars for Student-Athletes* by Nikkola Grafnetterova, Chelsie Hawkinson, and Rachel Rodriguez revealed that the quality dimensions of HIPs were generally present but there was a need for more intentionality in the design of these courses. They also found that of the 10 first year seminars they reviewed, eight were taught by athletic department staff and only two were taught by full-time faculty. They indicated that there was a notable increase in rigor for the courses taught by full-time faculty members.

Engaging College Athletes in & Through Graduate Study: Academic Trajectories and Implications

In the final two articles in this volume, authors explore the experience of athletes once they complete their undergraduate degrees. In the case of Siduri Haslerig's work on *Engaging College Athletes In and Through Graduate Study: Academic Trajectories and Implications*, she argues that pursuit of graduate study can be thought of as a high impact education practice. She further concludes that for some athletes, graduate study fills a number of gaps that existed in their undergraduate experience through more opportunities to interact with students; coursework that better matches their academic interests; and experiences designed to help them in life after their sport career is over.

College Football Player Transitions Out of Their Sport: A Qualitative Exploration

In contrast to Haslerig's work focused on college athletes who continued to play while pursuing post-baccalaureate or graduate coursework, Taylor Payne and Andrew Driska's manuscript reports on interviews with six former NCAA Division I football players who were in the process of transitioning out of their sport. In *A Qualitative Exploration of Transition out of Sport and its Relation to Athletic Identity and Social Support*, those with more diverse support systems were able to adapt better to transitioning out of football; the environment that the former football players had been in influenced the strength of their athlete identity; and the former football players who had developed more identities were better able to adapt to the uncertainty of moving on into a new environment.

As editors, we are heartened by the thoughtful work that is being done to analyze the opportunities for, or lack thereof, academic engagement for college athletes before, during, and after their time on campus. We hope that the empirical research presented in this special issue encourages scholars to continue the critical analysis of academic engagement in collegiate athletics.

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A Note of Appreciation to the Special Issue Reviewers & Authors

This special issue would not have been possible without the willingness of our 53 reviewers to provide thoughtful and insightful feedback and the patience and persistence of our authors. Due to the accident of timing, the review of manuscripts for this issue coincided with the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. While managing the stress and uncertainty of this time, reviewers and authors alike worked diligently to bring this issue to fruition. On behalf of JIIA, we express our deep gratitude for your service and commitment. An additional note of appreciation is extended to JIIA editors, Thomas Aicher and Joseph Cooper for their constant encouragement and support for this project.

Special Dedication to Dr. Ellen J. Staurowsky

On behalf of the College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) and Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA), we would like to recognize Dr. Ellen J. Staurowsky for her outstanding service, scholarship, and leadership with the conference, the journal, and the scholarly field of intercollegiate athletics. Dr. Staurowsky is an exemplar scholar, educator, and social justice champion who has been involved with CSRI since its inception in 2008. With her numerous roles, she has served on the CSRI Board of Directors, as a CSRI Case Study Competition Judge, as a CSRI Panelist, as a CSRI Session Organizer, as a JIIA Editorial Board Member, as a JIIA Outstanding Article of Year Reviewer, and most recently as the Senior Editor for the JIIA Special Issue on High Impact Practices in Intercollegiate Athletics. Her contributions to both CSRI and JIIA have been invaluable and as a result of her efforts the visibility and impact of the conference and journal have reached international audiences. We thank and honor her for all that she has done and continues to do for college athletes, coaches, staff, and administrators in the past, present, and future.