Division III Student-Athletes Perceptions of Pay for Play

Daniel P. Maloney
St. John Fisher College

Follow this and additional works at: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/sport_undergrad

Part of the Sports Management Commons

How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?

Recommended Citation

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations.

This document is posted at https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/sport_undergrad/87 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
Division III Student-Athletes Perceptions of Pay for Play

Abstract
Since the NCAA was first created, the subject of academic corruption in intercollegiate athletics has been of significant concern and empirical inquiry (Ridpath, 2008). There are many current issues that are still ongoing today such as: the denial of payment of Division I football players, the exploitation of student-athletes in academics, and the difference in treatment between student-athletes and students academically. Although this may not always hold true at all Division I schools, previous studies have concluded the values and missions of the NCAA seem to be misaligned with what they are actually promoting. I would like to prove that the NCAA is in need of some serious reform especially the commercialization and exploitation of student-athletes in big time Division I programs. My research question is does the NCAA properly align with the missions and values they have in place? More importantly I would like to show that the values and missions the NCAA currently has in place does not align with what is really taking place in intercollegiate athletics.

Document Type
Undergraduate Project

Professor's Name
Katharine Burakowski

Subject Categories
Sports Management

This undergraduate project is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/sport_undergrad/87
Division III Student-Athletes Perceptions of Pay for Play

Daniel P. Maloney

St. John Fisher College
Abstract

Since the NCAA was first created, the subject of academic corruption in intercollegiate athletics has been of significant concern and empirical inquiry (Ridpath, 2008). There are many current issues that are still ongoing today such as: the denial of payment of Division I football players, the exploitation of student-athletes in academics, and the difference in treatment between student-athletes and students academically. Although this may not always hold true at all Division I schools, previous studies have concluded the values and missions of the NCAA seem to be misaligned with what they are actually promoting. I would like to prove that the NCAA is in need of some serious reform especially the commercialization and exploitation of student-athletes in big time Division I programs. My research question is does the NCAA properly align with the missions and values they have in place? More importantly I would like to show that the values and missions the NCAA currently has in place does not align with what is really taking place in intercollegiate athletics.

Introduction

“In July of 1859, two colleges came together on a field in Massachusetts to play a game of baseball that is now recognized as the first intercollegiate sporting event in the United States” (Carson II & Rinehart, 2010). This game radically altered higher education and collegiate experiences because this was the first time the sport was seen as an intercollegiate contest rather than just a regular amateur sporting event (Carson II and Rinehart, 2010). Prior to that
game, for two centuries American colleges and universities focused on educating young men and women to be learning and become engaged citizens rather than recognized student-athletes (Carson II et al., 2010; Oriard, 2012; McArdle & Petr, 2012). Sports seemed to take the back seat in colleges as students were more focused on becoming educated rather than spending most of their time practicing sports. The student-athletes were required to maintain their own education while learning life lessons through sports such as the value of hard work, dedication, perseverance, leadership, and other important qualities (Carson II et al., 2010). The focus always remained first on the student and his education, then on the athlete (Carson II et al., 2010; Cole, 1976; Zimbalist, 2010). Back in the 1800’s it was considered “a sound body would lead to a sound mind” (Carson II et al., 2010). This however changed when schools started to reap benefits from their athletics, starting in the 1970’s, especially the revenue generating sports such as football and men’s basketball (Zimbalist, 2010).

The subject of academic corruption in intercollegiate athletics has been of significant concern and empirical inquiry for about one hundred years (Ridpath, 2008). Many negative issues affect college sports regularly now such as academic fraud, cheating in the recruitment of athletes, false sense of entitlements, and illegal inducements from schools and boosters (Ridpath, 2008). In fact controversy about compensating student-athletes for their services actually first began during the second intercollegiate sports event, a rowing match between Harvard and Yale in 1852, in which Harvard’s crew team received payments in order to participate (Oriard, 2012; Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). Three years later from the first match, in an apparent rematch, Yale protested in the beginning of the match over Harvard’s use of a student from the 1852 boat who had subsequently already graduated but their request
was denied and Harvard went on to win again (Oriard, 2012). Schools began to establish a win at all cost attitude in athletics, students and faculty alike banded together in a sense of institutional camaraderie to prove that their school was better than the one down the street (Carson II & Rinehart, 2010). Over the next half century, questions of eligibility and reform came to surface as college sports had no traditions, no governing body, and minimal institutional control (Oriard, 2012).

I would like to prove that the NCAA is in need of some serious reform especially the commercialization and exploitation of student-athletes in big time Division I programs. My research question is does the NCAA properly align with the missions and values they have in place? More importantly I would like to show that the values and missions the NCAA currently has in place does not align with what is really taking place in intercollegiate athletics. This is important because these issues have been ongoing ever since college sports was born and have yet to be reformed or resolved. This study will produce a new perspective as I will be the first to study Division III student-athletes perceptions of their thoughts on the NCAA and the current treatment of student-athletes.

**Literature Review**

**(1880’s-1900)**

During the 1880’s through the first five years of the 1900’s, college athletics became increasingly organized and shifted from student run organizations to institutional control (Oriard, 2012). This was the first movement towards reform in college sports as there were
many issues to iron out such as eligibility status in regards to academics, the difference between part-time and full-time students, as well as recruiting rules and violations (Oriard, 2012). A four point consensus on eligibility had emerged from these institutional movements in which they determined a student-athlete was eligible to participate in sports for only four years, had to be a full-time undergraduate student, in good academic standing, that maintained the pursuit of a degree (Oriard, 2012). Due to the fact that there was no government body available in college sports, schools were to monitor the eligibility of their own athletes and make sure they were fit to play each year. During these times football passed “America’s pastime” baseball as the number one sport and best sport spectacle in the country as it involved lots of pride between competing schools (Oriard, 2012). In the early 1900’s massive concrete and steel stadiums began sprouting up on many college campuses and reinforced how important sports were becoming in American society (Oriard, 2012).

**Growth of College Football and the NCAA**

Rather than eligibility and amateurism rules coming to the forefront it was actually the safety which was the most important for college football. The most popular offensive formation was the wedge in which seven players would line up side by side and link arms to charge into the defending line, making the game very dangerous (Cole, 1976). In the late 1800’s media was the first to recognize that football was a very dangerous sport that needed to have some rule changes implemented in order to preserve the sport (Rader, 2009). Joseph Pulitzer was the first to exploit the violence of football and magnified the sense of crisis to the American public when he wrote about the sport or reported previous games (Oriard, 2012).
Also during these times “tramp athletes” became very famous as they would enroll in schools for the fall semester only and play sports, but never attend a class, to only move onto another school for the spring semester (Oriard, 2012). The college football world in the 1880’s and 1890’s were full of these tramp athletes, which only added to the need for a governing body in college sports.

In 1905 President Roosevelt stepped in to intervene when college football was at the height of its crisis and debacle (Oriard, 2012; Rader, 2009). Roosevelt brought together college administrators during a historical meeting in which he addressed the problems in college football and developed a governing body for the sport called the IAA or Intercollegiate Athletic Association (Cole, 1976). The group was formally established in 1906 but it was made to reform the rules and regulations of the sport (Cole, 1976). The governing body was the first step in reforming college football and all sports as it still exists today as the NCAA or National Collegiate Athletic Association (Rader, 2009). Many of the matters addressed related to eligibility and incoming freshman not being eligible to participate in varsity sports, eligibility being restricted to three years instead of four, restrictions on transfers from other schools, and athletes being banned to play on any team if they did not represent their own institutions (Oriard, 2012). However schools were still in charge of keeping track of their own student-athletes eligibility and Roosevelt made some significant rule changes such as implementing the forward pass, creating a line of scrimmage or distance between a team’s offense and defense, and giving a team four downs in order to gain 10 yards for a first down to open up the offenses and draw more attention (Rader, 2009).
College Football began to gain tremendous amounts of support for these rule changes however it was shocking that there were not any academic standards put into place (Oriard, 202). This change in sport was evident but no change in academics portrayed the shift of importance between sports and education (Oriard, 2012). “In this era the linkage between alumni and the institutions reflected institutional thirst to obtain financial support from donors became firmly tied to many universities’ intercollegiate sports programs” (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). As many colleges and universities began to profit from their sports teams mainly in the sport of football, amateurism and professionalism problems seemed to rise to the forefront for the newly formed NCAA (Oriard, 2012). According to Michael Oriard, “professionalism’s twin curse was commercialism, which exploded during this time just like those overarching football stadiums” (2012, p. 7).

With the issues of sport always taking an advantage over academic standards, amateurism issues always seem to arise. The NCAA has always maintained that the intercollegiate sports should be viewed as an amateur sport even though athletes are not being paid (NCAA.com). According to the NCAA amateurism or an amateur is a “person who engages in a study, sport, or other activity for pleasure rather than for financial benefit or professional reasons... or an athlete who has never competed for payment or for a monetary prize” (Muenzen, 2003).

Reform of the NCAA

Many forms of reform have been created in the hopes of strengthening the NCAA, the academic standards, eligibility issues, and the exploitation of student-athletes through
commercialization (Ridpath, 2008). All these efforts of reform are currently ongoing, but overall the efforts have failed to change anything substantial to curb the commercialization and academic problems faced everyday in college sport even today (Ridpath, 2008). It is important to point out the history of the NCAA and times of change because it helps pave the way for the types of reform that are needed today. The first movement towards reform of the IAA or NCAA was the Carnegie Report in 1929 (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009; Cole, 1979; Oriard, 2012; Rader, 2009; Ridpath, 2008; Sperber, 2000). The Carnegie Report documented rampant professionalism, commercialization, exploitation that were corrupting virtually all aspects of intercollegiate athletics (Ridpath, 2008). The Carnegie Report identified the inordinate emphasis on intercollegiate sports competition on college campuses and failed university administrative oversight of athletic programs (Ridpath, 2008). It called for reform to eliminate professionalism and commercialism from college sports which inevitably was unheard because it all still exists today. Michael Oriard blames the timing of the Carnegie Report because “big time college football had simply became too important to local communities and institutions to be governed only by ethical and academic concerns” (2012, p. 8). This was the same era in which college football was bigger than school with respect to the amount of money dedicated to running the program. This was the time when the American society was filled with sports information because the local news agencies and media magnified the spectacle, one game at a time (Rader, 2009). Commercial radio began to greatly rise in the 1920’s and newspapers now depended on sports news for circulations (Oriard, 2012). This was the beginning of the rise of sports and the turning point in sports especially college football and basketball into the big business it currently is today. However unsuccessful, the Carnegie Report was the first step
During the 1930’s through the 1950’s college sports saw no major changes being handed down from the newly formed NCAA. During these times immigrants began participating in football and basketball as a way to achieve stardom and popularity in their new country (Rader, 2009). Oriard claims “Football played a key role in democratizing American higher education, as a predominately white protestant game began to be dominated by the sons of working-class Irish, Italian, Polish, Slavic, and Jewish immigrants at a time when anti-immigrant hysteria was at its height in the US” (p. 9, 2012). Sports served as another path to gain popularity and stardom as opposed to just working (Rader, 2009).

Big time College football entered a new era in the 1950’s, with the birth of the athletic scholarship in 1956 (Oriard, 2012). Athletes were given financial aid or money to attend a school for free for all four years because of their athletic skills (Oriard, 2012). This was a risky decision made by the NCAA however because with the history of tramp athletes in the early 1920’s athletes could attend a school for free without any confirmation that they were going to pursue a degree and graduate.

The Sanity Code was the second form of reform that changed the NCAA and the way they viewed college sports in relation to higher education. Five of the points in the Sanity Code reiterated what was agreed on in the first College Convention meeting in 1906: athletes being held to same academic standards as regular students, one–year residency for transfers, undergraduates only could participate, three years of eligibility, and freshman were banned
from participating (Oriard, 2012). The new changes however introduced in the sanity code all dealt with many of the issues that we are currently still dealing with today involving professionalism, commercialism, and amateurism. They limited the number and amount of financial grants to athletes to come from the institutions rather than boosters or supporters, banned all subsidies or gifts beyond what is regularly permitted, and eliminated excessive entertainment of prospective student-athletes (Oriard, 2012). These changes were all made to reinforce the importance of schooling and to detract away student-athletes who were not interested in becoming an actual student.

The Sanity code was the first time academics was included in the NCAA code and conduct. Many of these academic changes were necessary as the Carnegie Report in 1929 completely ignored the importance of education in colleges and universities. The new changes confined practice sessions to the recognized season of sport, creating more time for students to study rather than practice (Oriard, 2012). They limited the number of games in the football and basketball, made students pursue a degree rather than take courses that had no effect on their respected major, and schools were told to pay close attention to the athlete’s curriculum, to assure that they are not diverted away from their educational purpose (Oriard, 2012). The first couple of changes seem to deal with the amount of time an athlete spends on sports in relation to the amount of time spent on academics. The last couple of changes are still reforms that we are still wrestling with today: eligibility and amateurism. These changes especially in academics were the first steps the NCAA took toward reforming college sports and making sure the educational standards of the school were still being met even by all students including student-athletes. It is important to point out both the Carnegie Report and the Sanity Code because
they have both been used today as a blueprint to pave the way for other forms of reform that is needed in the NCAA. However it is important to note that both reports were written over 75 years ago and are essentially addressing and decrying the same issues faced today (Ridpath, 2008).

**Growth and Expansion through today**

In the following years, from the 1960’s through today, it has been a century full of scandals, media, reform, and movement towards more reform. This was the key era when college sports began to really pick up, and develop into the big money business that it is today. National Television turned the sports into a spectacle as many of the big games would be shown on TV for the whole country to watch (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). Key Networks such as ESPN would televise and cover games from all across the country so that people could see their favorite school compete (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009).

According to Burton, Mitten, and Musselman, “The NCAA was transformed from an advisory body into a powerful national regulatory agency, which made rules, systemized policing of rules infractions, and imposed sanctions on its member institutions for rule violations (p. 206, 2009). In 1972, freshman were again eligible to participate in varsity sports as a Freshman and in 1973 high school students had to have at least a 2.0 GPA in able to be eligible, and replaced the four year scholarships with a 1 year athletic scholarship that could be renewed each year (Oriard, 2012). These were two key changes because it gave incentive to high school students to do well in school in order to be eligible for athletics in their freshman year of college. Also it allowed schools to take away athletic scholarships from athletes if they
were not holding up their end of the agreement and pursing a degree in any year they are enrolled. If a college athlete is maintaining the pursuit of a degree and attending their classes while remaining academically eligible (having a GPA over 2.0) than their athletic scholarship will be renewed each year. This change in the NCAA shows the progress they have made over time when they used to ignore academics as a whole to now creating a balancing act between doing well in school and doing well on the field/court.

Even though the NCAA has become stricter in their rules and regulations, it seems the win at all cost attitudes still exist from the early years of college sports. There was the point shaving scandal of 1951, illegal recruitment cases all over including the most recent with Cam Newton at Auburn University in 2009, and the first ever death penalty handed out to Southern Methodist University in 1986 by the NCAA (Oriard, 2012). However while many people place the blame on athletics directors, college Presidents, and coaches as the problem with college athletics, others agree the NCAA has created its own problems. Murray Sperber author of the book “Beer and Circus” agrees that “the irony of the entire organization (the NCAA) is that its proclaimed intention is to regulate and reform college athletics, when in reality it is the cause of the corruption” (p. 32, 2000).

Pay for Play and other major issues

Today, many of these Division I student-athletes are being heavily promoted by their schools for their athletic successes to help create popularity to boost their brand, attract new tuition paying students, raise merchandise sales, and increase attendance records in their stadiums and arenas which all bring in extra revenue for these institutions (Altheide and Snow,
Schools specifically rely on these revenue generating sports because they are “the aspect of the university that is most often visible to those outside of the academic community, both sports fans and non sports fans alike” (Cross and Toma, 1998). Many prospective students, student-athletes, and their families might not know a lot about a school academically, but they may know that their men’s basketball team or football team is very successful each year. Murray Sperber points to something he calls the “Flutie Factor” to aid this current issue. Doug Flutie attended Boston College University in 1980-1984 and was the star quarterback of the team during that time in which he went on to later win the Heisman in 1984 (Sperber, 2000). The year after Flutie won the Heisman, the applications for admissions to Boston College rose 25 percent (Sperber, 2000). It’s easy to point out the relevance of Flutie’s and the football team’s success to the increase number of applications received the following year at a small private college in Boston. In a study polling students in Division I schools 88 percent of males and 51 percent of females answered that they were moderately or very informed about their schools intercollegiate football or men’s basketball team before they applied to the school (Sperber, 2000). However in the same poll, only 39 percent of males and 42 percent of females claimed they were aware of what undergraduate educational programs that school offered before they applied (Sperber, 2000). This helps to point out the shift of importance in today’s current society of focusing more on athletics than academics, which was pointed out earlier in this paper.

Many Colleges and Universities rationally use their intercollegiate athletic programs, particularly National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I FBS football and men’s basketball, as a means to achieve a wide range of legitimate objectives of higher education.
The educational objectives that can be achieved through the success of these revenue generating sports can include: the recruitment of better quality students and faculty, generation of more revenue for specific academic departments, generation of more total revenue for the entire institution, other institutional advancements and development, as well as improving the college’s image and current brand (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009; Cross and Toma, 1998). Division I athletes are compensated a full scholarship if they are recruited to come play but this does not cover all costs associated with attending college (Schneider, 2001). Irvin Tucker states that “a highly successful football team has a positive impact on both the overall graduation rates and the alumni giving rate” (Tucker, 2004, 655). This proves that the more successful a men’s basketball or football team is, the more money the alumni gives in donations to the athletic departments and institutions as a whole (Tucker, 2004; Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). With the growing popularity of college sports today, especially in men’s basketball and football, the more money these athletic departments produce from these sports, the more money they are going to spend toward producing an even bigger profit or bottom line in the future (Fort, 2010). Schools will use money that is earned through their sports programs to better their campuses, schooling, and other areas (Zimbalist, 2010). Murray Sperber claims that “the appearance of the campus is, by far, the most influential characteristic during campus visits” to prospective students and “if the school appeared highly collegiate, featuring a big time college sports program and party scene, then this would persuade many touring high school seniors to apply” (p. 56, 2000). However this puts Division III programs at risk because they do not have the great athletic programs that Division I schools have to offer. Sperber claims few students at Division III institutions
considered the fame of their schools’ college sports teams and accompanying party scene before applying to their respected school (Sperber, 2000).

In an extremely competitive higher education market, academic leaders increasingly use intercollegiate sports as a catalyst and means to achieve these legitimate ends (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). These educational ends can include things such as reduced or non-existent admission standards for athletes, development of costly athletic academic centers primarily used for eligibility maintenance rather than the actual advisement of athletes, as well as the special treatment athletes receive in their communities whether from local merchants or law enforcement (Ridpath, 2008). According to a study performed in 2009 by the NCAA athletic expenditures and revenues were at a 1 to 1 relationship and supported the existence of an “arms race” in which a school tends to increase its spending when other schools in the same conference increase theirs (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). This “arms race” points to the history of the NCAA already mentioned in which schools gained this win at all cost attitude for their athletic teams, in order to reap the financial benefits. Every school seems to have an incentive to cheat on the cartel by offering effective wages above those set by the NCAA to attract higher quality players from competing schools (Brown, 2001). This often involves breaking NCAA rules by paying athletes outside payments and gifts, or using illegal recruiting practices (Brown, 2001). The intoxicating lure of winning, money, and degradation of higher education academic standards even permeates the Division II and III levels (Ridpath, 2008). If academic corruption is minimized and even eliminated, it will greatly assist those involved in college sports toward positive character development rather than negative (Ridpath, 2008).
Schools use the successes of their football and men’s basketball team to acquire better quality students, more diverse students, and raise application rates for their school which helps the institutions overall reputation (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). Academic leaders from Boise State University point to the recent national success of their football program for the increase in applications received, the boost in merchandise sales, and for the flow of gifts pouring in from boosters such as a new business schools, nursing departments, and the prosperity of the campus bookstore (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). We have to remember that the recent financial success that Boise State has seen is directly related to the success of the football team and their national prominence yet the institution betters from these gifts rather than the individual athletes (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009).

With the increased pricing of tickets, television contracts, conference revenue sharing, bowl and NCAA tournament prizes, and merchandise sales these schools are able to make large amounts of money to better their institutions (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). For example in 2010 the NCAA signed a 14 year, 11 Billion Dollar broadcast rights agreement with CBS and Turner Sports for its men’s basketball tournament and the 2010 season national championship game aired on ESPN was the most watched program in cable network history (Ash, Hardin & Whiteside, 2011). Another recent example is ESPN signing a deal with the BCS for a $500 Million dollar Television deal that runs through the 2014 season, the last year of the current BCS system (Ash, Hardin, & Whiteside, 2011). All of the money gained by these schools from these contracts will greatly benefit the institution over a great period of time; however the athletes receive no compensation (Zimbalist, 2010). According to Frank Deford “college
football and basketball players are the only athletes in the world who are denied payment for their services in sports where significant sums of money are involved” (2011).

On a Division I college football team, each team has about 32 walk on players and is allowed to hand out 85 athletic scholarships (Zimbalist, 2010). However athletic scholarships although costly, may not add up to the amount of revenue a team or conference brings in each year (Burton, Mitten, & Musselman, 2009). Is the NCAA denying the fact that these athletes should be treated as amateurs because some of them go on to play professional sports and reap the benefits, while the majority of them never make it pro (Oriard, 2012)?

“Colleges make scores of millions of dollars from box-office and television revenue” while coaches are being paid seven figure contracts and others such as journalists are making large salaries as well on the backs of these young players (Deford, 2011). In 1991 a college football coaches average annual salary in Division I was about $300,000, now it is currently about $600,000 with many coaches earning over $1 Million (Sperber, 2000). Winning coaches receive among the highest salaries at their universities, but their supplemental earnings- endorsements of sneakers and other products, lucrative summer camps, public-speaking engagements- generate an even larger proportion of their annual incomes (Sperber, 2000). Sperber goes on to say that “all aspects of their job depend on winning, for example, no trade association has ever paid a losing coach $20,000 to speak at a convention” (p. 30, 2000). The stance that sports today are more important than higher education can be blamed for paying football coaches double, triple, sometimes quadruple more than that of a university president or professor (Ridpath, 2008).
Current Reform

Currently there are two different groups that are working towards reforming some of the issues that are ongoing with the NCAA and intercollegiate athletics. The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) is primarily geared toward having faculty senates agreeing with their proposals and then working alongside the NCAA to have the platform approved through the NCAA governance and legislative process (Ridpath, 2008). Conversely, the Drake Group is a group headed by well known author Murray Sperber, and there core issue is academic responsibility and integrity by faculty at their respective institutions with backing and approval from the faculty senate (Ridpath, 2008). Basically the main difference is the COIA is trying to work with the NCAA to develop new reforms for college athletics while the Drake Group desires to take the power and governance out of the NCAA’s hands and back into the institutions or faculties hands. The COIA main framework of reforms works towards establishing academic integrity, athlete welfare, and the proper commercialization of athletes while maintaining the NCAA’s current governance and finances (Ridpath, 2008). The Drake Group on the other hand wants to do away with some of the NCAA’s rules and regulations and claims that if their plan was put into place could positively affect and change the shameful integrity of higher education (Ridpath, 2008; Sperber, 2000). The Drake Group wants to retire the term student-athlete, they want to make academic standards and counseling of athletes uniform across the country, ensure athletes make it to class and that there is no athletic/class conflicts, get rid of freshman eligibility, do away with renewable scholarships and only allow them to be given to athletes
that need money to attend college, and make the cumulative GPA of 2.0 throughout all years of college in order to remain eligible for athletics (Ridpath, 2008; Sperber, 2000).

In the world of college sport, institutional rules and standards trump conferences and NCAA standards, yet many institutions are reluctant to take the easy route in academics to put other schools at a disadvantage (Sperber, 2000). In other words, most institutions want to recruit the best-athletes period to preserve the chance at winning and revenue generation (Ridpath, 2008). Sometimes in order to recruit the best athletes to ensure that your school will have a successful football or men’s basketball team, could require lowering your academic standards. In many of these cases, student-athletes only attend these schools to develop a foundation for acquiring a lucrative career in professional athletics (Zimbalist, 2010). With the information presented it is easy to see the number of issues wrong with the current NCAA. For many schools it is hard to find the balance between acquiring a successful team in athletics while maintaining the academic credibility that has been instilled at their respective schools. The United States is still the only country in the world that maintains an intercollegiate athletic system like this one within a higher education model (Ridpath, 2008).

Methodology

Some of the questions I plan on using in my survey are as follows: Do you feel unfairly treated that the institutions are benefiting from your own personal success and that of the team’s? Do you feel you should be compensated some extra money each month to pay off food, travel, and daily expenses? What should the NCAA do to resolve this issue of amateurism? These questions will help me better determine their thoughts on the given issue and can in turn
create new ideas of what the NCAA can do to fulfill the betterment of their athletes. Again this study is important because it will add to the knowledge that already exists in the sport industry and hopefully help to contribute towards finding a solution for the changes that have been long awaited.

I plan on collecting my data by using a survey in which I will analyze all answers to my survey questions and analyze them differently in hopes to resolve these current ongoing issues within the NCAA. I cannot use a nominal scale to record my data because most of my questions are not straightforward, therefore the quality of answers may be very differentiated and inconsistent. I believe the best way to adapt for my analysis is to create a survey in which I give the student-athletes multiple agree or disagree statements to see if they’re feelings align with the NCAA. Instead of just giving my participants two answers to choose from I am going to make all of my questions based on a scale of: strongly agree/disagree, somewhat agree/disagree, or mostly agree/disagree. I want to analyze every answer and possibly compare the answers based on each other and to try to draw some distinctions from the data.

Other variables that I have considered to use in my study but decided against to not use to measure my study is the motivational levels of student-athletes to participate equally in both sports and school, the different philosophies of student-athletes based on their own school’s mission, values, and goals, and the overall difference of the Division III student-athlete compared to the Division I student-athlete. Many of these issues are hard to actually relate to and/or collect for my paper and therefore cannot be properly measured to add to my data collection.
The theory or framework that I am using to relate towards my paper is the NCAA’s Mission statement. Their mission statement is supposed to reflect their importance of the student-athlete and how they are continuously improving their lives both in sports and academics. The NCAA’s mission statement is: “To be an integral part of higher education and to focus on the development of our student-athletes (NCAA.com).” This mission however does not support prior literature has said because there are many instances in when the NCAA’s mission misaligns with what is actually taking place. There are many current issues that are ongoing such as the denial of payment of Division I football players, the exploitation of student-athletes in academics, and the difference in treatment between student-athletes and students academically. Although this may not always hold true at all Division I schools, previous studies have concluded the values and missions of the NCAA seem to be misaligned with what they are actually promoting. Academic standards are not being met and higher learning objectives are not being met because student-athletes are having time taken away from their studies so that they can perform as best as possible on game days. I am assessing Division III student-athletes perceptions of Division III sports and the NCAA’s mission because these are current issues that still relate to all student-athletes.

The NCAA has the same mission statement throughout all three Divisions but they each have unique goals and objectives. The values that the NCAA is promoting at the Division III level is to discover, develop, and dedicate (NCAA.com). The NCAA wants Division III student-athletes to “pursue their interests and passions and discover themselves” (NCAA.com, paragraph 1). “Division III institutions provide an environment that encourages student-athletes to develop into well-rounded adults. Small class sizes, the ability to participate in more
than one sport, and an emphasis on participating activities outside of the classroom are all hallmarks of the Division III experience” (NCAA.com, paragraph 2). “Division III institutions expect student-athletes to dedicate themselves to achieving their potential, student-athletes must manage their busy schedules, keep up with class work and face the same challenges as the rest of the student-body” (NCAA.com, paragraph 2). The Division III experience provides for passionate participation in a competitive athletic environment, in which student-athletes push themselves to excellence and build upon their academic success with new challenges and life skills (NCAA.com). Student-athletes are encouraged to pursue their full passions and find their potential through a comprehensive educational experience (NCAA.com).

I would like to assess what Division III student-athletes think of what actually goes on within the NCAA and how it compares to the NCAA mission and Division III values. “All three divisions are joined by common values...The goals and values of student-athlete learning and well-being are the same, whether we’re talking about a football game at the Big House in Michigan or a soccer game at Hobart” (NCAA.com, paragraph 3).

The participants that I am including in my study will be Division III student-athletes as they are regulated by the same organization, the NCAA. I would like to have them answer a few questions regarding the pay for play issue and the NCAA missions and core values. I want to hear other student-athletes perspectives on the NCAA standards and if they currently align with the rules and regulations that they currently have in place. More importantly I would like to hear other student-athletes thoughts on Division III athletics and see if many of the values the NCAA is promoting are really taking place. I would like to get a mixed sample of Division III
football players specifically that play here at Fisher and measure different things such as their
time constraints and level of commitment to see if Division III athletes are getting the true
student-athlete experience. I would like to ask these student-athletes different questions that
pertain to the current ongoing issues with the NCAA that have already been mentioned in this
research paper.

My research is going to be exploratory because it is new and adds a different
perspective than what has already been studied. The idea of asking Division III student-athletes
about their thoughts and perspectives on the NCAA has yet to been studied. The perceptions
of what these student-athletes actually know about the NCAA and the current issues that are
ongoing in Division I sports may actually be hindering Division III athletics and student-athletes
as well. I am going to be using the interpretive and qualitative approach as I am looking for
something to emerge from the data that would agree and support my research paper. The
perceptions of the NCAA based off of Division III student-athletes are intangible as a variable
because it is really based on feelings and cannot be specifically measured. The way that I will
be able to measure the data through survey is by using what people have to say and showing
that there are multiple supporters that want to fix these ongoing issues in college sports. I plan
on using primary data collection because it will be all new data that has yet to be collected and
examined before.

I plan on completing a survey using qualtrics and distributing it to current football
players that play for St. John Fisher because it will be the easiest place for me to collect my
data, and the place where I will probably get the most responses. I will choose a random
sample of the participants and then rule out any surveys in which the participants filled out either wrongly or incorrectly. Once my survey is completed, I plan on emailing my former Head Coach and having him pass along my invitation to the survey to all current players on the team. From there I will then send a reminder email after about one week has gone by and then collect all my results after about two to three weeks. Once I have gotten all my results I then will be able to analyze my data and draw conclusions based off of the surveys.

The survey questions will ask student-athletes about their thoughts on certain issues, as well as asking them to apply some of their own personal experiences while participating in that given sport. Some examples of the questions that I am going to ask on my questionnaire will be: Do you feel unfairly treated that the institutions are benefiting from your own personal success and that of the teams’?, Do you feel you should be compensated some extra money each month to pay off food, travel, and daily expenses?, How much time do you spend on studies/school a week?, How much time do you spend on football related activities each week?, Do these times consistently change depending if you are in season or not?, These questions will help me better determine their thoughts on the given issue and can in turn create new ideas of what the NCAA can do to fulfill the betterment of their athletes. Asking open ended qualitative questioning will only allow me to analyze my data a few different ways. I plan on using the data to compare to the actual NCAA Division III values and mission statement to see if these athletes are achieving what the NCAA says they are.

Results
For my survey there were 54 participants who partook in answering my questions. Once my survey was first sent out it had a minor error as the link my coach sent along with my email was not the correct link. Therefore roughly about 9 participants were unable to access the survey however for some reason it still showed up on the qualtrics results page. There were only about two to three people who did not fully complete the survey and their results and answers were thrown out. Among my participants: 16% were freshman, 31% were sophomore, 36% were Junior, and 18% were Senior.

When asking my participants how many hours a week during the football season do they watch Division I College Football: 54% said they watched about 3 to 4 hours a week during the season, it is important to know that this is the during the same time these Division III athletes are in season as well. Only 8 people claimed they watched over 6 hours of college football in a given week while only 7 others said they only watched about 1-2 hours per week. When asking how many hours a week do you spend on school/studies per week in season it was a tie with 28% for each category 3-4 hours, 5-6 hours, and more than 6 hours in a week spent on school. It is important to point out that the same question was asked while out of season and it was almost the same response with 16% 1-2 hours, 23% 3-4 hours, 30% 5-6 hours, and 32% over 6 hours. While comparing these statistics with the amount of time these participants spent on football related activities, 89% claimed they spend more than 6 hours a week on football related activities in season while about 80% claim they still spend more than 6 hours in a given week on football related activities out of season. In asking my participants to check all that apply in which they believe Division I college football players should be compensated for in a monthly basis: 80% said food expenses, 66% travel expenses, 45% daily
expenses, and 36% say for discretionary income. My next question dealt with asking them if football takes away considerable time from your studies or potential job: roughly about 80% agreed in some fashion with 30% strongly agreeing while only 5 participants in total disagreed in some respect. Lastly when the participants were asked if they believe they should be paid on a monthly basis for their services which is competing for their school in sports it was a very overwhelming answer. The participants were asked to check all that they felt applied and the results were: 85% food expenses, 71% travel expenses, 46% Daily Expenses, and 34% said discretionary or extra income.

Discussion

While analyzing my results to my survey to Division III student-athletes there were some important areas to look at in order to determine why my results were what they were. This is an area where I can try to figure out how most of my participants were to arrive at their specific decisions when answering the survey. Since my survey was pretty straight forward it should be easy to point out some of the points in which led to these specific results. When I asked my participants how much Division I college football they watch it is very important to note that some of these results may have been skewed because these games are usually shown at the same time the St. John Fisher team plays. Even though more than half said they watch about 3-4 hours per week it probably could have been more had most of these games not been shown at the same time.

The important questions to point out are when I began to ask the participants how many hours a week they spend on school work in comparison to the amount of time they spend
on football related activities. I asked these questions twice to see if there was a difference between the time constraint these student-athletes spend both in season and out of season. These questions were asked in order to compare to the values and missions in which the NCAA have been promoting on their national website. For Division III the focus is supposed to be more on the student than the athlete however when checking the results it is clearly shown that these football players spend more time on football related activities than school work. These student-athletes actually spend more time on school work in season than they do out of season. This may seem very odd to some because you would expect players to have their minds on practice or games each week however this may not be the case. It is easier for student-athletes to spend more time on school in season because although it is very busy, the schedule of football makes you learn how to manage your time wisely. These results go to show that the winning mentality mentioned earlier in my literary review has worked its way into the Division III level where money and super stardom is not even involved.

While comparing these statistics with the amount of time these participants spent on football related activities, 89% claimed they spend more than 6 hours a week on football related activities in season while about 80% claim they still spend more than 6 hours in a given week on football related activities out of season. Unlike school these hours do not change and seem to stay true whether the football team is in season or not. Is the NCAA really holding true to their values and missions? It seems these student-athletes are actually still being exploited in the Division III level. These student-athletes likely chose a Division III school because they wanted to compete in a sport however still be able to receive their full education. However these students are not really getting their money worth when you look over the results and
realize that these student-athletes are focusing more time on sports than school. Even though football related activities are supposed to be lowered at the Division III level especially in the offseason compared to Division I football players, coaches are still finding ways to get around this. Coaches have began making offseason workouts optional however most players claim that this is not true and that if they were to miss their reputation and playing time would be at risk.

It seems that when these participants were asked to chime in on the pay of play issue both at the Division I and III levels they considerably agreed it should happen. It is important to take these participants answers strongly because most of these student-athletes although they compete at the Division III level know what it takes to participate in a college sport. Also these student-athletes are all governed under the NCAA so that is why I am able to compare these players’ thoughts with the thoughts on Division I college football players. Although the numbers may be skewed when you compare their answers on the pay for play issue between Division I and Division III, it is still a considerable amount that agrees student-athletes should be compensated in some fashion. Some may say that it is obvious that Division I football players are demanded to practice/work out more however according to the survey it says Division III players should be paid before Division I. This is why I say some of the results may be skewed because Division III student-athletes took the survey so obviously they may skew some the results towards their preferences. However all in all, they agreed that both parties Division III and Division I should be compensated in some fashion for competing for their schools.

For future research I would like to study what Division I athletes would say to my survey and research question. This survey could really be passed along to anybody that plays a
collegiate sport. It would be interesting to look into the specific gender issues involved and different sports in regards to Title IX being compared to this specific study. There is also the possibility that somebody else could test this survey again at another Division III school and see if their results support/contrast.

Conclusion

My research question was supported that in fact the NCAA is in need of some reform in regarding to aligning their values and missions with what is actually taking place. Many people and years have passed by all with the one goal of demanding the proper treatment of student-athletes and is still exists today. However the above problems mentioned above and previously supported still goes unsolved after all these years. I can’t point the NCAA in a proper way to take care of these issues however this can be served as a start to reform the movement.
Works Cited


WWW.NCAA.com (2013).


