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The Dynamics Between Intercollegiate Athletics & Academics: A Phenomenological Case Study Approach

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THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS & ACADEMICS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY APPROACH

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

by
Cherese F. Fine
May 2015

Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Intercollegiate athletics has played a prominent role in higher education. While athletics may not fit into the purpose of higher education, its presence has brought many benefits to colleges and universities, such as brand recognition. However, the commercialization of schools with big-time sports programs has, at times, impact the integrity of these institutions. The large presence of athletics has commonly caused tensions between athletics and academics. Causes of tension typically are about the concern of the welfare of student athletes. While there are many studies that focus on the student athlete experience in regards to their academic and athletic commitments, there is a need to explore the athletic-academic dynamic from an administrative standpoint.

The purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. The researcher wanted to learn about the nature of the athletic-academic dynamic from an organizational perspective through the experiences of members in the athletic and academic communities. In addition, the researcher wanted to learn how the athletic-academic dynamic changed over the last 30 years, using the timeframe 1980 – 2014. Using a phenomenological case study approach, the researcher interviewed athletic administrators, university administrators and faculty that have been directly involved in athletic-academic dynamic. Furthermore, documents were collected to further inform the researcher of what was occurring. The researcher employed institutional theory and neo-institutional theory as the guiding framework for the study.

Findings indicated that the athletic-academic dynamic at Clemson is complex. Athletics has played a significant role in the success and growth of Clemson University.

However, findings indicated that while there is an overall positive dynamic, there is still a disconnection that exists between athletics and academics. Tensions do exist between athletics and academics due to misconceptions and lack of communication, but opportunity exists to further improve the dynamic.

Keywords: Athletics, Academics, Administrators, Student Athlete, Phenomenological Case Study

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family who have encouraged and supported me through all of my educational pursuits: my mom Lenora, my brother Shaun, my aunt Loretta, and my grandparents Frances and Jerome.

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First, giving honor to God, who has provided me with the physical and mental strength to persevere through this process and finish.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Intercollegiate athletics and higher education have a special relationship that dates back to the existence of American higher education. Intercollegiate athletics has been referred as American higher education's peculiar institution (Thelin, 1994), because it does not serve as one of the primary purposes, but plays a major role. The large role athletics has played in higher education has caused tensions between members in the academic and athletic communities. The phrase *academics vs. athletics*, has been commonly used to describe the tensions between athletics and academics, where athletics is believed to be a priority over academics. The problems between athletics and higher education tend to be unique to higher education in the United States (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). The presence of intercollegiate athletics has provided visibility to colleges and universities, both positive and negative. However, revenue-producing sports of football and men's basketball have turned into a large, commercialized machine that is out of control. Sperber (1990) argued the main purpose of college sports is commercial entertainment and has nothing to do with the educational mission of the schools. The commercialization of athletics can influence the decision making process of administrators, which can potentially impact the integrity of the institution. As a former university president, Duderstadt (2000) stated, "The integrity of higher education continues to be threatened by the enormous appeal of college football and basketball" (p.

85). The impact on the academic integrity of institutions becomes a source of tension between athletics and academics.

The 2011 scandal at Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) is a prime example of how intercollegiate athletics can impact the integrity of the university. The Penn State scandal is considered one of the worst scandals in the history of intercollegiate athletics (Berube, 2012). The charges of rape of children by former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky, and the large cover-up tarnished the reputation of the athletic department and their beloved coach, Joe Paterno (Berube, 2012; Giroux & Giroux, 2012). Additionally, while the majority of the institution had nothing to do with the scandal, the public image of the university was damaged. A scandal of this magnitude happening at Penn State, an institution known for integrity in both academics and athletics, caused concern from many institutions. In light of the Penn State scandal, questions continue to be raised regarding the role of intercollegiate athletics in higher education and the impact of questionable practices from athletics. While the push for athletic reform continues throughout the academic community, college presidents face numerous obstacles that make it difficult to reform intercollegiate athletics (Bok, 2012).

A more recent example that has caused tension between athletics and academics are a variety of scandals that occurred at the University of North Carolina (UNC). In 2012, the governor of North Carolina identified 216 suspect courses and 454 potential unauthorized grade changes from two administrators in the African and Afro-American Studies department (Stripling, 2014). It was found that student athletes represented 45% of the students enrolled in those courses (Stripling, 2014). The scandal was exposed when

Mary Willingham, a former learning specialist at UNC, blew the whistle when she provided details on the number of student athletes reading at a middle-school level and the hundreds of athletes that were enrolled in independent study courses that required very little work (Wolverton, 2014). The academic and athletic scandals have caused a great divide between athletics and academics at UNC. Both sides are blaming the other and there is a lot of infighting (Stripling, 2014). The scandals have resulted in colleges nationwide examining their academic support systems for student athletes.

A recent study conducted through HigherEdJobs explored the mixed goals in college athletics. HigherEdJobs (2013) conducted a survey on the perceptions of college sports. Over 185 employees were surveyed about their views on college sports; and overall respondents viewed college sports as being an important part of the college experience. Respondents believed successful athletic programs help bring in alumni donations (82%) and an increase in college applications (75%) (HigherEdJobs, 2013). In addition, respondents strongly agreed (15%) and agreed (35%) that faculty should have a prominent role in the governance of intercollegiate athletics (HigherEdJobs, 2013). While insightful information, the gap in this study is there is no indication of the type of employees that were surveyed.

The attention of intercollegiate athletics serves as a benefit or a detriment to the brand of an institution. Conversations about the role of intercollegiate athletics in higher education are continuous. If athletics is not a part of the educational mission, why does the university continue to support intercollegiate athletics? There are those who seem to not understand the reasons why universities continue to support athletics and how this has

been the case since its inception. This study plans to further understand the dynamics between athletics and academics, at one institution, using an organizational perspective and institutional theory as the guiding framework.

Statement of the Problem

The two primary views about the role intercollegiate athletics plays in higher education are: (a) intercollegiate athletics is not part of the educational mission and (b) intercollegiate athletics is part of the educational mission. Brand (2006) identified these viewpoints as the Standard View and the Integrative View, respectively. The Standard View believes intercollegiate athletics is an extracurricular activity, that “may have some redeeming developmental value for students, but they are not part of the educational experiences” (Brand, 2006, p. 10). Intercollegiate athletics should operate as an auxiliary, be self-supporting, and return the revenue to the institution for academic purposes (Brand, 2006). Administrators, faculty, and even some athletic administrators who believe that athletic departments should be self-supporting commonly hold this viewpoint. The problem with the Standard View is that it is filled with misconceptions of intercollegiate athletics.

The Integrative View believes intercollegiate athletics is part of the educational mission of the university. Intercollegiate athletics being part of the educational mission “reflects the balanced approach to education that includes both cognitive and physical capacity” (Brand, 2006, p. 18). Those who hold the Integrative View believe athletics plays a similar role to academic departments such as music, since both student athletes

and music students receive scholarships, perform at numerous events, and have ambitions for a professional career in their respective areas (Brand, 2006).

Due to the inconsistencies of these viewpoints, there appears to be a misunderstanding of the dynamics between athletics and academics. There are misperceptions of the dynamics between those directly involved and those not directly involved in the dealings between the two. Intercollegiate athletics and universities have commonalities, but the focus is always on their differences. Toma and Kramer (2009) stated, “Both sides criticize the other without really knowing or acknowledging the context in which the other operates—and neither recognizes that trends and issues in both academe and athletics are often more alike than they are different” (p. 4). Athletics and academics are usually at odds with one another and this can be attributed the lack of understanding on both sides. The lack of understanding between both sides can contribute to problems and lost opportunities, therefore providing reasons to why this connection should be explored (Toma & Kramer, 2009). In order to understand the connection and disconnection between athletics and academics, the perspectives from members of the athletic and academic communities should be taken into consideration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education and how it has evolved over time at one institution in the Southeast. This study explored the role of intercollegiate athletics and its impact at Clemson University. Clemson University was selected due to its long history between athletics and academics, as well as the prominent role athletics plays at Clemson. The

history of this dynamic enhanced the understanding of the current dynamic therefore, this study focused on the last three decades of this dynamic. Using an organizational framework of institutional and neo-institutional theory, this study sought to understand the dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education from the perspectives of key members from both the academic and athletic areas at Clemson University. Interviews were conducted with university administrators, faculty, and athletic administrators, who informed the researcher of the dynamics between athletics and academics from 1980-2014. Documents, such as newspaper articles, meeting minutes, and policy documents were also used to inform of what was occurring between athletics and academics during that time.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the term intercollegiate athletics refers to universities with high-profile sports, such as football and men's basketball. Specifically, the term athletics refers to the athletic department. The term higher education refers to colleges and universities. The term academics specifically refers to the academic areas and the university administration. The term dynamics refers to the interactions and involvement between athletics and academics. It also refers to the roles athletics and academics serve in interacting with one another.

Significance of the Study

While there are arguments that intercollegiate athletics is not a part of the educational mission, intercollegiate athletics has played a significant role since the early existence of American higher education. Rather than, exploring personal opinions of

those who may not have a direct connection to the other entity, this study explored the experiences of former and current employees that have been involved in the athletic-academic dynamic. It was important to learn about this dynamic through the experiences of those involved in the dynamics between athletics and academics.

This study used the qualitative research method of phenomenological case study. Using the phenomenological case study approach allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994), while examining in-depth the dynamics through multiple data sources (Yin, 2006). What makes this study unique is the exploration of the athletic-academic dynamic throughout history. Understanding the current dynamics requires knowledge of the historical relationship of athletics and academics at Clemson University. Furthermore, this study extends the current literature on intercollegiate athletics in higher education and creates new knowledge by studying academic and athletic administrators.

Theoretical Framework

Institutional theory was used to create the theoretical framework that analyzed the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department (see Figure 1.1). Institutional theory emphasizes organizations are open systems that are influenced by their environments (Scott, 2003). This includes competitive and efficiency-based, socially constructed beliefs, and rule systems (Scott, 2003). Colleges, universities, and athletic departments are social institutions that change over time but are often faced with constraints. Within the framework, neo-institutional theory is also applied to determine how organizations are influenced by society and culture. The study used Scott's (2001)

three pillars of institutions: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. Scott (2003) stated, “In any fully developed institutional system, all three of these forces or elements are present and interact to promote and sustain orderly behavior” (p. 135). All three pillars can be found in the structure of colleges and universities and their athletic departments.

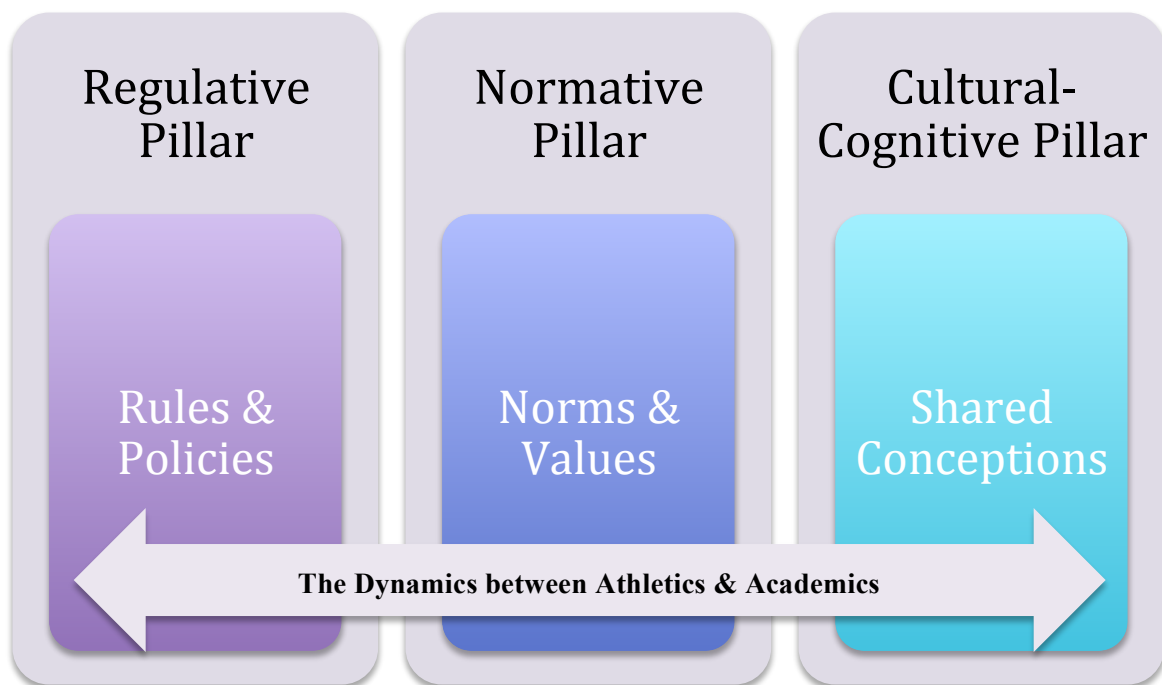


Figure 1.1. Theoretical Framework of the Dynamics between Athletics and Academics at Clemson University.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

Central Research Question:

1. What is the nature of the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department from the experiences of athletic and academic administrators?

Research Sub-questions:

2. How has the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department changed from 1980 – 2014?
3. What role(s) has athletics played at Clemson University from 1980 – 2014?
4. How have historical developments impacted the dynamics between athletics and academics?

Limitations

There are different factors outside the control of the researcher that can provide limitations to the study. The first limitation is a phenomenological case study cannot be generalized. In qualitative research, the sample size is typically small, therefore reduces generalizability (Patton, 2002). A second limitation is the information gathered in this study may not be representative of all dynamics between universities and their athletic departments. A third limitation is the use of documents. When examining certain documents, the researcher does not have insight or reasoning behind certain documents, nor does the researcher know the accuracy of certain documents. Additional challenges in using documents include access, linking documents to other sources, and deconstructing and demystifying institutional texts (Patton, 2002). A final limitation of the study is the participants. When interviewing the participants, it is not guaranteed the participants will provide truthful responses. Since Clemson University is revealed as the site used in this study, participants may become cautious of the language that is used during the interviews so that they are not as easily identifiable. Additional study limitations are discussed in Chapter Five.

Delimitations

The first delimitation used by the researcher is the selection of participants. To gain a better understanding of the dynamics between athletics and academics, the researcher sought participants that formerly held or currently hold key roles in this dynamic. The researcher did not select participants that do not have any interaction with the other entity. The second delimitation used by the researcher is revealing Clemson University as the site being studied, instead of providing a pseudonym. The dynamics specifically explored in this study would lead to Clemson's identity being revealed, whether a pseudonym was used or not, so the researcher decided to make it public. A third delimitation used by the researcher is only using one site for the study. The examination of one site does not allow the researcher to gain perspectives from sites with similar qualities. However, the information in this study will make a valuable contribution to the literature.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation is presented in six chapters. Chapter One included the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, significance of study, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions of the study. Chapter Two is the review of the literature and the historical development of the relationship between athletics and academics that includes: (a) studies addressing the athletic-academic relationship, (b) the history of the relationship, (c) major political developments that impact the relationship, (d) the theoretical lens, and (e) the justification of the methodology. Chapter Three

presents the proposed methodology of the study that includes the design selection, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapters Four and Five present the findings of the study. Chapter Six provides a summary of the entire study, discussion of the findings, implications for research and practice, and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW & HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

To understand the current nature of athletic departments and why institutions appear to allow athletics to be “out of control,” requires understanding its historical context. Looking at the historical relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education provides an explanation of why intercollegiate athletics remains a part of higher education. The researcher is interested in further exploring the literature that focuses on the historical and current relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education and how it has developed and changed over time. The literature review consists of: (a) the athletic-academic dynamics from a number of scholars that includes supporters and critics of the role athletics serves in higher education; (b) the historical relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education; and (c) major political developments that impacted the dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education. Following the review of the literature is the theoretical lens and the methodological justification of the study. For this literature review, intercollegiate athletics is referenced to institutions with big-time sports programs such as football and/or basketball. Higher education is also referenced to American higher education and United States colleges and universities.

The Athletics vs. Academics Debate

This section of the literature review examined the dynamics between athletics and academics through a variety of scholarly perspectives. This included the perceived role of

intercollegiate athletics in higher education and the perceived reasons to why athletics and academics are disconnected.

Supporters of athletics believe it is a significant part of academics due to the benefits associated with athletics (Lawrence, Ott, & Hendricks, 2009; Toma, 1999). The idea that institutional recognition makes everything easier is a common notion in higher education (Fisher, 2009). Athletics introduces universities to a national audience that provides free advertising to prospective students and donors (Fisher, 2009). It also helps advance institutional goals (Toma, 1999). Furthermore, athletics are essential to the personal identity of students within the university community as well as external constituents that associate with the institution primarily through sports (Toma, 1999).

Mixon and Trevino (2005) found that football success is significantly and positively related to freshmen retention and graduation rates. Their survey results supported their hypothesis that athletics serves “the institution’s academic mission and provides students with a respite from the psychic costs associated with college life” (Mixon & Trevino, 2005, p. 97). In a study of 11 universities that make a substantial institutional investment in athletics, Toma (1999) found that external constituents perceived athletics favorably and to be distinctive, central, and enduring to an institution. Institutional identification was enhanced causing people to be drawn to campus and increasing knowledge regarding the institution (Toma, 1999). According to Toma (1999), “These factors represent the collegiate ideal serving the goals of institutional advancement by increasing the level of contact that external constituents have with the

institution and motivating them to want to enhance the visibility of their organizational affiliation” (p. 84).

Critics of athletics believe that it devalues academics (Lawrence, et al., 2009). Examples includes exploitation of student athletes (Sack and Staurowsky, 1998), celebrity coaches (Duderstadt, 2000), unfairness in opportunities for female athletes (Brand, 2006), its excessive commercialization and scandalous behavior (Bok, 2003; Duderstadt, 2000) and being referred to as “beer and circus” (Sperber, 2000).

Sperber (1990) argued that athletics has nothing to do with the educational mission of universities. Big-time college sports main purpose is commercial entertainment where athletes are recruited to entertain. Sperber (1990) also emphasized that athletics has not benefited universities financially because many athletic departments lose money. He stated, “Because athletic department expenses usually exceed revenues, any money earned by college sports teams stays in the athletic department...rather than financially help the university, most athletic departments siphon money from it” (Sperber, 1990, p. 4). Furthermore, Sperber (2000) argued that intercollegiate athletics is crippling undergraduate education. He coined the term “beer-and-circus” to describe the party scene connected to big-time intercollegiate athletics events and its effect upon many undergraduates at large, public research universities (Sperber, 2000). Sperber (2000) devised a questionnaire to determine the impact of big-time college sports on undergraduate education. Sperber (2000) concluded that universities use athletics to gain tuition dollars as well as provide commercial entertainment to keep students happy and distracted from the inability of universities to provide a quality undergraduate education.

While there are many perspectives in regards to the role of intercollegiate athletics in higher education, college and university presidents often struggle in trying to reform intercollegiate athletics. In reviewing the literature of university presidents and their thoughts about the complexities of athletics and academics, Ester and Nelson (2005) found three consistent themes: (a) financial escalation associated with intercollegiate athletics as each athletic department and university seeks to have a level playing field and a competitive edge, (b) the threat to academic integrity associated with the commercialization and competitiveness of college sports, and (c) the risk of exploiting student athletes for their physical skills without regard to their academic needs (Estler & Nelson, 2005).

Financial Escalation and Benefits of Athletic Programs

Athletic programs find themselves in an athletics arms race in order to gain a competitive advantage over their peers (Estler & Nelson, 2005; Knight Commission, 2001). In order to stay competitive, colleges and universities, along with their athletic programs, invest heavily in athletics resulting in continuous increased costs. Financial escalation results in the efforts of athletic programs trying to level the playing field. This consists of continuous facility improvements, elaborate locker and training rooms, higher paid coaches, luxury skyboxes, and any other ways to attract corporate support (Estler & Nelson, 2005). The downside of the athletics arms race is that the majority of athletic programs are not successful, and they operate in the red (Frank, 2004; Knight Commission, 2001; Sperber 1990). Many wonder why colleges and universities continue to financially invest in athletics if they are not profitable. Colleges and universities

continue to support athletics due to the perceived benefits athletics provides to them.

These benefits include financial gain, increased alumni and corporate contributions, and increased student applications and enrollment (Frank, 2004; Goff, 2000; Suggs, 2009).

Studies have produced mixed results on the relationship between athletic program successes and the benefits colleges and universities receive. Toma and Cross (1998) collected admissions data of 30 championship football and basketball universities from 1979 – 1992, for three years before and three years after they won a national championship. Findings revealed increases in admissions applications in the years following the national championship season (Toma & Cross, 1998). Pope and Pope (2009) also conducted a study measuring the benefits of athletic success on admissions for the top 20 football and top 16 basketball schools. Findings revealed a 2% to 8% increase in applications when athletic programs had success (Pope & Pope, 2009). Frank (2004) examined a number of empirical studies related to why universities invest in athletic programs. Findings revealed that if athletic programs generate indirect benefits, the effects are very small in regards to alumni donations and admission applications (Frank, 2004). Frank (2004) also concluded that there is lack of evidence that cutting the spending on athletics would reduce donations or applications.

Furthermore, negative exposure of athletics appeared to not have a large effect on the benefits colleges and universities received. Goff (2000) found that negative exposure, such as NCAA sanctions, does not negate the influence of past successes and if so, it's a small magnitude. Sperber (1999) argued that athletics can have a negative effect on giving. Alumni primarily contribute to the academic units and only 1-2% of them

contribute to athletics; boosters primarily give to athletic program (Sperber, 1999).

Alumni tend to withhold their contributions when they are embarrassed and/or angered by the bad publicity their school receives when involved in sports scandals (Sperber, 1999). Though there is evidence that the indirect benefits of athletic successes are small, senior administrators continue to believe institutions benefit when athletics receives significant attention (Suggs, 2009). Due to this perception, colleges and universities continue to support athletics.

The Threat to Academic Integrity and the Risk of Exploiting Student-Athletes

Athletic programs also have an educational identity (Buer, 2009). Athletes have to be students in good academic standing, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and athletic departments must be under the control of the university (Brand, 2006; Buer, 2009). While athletic departments focus primarily on winning, they also use the academic successes and prestige of their institutions to differentiate themselves from others (Buer, 2009).

One concern among college and university presidents is the conflict between academic values and athletic values. The conflict can be attributed to the increased commercialization and competitiveness of college sports that threatens the academic integrity of institutions (Estler & Nelson, 2005; Knight Commission, 2001). Athletic departments operate as minor leagues with little interest in the academic performances of student athletes beyond eligibility (Knight Commission, 2001). Commercialization and competitiveness leads to a win at all costs culture, where practices occur that can threaten the academic integrity of an institution.

Threats to academic integrity surround the issues of compromised admission standards and lower academic expectations of student athletes (Estler & Nelson, 2005; Knight Commission, 2001; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). The lowering of admission standards has been common in intercollegiate athletics for a long time. Shulman and Bowen (2001) conducted a study to learn about pre-collegiate preparation of students and student athletes in the 1951, 1976, and 1989 cohorts.

In a study of 30 academically selective schools from Divisions I-A, I-AA, and III, Shulman and Bowen (2001) found that athletes constitute a sizable share of the undergraduate student population. In addition, they found that both male and female students had a “very substantial statistical ‘advantage’ in the admissions process—a much greater advantage than that enjoyed by other targeted groups such as underrepresented minority students, alumni children, and other legacies” (Shulman & Bowen, 2001, p. 260). While student athletes may have an advantage in the admission process, football and basketball players in particular, are admitted into institutions with academic deficiencies. This leads to some wondering whether student athletes are being exploited.

With the increased commercialization, competition, and financial escalation, there is a growing concern that student-athletes in big-time sports programs are being exploited. With recruitment being an important job duty of a coach, the message conveyed to student athletes is the college or university is primarily interested in their athletic skills, not their academic skills (Estler & Nelson, 2005). Student athletes have differing views on the issue of exploitation. While some believe having the opportunity to

play in exchange for an education is sufficient, others feel that many people benefit financially off of their labor (Estler & Nelson, 2005), while they benefit the least.

The perception of exploitation is also steeped in racism, in particular, to the recruitment of Black student athletes (Estler & Nelson, 2005; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Black student athletes recruited for football and basketball are targeted for their athletic skills and being exploited in the process for financial benefit of institutions and athletic programs. This perception is due to the lack of effort made by colleges and universities to increase their minority student enrollment in their general student body (Estler & Nelson, 2005; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Sack and Staurowsky (1998) emphasized, “The message this sends out is that America’s colleges and universities are more concerned with producing winning sports teams than with seeking out and educating future black lawyers, doctors, and corporate executives” (p. 105). The perception of the exploitation of student athletes can also threaten the academic integrity of colleges and universities in that winning games is more important than academic success.

The Athletics vs. Academics Debate Section Summary

It is difficult to deny the role intercollegiate athletics has played in higher education. In the public life of the university, college sports greatly matter (Toma, 1999) and intercollegiate athletics is not leaving higher education anytime soon (Pine, 2010), because sport is a reflection of society (Wolfe, 2000). Buer (2009) explained this concept when he stated, “Unfortunately, the athletics-academic debate often masks the complexity of characterizing athletics programs as either educationally valuable initiatives or belonging in business and the entertainment industry” (p. 109). Regardless

of this viewpoint, there is an “underlying and growing disconnect with intercollegiate athletics within the campus-based academic community” (Brand, 2006, p. 13). This disconnect is fueled by issues such as academic fraud, academically underperforming student-athletes, and the misbehavior of coaches and college presidents (Brand, 2006). Another disconnect is athletics is an entity of the university that has little do with its purpose but serves a primary role. This disconnect can be attributed to athletics and academics not understanding each other. According to Toma and Kramer (2009),

Academics and athletics persistently, though needlessly, function as adversaries, rarely working jointly on shared issues or even drawing on one another’s experience to improve practice. Such an illusory divide results from faculty members and academic administrators reducing college sports to stereotypes and favoring an us-versus-them orientation. Even those most interested in these issues can take an overly romantic and thus insufficiently complex view of the realities of both the contemporary university and intercollegiate athletics within it. Arguments of the “we need to just rid of athletics” type are as unrealistic as those contending “all would be well at the university if the state would support us as they once did.” The same is true of most who have written specifically about college sports. Meanwhile athletic leaders are often too insulated from academe, too commonly failing to understand the norms, values, and beliefs that are so important in framing issues. (p. 4)

Academics and athletics may not recognize the similarities in how they operate within their universities. With increasing expenditures, they both generate and spend all of the

revenue they can (Suggs, 2009). Though commercialization has always been common among athletic programs, universities also utilize commercialization to make a profit off intellectual work being pursued on the academic side (Bok, 2003). While the main goal for both athletics and academics is institutional prestige, the main difference is that for athletics, “the ultimate goal of winning is more tangible than institutional prestige” (Suggs, 2009, p. 20). This disconnect between athletics and academics offers reasons to study the connections between them (Toma, 1999). In order to understand the athletic-academic dynamics, it is important to have knowledge about the history between the two entities.

The Early Dynamics between Intercollegiate Athletics and Higher Education

This section of the literature review focused on the early dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education. The literature includes the origins of intercollegiate athletics and how intercollegiate athletics became legitimized into higher education. This section also addresses the early struggles within the athletic-academic dynamic as well as the role women and African American student athletes played in this early relationship.

Higher education in the United States (US) has progressed through different transformations, mainly because US society has not achieved a consensus on the purposes of higher education, resulting in colleges and universities emerging with different models (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Chu, 1985, 1989). The first colleges exemplified traditions and values that patterned the English colleges such as Oxford and Cambridge (Chu, 1989). Pragmatism and utilitarianism also embodied American culture

(Beyer & Hannah, 2000). American higher education was concerned not only about mental and moral development, but focus on improving the human condition (Chu, 1985). New models of higher education began to develop after the passage of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862. The Morrill Act provided land across the states to maintain agricultural and mechanical colleges. Due to the Morrill Act, state-institutions were developed to meet the needs of the community and to offer a variety of subjects to students (Chu, 1985).

American universities grew as part of a decentralized system of institutions that resembled a market (Clotfelter, 2011). American colleges and universities have been exposed to a variety of educational models. Because of its diversity, any individual, group, church, private firm, city, or state could open a college (Perkin, 2006). American higher education used its many influences to eventually become the mecca for scholars in the 20th century (Perkin, 2006; Sloan, 1971). Since there was not one definition of what American higher education should or should not be, there was openness in determining the programs and objectives most appropriate (Chu, 1985).

Another important factor that influenced US higher education was resources, especially reliable patterns of funding (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Chu, 1989). Sources of funding from the government, churches, and donors would fluctuate causing colleges and universities to seek and rely on different sources of funding (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Clotfelter, 2011). The openness of the structure of US colleges and universities and the need for consistent sources of funding would result in intercollegiate athletics eventually becoming an integral part of American higher education.

The Origins of Intercollegiate Athletics

In early American higher education, sports, games, and any form of play were restricted and perceived as negative (Chu, 1989). At the turn of the nineteenth century, college students were fed up and decided to take on a different form of physical activity that did not involve manual labor. Students created intramural contests to test their skills against their peers at other institutions. The contests included sports such as rowing, baseball, tennis, track and field, wrestling, hockey, and football. Team sports became more popular than individual sports because of its capabilities to form a sense of brotherhood among the students and to draw in crowds to the competitions. Football and baseball games brought enthusiastic crowds and publicity, but they were still considered “outside the official purview of higher education” (Beyer & Hannah, 2000, p. 107).

Sports, games, or any form of recreational activity were never planned to be part of the curriculum (Davenport, 1985). Faculty and administrators refused to support these contests because they felt it took away from their scholarly work, but the faculty tolerated these activities because it was a method for students to let off steam from any pent-up energy before settling into more important intellectual matters (Davenport, 1985). These contests grew into sanctioned and refereed events between institutions. Since the institutions did not want to support these contests, students organized these events and looked for assistance elsewhere.

Students formed athletic associations, with the help of alumni groups, and raised funds through selling tickets, charging fees, and finding sponsorship. For example, James Elkins, a railroad superintendent, covered the expenses of the first intercollegiate event

because of the potential profit and a way to promote his company (Flowers, 2007). Rowing became the first intercollegiate sport with the first regatta occurring between Harvard and Yale in 1852. Many intercollegiate first games and matches also occurred: baseball (Williams vs. Amherst, 1859), football (Rutgers vs. Princeton, 1869), tennis (1883), ice hockey (Harvard vs. Brown, 1895), and gymnastics (1899). Without the support from higher education, students had to make intercollegiate events commercialized, which began the process of athletics moving away from being an educational activity. Though many sports contributed to the creation of intercollegiate athletics, football prevailed as the sport that changed the structure, culture, and power of athletics in higher education. According to Lombardi, Capaldi, Reeves, Craig, Gater, and Rivers (2003), “football captured the American collegiate imagination and the management of football provided the center around which the organizational structure of college sports evolved” (p. 4).

After the passage of the Morrill Act, institutions began to form throughout the country. Athletics became an important part of this growth, and institutions in the Northeast became models for other institutions to develop their athletic programs. Winning programs provided visibility to attract students and support. American colleges were autonomous and free from national or regional control (Smith, 1988) so they had the ability to compete for students and public support freely. As intercollegiate athletics continued to grow, the desire to win led to efforts to do whatever it takes to win.

Alumni helped “cement the tie between institutions and their athletic programs” (Crowley, 2006, p. 7). Alumni associations began to develop in the late nineteenth

century out of a commitment to control and promote athletic programs (Crowley, 2006). Alumni supported, financed, and helped administer college teams, which resulted in better facilities, the professional coach and the recruitment of players (Smith, 1988). Administrators and faculty resented the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics and they believed it was a distraction to the academic mission, but unreliable funding and competition made it difficult for institutions not to become involved in intercollegiate athletics. Flowers (2007) stated, “The presidents of these early colleges were willing to look the other way if a victory on the field of play could bring the public recognition they desired” (p. 58).

Legitimizing Intercollegiate Athletics into Higher Education

Flowers (2007) stated, “The notion that participation in sport had an educational value would not become part of the athletic creed until the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (p. 57). Near the end of the nineteenth century, the rapid industrialization and market capitalism in America began to pervade its colleges and universities (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Wealthy men invested resources into the founding of different institutions (Crowley, 2006). Governing boards, now made up of businessmen (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998), were very interested in athletics and created athletic policies that supported the business and commercialization of athletics (Flowers, 2007). During this time, the control of athletics shifted from the students to the institutions. Colleges and universities were benefiting tremendously from intercollegiate athletics. Tuition and funding from donors and alumni was a viable source of revenue (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). A belief system was embedded that athletics is a source of enhanced name recognition

that increased enrollment (Chu, 1985, 1989; Flowers, 2007), philanthropy, and legislative support (Flowers, 2007). Therefore, college presidents did not stand in opposition of the athletic policies because they were being hired and fired by these governing boards (Flowers, 2007).

By the turn of the twentieth century, college presidents began to accept athletics as an integral part of the institution (Flowers, 2007). Flowers (2007) reported,

Presidents and university boards looked for a bridge that could link the “high culture” of the academia with the general public and attempted to rally an otherwise ambivalent public who often neither understood nor necessarily valued the academic mission of the university to become “vicarious” alumni and demonstrate hometown (or home state) pride. (Flowers, 2007, p. 129)

Furthermore, the field of physical education emerged in the 1920s and offered academic legitimacy for athletic programs (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). Colleges and universities incorporated physical education into their course requirements. Institutions placed athletics in the physical education departments and recommended coaches become faculty members in the department (Davenport, 1985). Athletes were recruited as scholarship athletes and it was rationalized as similar to other academic scholarship students (Chu, 1985). As a result of all of these changes, intercollegiate athletics “was formally incorporated into many universities and recognized as a part of education” (Beyer & Hannah, 2000, p. 107). Once athletics became an official part of colleges and universities, they began to receive institutional funding.

Amateurism also served as a reason for colleges and universities to accept intercollegiate athletics. Amateurism in sport was a British upper-class concept that was a way to keep lower classes from mixing with upper classes on the field (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998), but amateurism was not always part of the intercollegiate athletics in the United States. Amateurism became part of athletics after control shifted from the students to the institution. The Ivy League schools were resistant to professionalizing sports because they felt student should not be paid to play sports. The concept of amateurism was a tradition that allowed colleges and universities to retain their legitimacy as elite institutions of higher education (Flowers, 2007). President Theodore Roosevelt and others endorsed creating the tradition of the amateur code that became a means to ensure that one institution's policies did not give an advantage over another's and promote moral and personal development over economic gain (Flowers, 2007).

Violence, Corruption, and the Need for Regulation

Though intercollegiate athletics became a part of colleges and universities, it had “evolved into a separate business unrelated to the core educational mission of higher education” (Flowers, 2007, p. 130). Athletic departments were becoming more powerful and an increase of corruption and abuse of power occurred. Alumni, boosters, and officials were participating in the recruiting and compensation of players. By the 1890s, questionable practices were occurring and concerned schools wanted a change (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). College presidents and faculty tried to help control intercollegiate athletics, but football remained a problem (Crowley, 2006; Duderstadt, 2000). President James Angell of the University of Michigan persuaded the presidents from different

midwestern universities to form the Western Conference, now the Big Ten Conference, in 1895 to help provide rules and institutional control (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Duderstadt, 2000), and restore a sense of integrity and discipline to football (Duderstadt, 2000).

Even with efforts from institutions, football became increasingly violent, causing multiple injuries and deaths. The 1905 football season resulted in 18 deaths and over 140 seriously injured and caught the attention of President Roosevelt (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Crowley, 2006). President Roosevelt summoned a meeting with representatives from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton to charge them to reform football (Crowley, 2006). Though they accepted the challenge, nothing came of it so New York University and other institutions took matters into their own hands (Crowley, 2006).

President Roosevelt became involved again and promoted a joint committee to address the brutality of football, lack of regulation in intercollegiate athletics, and the nonexistence of standards for eligibility and scholarships (Crowley, 2006; Duderstadt, 2000). President Roosevelt strongly supported the principle of amateurism and as a result of his efforts, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, now the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), was formed in 1906 (Crowley, 2006; Duderstadt, 2000). The NCAA did not start out as a regulatory and enforcement agency for intercollegiate athletics but an outlet to promote amateurism and “a high standard of personal honor, eligibility, and fair play” (Crowley, 2006, p. 15). The authority and responsibility for enforcement was on the member institutions, and it would take almost 50 years for the NCAA to claim a significant enforcement role (Crowley, 2006; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998).

Women and African Americans in Sports

Another factor that shaped American higher education was the inclusion of women and minorities into institutions that served White men. After the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 was passed, women's colleges and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established as places for women and minorities to receive an education. Predominately White male institutions' decision to allow women and minorities to enroll varied immensely. Intercollegiate athletics began as competitions among White men at predominately White male institutions. Women and minorities were not participating in these competitions. According to Crowley (2006), "The journeys to acceptance at overwhelmingly white NCAA colleges and universities were long for most minority athletes, and longer for women" (p. 115).

Women did not always participate in sports, but they eventually changed the structure of intercollegiate athletics. Originally, women were frills (a decoration) that accompanied men who participated in athletic activities (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). Society as a whole believed women should not participate in intercollegiate athletic competition; nevertheless even attend college (Crowley, 2006), but the women's movements of the mid-1800s helped with women attending college as well as creating opportunities for women to participate in sports. Physical educators took responsibility for women's sports and they opposed the commercial excesses of male intercollegiate sports (Chu 1989). The "participation first, competition second" philosophy was adhered as the underlying basis for women's sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985).

In the 1890s, a number of sports arrived at all-women's and coeducational colleges such as crew, basketball, fencing, swimming, track and field, bicycling, and physical fitness (Crowley, 2006). The first intercollegiate contest recorded for women was basketball game between Stanford and Berkeley in 1896 (Chu, 1989). There were a number of organizations that consisted of physical educators and students that were involved in establishing policies and guidelines for girls and women's sports until the 1970s (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985).

Most Black students attended and played at HBCUs, but Black students and athletes began to appear on predominately white campuses during the latter half of the nineteenth century. These institutions were primarily located in the North, but only a small number of spots were provided for Black students. Black students, especially athletes, served as tokens with distinction (Grundman, 1985). Oberlin College is said to be the first institution to accept Black students and the first to have Blacks on its baseball team (Crowley, 2006). Moses Fleetwood Walker and his brother, Welday Walker, were the first Black baseball players in the 1870s that played at Oberlin (Crowley, 2006).

Jim Crow laws affected college playing fields and courts for most of the twentieth century. The 1896 Supreme Court ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* upheld racial segregation under the doctrine "separate but equal" (Crowley, 2006), but Black athletes, such as Fredrick "Fritz" Pollard and Paul Robeson attended predominately White institutions (Crowley, 2006; Wiggins, 1991). During this time, Black athletes that attended these institutions came from well-educated families and were both outstanding students and athletes (Wiggins, 1991). Academic success was more important than athletic success. By

the 1930s, a trend occurred where migration to the north increased the number of Black students attending college, as well as the number of outstanding Black athletes (Wiggins, 1991). As a result, colleges and universities were more willing to accept talented Black athletes that can contribute to their success (Wiggins, 1991).

Black athletes at these institutions dealt with issues of discrimination and insensitivity throughout their career. When playing against southern institutions, Black athletes were kept off the field (Crowley, 2006; Wiggins, 1991). Their experiences on campus often “inhibited their ability to be functioning members of their athletic teams and general student body” (Wiggins, 1991, p. 170). Black athletes continued to encounter these issues throughout the twentieth century.

The Early Relationship Between Intercollegiate Athletics and Higher Education

Section Summary

According to Toma and Kramer (2009), “The marriage of spectator sports and higher education is, of course, a historical accident” (p. 1). The early relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education indicates that both entities needed each other to survive. Intercollegiate athletics needed universities for legitimization, while universities needed athletics for exposure and financial support. By institutionalizing athletics into higher education, colleges and universities believed that they could better control athletics. According to Shulman and Bowen (2001) “Colleges and universities gambled on their ability to ‘control the beast,’” (p. 288), and major developments continued to raise the question of whether this gamble was a good decision.

Major Historical & Political Developments that Impacted Athletics and Academics

This section of the literature focused on the major historical and political developments that impacted the culture of athletics and academics. This section focused on the 1940s-1980s, a time period where intercollegiate athletics and higher education went through drastic changes due to coeducation, racial integration, Title IX, and new academic standards.

The 1940s through the 1980s had a variety of political developments that impacted both higher education and intercollegiate athletics. World War II, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, legislative policies, and other external factors changed the face of American higher education. World War II not only changed society, but also had a large impact on higher education. As a result of the war, college enrollment began to decline, forcing colleges and universities to create new strategies to increase their enrollment. The acceptance of coeducation, ending the bastions of male privilege, opened the doors to female students (Conway, 1974). The forced acceptance of minorities at predominately White institutions (PWIs) would also occur.

Intercollegiate athletics also went through a number of changes during the 1940s and 1950s. The decrease in enrollment in higher education during the 1940s and 1950s impacted the growth of intercollegiate athletics (Davenport, 1985). Athletics changed its eligibility restrictions and allowed freshmen and first-year transfer students to play on varsity teams (Davenport, 1985). Eligibility changes were the beginning of a number of changes in athletics. By the late 1950s, athletic departments began to separate from the physical education departments and become its own entity, with its own facilities

(Davenport, 1985). Coaches also were no longer given faculty rank (Davenport, 1985). Basketball became as popular as football, and contributed to the rise in the commercialization of athletics. The increase of commercialization also increased corruption, but university presidents could not control them at the risk of losing their jobs. “According to Davenport (1985), “The 1950s at the time may have appeared traumatic with the growing commercialism, scandals, and illegal operations but historically was the calm before the storm of the 1960s and 1970s” (p. 13).

The 1960s were very significant for higher education and intercollegiate athletics. The Civil Rights and the anti-Vietnam War movements produced campus demonstrations and student uprisings. College students were more radical, took a serious role in world affairs, and openly confronted university administrators (Wiggins, 1991). While the Civil Rights movement continuously brought awareness to racial inequalities, Black athletes did not stand on the sidelines. Black athletes were also involved as they confronted racial discrimination within athletic departments (Wiggins, 1991).

Racial Integration

As more Black athletes attended PWIs in the late 1930s and 1940s, a different type of athlete started enrolling at these institutions. While institutions still attracted athletes who were outstanding scholars, many institutions began to enroll Black student athletes that were inadequately prepared for academic success (Wiggins, 1991). Many institutions were willing to accept these students because their outstanding athletic abilities would help their athletic programs become successful, not concerned about their academic success. Institutions expressed their belief in scholar-athlete but failed to

provide support services for those who were academically underprepared or were not interested in receiving a college education (Wiggins, 1991). Most schools with major athletic programs recruited Black athletes much more intensively and systematically than they do regular black students (Sperber, 1990). Colleges and universities claimed that they were advancing the cause of race relations in America (Grundman, 1985).

Though the North seemed more progressive in accepting Black students, integrating the Southern colleges and universities became more difficult and took the work of the Civil Rights Movement to see changes. The 1954 Supreme Court Decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* would repudiate the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, thus removing the “separate but equal” doctrine, and allowing Black students to integrate PWIs, including those in the South. *Brown v. Board of Education* provided Black athletes a wider selection of schools to participate in sports. Many believed sports would lead the charge in desegregation. The idea that the integration of sports would be cutting edge in slashing the last constraints of segregation did not reflect on college campuses as segregation efforts were still in effect (Chu, 1989). Many southern institutions rebelled and sometimes reacted violently (Marcello, 1987). Though the *Brown* decision was made in 1954, many southern institutions did not begin to integrate or change their athletic policies until the 1960s.

Black athletes primarily participated in football, basketball, and track and field. The increased number of Black athletes alarmed the dominant culture because they feared their sports were “being taken over by the country’s most hated and least esteemed racial groups” (Wiggins, 1991, p. 172). Black student athletes at PWIs both in the North and

South had to face hostile environments on and off the field. These issues included physical abuse from teammates, not being allowed in certain venues with their White teammates or being sat out if a team did not want to play against a Black player (Crowley, 2006). States and universities adopted policies that prohibited competition with institutions that had black players in their teams (Grundman, 1985). In return, some northern institutions would cancel games against southern institutions while others refused to cancel and would just sit out their Black players.

Black student athletes continued to break barriers in intercollegiate athletics. When the all-Black starting five at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas El Paso, won the 1966 national basketball championship, it accelerated the advancement of Black athletes in the South. This moment in history changed the way Black players were perceived and more efforts were made to recruit more Black student-athletes, especially in the South. As a result, HBCUs began to lose outstanding athletes to PWIs that had more resources.

Governance of Women's Athletics

Once colleges and universities became coeducational, women's sports began to arrive on campuses. On college campuses, the athletic departments had separate entities for men's and women's sports. While funding for men's athletics came from sources such as donors and gate receipts, funding for women's athletics came from nonrestrictive university funds (Slatton, 1982). Having separate entities allowed women's athletics to have a more educational focus and align with the university's purpose over the men's athletics.

Women's athletics, with the help of students, created governing boards or councils to establish rules on many campuses (Slatton, 1982). It was not until 1971, that an organization similar to the NCAA governed women's sports. The Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) formed in the 1960s and eventually became the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women in 1971 (AIAW), an organization committed to protecting the women from abuses that were evident in men's sports (Chu, 1989; Slatton, 1982). AIAW favored student rights over an institution's rights, and students continued to have a voice within this organization (Slatton, 1982). Crowley (2006) stated, "In spite of the standardization efforts and the attendant focus on developing a distinctively different game for women, many institutions decided to play under men's rules" (p. 118). Women leaders still wanted to maintain the same philosophy, but the competitive urge had manifested into a number of women's sports (Crowley, 2006). Sports such as basketball gave women national prominence (Crowley, 2006) and society became more accepting of women being competitors (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). The AIAW became the governing association that was in charge of women's competition. While women's intercollegiate athletics emerged as a national entity, a federal legislation known as Title IX would have the greatest impact on women's athletics thus far (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985).

Title IX

When Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was enacted, its purpose was to prohibit sex discrimination in any educational program that receives federal funding. Title IX went through policy interpretations, further legislations, hearings, court

decisions, studies and reports, and reams of commentary (Crowley, 2006). Though it was enacted in 1972, institutions were given time to be in compliance until 1978 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). Most of the attention on Title IX is related to intercollegiate athletics. Additional policy interpretations were drafted to judge compliance within intercollegiate and interscholastic athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). The 1979 Policy Interpretation condensed the responsibilities of educational institutions into three general areas: (a) financial assistance, (b) benefits and opportunities, and (c) accommodation of interests and abilities. The third responsibility provided a three-part test that “educational institutions could use to demonstrate compliance with accommodating the interests and abilities of their students” (Pickett, Dawkins, & Braddock, 2012, p. 1583). The three-part test would be further magnified in the 1996 Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletic Policy Guidance (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The passing of Title IX brought concern and anxiety to the NCAA and its institutions regarding possible liability (Crowley, 2006). Athletic departments and the NCAA challenged Title IX, but the courts required they adhere to the mandate (Crowley, 2006). The 1980s changed the application of Title IX in athletics. The 1984 US Supreme Court decision in *Grove City v. Bell* ruled that Title IX only applied to programs and activities that receive federal funding (Pickett, et al., 2012). Since most athletic programs were not receiving federal funding, they became immune and as a result, there was a lack of growth in women’s sports and female participation (Pickett, et al., 2012). The federal funding for women’s sports changed four-years later when Congress passed the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, indicating Title IX applied to indirect recipients of

federal funding (Pickett, et al., 2012); thus intercollegiate athletics losing its immunity (Crowley, 2006).

Title IX benefits. Title IX has provided many benefits such as increasing the number of women enrolled in college and the number of female athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics (Hardin, Whiteside, & Ash, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; Priest, 2003). In 1971, there were less than 32,000 female student athletes in intercollegiate athletics (Brake, 2001). In 2012, 40 years after the enactment of Title IX, there were 9,274 women's teams and approximately 200,000 female student athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics, the highest in history (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). In addition, there is an increase in female athletes competing in traditionally male sports (Brake, 2001). Increased female scholarships and funding for female sports occurred, but it also provide consequences for the AIAW when college campuses began to integrate the entities and create one athletic department (Crowley, 2006). One big consequence was the NCAA finally taking control over women's sports, thus ending the AIAW in 1981 (Crowley, 2006).

Title IX controversies. The controversy surrounding Title IX is not due to the equality of women, but the effects it has on men's sports (Pickett, et al., 2012). College presidents and athletic departments often had to make difficult decisions (Crowley, 2006), such as cutting some of the men's sports, to comply with Title IX. Critics of Title IX argued that it has caused athletic programs to decrease opportunities for men and eliminate some of their male sports (Brake, 2001; Hardin, et al., 2012; Marburger & Hogshead-Makar, 2003; Paule-Koba, Harris, & Freysinger, 2013). For example,

wrestling lost over 170 of their programs between 1981 and 1999 (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar, 2003). Colleges and universities would object the court's interpretation of Title IX because they argued the three-part test places additional burdens on colleges and universities and that women's sports would cause a strain on athletic department budgets (Thelin, 2000). Colleges and universities have limited athletic budgets so it is economically impractical to operate men's non-revenue producing sports while providing women's sports (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar, 2003).

Different studies addressed the critics of Title IX. Sabo (1998) conducted a study that to address whether women's sports triggered the reduction in men's sports. The study revealed that the increase in women's sports between 1978 and 1996 were not accompanied by the reduction of men's sports (Sabo, 1998). There was an increase in men's sports in Divisions I-AA, II, and III and the only programs that had a decrease in men's sports were Division I-A and I-AA schools with the largest athletic budgets (Sabo, 1998). The Government Accountability Office conducted a study in 2001 and found that most colleges and universities were able to add women's sports without cutting men's sports (Hardin, et al., 2012; Messner & Solomon, 2007).

Thelin (2000) explored whether women's sports was the primary cause for financial strains and deficits of Division I athletic budgets. The study revealed that there was other practices that caused financial strain to athletic budgets unrelated to adding women's sports (Thelin, 2000). Other practices included large athletic grants-in-aid for major sports and expenditures outpacing the revenues in football and men's basketball;

hence nonrevenue men's sports were already being subjected to budget cuts (Thelin, 2000).

Additionally, waste, mismanagement of funds, and fraud caused athletic departments to operate in the red (Sperber, 2000). During the four-year period between *Grove City v. Bell* and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, where Title IX was not being applied to athletics, colleges and universities cut wrestling teams "almost three times as high as the rate of decline during the 12 years after Title IX's application to intercollegiate athletics was reestablished" (Priest, 2003, p. 10). In addition, women's gymnastics was also being cut during this timeframe (Priest, 2003). Athletic departments have run deficits long before Title IX was mandated; Title IX gave athletic directors an excuse for their money loss (Sperber, 2000).

Perceptions of Title IX. Though female participation in intercollegiate athletics has increased since the passage of Title IX, some have argued that Title IX has not done enough to achieve gender equity (Brake, 2001; Pickett, et al., 2012). Colleges and universities continue to provide more opportunities for male student athletes than female student athletes. There are more women enrolled in college than men, but female student athletes compose of a lesser percentage than male student athletes. The lack of enforcement of Title IX laws and regulations has also been major problem (Kennedy, 2010). Many colleges and universities are not in compliance of Title IX in athletics as male student athletes still receive more funding and better facilities than female student athletes (Kennedy, 2010). Institutional practices contribute to the disparate participation rates of male and female students that are outside of Title IX enforcement (Brake, 2001).

Most of the research on Title IX focuses on the benefits to women and how Title IX has impacted men's athletics, but there appears to be a lack of research on the perceptions of Title IX from the university community, including athletics. Paule-Koba, et al. (2013), stated, "Little research has examined how Title IX is perceived by the variety of individuals who comprise the communities of the institutions of higher education that have made changes to their athletic program offerings because of this legislation" (p. 116). In a study examining the perceptions of Title IX from individuals in institutions of higher education, Paule-Koba, et al. (2013) results revealed that many believed Title IX did increase the number of sport opportunities and educational opportunities for women. However, it also revealed that many believed Title IX was unfair and problematic because it limits and decreases opportunities in sports for men (Paule-Koba, et al., 2013). Though there are different studies that dispel the myth of Title IX causing the elimination of certain male sports, this perception still exists today.

Academic Standards

The academic credentials of student athletes are continuously questioned since the early developments of intercollegiate athletics. In the origins of intercollegiate athletics, athletes were current students who were admitted to the institution based on their academics. As the desire to win became a priority, students were being admitted that were outstanding athletically, but not academically. These student students were commonly described with the term ringer. Ringers are athletes brought in as professionals illegally to help a team win. Ringers began with graduate students, but student leaders brought in athletes and hid them under a "special designation" of students who were in

non-degree programs (Flowers, 2007). For many years, colleges and universities have admitted and given scholarships to academically unqualified athletes by using the rules on special admits (Sperber, 1990). Faculty emphasized academics should be first, but winning was more important; so many student athletes were entering these institutions with lower standards. This was especially true among Black student athletes that arrived after the 1940s. Numerous proposals were recommended to function as benchmarks for freshman academic eligibility (Mondello & Abernethy, 2000).

1.600 rule. During the 1965 NCAA Convention, the 1.600 rule was established as a formula-based academic standard, where incoming student athletes had to have a predicted minimum GPA of 1.600 (Crowley, 2006) to receive financial aid. The objective of the 1.600 rule was to have student-athletes have an academic standing that is comparable to the general student population (Crowley, 2006). The 1.600 rule did not come without its debates. While some commended the NCAA for creating a standard, others believed the NCAA should not be involved in creating an academic standard historically resided with an institution (Crowley, 2006). In addition, debates continued on whether a 1.600 GPA should be sufficient for student athletes, competitive advantage, and the bias the rule has for disadvantaged students (Crowley, 2006).

Proposition 48. In the 1980s, a number of national scandals occurred in intercollegiate athletics surrounding academics. For example, the University of Southern California was accused of having over 330 student athletes that are scholastically deficient over a period of a decade (Thelin, 1994). In addition, it was highly publicized

that many colleges and universities admitted athletes that were functionally illiterate (Petr & McArdle, 2012; Sperber, 1990).

Due to the numerous scandals and questionable practices occurring in intercollegiate athletics, the American Council on Education formed a committee to examine eligibility standards (Crowley, 2006). The committee recommended that a high school student would have to meet specific core curriculum, pass with a minimum 2.0 GPA, and have at least a combined verbal and math score of 700 on the SAT or a composite score of 15 on the ACT to be eligible as a freshman (Crowley, 2006). A student who did not meet the requirements but maintained a 2.0 GPA was eligible to receive financial aid, but would lose a year of eligibility (Crowley, 2006). This proposed legislation would be known as Proposition 48 that only applied to Division I schools and took effect in 1986 (Crowley, 2006; Sperber, 2000).

Proposition 48 brought much controversy, and the issue of race was at the center of this controversy. There were arguments that the new standards would impact minority students, in particular Black students, from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Crowley, 2006). Black educators argued that Black athletes would be impacted the most because more of them score below a 700 SAT score than white athletes (Sperber, 1990).

In 1986, HBCUs responded to Proposition 48 by proposing Proposition 14, which recommended a 2.0 GPA in the core curriculum and the elimination of standardized-test scores (Crowley, 2006) because they believe these tests are culturally biased against the poor (Sperber, 1990), but it was voted down at the 1986 NCAA Convention.

When Proposition 48 took effect in 1986, statistics showed that there were many incoming student athletes that failed to meet the standards, in particular, football and basketball players (Sperber, 1990). As a result, an increase in cheating on the SAT and ACT occurred with the help of coaches and recruiting coordinators (Sperber, 1990). As a response to the cheating issues, a few amendments to Proposition 48 occurred. During the 1992 NCAA Convention, the Presidents Commission created three eligibility items on the legislative docket that included raising the number of core courses required for a high school athlete and setting degree-completion requirements by year for college student athletes (Crowley, 2006). The third eligibility requirement was establishing an initial-eligibility index relating GPA in core courses to test-score performance on a sliding scale where higher scores offset lower test scores and vice versa (Crowley, 2006). These three eligibility items would be known as Proposition 16.

NCAA eligibility certification. The NCAA has tried to eliminate the negative perceptions of student athletes by raising the academic requirements (Mondello & Abernethy, 2000). In 1994, the NCAA began an eligibility certification process for all incoming freshmen student athletes to address compliance and equity concerns (Petr & McArdle, 2012). The Academic Progress Rate (APR), the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR), and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) are also measures used to measure the academic progress and success of student athletes, but the belief still exist that colleges and universities continue to admit student athletes that are academically unqualified. It is argued that student athletes receive preferential treatment in the admissions process and

are more likely to be academically underprepared than non-athletes (Shulman & Bowen, 2001).

Until the 1980s, there was a lack of research regarding student athlete academic performance from a national perspective (Petr & McArdle, 2012). Using data from the NCAA, Petr and McArdle (2012) studied high school academic performance and eligibility, college academic performance and continuing eligibility, and team-level academic success from different eras. One of their findings showed that NCAA changes in the academic rules corresponded with positive changes in the academic success of student athletes (Petr & McArdle, 2012). In addition, the graduation rates of student athletes have been slightly higher than the general student population. For example, in the 2004 cohort, the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) of White student athletes was 68% and the White student body was 66%. The FGR for African American students athletes was 55% and the African American student body was 44%. When separated by race and gender, White male student athletes were the only group that trailed their student body counterparts (Petr & McArdle, 2012). Though African American student athletes fared better than their counterparts, Petr & McArdle (2012) were still concerned about the Black male percentages. Black male students athletes had a 50% FGR, the lowest of all the student athletes while their counterparts had a 38% FGR, the lowest of the student body. Members of the academic community that are concerned about the academic qualifications of student athletes also need to look at the general student population, who fare similar to student athletes. While student athletes may be performing well

academically, the professionalization of athletics still brings controversy and concern to higher education.

Major Historical and Political Developments Section Summary

The major historical and political developments that occurred between the 1940s and 1980s both impacted intercollegiate athletics and higher education. Both higher education and intercollegiate athletics had to deal with a declining enrollment early on, which led to a change in the student dynamics. Women, minorities, and academically underprepared students increasingly entered these traditional institutions and helped shape intercollegiate athletics. While Black male students contributed to the successes of athletic programs, female student athletes impacted the structure of intercollegiate athletics. The tactics of building successful athletic programs included commercialism and the acceptance of academically underprepared student athletes. The processes were constantly in conflict with the institutional missions of academic integrity, which also needed the visibility athletics provided. These dynamics will continue to be explored at Clemson University, the site of the research study.

Assessing Athletics in a Historical Context

The literature surrounding intercollegiate athletics and higher education is abundant, but there appears to be a scarce amount of literature that explores the dynamics through history. To understand the role intercollegiate athletics currently has in higher education requires it to be placed in historical context. Flowers (2007) emphasized, “By examining institutions in the process of formation, history makes it possible to abstract the organizational biases which underlie their manifestation and remain embodied in

current practice” (p. 122). A few scholars have studied the relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education through its history.

Thelin ‘s (1994) book, *Games Colleges Play*, is a historical narrative study on the significance of intercollegiate athletics being incorporated into American higher education and society from 1900 to the 1990s. In particular, Thelin (1994) tested the hypothesis of how current issues in college athletics such as scandals and reform fared as a historical problem. Thelin (1994) studied historic relations between intercollegiate athletics and academic policies at major universities with big-time sports programs. Data sources included university archives, and the files of foundations, associations, and athletic conferences. In addition, national reports and the works of previous scholars were used. The study extended beyond athletic departments to include campus groups such as faculty senate, curricular committees, board of trustees, offices of university presidents and provosts, and external groups such as foundations, courtrooms, and congressional subcommittees (Thelin, 1994).

Thelin (1994) found all reports that focused on athletic reform, regardless of whether it was 1929 or 1990, had many similarities. These included: commitment to the idea of the student-athlete; acknowledgement that athletics were important to the college experience; the role of a coach as teacher; colleges and university presidents being involved; and warning against commercialization and dependence on media and other constituents outside of campus (Thelin, 1994). Thelin (1994) also found that sports scandals were not the most significant development; it was what colleges, universities, and the public have accepted as approved practices. Thelin (1994) concluded that the

same issues and questions will occur until university administration and faculties are willing and able to force reform in intercollegiate athletics.

Flowers (2007) conducted a study to understand the roles played by athletics in higher education and the student athletes in athletic programs. He also wanted to understand how athletics became institutionalized in higher education as an extension of the academic mission. Flowers' study was a historical analysis of major developments of intercollegiate athletics. Institutional and organizational theory was used as the conceptual framework to understand how colleges and universities have grown athletic programs. The study revealed that intercollegiate athletics were organized to be rationalized, commercialized, and professional enterprises that produced winning teams (Flowers, 2007). Intercollegiate athletics were not organized to be part of the academic mission of higher education. Athletics became part of the educational mission when they began recruiting working-class athletes that did not favor the elite status colleges and universities wanted to maintain (Flowers, 2007). By placing the study in historical context, the study provides an understanding of the current issue between athletics and academics.

Shulman and Bowen (2012) examined the institutionalization and regulation of intercollegiate athletics into higher education through a historical analysis. Shulman and Bowen (2012) examined how athletic programs fit into the educational missions of institutions and how colleges and universities have been affected by athletics. When examining different mission statements, two themes emerged: (a) knowledge for its own sake and for preparing flexible minds; and (b) education for leadership or success in life

(Shulman & Bowen, 2012). For the first theme, there is not a direct connection between the athletics and the mission; it's argued that athletic competition provides a balanced life for a number of students (Shulman & Bowen, 2012). The second theme is mission statements that invoke excellence in all pursuits so it is easier to justify intercollegiate athletics being a part of the mission. Based on these notions, three reasons why athletics is justified in higher educations are identified. Institutions with a substantial percentage of student athletes can affect the priorities of the school as well as shape the mission (Shulman & Bowen, 2012). Second, athletic programs build a sense of community that attracts students to the university (Shulman & Bowen, 2012). Lastly, high-profile sports are valued because of their revenue-generating capacity (Shulman & Bowen, 2012).

What these studies have in common is using a historical analysis to understand the relationship between athletics and academics. When studying organizations, Berger and Luckmann (1967) stated, "It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced" (p. 54). Having the knowledge of the institutionalization of intercollegiate athletics can serve as a guide when examining the current nature between athletics and academics. This study extends beyond a historical analysis and also addresses the current dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education. It was important to include the history in this literature review and the major political developments to understand the current issues. Shulman and Bowen (2012) stated, "History and tradition are themselves potent factors in shaping debate and justifying current policies" (p. 33). Major historical and political developments have impacted both intercollegiate athletics and higher education.

The study expands on the historical and political developments that impact intercollegiate athletics and higher education as well as the current developments that have occurred.

This study contributes to the existing literature while providing a different methodology.

While previous studies are theoretical or steeped in quantitative methods, this study applied qualitative research using phenomenological case study. Furthermore, this study focused on a selected institution that explores the perspectives from the athletic department and the institution.

Theoretical Lens

The study was conducted from an organizational perspective. Organizations, as defined by North (1990) provide structure to human interaction. They are corporate actors where groups of individuals are bound by some rules designed to achieve a common objective or solve a common problem (Mantzavinos, 2001). Universities and athletic departments are both considered organizations. Even though athletic departments belong to universities, they are an auxiliary unit that raises funds to operate. To better understand the athletic and academic organizational dynamics, the theoretical lens that will be used in this study is institutional theory, with a special focus on neo-institutional theory. Institutional theory became popular in the 1970s and has been influenced by the works of economists, sociologists and political scientists.

Institutional theory is a continuation and extension of open systems theory, where organizations are strongly influenced by their environments (Marion, 2002; Scott, 2003). Institutional theory is about how social systems construct reality (Marion, 2002; Scott, 2003), and “how such constructed reality emerges, shapes behavior and structure, and

causes isomorphism” (Marion, 2002, p. 294). Scholars who study institutions increasingly attend to how institutions arise and are maintained, but also how they undergo change (Scott, 2001). This helps in understanding how the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University has changed over time.

Within institutional theory is neo-institutional theory, which focuses on the behavior of organizations and how they are influenced by societal cultures and beliefs. According to Greenwood and Hinings (2006), neo-institutional theory began with John Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977), who argued organizations are influenced by the social context in which they are embedded. Organizations are “social and cultural systems embedded within an ‘institutional’ context, comprising the state, professions, interest groups, and public opinion” (Greenwood & Hinings, 2006, p. 819). Scott (2001) further explained that Meyer and Rowan believed organizations “also result from the increasing rationalization of cultural rules that provide an independent basis for their construction” (p. 43). According to neo-institutional theory, organizations are constrained by social expectations and legitimacy (Greenwood & Hinings, 2006).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), “Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (p. 54). Processes become habitual over time and turns into a mutual agreement, where actions are predictable, therefore reducing any danger (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Institutional theory considers the processes by which structures, that include schemas, rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior (Scott, 2001, 2003). Scott (2001) stated, “Institutions impose restrictions by defining legal,

moral, and cultural boundaries setting off legitimate from illegitimate activities. But it is essential to recognize that institutions also support and empower activities and actors” (p. 50). Organizations conform in different ways. Scott’s (2001) three pillars of institutions, regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive, are vital ingredients of institutions. These elements are identified as making up or supporting institutions that provide stability and meaning to social life (Scott, 2001). Each of the pillars are “aligned with quite profound differences in the assumptions made about the nature of social reality and the ways in which actors make choices in social situations” (Scott, 2001, p. 69). All three elements can be found in institutions. The study will use all three pillars to examine the perceptions of the structure, culture, and relationship between a university and its athletic department.

The Regulative Pillar

The regulative pillar views institutions as systems that constrain and regularize behavior (Scott, 2001, 2003). The regulative pillar involves establishing rules and creating rewards and punishments as an attempt to influence behaviors (Scott, 2001). Scott (2001) stated, “Force, fear, and expedience are central ingredients of the regulatory pillar, but they are often tempered by the existence of rules, whether in the guise of informal mores or formal rules and laws” (Scott, 2001, p. 53). For universities, authority comes from entities such as the board of trustees/board of regents and the federal, state, and local governments. For athletic departments, authority comes from entities such as the NCAA, athletic conferences, and the universities in which they are housed. In the regulative pillar, rules are both formal and informal. These can consist of policies, laws, codes of conduct, or any other rules where it is in the best interest of an organization to

comply. Though colleges and universities traditionally have freedom, rules can constrain the behaviors and impact their decision-making, especially when they are in need of financial support.

The Normative Pillar

The normative pillar view institutions as systems that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life (Scott, 2001). The norms and values of the institution guide the behavior of individuals (Scott, 2003). Scott (2001) stated, “Values are conceptions of the preferred or the desirable, together, with the construction of standards to which existing structures or behavior can be compared and assessed. Norms specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends” (Scott, 2001, p. 55). Normative systems define goals and objectives while designating ways to pursue them (Scott, 2001). Normative systems are viewed as imposing constraints on social behavior while empowering and enabling social action (Scott, 2001). Values and norms can be role specific, where it does not apply to the collective, where normative expectations occur in how the actor should behave in varying degrees (Scott, 2001). Universities and athletic departments can have different norms and values as well as ones that are the same across both entities. The norms and values of an institution may also indicate how they interact with athletic departments.

The Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

The neo-institutional approach stresses the cultural-cognitive pillar (Scott, 2001, 2003). The cultural-cognitive pillar emphasizes that shared conceptions constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made (Scott, 2001).

Scott (2001) stated, “Meanings arise in interaction and are maintained and transformed as they are employed to make sense of the ongoing stream of happenings” (p. 57). Symbols, words, signs, and gestures shape meanings to objects and activities (Scott, 2001).

Individuals interact and create understandings that support collective action (Scott, 2003).

With neo-institutional theory, actors will have different realities based on their experiences; therefore construct different meanings (Scott, 2001). Berger and Luckmann (1967) stated:

Reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always *embodied*, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality. To understand the state of the socially constructed universe at any given time, or its change over time, one must understand the social organization that permits the definers to do their defining. (p. 116)

Universities and athletic departments have common beliefs and shared logic within each entity. These shared conceptions can also impact their perceptions of the other entity. For example, the continuous beliefs and assumption about intercollegiate athletics are continuously shared and becomes institutionalized within the university culture, which can impact the relationship between each entity and how they interact with each other.

Legitimacy

While each pillar has different views of institutions, they are all influenced by legitimacy. Berger and Luckmann (1967) explained, “The institutional world requires legitimation, that is, ways by which it can be ‘explained’ and justified” (p. 61). According to Scott (2001), legitimacy is a “condition reflecting perceived consonance with relevant

rules and laws, normative support, or alignment with cultural-cognitive frameworks” (p. 59). Legitimacy is an overall perception that the actions of an organization are appropriate based on the constructed systems of norms, values, and beliefs (Scott, 2001). According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), “Legitimation not only tells the individual why he *should* perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things *are* what they are. In other words, ‘knowledge’ precedes ‘values’ in the legitimation of institutions” (p. 93). Entities within the university, such as athletics and academics, legitimize their behavior and decision-making based on the socially constructed views within their respective areas.

Justification of Method

The development of neo-institutional theory has been influenced by phenomenological philosophy (Gill, 2014; Holt & Sandberg, 2011). Silverman (1971) emphasizes the importance of the actors of organizations. According to Scott (2001), Silverman “proposes a phenomenological view of organizations that focuses attention on meaning systems and the ways in which they are constructed and reconstructed in social action” (p. 42). Drawing from the Schutz’s phenomenology and Berger and Luckmann’s social construction of reality, Silverman created a framework for understanding human action in organizations by using phenomenology to explain actors’ subjective meanings (Holt & Sandberg, 2011). The action frame of reference framework identifies the actors’ motives, reasons and what meaning the action has from the actors’ point of view (Sandberg and Targama, 2007). According to Silverman (1971), “action arises out of meanings, which define social reality” (p. 126).

Phenomenology can be an appropriate method for studying organizations because it “presents a ‘new way’ of viewing what is genuinely discoverable and potentially there but often is not seen” (Sanders, 1982, p. 357). Phenomenology can answer a void in organization behavioral research by studying the deep structures of organizations (Sanders, 1982). Sanders (1982) stated, “the values of phenomenological approaches to organization research is that the emergent themes and underlying essences may serve to validate (or repudiate) and complement quantitative research findings” (p. 358).

To better understand the dynamics between athletics and academics, a phenomenological case study approach was used. To understand the human experience, phenomenology is the most appropriate method to use. Phenomenology is the study of the human experience and of the way things present themselves to us and through such experience (Sokolowski, 2000). It focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is they experience what they experience (Patton, 2002). It is important to know the experiences of individuals in their role within athletics and/or academics, and how they handle or adjust to both higher education and athletic policies. Phenomenology was used to examine entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives to form a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience (Moustakas, 1994). Case study allows the researcher to examine a phenomenon in-depth and explore its contexts (Yin, 2006). Case study also allows the use of multiple sources of data to examine the dynamics between athletics and academics. Using elements from phenomenology and case study methods, the researcher used phenomenological case study to gain better insight into athletics and academics. The historical developments that occurred not only impact athletic

departments and institutions as units, but also the individuals working for the entities. Athletic department staff, university administration, and faculty have different insights and experiences in regards to the dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education.

Chapter Summary

The relationship between athletics and academics is complex. The literature on the historical background of this relationship indicates that athletics and academics have had problems since the beginning, but each side needed the other to survive. While athletics may not serve a true educative function of colleges and universities according to some, the effects of athletics will always impact their institutions. Decisions that impact higher education also have an impact on athletics. The major political developments that occurred are prime examples of how certain decisions for one entity, impacts the other. The background of this relationship sheds light to the current issues that surround athletics and academics. Athletics and academics are at a disconnect, where each side does not fully understand the other, resulting in decisions that can negatively impact one entity while benefiting the other.

The theoretical lens for the research study includes institutional theory with a focus on neo-institutional theory. Institutional and neo-institutional theory was examined through Scott's (2001) three pillars of institutions. The regulative pillar emphasizes the rules that constrain behavior, the normative pillar emphasizes norms and values that shape behavior, and the cultural-cognitive pillar emphasizes shared understandings and beliefs (Scott, 2001). The theoretical lens uses neo-institutional theory to determine how

individuals socially construct their realities. To provide an understanding of how participants experienced the athletic-academic dynamic, the phenomenological case study approach was selected to understand the meaning behind those experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department and how it has changed over a specific period of time. The goal is to explore and document the historical and current dynamics over three decades (1980 – 2014). This study plans to inform what was occurring at Clemson University during the 1980s and 1990s and how it has influenced the current dynamics (the 2000s). Using a phenomenological case study method, the study seeks to explain the dynamics through the experiences of former and current Clemson University employees and through the use of documents.

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as an “inquiry process of understanding based on methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Qualitative research studies explore issues in depth and produce a wealth of detailed information. While it increases the depth of understanding, it also reduces generalizability due to the typically small number of participants and cases (Patton, 2002). The researcher is the instrument, so qualitative research depends on the skill, competence, and rigor of the researcher (Patton, 2002).

Creswell (2007) distinguished five qualitative traditions of inquiry: (a) narrative research, (b) phenomenology, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnography, and (e) case study. Though all qualitative research methods focus on studying experiences, the difference

among the traditions is the foci: (a) narrative research (life of an individual), (b) phenomenology (understanding a phenomenon), (c) grounded theory (developing theory), (d) ethnography (behaviors of a culture), and (e) case study (examining a specific case) (Creswell, 1998; 2007). This study uses a phenomenological case study approach, using elements from phenomenology and case study research traditions. Phenomenology focuses on individuals' lived experiences, toward a phenomenon, and the meanings behind those experiences, while case study focuses on examining people and events in-depth, which is the reason for the selection of the method for this study. The two research methods are explained in further details following the description for phenomenological case study.

Transcendental Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the study of the human experiences and how things present themselves in and through such experience (Patton, 2002; Sokolowski, 2000). The foundational question in phenomenology is “what is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomena for this person or group of people?” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Phenomenology can be viewed as a philosophical perspective as well as a research method. There are multiple forms of phenomenology, such as transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic phenomenology. The difference between the different forms of phenomenology is the nuances of focus as transcendental focuses on the essential meanings of individual experience, existential focuses on the social construction of group reality, and hermeneutic focuses on the language and structure of communication (Patton, 2002). Transcendental phenomenology, as outlined by Moustakas (1994), is the

phenomenological method chosen for this study because the researcher seeks to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences.

Created by German philosopher Edmund Husserl, the main focus of transcendental phenomenology is to study phenomena as it appeared through consciousness (Lavery, 2003). Patton (2002) further explains Husserl's phenomenology:

By phenomenology Husserl (1913) meant the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses. His most basic philosophical assumption was that *we can only know what we experience* by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our conscious awareness. Initially, all of our understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomena, but that experience and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one. (pp. 105-106).

Husserl saw phenomenology as being both objective and subjective (Lavery, 2003) and emphasized that transcendental phenomenology is "a science of pure possibilities carried out with systematic concreteness and that it precedes, and makes possible, the empirical sciences, the sciences of actualities" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 28). Husserl (as cited in Sanders 1982) "referred to subjectivity as 'empirical' subjectivity" (p. 355). Transcendental phenomenology provides an understanding of how perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are evoked in consciousness in a specific experience (Moustakas, 1994).

What makes transcendental phenomenology different from other research methods is its data collection and analysis. In transcendental phenomenology, the

researcher sets aside prejudgments of the phenomenon through a disciplined and systematic approach (Moustakas, 1994). In studying the relationship between athletics and academics, it can become easy to support one side based on the literature. Transcendental phenomenology forces the researcher to understand the nature of the relationship between athletics and academics, without prejudice.

Intentionality, Noema, and Noesis

Husserl's phenomenology is closely associated with the concept of intentionality (Moustakas, 1994; Sokolowski, 2000). Husserl (1970) stated,

Intentionality is the title which stands for the only actual and genuine way of explaining, making intelligible. To go back to the intentional origins and unities of the formation of meaning is to proceed toward a comprehension which, once achieved, would leave no meaningful question unanswered. (p. 168)

Intentionality refers to consciousness, "to the internal experience of being conscious of something; thus the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 28). The core doctrine in phenomenology is the teaching that "every act of consciousness we perform, every experience that we have, is intentional: it is essentially 'consciousness of' or an 'experience of' something or other" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 8).

Intentionality is a process where all our awareness is directed toward objects of study (Lavery, 2003; Sokolowski, 2000). Knowledge of intentionality requires that we be present to ourselves and to things in the world, that we recognize that self and world

are inseparable components of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Intentionality always consists of a noema and a noesis. The noema is the “perceived as such,” or the perceptual meaning (Moustakas, 1994). The noema is not the real object, but the object that appears in perception (Moustakas, 1994). The noesis is the way in which the “what” is experienced (Moustakas, 1994). The noesis is the act of perceiving, thinking, feeling, remembering, or judging that are embedded with meanings that are hidden from consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). The noema and noesis are directly related.

Case Study

Case study research produces a firsthand understanding of people and events (Yin, 2006). According to Stake (2005), case study research “is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. If case study research is more humane or in some ways transcendent, it is because the researchers are so, not because of the methods” (p. 443). Case study can refer to the process of inquiry about the case and/or the product of the analysis of the inquiry (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002; Stake 2005). Yin (1993, 2003, 2009) defines case study as the research process that investigates a phenomenon in depth within real-life context, when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context. According to Stake (1995), case study is defined by individual cases, where the object defines the case. Merriam (2001) defines case study as an end product, where it is a holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon, instance, or social unit. While the authors may have different definitions for case study, what they have in common is the goal is seek greater understanding of the complexities of the case.

Defining the case, the unit of analysis, is the most important step in case study research (Merriam, 2001; Stake 2005; Yin, 2006). For the purposes of this study, a descriptive case study will be used because it presents a complete description of a phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 1993). A descriptive case study allows the researcher to provide rich, thick descriptions of the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. Due to the complexities of the study, the researcher decided to use a single case study, where she can get a holistic picture of what is occurring at Clemson University.

Rationale for Using Phenomenological Case Study

This study used qualitative research by adopting a phenomenological case study approach. The benefit of using a case study approach is its strength in the ability to examine in-depth a phenomenon within real-life context (Yin, 2003; 2006). According to Patton (2002), case study research provides an understanding of a holistic entity and “should take the reader into the case situation and experience” (p. 450). Since case study does not have a particular method for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2001), other research methods can be used to complement. To get an in-depth understanding of the experience, the method of phenomenology was also used in this study. Phenomenology focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is they experience what they experience (Patton, 2002). Using the phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994) in how they define the dynamics between athletics and academics. Therefore, a phenomenological case study is used in this study to capture a holistic picture of the case,

by investigating the dynamics between athletics and academics through the experiences of the participants at Clemson University.

This study is rooted in the interpretivist research paradigm. The purpose of the interpretivist approach is to understand. In the interpretivist paradigm, “the world is constructed by each knower/observer according to a set of subjective principles peculiar to that person” (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 158). Reality is subjective and constructed and there are multiple ways in understanding reality. The nature of knowledge is individually and collectively reconstructed and sometimes coalesced around consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Patton (2002) further explained the importance of interpretivism as it relates to phenomenology:

Interpretation is essential to an understanding of experience and the experience includes the interpretation. Thus phenomenologists focus on how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and in so doing, develop a worldview. There is no separate (or objective) reality for people. There is only what they know their experience is and means. The subjective experience incorporates the objective thing and becomes a person’s reality, thus the focus on meaning making as the essence of human experience (Patton, 2002, p. 106).

In the interpretivist approach, the participant plays a role in the reconstruction of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). According to Sipe and Constable (1996), “Interpretivists attempt to understand situations from the point of view of those experiencing the situations, and are concerned with what will assist them in doing so” (p.

158). The researcher's goal is to understand the dynamics between athletics and academics based on how participants construct their understanding of the dynamic.

Design of the Study

To determine how the athletic and academic dynamic has changed in the last 30 years, the study plans to focus on Clemson University from 1980 - 2014. The time period was selected, because during the 1980s, Clemson had many successes in athletics, including winning a national championship in football. While the athletic program was doing well athletically, the department also had its share of controversies, including multiple NCAA violations. In addition to the violations, the conduct of some of the coaches and student athletes received undesirable media attention. These issues negatively affected Clemson University's reputation. As a result, this began to cause a fractured relationship between the larger university and athletics. The following research questions guided this study:

Central Research Question

1. What is the nature of the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department from the experiences of athletic and academic administrators?

Research Sub-questions

2. How has the dynamics between Clemson University and its athletic department changed from 1980 – 2014?
3. What role(s) has athletics played at Clemson University from 1980 – 2014?
4. How have historical developments impacted the dynamics between athletics and academics?

Selection of Participants

The role of the participants is to gain insight about the dynamics between athletics and academics during the period of time they were/are connected to Clemson University. The participants need to be carefully chosen as individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; 2007). The researcher identified current and former employees during the 34-year span. Participants consisted of 16 former and current Clemson University employees, from both athletics (eight participants) and academics (eight participants). In particular, participants consisted of athletic administrators, university administrators, and faculty members who served in administrative roles. To protect the anonymity of the participants, the positions will not be identified. Participants had a range of 1 – 39 years at Clemson University and had direct dealings in the academic-athletic interaction. Sixteen participants represent a reasonable size in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 1998).

Sampling procedures

Purposive sampling was the chosen form of data collection. Purposive sampling is also referred to as nonprobability sampling, purposeful sampling, or qualitative sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Qualitative research typically focuses on small samples that are selected purposefully to understand a phenomenon (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling in this study investigated a specific population that can provide better insight in the relationship between athletics and academics. For the purposes of this study, the goal of purposive sampling is to achieve representativeness or comparability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Selecting participants consisted of using the intensity sampling

approach, in which different views on the athletic-academic dynamic may occur based on their position and experiences. In addition, the sequential sampling approach was used to find additional participants that would best fit the study. Snowball sampling, a type of sequential sampling, was used where participants referred potential people that could participate in the study. This helped the researcher access participants that were not accessible through the other sampling strategy. Document sampling was also utilized in this study. The researcher selected documents that will provide additional information and insight into the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University.

Protection of Participants

The assurance of confidentiality is important in a qualitative study because it is important for researchers to respect those they are studying (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Prior to the interviews, participants were provided a consent letter explaining confidentiality of the participants in the study, even though the institution's name would be public. The letter assured their privacy would be protected in any documents or publications from the study. It also explained how their interview data would be protected. The researcher wanted to protect the participants due to their high-level positions, even though the study does not pose any threats to the institution.

The researcher did everything in her abilities to protect the identities of her participants. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants. The interview recordings were on a digital recorder that was kept in a locked file at home. The transcripts were electronically stored on the researcher's password-locked computer and an external hard drive that was kept locked at home. Only electronic copies of the transcript are on record.

Site Selection

Clemson University was the site selected for this study. Clemson is an institution that is a member of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) in the NCAA. Since Clemson is a prominent athletic program with high-profile sports of football and men's basketball, it was an ideal site to explore the athletic-academic dynamic. Furthermore, Clemson was easily accessible to the researcher in order to conduct interviews and collect documents.

Clemson University is well known for the Clemson Tigers football team and its infamous Memorial Stadium, better known as "Death Valley." What has been described as "the most exciting 25 seconds in college football," Clemson University is steeped in many football traditions. From the football team tradition of touching "Howard's Rock" before running down "The Hill," to all of the die-hard fans in orange and purple, football has been an important part of the Clemson brand.

Participant Profiles

Participants consisted of members of both the athletic and academic communities at Clemson. There were a total of 16 participants that consisted of athletic administrators, university administrators, and faculty. Table 3.1 provides a profile description of the participants. Each participant's job title is very specific, making him or her easily identifiable; therefore, their job position and duties are not disclosed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Athletic Administrators

Eight of the participants were from athletics: Darren, Eric, Fred, Giselle, Irene, John, Karen, and Neil. The athletic participants served in upper administrative roles,

where they make decisions on behalf of the athletic department and their respective areas. The participants also interact with academics in numerous capacities that impact student athletes such as admissions, academics, and compliance.

University Administrators

Three of the eight participants from academics were university administrators: Hank, Leon, and Orlando. The university administrators also served in upper administrative roles as decision makers that impact the overall university, academics, and athletics. They also interacted with athletics in regards to decisions that will impact student athletes and the overall athletic department.

Faculty

The remaining five participants from academics were faculty members: Anthony, Brad, Charles, Martin, and Paul. The faculty participants also served in various leadership and administrative roles (e.g. deans, department chairs) and have made decisions that impact the academics of the university. Furthermore, the faculty participants have interacted with athletics in numerous capacities such as the Athletic Council and Vickery Hall, the student athlete academic support center.

Participants consisted of 11 current (69%) and five retired (31%) employees. There were 13 male (81%) and three female (19%) participants. Participants had a range of 1 – 39 years of work experience at Clemson. While years at Clemson refer to the number of working years at Clemson, it should be noted that some of the participants have additional years at Clemson if they attended Clemson for school. Nine of the

participants were Clemson alum, two attended Clemson for graduate school, representing 56% of the participants.

Table 3.1

Description of Participants

Name*	Area	Role
Anthony	Academics	Faculty
Brad	Academics	Faculty
Charles	Academics	Faculty
Darren	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Eric	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Fred	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Giselle	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Hank	Academics	University Administrator
Irene	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
John	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Karen	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Luke	Academics	University Administrator
Martin	Academics	Faculty
Neil	Athletics	Athletic Administrator
Orlando	Academics	University Administrator
Paul	Academics	Faculty

Note. *Pseudonyms for the participants' actual names.

Data Collection

In phenomenology, data sources can include participant observations, artifacts, and documents (Patton, 2002), but typically in the phenomenological investigation the

long interview is the method through which the data is collected (Moustakas, 1994). Data sources in case study primarily consist of interviews, observations, and documents (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2006). For this phenomenological case study, data sources consisted of interviews and documents. Having more than one data source provided a complete picture of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Using multiple sources of data allowed for triangulation, where “we look to see if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently” (Stake, 1995, p. 112). Triangulation also strengthens the study and findings (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2006).

The primary source of data was the phenomenological interview. According to Patton (2001), “One must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have ‘lived experience’ as opposed to secondhand experience” (p. 104). Participants were contacted through email and asked if they would like to participate in the study. An attached letter that described the study was also in the email sent to the participants. If the participants agreed to the study, interviews were scheduled. Moustakas (1994) stated, “The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions” (p. 114). Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher engaged in the Epoche process to remove any preconceptions she may have of the participants, based on their position. Interviews focused on the experiences of the participants and their perspectives of the dynamics between athletics and academics. The participants informed the researcher about the period of time they are (or were) connected to Clemson University. For the participants that were current Clemson employees, the interviews

took place in their offices. For the participants that were former Clemson employees, the researcher secured a private room to conduct the interview, or met the participant at a location of their choice. The interviews ranged from 30 to 100 minutes, with the majority of the interviews lasting approximately an hour.

In combination of the interview data, documents were used. Documents are a viable source of information that provides a good source of text data in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2005). According to Stake (1995), “Quite often, documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly” (p. 68). Documents are usually produced for other purposes that is not related to the research study, so this data source is not subject to the same limitations as interviews and observations (Merriam, 2001). Documents are “objective” sources of data because the presence of the researcher does not alter what is being studied (Merriam, 2001). Documents are “a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world” (Merriam, 2001, pp. 126-127).

Merriam (2001) stated, “Since the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering data, he or she relies on skills and information to find and interpret data from documents. Finding relevant materials is the first step in the process” (p. 120). The process consisted of reviewing documents from the past 34 years that attribute in explaining the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. The documents reviewed included newspaper articles, policy documents, meeting minutes, memos, reports, handbooks, manuals, and other historical documents that can further explain the dynamics at Clemson. The researcher utilized different methods to obtain the

documents. The researcher used the Internet to search for newspaper articles that highlighted anything related to dynamics between athletics and academics. For documents such as meeting minutes, manuals, and policies, the researcher also utilized Clemson's website to locate the more recent information (about the last 10 years). For documents from the 1980s and 1990s, or any documents that could not be found online, the researcher made several trips to the university library as well as the Special Collections department to locate archival documents.

The researcher stopped collecting data when she reached a point of data saturation. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), though saturation is the point of no new data, a researcher reaches saturation "when all the concepts are well defined and explained" (p. 145). Achieving complete saturation is difficult according to Corbin and Strauss (2008):

Though total saturation (complete development) is probably never achieved, if a researcher determines that a category offers considerable depth and breadth of understanding about a phenomenon, and relationships to other categories have been made clear, then he or she can say sufficient sampling has occurred, at least for the purposes of this study. (p. 149)

Since data collection and analysis were occurring simultaneously, the researcher stopped collecting data, once new data was not emerging from the participants' interviews and the documents, and when she felt there was sufficient data to produce in-depth explanation of the phenomenon. The researcher can continuously collect data for a long time, but at

some point, the researcher needs to stop, when they feel there is sufficient data, and accept any limitations of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Instrumentation

The instruments in this study consisted of interviews and archival data. Since the phenomenological interview is an informal, interactive process, a general interview guide was used. A semi-structured interview protocol was created to “facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, substantive descriptions of the co-researcher’s experience of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116). The semi-structured approach allowed the researcher to have flexibility while also having a standard structure. The flexibility allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on the responses to the pre-constructed questions (Turner, 2010). Furthermore, this approach provided an informal environment that allowed the researcher to develop rapport with the participants (Turner, 2010). The literature on the athletic and academic dynamic and the research questions helped develop the general interview guide.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used throughout this study is institutional theory with a focus on neo-institutional theory. Institutional and neo-institutional theory was used to examine the dynamics between athletics and academics through Scott’s (2001) three pillars of institutions. The regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars each created different constructed realities based on the experiences of the participants. According to Estler and Nelson (2005), “What they see depends on the window from which they are looking” (p. 11). Participants had different views on the same issues based

on their position within the institution. The theoretical framework examined the overall dynamics between athletics and academics, through the appropriate pillars that impact both entities.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis typically occur simultaneously (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). Data analysis does not occur at a particular moment (Stake, 1995). In case study research, data analysis has not been clearly defined (Yin, 2009), but the analysis typically consists of reviewing data, searching for patterns, testing, and other techniques to draw conclusions about the case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2006, 2009). In phenomenology, data is typically analyzed through phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994). For this phenomenological case study, data analysis used analysis techniques from phenomenology and case study. Interviews were analyzed through phenomenological analysis and document analysis was used to analyze the documents.

Phenomenological Analysis

Data analysis begins with the organization of data to prepare for the phenomenological analysis. Patton (2002) states, “phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people” (p. 482). It is important to note that there is not a single approach to phenomenological analysis due to the various traditions, forms, and meanings of phenomenology (Patton, 2002). For the purposes of this study, the phenomenological analysis will follow the process outlined by Moustakas (1994).

Epoche is the first step in phenomenological analysis (Patton, 2002). Epoche is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary ways of perceiving things (Moustakas, 1994). In the Epoche, we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). The researcher looks inside to become aware of personal bias, to eliminate personal involvement with the subject material, or at least gain clarity about preconceptions (Patton, 2002). Moustakas (1994) reported that, “the Epoche is the first step in coming to know things, in being inclined toward seeing things as they appear, in retuning to things themselves, free of prejudgments and preconceptions” (p. 90). Everything has equal values and nothing can be determined in advance (Moustakas, 1994). The challenge of the Epoche is becoming transparent and allowing us to see in a naïve and open manner (Moustakas, 1994). “Epoche is an ongoing analytical process rather than a single fixed event. The process of epoche epitomizes the data-based, evidential, and empirical (vs. empiricist) research orientation of phenomenology” (Patton, 2002, p. 485). Throughout the study, the researcher engaged in Epoche to avoid any assumptions when interviewing the participants and when analyzing the interviews and documents.

With the transcribed interviews, the researcher engaged in Phenomenological Reduction. In Phenomenological Reduction, “the task is that of describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). Furthermore, “the task is to describe its general features, excluding everything that is not immediately within our conscious

experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 92), Data becomes clearer when there is continuous reflection, viewing the phenomenon from different angles (Moustakas, 1994).

The reduction process began with the researcher bracketing out presuppositions to identify the data in pure form (Patton, 2002). The data was then horizontalized, where every statement (or horizon) was treated with equal value (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). The researcher read through every statement in the transcript, identifying the significant statements relevant to the study. A total of 835 horizontalized statements were found in the data. The horizontalized statements were listed, creating the meaning units of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). A total of 140 meaning units were listed. The next step in the reduction process is when the meaning units are clustered into themes (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). The researcher actually used two steps to create the themes. From the meaning units, the researcher created 45 meaning clusters. The number of meaning clusters were too large to become individual themes, so the researcher conducted another cluster, resulting in nine themes (See Table 3.2). These themes were then organized into coherent textual descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Chapters Four and Five provides an in-depth description of the themes and meaning clusters. The analysis showed two distinct types of findings that explain the athletic-academic dynamic: (a) historical and (b) current. Due to this distinction, the themes were separated into two chapters to make better sense of the findings.

The next step in the phenomenological analysis is Imaginative Variation, where the task is to “seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the

phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions” (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 97-98). Imaginative Variation allows derived structural themes from the textural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher identified the invariant themes within the data in order to perform an imaginative variation on each theme (Patton, 2002).

The final step in the phenomenological analysis is Synthesis, the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Table 3.2

Thematic Analysis

Theme	Meaning Clusters	
Academic Impact	Admissions requirements	Student athlete academics
	Athletic opportunities	Student athlete independence
	Curriculum	Underprepared student athletes
Behind the Communication	Athletic Council	Helping each other
	Causes of disconnect	Interaction with athletics and academics
Inseparable	Admissions applications	Enhancing the college experience
	Athletic impact	President Barker's goals
	Branding and visibility	Reputation
	Can't separate athletics and academics	Role in educational mission
	Community	What makes Clemson distinct

Learning from the Past and Others	Academic and athletic relationship change Controversy Infractions	Mindful of the past No secrets Other campuses
NCAA Infractions	Major infractions	Buckingham case
Priorities	Academic vs. athletic priorities Academic and athletic relationship Competitive equity	Mission and goals Model athletic program Values
The Possibilities	Future of academic-athletic relationship Improving the relationship Supporting athletics	Too close of a relationship Understanding athletics
Student Athlete Admissions	Special admissions	NCAA standards vs. Clemson standards
Vickery Hall	pre-Vickery Faculty support of Vickery Hall	Vickery Hall inception Vickery Hall support services

Document Analysis

Document analysis was used for the documents. Document analysis is a “process of evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed. In the process, the researcher should strive for objectivity and sensitivity and maintain balance between both” (Bowen, 2009, pp. 33-34). According to Bowen (2009), “the analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents” (p. 28). In documents analysis, the researcher has to create a system to code and categorize the documents (Merriam, 2001). Document analysis typically uses elements from content analysis and thematic

analysis (Bowen, 2009). Content analysis is a “systematic procedure for describing the content of communications” (Merriam, 2001, p. 123). The data is organized into categories related to the research questions (Bowen, 2009). Thematic analysis is a system of pattern-recognition, where emerging themes in the data become categories for analysis (Bowen, 2009).

The document analysis process involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation (Bowen, 2009). The researcher began by skimming the variety of documents looking for those that can highlight the dynamics between athletics and academics. Once the researcher identified the relevant documents, she thoroughly read through all of the documents to make sense of the data. Excerpts from the various documents were captured to record and preserve the context (Patton, 2002). Using content analysis, the documents were organized into categories. Once the data was organized, the researcher synthesized the data for interpretation. Interviews were the primary data sources, but analyzing the documents helped further make sense of the interview data.

Analytic Memo

To researcher conducted mini-analyses that were completed as an analytic memo. An analytic memo creates connections to literature, critically questions the data, and notes emerging themes (Phillips & Carr, 2007). The researcher kept an analytic memo that consisted of critical questions, notes, and ideas from data during data collection and analysis. The memo addressed literature, interview questions, participants’ responses, observations, documents analysis, emerging data, and multiple approaches to create the

themes from the findings. The memo consisted of jotting down notes during the data collection and analysis process, writing down what the researcher saw in the data and questioning why, and summaries of major findings. The researcher continued to write analytic memos until the findings were completed. Phillip and Carr (2007) also mentioned that an analytic memo could serve as a space to address reflexivity, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Managing Data

Due to the large amount of data for this study, the researcher utilized QSR International NVivo 10, a qualitative research software, and Microsoft Excel to organize and managed the data. All of the transcripts were uploaded in NVivo to begin the analysis. The researcher then used NVivo to select the significant statements and turn them into meaning units. Once the meaning units were created in, the researcher used NVivo and Excel to help organize the meaning units into clusters and then into themes. The reason for using both software programs was to ensure the researcher did not miss anything when creating the clusters. While the software programs assisted greatly in organizing the data, the researcher also used non –technical forms to help create the themes. The researcher wrote each meaning cluster on a post-it note and stuck it on a white board so that she had a visual. The researcher then continuously grouped the clusters until the themes were created. Having the ability to see all of the meaning clusters at once, made it easier to create the themes.

The documents were also managed electronically. Electronic documents were downloaded and saved into a folder on the researcher's computer. Archival documents

from the library and special collections were scanned and emailed to the researcher so that she can download them to her computer. All of the documents were uploaded in NVivo to help organize data and conduct the content analysis.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers take different accounting measures to ensure validity of their research than quantitative researchers (Merriam, 2001). According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), different criteria can be used to address trustworthiness in qualitative research, a term parallel to the term rigor. To ensure trustworthiness during this process, various strategies were employed to address validity and credibility: 1) triangulation, 2) member checking, 3) thick descriptions, and 4) researcher bias.

Triangulation

As mentioned earlier, the researcher used multiple data sources in the study in order to triangulate the data. Triangulation is a process of using multiple data sources to clarify meaning and verify repeatability in an interpretation (Stake 2005). Bowen (2009) stated, “By examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study” (p. 28). Triangulation is important in qualitative research because it can help reduce bias in the study. Triangulation also provides the researcher with multiple perspectives. Stake (2005) stated, “The qualitative researcher is interested in diversity of perception, even the multiple realities within which people live.

Triangulation helps to identify different realities” (p. 454). Overall, data triangulation makes the findings robust (Yin, 2006). In addition to the interviews and documents, the

researcher also wrote notes during the interviews and kept an analytic memo during data collection and analysis.

Member Checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned how the use of member checking is necessary form of validation for qualitative research. The researcher used member checking to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of the research (Harper & Cole, 2012). Typically in member checking, the researcher will restate or summarize information and send it back to the participants to allow them to reflect and determine accuracy (Harper & Cole, 2012). Stake (1995) provides a detailed account of member checking:

In a process called “member checking,” the actor is requested to examine rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured, sometimes when first written up but usually when no further data will be collected from him or her. The actor is asked to review the material for accuracy and palatability. The actor may be encouraged to provide alternative language or interpretation but is not promised that that version will appear in the final report. Regularly, some of that feedback is worthy of inclusion. (p. 115)

After each interview was transcribed, the researcher emailed the participants a copy of their transcript, asking them to review it for accuracy and authenticity. Some of the participants responded back with feedback and some changes in their transcripts. Since the changes in the transcript were minor and would not impact the interpretation, the

researcher made the changes participants requested. After making the changes, a final transcript was sent for approval.

Thick Descriptions

Another way to ensure trustworthiness is through the use of thick descriptions. Thick descriptions can enhance the results of a qualitative study (Merriam, 2001). According to Patton, 2002), “Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Good description takes the reader into the setting being described” (p. 437). In order for a description to be thick, Denzin (as cited in Patton, 2002), stated the following, “a thick description does more than what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another” (p. 503). The reader should be able to have an in-depth understanding of the study based on the rich, description. The researcher used thick descriptions support the data analysis findings and themes.

Researcher Bias

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument, so “data has been filtered through his or her particular theoretical position and biases (Merriam, 2001, p. 216). The researcher biases in this study include the belief that athletics is beneficial for universities. The researcher also believes some of the larger athletic programs have gotten out of control and believes that academics should always be a priority. The researcher applied the concept of reflexivity and the technique of a critical friend to address researcher bias.

Reflexivity is “a way of emphasizing the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness, and ownership of one’s perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 64). Hsiung (2008) described reflexivity as a “process that challenges the researcher to explicitly examine how his or her research agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions enter into their research” (p. 212). Reflexivity requires the researcher to examine any preconceived notions they have (Hsiung, 2008).

Transcendental phenomenology requires the researcher to be reflexive throughout the research process by becoming self-aware of biases, assumptions, and prejudgments. The researcher engaged in Epoche to remove any bias and assumptions about the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. In addition, the researcher kept a reflexivity journal to monitor any of her subjectivities. During the data collection and analysis process, the researcher wrote down any feelings, thoughts, and assumptions that occurred. The researcher reflected after every interview to process what occurred and what she could do differently. The researcher also reflected during the analysis process with thoughts and questions about the raw data, meaning units, meaning clusters, and themes.

Another way the researcher addressed bias was through the use of a critical friend (Gordon, 2006). A critical friend has the potential to reduce or remove blind spots when it comes to interpersonal awareness (Gordon, 2006). The researcher used a critical friend during the data collection and analysis process to help reduce the blind spots in her subjectivities. The critical friend, who is knowledgeable about the topic of study and the

methods used, provided feedback and recommendations to assist the researcher during her research process.

Subjectivity Statement

Peshkin (1988) argued researchers need to be aware of their subjectivities, because “when their subjectivity remains unconscious, they insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stakes” (p. 17). The researcher’s philosophies and perceptions of reality are based on knowledge that is heavily influenced by her academic, personal and professional experiences. The researcher has prior work experience in higher education in academic affairs, student affairs, and athletics. Working in higher education with students and collaborating with other departments has allowed the researcher insight into the athletic –academic dynamic, which influenced her research interests. The researcher is aware of any assumptions she may have in the athletic and academic dynamic due to her previous experiences, which can influence the design and implementation of the study. The researcher is currently removed from the areas of athletic and academic administration, and has not had any involvement in those areas at Clemson University.

The researcher took all of the necessary steps to ensure a quality study. The researcher immersed herself in the literature to understand multiple perspectives in the dynamics between athletics and academics. The goal of this study is to understand the nature of the dynamics between athletics and academics through the lived experiences of the participants. Since phenomenology is the primary method being used, the researcher used the process of Epoche to set aside any prejudgments, assumptions, or any

preconceived notions that prevented the researcher from viewing the data in pure form. The researcher entered the study with openness and allowed the participants to actively participate.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three consisted of the methodology and research design of this study applied to explore the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University from 1980 - 2014. Qualitative research was most appropriate for this study because it allows a problem or issue to be studied in all of its complexity (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenological case study was the approach used for this study, using elements from transcendental phenomenology and case study. Transcendental phenomenology allowed the researcher to describe the lived experiences of former and current Clemson employees and the meaning behind their understanding of the athletic-academic relationship. Case study allowed the researcher to examine in-depth the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson. Therefore, phenomenological case study provided the researcher a holistic picture of athletics and academics at Clemson University through the use of multiple data sources and analysis techniques.

Using Scott's (2001) three pillars of institutions along with neo-institutional theory complements the phenomenological method. Participants constructed their own realities of the relationship between athletics and academics based on their experiences. Data sources consisted of interviews and documents. Participants consisted of former and current Clemson University employees from both the athletic and academic areas. Documents consisted of meeting minutes, policy documents, newspaper articles, and any

additional documents that can help further understand the athletic-academic relationship. The data was analyzed through phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994) and document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Merriam, 2001).

The researcher ended the chapter with discussing trustworthiness and validity in her study. The researcher acknowledged her biases and subjectivities and discussed the steps she took to reduce researcher bias in the study. Chapters Four and Five will present the findings from the study. The findings are separated into two chapters. Chapter Four focused on the findings related to the historical dynamics and Chapter Five focused on the findings of the current dynamics between athletics and academics.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL FINDINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the athletic-academic dynamic at Clemson University. In order to understand the current dynamics between athletics and academics, it was important to understand the history of the dynamics between both entities. This chapter consists of the history of Clemson University and its athletic department and the developments that have impacted their dynamic. The historical developments are instances that occurred, which impacted the dynamics between athletics and academics. This chapter includes the findings that explain the historical aspects of the athletic-academic dynamic. This chapter primarily focuses on the timeframe of the study during the 1980s and 1990s, but additional historical info will be provided for context purposes. This chapter provides the context for the next chapter that focuses on the findings that explain the current athletic-academic dynamic, which is during the timeframe of the study in the 2000s.

The Establishment of Clemson College and the Development of Clemson Athletics

Thomas Green Clemson founded Clemson Agricultural College in 1889 as a land-grant institution that also served as an all-male military school (Clemson, 2013). Thomas Green Clemson died before Clemson was established but it was drafted in his will that an institution that focused on agriculture be established and for the use of portions of Fort-Hill estate and other assets to establish the college (Lambert, 1998; Lander, 1998). The will also appointed seven life trustees and allowed the legislature to appoint six trustees that would serve fixed terms (Reel, 2011). Henry Aubrey Strode became the first

president of Clemson and helped with the constructing of the buildings, hiring faculty, and developing the curriculum (Lambert, 1998; Reel, 2011). The first graduating class of Clemson occurred in 1896 (Reel, 2011).

As intercollegiate athletics began to expand throughout the US, baseball became the first intramural sport to become a competitive sport at Clemson in the spring of 1896, and Professor R. T. V. Bowman served as coach (Reel, 2011). The first baseball game occurred on Clemson's campus against Furman University (Reel, 2011). Professor Walter M. Riggs had a high interest in student sports, so with the support of President Edwin Boone Craighead, the Clemson College Athletic Association was formed in the spring of 1896 by Riggs, Bowman, and a number of students and faculty (Reel, 2011). In September 1896, a group of students organized the first Clemson College Football Association and requested that Professor Riggs coach the team (Blackman, Bradley, & Kriese, 2001).

The first football team was fielded in 1896 (Reel, 2011). The Tiger became the mascot of the football team and their first colors were red and blue, but there are conflicting stories about the source of Clemson's mascot and original colors. One story is that Professor Riggs based the mascot and colors off of the Auburn Tigers, his alma mater (Sherman, 1976). Another story is that a student based the Tiger mascot and colors on Princeton; not the Auburn Tigers, whose colors were burnt orange and blue (Reel, 2011). The first intercollegiate football game was against Furman University on October 28, 1896 (Blackman, et al., 2001; Clemson, 2013).

In 1897, Henry Simms Hartzog became the third, president of Clemson and was a huge supporter of athletics. Hartzog believed that sports promoted discipline and provided “a natural outlet for surplus animal spirits” (Kohl, 1998, p. 62). In addition, it provided popularity for Clemson. He would receive funds to build a gymnasium and to hire an instructor to run it (Kohl, 1998). There was not a baseball season in 1897, so attention was put toward football. The Tiger remained the mascot but the team colors would fluctuate between orange and purple or gold and purple (Reel, 2011). In the 1897 and 1898 seasons, Clemson hired two football coaches but Professor Riggs would take over as coach again in 1899 due to the weak finances of the football association (Blackman, et al., 2001).

Clemson continued to struggle financially and needed a system that would get alumni to help the football team. The Football Aid Society was formed in 1899 with its initial purpose to raise funds to secure a capable coach that could put Clemson on the map (Blackman, et al., 2001). It became a permanent organization “with the avowed purpose to render all possible assistance to the football association, a forerunner to the Clemson University Athletic Department” (Blackman, et al., 2001, p. 202). Like other schools who had the desire to win, Clemson knew it would have to find the best coach. The Football Aid Society’s purpose was to raise funds to hire a football coach (Sahadi, 1983). To hire the best coach, the football association requested its members to help raise funds, and (Blackman, et al., 2001) through the help of Professor Riggs, John Heisman became the head coach in 1900 (Blackman, et al., 2001). Heisman led Clemson to an undefeated season in 1900 and received the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association

(SIAA) championship (Reel, 2011). He also led Clemson to its first bowl game in 1903, where it ended in an 11-11 ties against Cumberland (Blackman, et al., 2001). He also coached the baseball team for three years with a 28-6-1 (.814) record (Reel, 2011).

The establishment of Clemson University and Clemson Athletics was important to note because it shows how early athletics became a part of the institution. The organization that eventually turned into the athletic department was created 10 years after Clemson University was established. Throughout the history of Clemson University, athletics has played a role in helping with the enrollment numbers at Clemson. Furthermore, the researcher found that most of the presidents were very supportive of athletics, but always emphasized that academics came first. However, the role of athletics at Clemson has impacted the athletic-academic dynamic, creating a multitude of perspectives among the different constituents. The rest of the chapter will now go into the historical findings of the athletic-academic dynamic at Clemson University from 1980 – 2014.

Thematic Process

The findings in this chapter are based on major historical developments that impacted the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson. The 835 significant statements created 140 meaning units related to the dynamics between athletics and academics. For the findings in this chapter, a total of eight meaning clusters were created. Out of the eight meaning clusters, three themes were created. Table 4.1 shows the themes and the meaning clusters for this chapter. The meaning units were not included in the

table due to the large number produced. Three themes emerged out of the historical findings: (a) NCAA infractions, (b) student athlete admissions, and (c) Vickery Hall.

Table 4.1

Thematic Analysis for Historical Findings

Theme	Meaning Clusters	
NCAA Infractions	Major infractions	Buckingham case
Student Athlete Admissions	Special admissions	NCAA standards vs. Clemson standards
Vickery Hall	pre-Vickery Faculty support of Vickery Hall	Vickery Hall inception Vickery Hall support services

Themes

Chapter Two provided a history of the overall dynamics between intercollegiate athletics and higher education. This history consisted of major developments that occurred that impacted the dynamics between both sides, such as coeducation, integration, and academic standards. This study also explored similar developments and how it impacted the dynamics at Clemson University. Participants were asked about their thoughts on historical developments centered on gender, race, and academics at Clemson. In addition, participants reflected on how the historical developments impact the current dynamics today. While gender and race had some impact in the dynamic at Clemson, academics and the growth of athletics emerged in the findings as better informants of the athletic-academic dynamic. Within the findings, historical information is provided for contextual purposes.

The themes in this chapter consist of developments in the 80s and 90s that impacted the athletic-academic dynamic. Before the themes are explained, the following information is provided to support the findings. In the 1980s and 1990s, there appeared to be a divide among the faculty in regards to those who supported athletics and those who did not. One of the participants, Hank, who has been at Clemson for almost 40 years, reflected on some of the issues that caused controversies between athletics and academics at Clemson:

So I think the environment in the 70s and 80s with athletics was a tremendous political power battle. I saw in the context of what was happening at Clemson, yeah Clemson got into trouble for a lot of different reasons. We were growing way too fast. [Hank]

Controversy of the hostility between the faculty against the administration against athletics was extremely high. In the 90s, '90-'96, we were in the papers constantly, faculty were threatening to vote of no confidence in the administration. [Hank]

Faculty felt that, and I guess there was a view that the athletic student got more advantages than the regular student. I think there were also some fallacies that they felt that there were more athletes in one section than another because "that was the best professor." We worked real hard and I guess I started the first limitations on how many athletes could be in a section. I did that in the early 80s. I put some limits that they couldn't have and so many in one particular faculty member. Yeah there was the belief that certain faculty members gave preferential treatment to athletes. I think when you talk about how much an athlete travels, you have to give them a certain amount of flexibility, and a lot of faculty felt imposed, that it wasn't fair. But then again, there was a hostility of the faculty towards athletics because of that. That they were asked to do extra things for athletes that they felt put upon. But then again, there was an awful lot of faculty who felt because they were athletes that there was nothing wrong with doing something extra because of what other things they were expected to do. [Hank]

After winning the national championship in 1981, football continued to become more prominent at Clemson. Hank also discussed how football was at the center of many of the controversies:

The progression of it, from that point of during Danny Ford's era, the administration felt athletics was getting too strong. If you take and go look back at that era, you will see a lot of different changes of people in the higher administration over a period of three years. I think at that particular era, Danny was fired from Clemson for a lot of different issues, but one of the biggest ones that was the political battle between the administration and Danny was the fact that he wanted a brand spanking new athletic dorm. There were already vibes from NCAA that they were never going to allow, they were going to stop institutions allowing the students to live in one whole sole dorm by themselves. They had to be integrated with the rest of the student body. I think in that particular era, Danny kind of stepped over the bounds of what a head coach should be doing. [Hank]

Football coaches seemed to march to a different drummer, same thing with some of the other coaches. I think sometimes athletics got out of control. If you go back to our wrestling career here in Clemson and what transpired there, the recruiting of wrestlers seemed to have gotten out of control and those students ended up in a lot of trouble. If you look back at the history, we finally terminated their athletic program. [Hank]

Clemson always needs to be speaking with one voice and athletics got to a period there in the 80s that they were talking for the university rather than the university talking and that doesn't go well. I think the board has had a philosophy that they want to win, but they're not wanting to win at all costs and sometimes some of the coaches have crossed that line and when they crossed that line, heads roll. So it's a strange dynamic that has progressed over the 70s, 80s, and 90s into the years 2000. [Hank]

Hank was correct. Documents revealed that there were some frustration with athletics, in particular, especially the actions of head coach Danny Ford and the football team (Bauer, 1985; Brittain, 1985; Robinson, 1985). One member in particular, John Idol, was vocal about his displeasure with some of the actions taking place in athletics (Reel, 2013). Idol sent letter to President Lennon citing various incidents that have not shed a good light on Clemson. One example included Clemson football players attacking a Maryland football player during 1985 season in front of the television audience and the fans in the stadium (Reel, 2013). According to Reel (2013), Idol wrote,

I feel not only bruised but dirty and befouled now. If I did not have the memory of having worked with thousands of decant, caring, loving students, I would feel demeaned by having to say I teach at Clemson. (p. 348)

Other faculty members shared similar sentiments as Idol. Due to many of the displeasures with the football team, some overlooked the accomplishments of the football team (Reel, 2013). This included Clemson defeating Stanford in the Gator Bowl (Reel, 2013). In 1987, the Tigers ranked sixth in the nation for home game attendance (Reel, 2013). Also the 1987 season ended with the tigers winning their second consecutive Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) championship and defeating Penn State in the Citrus Bowl (Reel, 2013).

Ford was responsible for the 1981 championship and was the only coach in the ACC to have a winning percentage of over 70 percent at that time (Boykin, 1998). Though Clemson was appreciative of Ford's accomplishments, they disagreed on basic aspects of the football program (Boykin, 1998). The contention centered on Ford wanting a new athletic dormitory and the administration wanting a learning center for athletes (Boykin, 1998). Ford would express his views publicly stating:

They're going to spend \$2.5 million on a learning center, and you could put all of that into an athletic dorm if you wanted to, build a whole athletic dorm, for \$4 million...But I don't make policy at Clemson. That's someone else's job.

(Boykin, 1998, p. 276)

President Lennon approved and accepted Ford's resignation, and the board supported Lennon and the administration to negotiate the resignation (Boykin, 1998). Clemson had

to pay Ford approximately \$1 million over the next several years (Boykin, 1998). The campus was divided over the resignation, and the day after Ford's resignation supporters marched to the president's mansion to show their support of Ford (Boykin, 1998). Shortly after Ford resigned, Vickery Hall was constructed, catered to the academic development of student athletes (Boykin, 1998).

The themes, *NCAA Infractions*, *Student Athlete Admissions*, and *Vickery Hall*, will delve further into the historical developments that impacted both athletics and academics in the 1980s and 1990s at Clemson.

NCAA Infractions

One major source of tension that occurred between athletics and academics were NCAA violations. The findings showed Clemson had four major violations, two each in football and men's basketball. Only the three violations that occurred during the timeframe of the study will be addressed.

Football's First Violation

Bill Atchley became the ninth president of Clemson in 1979. President Atchley was a supporter of athletics, being a former student athlete, but believed academics should always be a priority. In 1981, the NCAA contacted President Atchley after reports circulated that two Tennessee recruits contacted the ACC about being offered gifts from a Clemson alum in Knoxville (Greenville News, 1982). Documents showed that in 1982, the NCAA conducted an investigation into the football program related to the recruitment process of two football prospects from Tennessee (Greenville News, 1982; Reel, 2013). Shortly after the investigation began, President Atchley created a committee to conduct

its own investigation into the athletic department and respond to the NCAA allegations (Greenville News, 1982). In November 1982, the NCAA found Clemson to be in violation of recruitment that included improper contact, entertainment and transportation, extra benefits, excessive visits, and unethical conduct (NCAA, Major Infractions Case, 1982). As a result, the NCAA placed Clemson on two years probation and the ACC added an additional year, banned from postseason play (Reel, 2013).

The major violation caused concern among the faculty and administration. The faculty felt that athletics was getting out of control. As a result of the NCAA violations, the Faculty Senate filed a motion requesting changes be made in the athletic department (Faculty Senate, 1982). As a result of the violations, President Atchley decided that the athletic department needed to be reorganized. He proposed his plan to reform Clemson's athletic department that included tightening control on recruiting, record-keeping, and reorganizing the responsibilities of the athletic director and associate athletic director (Steirer, 1998). He had full support from the Faculty Senate (Atchley, 1983; Faculty Senate, 1983a, 1983b). In addition, the board of trustees supported President Atchley handling the matter, even though some of them did not agree with all of the recommendations (Steirer, 1998).

In 1984, during the second year of NCAA probation, there was concern about the ACC additional punishment of a third year of probation because it was preventing them from another year of attending a bowl game (Vernon, 1984). President Atchley did appeal to remove the conference sanctions, but it was not successful (Taff, 1984). Athletics became the major source of conflict between Atchley and the board of trustees.

Eventually as a result of the tensions between athletics, academics, and the board, Atchley and the athletic director, Bill McLellan resigned in 1985 to restore harmony back on campus (Steirer, 1998).

Football's Second Violation

A. Max Lennon became the 11th president in 1986 and dealt with two NCAA infractions during his presidency. On August 1989, President Lennon received a preliminary inquiry from NCAA about possible violations in the football program (NCAA, Major Infractions Case, 1990). By January 1990, an official inquiry letter was issued. President Lennon continued to keep the faculty updated on the progress of the investigation (Faculty Senate, 1989, 1990). President Lennon discussed the allegations in the NCAA investigation calling them “relatively insignificant activities” and that “the adjustments will not likely have a major impact on the outcome” (Faculty Senate, 1990).

On May 31, 1990, the NCAA found Clemson in violation of extra benefits, where a student athlete received and distributed cash payments to another student athlete, ranging between \$50 and \$70. In addition, the same student athletes who received the money also received an additional cash payment from an athletic representative (NCAA, Major Infractions Case, 1990). The penalties included public reprimand and disassociation of athletics representative (NCAA, Major Infractions Case, 1990). While this is considered a major violation, there was minimal information about the campus perspective on this violation through the documents. Interview participants also did not mention this violation during the interviews. Shortly after this violation, another investigation began through the men's basketball team.

The Buckingham Case

Out of all of the violations, the one that was most prevalent in the findings is the one known as the Buckingham Case. Wayne Buckingham was a highly recruited basketball player that came to Clemson in 1989.

The NCAA contacted President Lennon about possible violations and a preliminary inquiry was conducted to determine if an official investigation was necessary (NCAA, 1991; Press release, 1991). The inquiry did not give specific information, but Clemson officials understood the inquiry concerned the 1988 recruitment and certification of Wayne Buckingham. Buckingham was not involved in any direct violations, but the NCAA discovered that he did not meet certain academic requirements in high school (Newsweek, 1991). His case triggered three separate investigations into possible recruitment violations, altered transcripts, and misuse of booster-club funds at Southside High School in Atlanta (Newsweek, 1991). Buckingham transferred from Cascade High School in Tennessee to Southside High School in Atlanta, but did not take enough standard courses at Cascade to meet eligibility (Newsweek, 1991; Reel 2013). The transcript provided by Southside did not match the one provided by the Tennessee high school he previously attended. In addition, Buckingham's SAT score might not have been valid (Fish 1991a, 1991b). Clemson was not aware of this because the records at Southside did not reflect this information (Newsweek, 1991). It took the NCAA three years to finish its investigation.

On December 9, 1992, the NCAA found Clemson men's basketball in violation of academic eligibility, impermissible recruiting, lack of institutional control, and unethical

conduct as a result of the recruitment and certification of Wayne Buckingham. Clemson was restricted in their official visits and off-campus recruiting. However, the biggest penalties were that Clemson had to vacate their records for 1990 championship and it was recommended to return 50% of their tournament revenue (NCAA, Major Infractions Case, 1992). The infractions lasted for two years (Reel, 2013).

The Buckingham case resonated with many of the participants. While some of the participants briefly mentioned the other violations, they discussed in greater detail the Buckingham case. Participants discussed the case and the aftermath:

This was a real dark spot on the university and it had to do with admitting a young man who was not eligible. And there were a lot of questions about his transcripts and the authenticity of the documents and the role that the university had in admitting the student. [Luke]

One of the mistakes in our past, a major violation was academic fraud, and it was an issue with transcripts. Basically transcripts were being changed and a student could get in. And now one of our things is we only accept transcripts from the individual high schools, they have to be official transcripts. In terms of tests scores, we only accept test scores from the testing agency. We're not just gonna take whatever is posted on the transcript, we want it from the testing agency. Also, some of the things that we have in place here is, and it's just not an athletic policy, it's for all students, is any student, let's take the SAT for example, if you have a 150 point jump in any one section. Say you have two tests, you took it, you have 150 point jump, you're automatically flagged for validation with the testing agency or a 300 point jump overall and for the ACT it's a similar process. In any given sanction, if you have a significant jump, it's flagged in admissions. [Giselle]

Well after the Buckingham incident, that's when it wasn't quite as loosey goosey. And many of the policies and procedures we have in place now came from the reaction of that, but at the same time, we have not had any problems since then. [Anthony]

The Buckingham case was the last major NCAA infraction at Clemson. It may resonate the most with the participants because changes started to occur to prevent this violation from occurring again.

Student Athlete Admissions

One source of tension between athletics and academics surrounds the admissions process, in particular, the special admissions process. Students that did not meet the general requirements went through a special admissions process. The NCAA has general eligibility requirements that students can achieve in order to be eligible to play. Clemson admitted student athletes based on these requirements, however, Clemson general admissions standards were higher.

During President Atchley's tenure, issues in admissions came from alumni, politics, and athletics (Reel, 2013). Walter Cox, the vice president of student affairs, and Kenneth Vickery, the dean of admissions and registration, received numerous requests and pressure from alumni and politicians to consider different applicants, however, they were capable of averting those requests (Reel, 2013). When it came to admissions and athletics, the board of trustees stated that grant-in-aid athletes be admitted to Clemson based on the NCAA academic requirements (Reel, 2013). There appeared to be a divide, in particular, among the faculty, about this matter (Reel, 2013). While some faculty members were fine with this requirement for athletes, others believed that only those who met the Clemson requirements should be admitted (Reel, 2013). Though some faculty members may have issues with the athletic process for admissions or did not want

athletics at Clemson, there is no evidence suggesting that they treated student athletes differently from the rest of the general body (Reel, 2013).

The tensions in admissions continued through Lennon's presidency. Manning Lomax, VP of Student Affairs and Dean of Students sent a memo to the Allen Dunn, President of the Faculty Senate explaining the admissions policies of scholarship student athletes. Scholarship student athletes are admitted based on the NCAA academic requirements. The policy of scholarship athletes is the same at all of the ACC schools. Even though Clemson's academic requirements are higher, they comply in order for Clemson to be competitive in athletics. The administration wanted higher standards so President Lennon, faculty athletics representative (FAR) Bob Skelton, and athletic director (AD) Bobby Robinson worked to improve the academic standards of the ACC and the NCAA (Lomax, 1990).

The Chronicle of Higher Education released an article on the special admissions process and how student athletes receive preferential treatment over the general student body (Lederman, 1991). They published survey data from Division I schools on the 1990-91 academic reporting form on special admissions (Lederman, 1991). Following that article, local news also reported similar statistics and targeted Clemson University. Student athletes in the ACC were more likely to have special exceptions in admissions than other students, according to the survey data. Six of the seven ACC schools made exceptions for at least 50 percent of their incoming football and men's basketball players in the fall of 1989. Clemson led at 82.1 percent (Associated Press, 1991).

Clemson University felt the report was unfair. According to B.J. Skelton, Chief Admissions Officer, “The article seems to imply that athletes who don’t meet regular admissions standards reflect negatively on the school. I think it just indicates that a university has high standards in the first place. Some schools that are reporting low percentages have open admissions policies, which means they virtually have no standards except a high school degree” (White, 1991).

The Admissions and Scholarship Committee, a subcommittee of the Athletic Council, agreed to work with the Faculty Senate Scholastic Policies Committee to review the admissions exceptions of student athletes through a study (Admissions and Scholarship, 1991a; 1991b). The review was intended to be a factual account of policies and procedures in place at Clemson relating to special admissions of student athletes (Admissions and Scholarship, 1991d, p. 1). While the report agreed that data from the Chronicle is hard to interpret because institutions have different admissions requirements, they did provide the following recommendations:

- (a) The administration should eliminate the discrepancy that exists between published policy and actual practice regarding the role of the Admissions Exception Committee in the special admission of student athletes;
- (b) The Vice President for Student Affairs, through Associate Vice President Almeda Jacks and Director of Student Athlete Enrichment Services Bill D’Andrea, should develop a detailed assessment plan for the Learning Center that includes routine reporting of graduation rates and grade-point ratios of special-admission student athletes;

(c) The Vice President for Student Affairs, through the Athletic Director, should advise all athletic coaches that the academic performance of recruits not meeting regular University admissions requirements will be closely monitored as a part of a continuing assessment of the impact of the Learning Center and the appropriateness of the University's special-admissions policies for athletes.

(Admissions and Scholarship, 1991d, p. 12)

Participants also discussed the admissions process for student athletes during the 80s and early 90s:

I think it was the fact that when the NCAA changed what they called Prop 48 in the early 80s, that was the first time in the NCAA they put on the admissions requirements. Before then it was always up to the institution, and whatever your policy was, you could take them. [Neil]

Basically, if you were qualified by the NCAA, you were admitted. That was in the early 90s and at that time you had to have just a 700 on the SAT and 2.0 in your core curriculum classes, and I think about at that time it was really 9 core-cap classes. So in the early 90s and mid-90s, we were not getting a real good caliber of student. We might have been getting a real good athlete but we weren't—and we looked at the success of some of these people along with the admissions office. [Fred]

Once we got to the point of 20,000 applications to get 3,000 seats, then there became focus on the athlete, where they gave quality students the boot. It was hard for the dynamics at the time of what was coming out of the high schools to get this all to balance. There were some mistakes done by the athletic department, some decisions of taking some students they shouldn't have, yeah. I think all schools in the south did that. If I had to go back and say did a student come in at one level and did he leave at a higher level, the answer to that is yes. That was what we were trying to achieve with every student that walked in the door. [Hank]

The admissions process admitted student athletes that met the NCAA standards that may not have met Clemson's general admissions requirements. While there are reports on the high number of student athlete special admits, the academics of student athletes seem to

fare well. In the 1990-91 academic year, Clemson men's sports ranked 7th in the nation and women's 13th in the nation in overall academics (Top ranked athletic programs, 1991; Williams, 1991).

Vickery Hall

In 1991, Vickery Hall was constructed and became the only freestanding facility in the nation catered to the academic development of student athletes at that time (Boykin, 1998). Inside of Vickery Hall is the Learning Center, which consisted of an auditorium, computer lab, study rooms, and the Student Athlete Enrichment Program (Admissions and Scholarship, 1991c). The Student Athlete Enrichment Program had three components: academics, personal growth and development, and career assistance (Admissions and Scholarship, 1991c, 1992a). The Student Athlete Enrichment Program is now called Athletic Academic Services.

While there were academic support programs for student athletes across the nation, Clemson University became the first institution to have a standalone facility catered to student athletes. Hank and Irene described what was occurring before Vickery Hall was created:

The first concept Colonel Robbins developed was the first study hall for athletes, every night. And it was mandatory. The Colonel had an interesting philosophy and a military philosophy. He ensured that the students realized the importance of studying and the facility that we have now really came out of the showing of the need and what Colonel did every Sunday – Thursday night. He used to use Daniel Hall and they would have tutors in all kinds of different rooms for all kinds of different subjects. And there were some major rooms that they used for study hall and they kind of made sure the athletes did their work. This was the era of Tree Rollins and “The Refrigerator” and a lot of very top-notch athletes and a lot of the controversy through the years. But Colonel and the athletic department tried their best to ensure to give the students the best possible education they could give them. [Hank]

I don't know what it was then, but tutoring took place in Mauldin Hall. That's where it was and we only had three or four academic advisors and we still had probably 400 and something student-athletes. But we were serviced in that building on the first floor of Mauldin Hall. [Irene]

Some of the participants discussed the inception of Vickery Hall and the importance of creating this facility:

Now that wasn't a real good time. We were on probation, so I'm not sure there was a unified view that it was a good idea. It was mostly a response to what happens if you don't give that kind of attention. And there was a time where there was a debate about whether it should be Vickery Hall or student-athlete dorm, which made them separate, and the university said no we're not gonna do the dorm thing, we're gonna do this, which I think was a really good judgment. [Orlando]

I think it was the very first standalone building. The services have been provided previously at a number of schools, but this was really the first attempt to make it a standalone kind of separate operation. It was intentionally built in the middle of campus, not over in the athletic district to kind of symbolize that it's an academic thing and that's where the kids are going to and from classes. [Paul]

But, no one across the country was doing it. They all had academic support systems, but they were all much slower or much smaller in scale. We just wanted to do something that would give them a leg up. Give them a state of the art facility, which it was in 1991. A computer lab, study halls, you can study anytime of the day instead of just doing it at night. Team meeting you could do, academically you could do them in the auditorium. We increased our staff of academic advisors and those types of things. The whole concept was to do the same thing in academics that we were already providing on the athletic side. [Neil]

Well I think going back to the inception of Vickery Hall, one of the things we began to do was at that time, below Schilletter was a dining hall on the basement and that's where all of the athletes ate. And they have since moved upstairs cause really it's better, to be honest with you. It's a little more of a variety. So what we began to do is to etch out kind of our mission. I would invite various department heads and key teachers, that we would have student-athletes in their classes, six to eight to lunch. And began to kind of convey what our philosophy was, why we built the building, how we expect to provide, not interference, but intervention. We're not there to kind of say, "Hey you need to help Chereese because if you don't give her a C, she's gonna be ineligible." We can't approach it that way. We

need to approach it as, “Look, she needs to earn a C, tell her what she needs to do. She needs write an extra paper or what.” So, the whole process is really to provide preventative of, or maintenance, so to speak. Making sure they are ahead of the game. So taking people to lunch, getting them to understand what our mission was, and doing it by various departments and getting a lot of feedback [Fred]

Documents also revealed that academics were involved in the development of the Student Athlete Enrichment Program in the Learning Center. The Athletic Council’s Admissions and Scholarship Committee members were asked to review the Student Athlete Enrichment Program information book to provide input about advising and tutoring and the objectives, policies, and procedures of the advising and tutoring components (Admissions and Scholarship, 1992a). Participants also discussed the early developments of Vickery Hall and the support it received from the academic side of Clemson:

When we decided to do Vickery, we couldn’t just say we were gonna do Vickery Hall. First of all, we had to get the land for it, it’s not—all the land belongs to the university. So we waited like a year and a half to get the place where we had it and to get the university’s approval, and those type things [Neil]

The faculty were very involved in the planning, the whole philosophy of Vickery Hall. [Neil]

Yeah the athletic council, we had a committee that was chaired by B.J. Skelton, who was the faculty chair of athletics, but he’s also a former faculty member, at the time was the dean in admissions and registration, I think, but anyways, he had a faculty background. He and the committee he formed really set, I want to say the agenda, but setup the philosophies, our goals, our organizational structure, and little things like building an auditorium. Cause we didn’t really have an auditorium for athletics, so that concept. Computer lab was another concept, it was way ahead of its time, but those type things. [Neil]

Then once we got the building built, we really used the faculty, at the time it was B.J. Skelton, who was the lead person and helped develop the program. Because we didn’t have a program, we had a concept. So it was up to the faculty members and the coaches to really kind of come together and decide, what’s our philosophy here, what do we want to do, how are we gonna fund it, what do we expect out of

it, that type of thing. And the whole concept is to give our student-athletes every opportunity to graduate. [Neil]

Through the Athletic Council, they established an executive committee and that committee was Dr. Cecil Huey, who was our faculty rep at that time, Larry LaForge, who became our faculty rep who was a marketing professor, Jean Bishop, who was an engineering professor on the athletic council. Dean Wixon who was in Biological Sciences and Gayle Noblet. And those five people really put together some of the policies, parameters, things that are embraced today that protect the integrity. [Fred]

The original director relied on faculty to help him establish guidelines and policies for how he was going to deliver those services. So he sort of build the groundwork there and I was part of the committee that worked with him in that. But I don't recall any objection or anyone saying, we can't do this or we shouldn't do this. I think everyone was supportive of it. [Paul]

It had a bona fide academic program that was transparent and you had a lot of faculty, I'd say a lot of faculty, you had people via the faculty rep that was understanding and encouraging with that type of program. [John]

While there was faculty support for Vickery Hall, there were some who opposed it. The support was not for the facility itself, but mainly because the services were not available for all students. A few of the participants further explained:

I think one of the challenges when we first established Vickery was getting faculty to understand a couple of things. First of all, that the building and the resources, the tutoring, everything was paid for by the athletic department. We were not using state funds to help the athletes. The second thing was to ensure that the appropriate help was being exercised. We didn't have test banks, we wanted our student-athletes to study the material that was discussed in class. We didn't want our tutors helping with studying tests; we wanted them to learn the material [Fred]

But then again when they put things in their place like Vickery Hall, the faculty opposed it because it wasn't available to everybody. So the funny thing is it took us longer to get one for the students in general but I don't think we would've gotten one for the students if we hadn't gotten one for the athletes. [Hank]

Participating in college athletics is an enormous drain on your time and your energy. Even though I feel like I was a pretty good student, as a student-athlete, I missed things that was hard to make-up and schedule, and keep up with my work

when it was during the season. I had the perspective that anything that helps athletes who are facing the same things, especially when their sport is in season, anything that helps be a good support mechanism to them, is a welcomed addition to the campus. And I think most faculty felt that way, if not all. So I don't think there was anybody that said this is a bad thing to be doing, and there were probably a large group that thought it was just fine and a smaller group who said while we're doing it, it should be a broader facility, a broader service for all. [Martin]

While Vickery Hall currently is seen as a benefit to the student athletes, Eric and Darren discussed some of the concerns that some may have with Vickery:

I know there's a large number of people that really appreciate Vickery Hall, that really have a positive influence of it, but there's some probably out there that still feel that's the student's responsibility or we're doing too much for them or they don't understand why things are happening and that's where I think we can do a better job as far as communicating. [Eric]

Now there's some concerns with having that type of support system in place. One concern is does this student have the same experience as this student? No. I'm not sure if this student could have the same experiences as this student. Is this student's education or degree the same as this student? Well it depends on what we're talking about. Will this student go on to be a PhD candidate? Probably not, but can this student now by earning the degree, going through the processes that we've had in place from an academic support system, can this student go on and be a good citizen, a productive member of society, and also a good employee. Absolutely. Absolutely. This person understands what it means to utilize resources that are at their disposal. [Darren]

Participants continued to discussed the impact of Vickery Hall at Clemson:

When we built that academic support center in the middle of campus for the student-athletes, it was a huge recruiting advantage for us. And so, next thing you know, everyone is getting bigger and fancier ones but we fired the first shot at that. And so I don't feel bad about that. I feel like ok that went to the benefit of student-athletes. Now, there's perhaps a perverse aspect of it. When we were kind of unique in providing this systematic tutoring the way we did and had a facility and you can bring people through. We would have parents and high school counselors and coaches and so forth and we might have student-athletes who they may think might have a lowly likelihood of succeeding college. But if he has a chance, the best chance that we would have is at Clemson because of the support. So what that tends to do maybe is shift a few more of the really marginal students

in your direction because people think, if they got a chance, there's a chance here.
[Anthony]

I would just say this. I think Vickery Hall was the first standalone academic facility in the country. Meaning it wasn't built next to the coliseum or the stadium, it was built in the center of campus, next to the academic buildings and housing. I think Vickery Hall has been a keystone for our recruiting. I think that we've been very fortunate to have good direction. Our policies seem to have upheld themselves, not to say we haven't had plagiarism issues, I'm sure we've had several of them and had several of them while I was there, in which I'm cheating off of you. But we haven't had any big scandals or anything like that.
[Fred]

Vickery Hall provides a lot of academic support, a lot. Tutoring, learning specialists, mentoring, all of it's right there. I am one of those unprepared students. It took me three times to qualify on the SAT. Nobody knew that I would ever go to college. I come from, and I don't mind sharing this with you, there was six in my family, two boys and four girls, single mom. It wasn't about academics, it was about survival. I didn't have the time to worry about studying, I was trying to make sure my sisters and brothers were fed. And I was working in high school trying to make ends meet to get the lights on, or provide a meal. So it wasn't about college for me, but praise God my high school coach said, "Irene you can go to college." I didn't want to go to college because I thought if I go to college, who's gonna take care of my sisters and brothers? He kept pushing me and pushing me. He said, "Irene, you gotta take the SAT." I played with it, played with it again, and said I'm gonna try. By the skin of my teeth, I passed it. I didn't want to go but my coach kept telling me to make a better life for myself, you need to go to college. So I came. I had to work, I had to go to Vickery Hall every day the door was open because I wasn't prepared. I was not prepared [Irene]

Now, if this person does not engage in our academic success programs, chances are they're not gonna be successful. They're gonna fall out of here. Now we've got student-athletes that don't need to engage in that academic support. And I would encourage them as soon as possible to wing them off themselves from that academic support. Because they need to be experiencing Clemson, college, just like the general student does. But that support system is in place for a reason. I think it's valuable. I think it's worthwhile and I think it's ethically responsible based on the current dynamics that surround intercollegiate athletes at the college football playoff level. [Darren]

We could not admit [Tony Foster or Robert Smith], or some of these people that have been great students, and great kids without a support structure. They're part of the team basically, they're part of the winning team, and if they do anything inappropriate, the whole thing can collapse. And you know you can get their

attention pretty quickly when you start talking about academic fraud at North Carolina, and things that might have been done where a relationship was established between an advisor and a student-athlete. And you love the kid, you're trying to help him, he's a great person who needs help, and you cross the line, and the next thing you know, all kinds of trouble. We wouldn't be able to function without Vickery Hall. [Paul]

Because, like I said, the basketball team, they're some of the worst. They come back a lot of times after games and don't get home 'til early in the morning and then are expected to be in class the next day. So you gotta provide that support, especially if you want a return out on those students that you do. And again, I think we do a good job between my efforts and some others here on campus to make sure that the student-athletes we bring into the university have a reasonable chance of retention, persistence, and graduating from the university in addition to the things going on in athletics [Paul]

Like all of our services, we kind of wrap our arms around those freshmen, but as they go through our process, they're gonna walk out on their own two feet, with accountability and dependability and a degree. [Eric]

And the student-athlete profile really hasn't changed a whole lot. It's not a whole lot of change there. But there's a different environment that this student-athlete now has to engage academic work in. So that means from a university perspective, and really it has fallen on our athletic department perspective, we have to provide the resources to support that student-athlete in their academic environment. There has to be resources that understand values within this university, values of academic integrity. That one value, more than any is espoused throughout Vickery Hall, every step of the way. [Darren]

Overall, Vickery Hall has been a necessary entity for the success of student athletes, especially for those who are deemed "at-risk," or did not meet all of the necessary requirements to get into Clemson. Building Vickery Hall proved that Clemson was committed to the academic success of not only the general student body, but also their student athletes.

Chapter Summary

The 1980s and 1990s at Clemson consisted of controversies that often times overshadowed the successes of athletics. Between the infractions and debates

surrounding the academics and admissions of student athletes, the findings revealed that athletics and academics were at odds. However, the findings also revealed that in the midst of controversy, athletics and academic were working together. Vickery Hall was the most prominent representation of athletics and academics working together, despite their views on the academics of student athletes.

The findings and the history of the 1980s and 1990s provides context of the athletic-academic dynamic in the 2000s. In 1999, James Barker became the 14th president of Clemson. President Barker had a goal of making Clemson a top 20 public research institution in 10 years (Reel, 2013). President Barker also had a goal of Clemson being successful in both academics and athletics, which set precedent to the current dynamics between both entities. The following chapter focuses primarily on the findings of the current athletic-academic dynamic during the Barker era, which ended in 2013.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

Chapter Five presents the findings from the study that explored the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. This chapter discusses the analysis process the researcher used that led to the creation of the themes. The findings in this chapter focused on the current dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson, since Chapter Four has already provided the historical findings.

Thematic Process

Chapter Three discussed the data analysis process the researcher used. The researcher identified 835 significant statements that described the dynamics between athletics and academics. The researcher then created 140 meaning units of the experience of the phenomenon. The researcher had to further reduce the meaning units into clusters to form them into themes. A total of 37 meaning clusters were created for the findings that explain the current athletic-academic dynamic. Finally, the researcher created six themes out the study. Table 5.1 shows the themes and the meaning clusters that were created. The meaning units were not included in the table due to the large number produced.

While athletics is an entity of the university, it is often treated as a separate entity due to the nature of how the department operates as compared to another campus department. Athletics also receives a large amount of attention, which can impact the dynamics between it and the university. The findings focused on the dynamics between athletics and the academic component of the university.

Table 5.1

Thematic Analysis for Findings on the Current Athletic-Academic Dynamic

Theme	Meaning Clusters	
Learning from the Past and Others	Academic and athletic relationship change	Mindful of the past
	Controversy	No secrets
	Infractions	Other campuses
Behind the Communication	Athletic Council	Helping each other
	Causes of disconnect	Interaction with athletics and academics
Priorities	Academic vs. athletic priorities	Mission and goals
	Academic and athletic relationship	Model athletic program
	Competitive equity	Values
Academic Impact	Admissions requirements	Student athlete academics
	Athletic opportunities	Student athlete independence
	Curriculum	Underprepared student athletes
Inseparable	Admissions applications	Enhancing the college experience
	Athletic impact	President Barker's goals
	Branding and visibility	Reputation
	Can't separate athletics and academics	Role in educational mission
	Community	What makes Clemson distinct
The Possibilities	Future of academic-athletic relationship	Too close of a relationship
	Improving the relationship	Understanding athletics
	Supporting athletics	

Six themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (a) Learning from the Past and Others, (b) Behind the Communication (c) Priorities, (d) Academic Impact, (e) Inseparable, and (f) The Possibilities. Some of themes may appear to overlap, but each contained content necessary to be viewed separately. Figure 5.1 displays the themes and the sub-themes created from the data analysis process.

Historical Themes (The 1980s and 1990s)		
NCAA Infractions	Student Athlete Admissions	Vickery Hall
Themes on the Current Dynamics (The 2000s - The Barker Era)		
Learning from the Past and Others	Behind the Communication	Priorities
Policies and Preventative Measures	The Interaction	Competitive equity vs. Academic Excellence
Technology & External Constituents	The Disconnection	Goals and Values
Learning from Other Campuses		In the right direction
Academic Impact	Inseparable	The Possibilities
Admissions Requirements and the NCAA Minimum	President Barker's Academic and Athletic Goals	Change in the Athletic-Academic Dynamic
Academic Quality of Student Athletes	Admissions Applications	Improving the Relationship
Curriculum Impact	Branding & Visibility	Understanding Athletics and Student Athletes
	Impact on the Student Body and Community	The Future of the Athletic-Academic Relationship
	Role in Educational Mission	

Figure 5.1. Themes and sub-themes of the findings.

Learning from the Past and Others

The historical themes provided insight into the tensions that occurred between athletics and academics. Due to the controversies, Clemson University made a commitment to try to avoid any future major violations. The theme, *Learning from the*

Past and Others, highlights how Clemson addressed issues from the past and how they learned from others. This theme is separated into the following sub-themes: (a) policies and preventative measures, (b) technology and external constituents, and (c) learning from other campuses.

Clemson had four major NCAA violations in athletics, two in football and two in basketball. Some of the participants acknowledged the violations, but did not discuss in detail the issues. As a result of the multiple infractions and controversies that occurred at Clemson, the administration decided to make changes. Participants emphasized that Clemson is mindful of the past, so they are committed to not making the same mistakes in the future:

But I think that the era of today, how things are handled with athletes are much more out in the open, there is punishment for doing something stupid, rather than in the 70s and 80s of covering it up. [Hank]

I think Clemson is unique in that it wants to be competitive in the ACC, yet it's mindful of its past. It had four major infractions prior to 1991, in 1991, that was the fourth major infraction, which they almost led the country in the number of times they had been before the Committee on Infractions. I think there was a move in the early 90s to ensure that the athletic department operated in the rules of the NCAA. I think that from that point on, there were many things that were established and I think they want to be competitive nationally, but I believe they are committed to operating within the rules of the NCAA and the ACC. [Karen]

It hurts the reputation but I think what we have in place, and let's face it, we haven't had academic issues with the NCAA but we've had probation issues with the NCAA. I think that is something we learned to be more in tuned to what's going on. [Fred]

From the integrity standpoint, Clemson has had four major violations and its past and that's something Clemson never wanted to do again. And we're here today, because it's not just athletics that said, "This is what we want to do," it's been the top down from our presidents enforcing it when they come over and they speak with our student-athletes or when they speak to our coaches, to say, "At Clemson, we're not gonna tolerate that. We don't want to go back to the past that we had

because it was an ugly past.” And I really think that influences a lot of what we do now. We have a lot of policies and things in place because of that. People don’t like them but it’s because of those things of us not wanting to go back to that. I think past mistakes (laughs) move you in a different direction to lead to your future. [Giselle]

I think that Clemson had some significant issues in the past when it came to admission standards. When I coached at [Southern Tech], we recruited against Clemson and there were some things from an admissions perspective that created differences between Clemson and other universities at that time. Clemson could recruit players that [Southern Tech could not]. Clemson also had some issues with the NCAA, and I do know Clemson and the athletic department worked hard to correct any breaches of trust across campus and work hard to ensure compliance as related to NCAA issues as well as university issues, predated me that the administration, both university and athletic administration, worked hard to shore up some areas to ensure character and integrity would be preeminent when it came to academic issues, in particular. So that was already in place by the time I got here and people have done, in my opinion, a really good job. [John]

But when it comes to meeting what are the rules of fair play on the field and off the field in terms of compliance, we take those very seriously, because I think when we didn’t, it really hurt us and we learned that lesson about 20 years ago, 18 years, 3 months ago, the last time we had a compliance problem. It tore the university—it made two Clemsons, athletics and academics. And we can’t ever let that happen again because we’re not very strong when that happens. I saw it and we were very weak. But we’re much stronger when we see ourselves whole. We’ve got to take athletic compliance on, academic compliance on, research, very seriously, and I think we do. That’s part of who we are, but it took us a while to learn that. For a while when we got in trouble with the NCAA, we blamed the NCAA. That wasn’t smart and it wasn’t true. We were the ones that did the things wrong. But we’ve had almost 20 years of not having that problem and I think those years coincide with the success of Clemson. Our moving up the rankings, our national reputation, our number of applications, all indicate that. [Orlando]

Policies and Preventative Measures

As a result of the major issues that occurred in the 80s and 90s, Clemson began to create policies and other preventative measures to avoid any future major violations.

Participants from athletics and academics discussed the following:

I think definitely there began a movement on campus that involved all institutional personnel. They developed systems to ensure that the institution had

more control of the athletic program. I think it was a clear signal from the president that we're not going to have these issues anymore. [Karen]

So I was involved with a number of faculty and staff here on campus because we were pretty much told at that time that after what had happened that we needed to have a system that was—there's no way that could happen again, with a lot of checks and balances and people coming behind each other. [Luke]

Academic integrity is first and foremost and we'll do several workshops in that semester on what it is and how to prevent it and educated them on what plagiarism is and what—kind of going through the entire academic policy that Clemson even has. [Eric]

New policies and procedures related to admissions were created throughout the years.

Academic participants, Luke and Charles, discussed their involvement in the changes in admissions:

So there are four signatures that have to be acquired before we admit a student, where it use to be that wasn't the case. That's probably the best thing example that I can give on how we are just more thorough. Because you know, that's the main thing, if you're doing so much of something at one time, sometimes things glance over you and you don't see them and the consequences would be huge if we made a simple mistake. So we try to make sure that can't happen. [Luke]

Mainly deal with the folks in compliance. We've got a policy in place where the coaches don't call over here. Part of that is to make sure there is no appearance on any impropriety. Coaches get a little emotional sometimes and it's a little easier to work with the folks in compliance than it is over here. So that's kind of the way that it has evolved over time. [Luke]

So when I was on the self-study review, we're talking about policies, one policy recommendation we made was that student-athletes had to go through the same admission process as any other student. You had to have the same standards and go through the same exact admission process as any other student. So it appeared to us that in essence the athletic department was acting as admissions officers. They wanted to be able to go to Seneca or whatever and meet with a great football player. And they wanted to pretty much assure that football player that if you get whatever the SAT score was, you will be admitted to Clemson. My point was that I thought that the admissions process had to be on the academic side, not the athletic side. I lost that battle, in fact. So we created this AARC, which is sort of a compromise, but the AARC has been greatly watered-down since then. [Charles]

Attendance for student athletes has always been a concern because student athletes may have to miss certain classes due to travel. Eric and Brad, athletic participants, discussed the attendance policies and travel for student athletes:

One of the policies that's in there is an attendance policy for student-athletes that are identified in a certain group and if they're identified in that group, then they must attend class, we will hire class checkers in Vickery Hall to check those classes and if they're absent, it will be reported out to a certain administrator on the athletic and academic side, as well as the coaches. And after so many absences, well really on the first absence there's discipline to be taken and by the time you get to your fifth absence, again it doesn't matter who what student-athlete is, you're gonna miss a game. You're gonna miss participation and so there's—again that reinforces the culture that we want which is to be in class and if not, we're gonna pull you away from the thing that's maybe distracting you from that. And so to put perspective back into it, it's a great policy that really I think, sends a strong message to what's important here at Clemson. [Eric]

I think Clemson does a great job with that but that council looks at those types of things. That's another way the academic side influences or kind of makes recommendations to the athletic side about travel and if you're leaving too soon, too early, are you coming back too late or within an appropriate amount of time. How much time is an allowable miss and there's even policies in the provost manual that dictates to where our teams are not allowed to schedule any competitions during the weekend before and the entire finals week. To protect the sacred—kind of the importance and sacredness of final exams. That's a special time to students that can make or break a semester and it's very important to being successful. I think it's great we have a policy that speaks to—because it's not the same case on all campuses. Now some people may operate that way, but to put it in writing, that's speaks volume to the commitment and again that our academic and athletics has come to and we see this as appropriate. [Eric]

One of the things the athletic council is dealing with is now is trying to think about the attendance policy. So athletes have to do all kinds of stuff and that means they have to miss class so there's this question of well, when is that excused absence and when is it not? There are coaches who will really push that envelope and say—so its one thing if the football team is going to be at Virginia Tech on a Thursday night. So they gotta leave Wednesday. They're gonna be gone Wednesday night, Thursday, and probably part of Friday. That's sort of a legitimate excused absence. But if the coach says that, “yeah they're not leaving til 5:00 on Wednesday but we also have to have a team meeting at 2:00 on Wednesday that everyone is required to be at.” So you have to make the team meeting and that all professors should cancel their classes for these athletes and

then schedule a makeup assignments. That kind of stuff, faculty don't react really well to. I don't even really like the idea that you're going to the game but I'm willing to do that. But if you're gonna creep it into a pre-game meeting or something like that, it begins to be more of a problem. [Brad]

Academics and athletics have worked together to create different policies to not only avoid future violations, but to also address additional concerns surrounding the academics of student athletes.

Technology and External Constituents

While policies and preventative measures have assisted in avoiding additional infractions, the notion of "no secrets" was prevalent among the participants. With new technology and social media, information about Clemson University and Clemson athletics is easily accessible, as well as outlets out there to attack the institution.

Participants in athletics discussed how technology and external constituents impact how Clemson addresses potential issues:

Yeah it used to be if anybody got in trouble downtown, they may not even know about it. Now they know about it almost as soon as it happens. Somebody is taking a picture and posting it, somebody is sending out a tweet, or just someone on Facebook or whatever. Everybody knows everything almost instantaneously. So there are no secrets, it used to be secrets, but no more. [Neil]

It use to be where if somebody wanted to contact you, they either picked up the phone and called you or write you a letter. If somebody sent you a letter, that meant they really had an issue, or something they wanted to get across, because it takes time to write a letter, mail it, that type thing. Now, I can text anybody I want to or email athletics about anything and it's instant. So it's much easier now, a lot more awareness, more information than ever is out about everything, so you're really not catching anybody off guard. It's the world we live in, it's gonna get, I would say more access, but I don't know how that's gonna be. Everything is so fast now. [Neil]

So technology has definitely had a huge impact on how we operate on a day-to-day, and with the NCAA rules right now, they can't keep up with technology because of how our adoption process has worked. So I remember when Facebook

and all the social media stuff came out, our rules did not really address that. So then a year later, we're like ok we're gonna tackle this, but now it's this, and it's instant messaging, there's always Snap Chat, there's always something new and coaches trying—and the funny thing is we have older coaches and they're trying to keep up with this technology. [Giselle]

Just to give you an example of how bad it is out there in recruiting, we get pictures, we get videos from just random people. “I saw your coach doing this or it look like your coach was doing this.” People are recording with their cellphones. They're taking pictures, they're sending those to the NCAA, they're sending them to the ACC office. And it's not just our coaches, our student-athletes, they're doing the same thing. We get telephone calls, “I saw your student-athlete in the grocery store.” An example, we have an African American student-athlete adopted by a White family. Got a call, “saw one of your student-athletes with this random White guy buying tires for his car. That's a violation and we just wanted to let you know.” “We appreciate it thank you.” And unfortunately, and I say unfortunately, we have to follow up on every one of those things. So we had to call the student in and he says, “oh my dad was with me,” and that's the climate we're in right now. And that's a message we try to make sure our coaches understand and make sure our student-athletes understand. And I'm not saying that it's not everywhere, but I say particularly at Clemson, because this is the biggest show in town and everyone wants to have a part in it. So that is what we're dealing with. [Giselle]

Participants continued to discuss how external constituents use technology and social media to address their concerns when it comes to recruiting and admitting student athletes, in particular, football and basketball players:

I think the Internet makes a lot of noise, chat rooms, those kinds of things. I think that all of them are experts that if they had their names published and we knew who they were, I bet they wouldn't know quite as much as they think they do now. [Karen]

When you think of call-in talk shows, and recruiting analysts, and 24/7 sports radio. For a small town, we have 24/7 coverage. So yeah they influence what the general public knows because they're learning a lot of it from the radio or from the Internet now, or radio, TV. Again, that's just something you learn to adapt to. I never felt odd or bad about that. [Neil]

I know that you've got all this stuff on the Internet, you've got all that stuff on talk radio. And I think like any part of life, I think there's a certain mind or a certain type of person that's gonna sit there and listen to talk radio and they're

gonna call in. How do these people make a living if they're always calling in to talk radio? (laughter) The Internet, anybody can put an opinion out there. And there's some questionable ethics that occur on the Internet, because in the good ole day, before someone would write a story in the paper of whatever, they would corroborate their facts and their stories. Nowadays, they write and no one worries about whether it's really factual based. And you've got that group of people that will stir the water and that's all you hear from. [John]

I think the outside has a huge influence on it and I say that and I'm really talking about just the media influences. The same with the NCAA. There's almost this fear of the media. An example is a school never wants to be the person to tell this student-athlete, you can't come, because if a another school let's them in, how the media gets involved in that. And then of course the media is reporting story so that they can gear attention a lot of times and pieces of that are missing [Giselle]

There's a very strong fan base. There's all kinds of social media. There's all kinds of bloggers who know everything or think they know everything. The student-athletes being recruited are well-known, even though the school can't comment, everybody else knows. And in some cases, the academics of those recruits are known. Somebody is telling them things, it might be the recruit, telling some recruiting service, "Well I just made 900 on the SAT" or something. So there's considerable pressure to admit kids, people are following that. And occasionally, someone will not be admitted and they'll turn around and go somewhere else. [Paul]

Outside people will try to influence the academics largely through admissions. They're not gonna interfere with grades or anything like that, but they know who is being recruited and they know it might be a borderline case. They want to make it known that if Clemson doesn't take this kid, and he ends up at UVA or North Carolina or Wake Forest or Duke, you know, what's going on? [Paul]

There are a lot of folks out there in the public, especially those that read chat boards and listen to talk radio, who think that if they're NCAA, they should be admitted to the university. Most cases, that's the case, but not necessarily all the time. It's not an admissions standard, it's a basic level for participation, but people perceive it sometimes being an admissions standard. [Luke]

Yeah I think from time to time there are comments especially on the radio or message boards that are taken wrong. And part of it is because some of the people that are making the commentary just don't know or have the big picture. As I mentioned earlier, most of our curricula for students to meet percentage of degree is pretty restrictive on transfer students. "Clemson doesn't want transfers." No it's not that, it's just trying to get them to fit what we do here. If you ever drive down the road and listen to talk radio and they start talking about academics stuff,

usually somebody is gonna call in and have no idea of what they're talking about. Or, they want to compare it to how it was 30 years ago. But it's just not the same, it's gotten more complex. [Luke]

And just the level of Clemson now, like football, everything we do now in football ends up on ESPN. So if we say this top prospect is not gonna get in, it's gonna be on national news. So you're always checking and double-checking, ok is there any additional information that we can ask for? Can we get letters from teachers, anything to help. Is there any way? But sometimes you just have to say no, and when you say that, you just have to be prepared for the backlash. [Giselle]

You know that this is a student who struggles academically, we can't take the chance on this student, so Clemson would say no. And then the media gets that and say, "Oh this student is a qualifier at the NCAA and Clemson is not gonna let them in." But another school is like well you can come here, but they have majors that are a little more forgiven. They have more elective hours. They have some time so they can progress, so just the pressure a lot of times is always weighing. It's like a cloud that hangs over you to say, "Okay we make this decision, we have to be prepared to stand by this decision because the media, the community, and then once that happens, how will this affect future students. It's like "Well I'm not gonna even consider Clemson because they didn't let this student in," and it's just pressure that you're always in the back of your mind, we can't make a mistake on this one, but if we do this with this student, we have to be prepared to stand by our decision because we're gonna get crucified in the media. [Giselle]

So those are decisions that we don't take lightly. And again it goes back to that collective group being able to work together, because at the same time, we gotta make sure we have each other's back. You know you didn't make that decision by yourself. And I would never, you know, a coach would come in and I say, "Admissions said it, I didn't say it." We have to be a cohesive unit and when those negative decisions are made, and I say negative decisions in the eyes of the coach, we have to be able to stick together and back up that decision, but you always have community, the media, national. [Giselle]

Learning from Other Campuses

Participants also discussed learning from mistakes at other campuses and how that impacted their decision-making in making sure they had the appropriate policies and tools in place to avoid similar situations. The recent events at North Carolina came up as a point of reference for many of the participants since it's tied into academics:

Going back to the relationship between athletics and academics, nothing will tarnish a university image more than a scandal like that from their athletic department or their athletic participants. North Carolina will attest to that right now. So we have a tremendous academic support system in place. [Darren]

Paid attention to schools that got in trouble and I would have conversations with our folks in Vickery Hall about it or our athletic director. And often times, they would bring it to me so it was always this continuous dialogue. “Are we making the same mistake? How do we ensure that we don’t do that?” [Orlando]

One of the things I realized was that people doing the counseling of student-athletes and helping them academically can go too far. For example, Georgia. North Carolina, lots of examples. So I said I gotta do something so I could sleep at night, because we are putting our university’s reputation in the hands of graduate students, who we’re paying \$10/hour or whatever it was at the time, to help. If one of those makes an error in judgment and crosses that line of doing work for someone, and where is that line exactly? How are they taught what to do? So I jumped in there and got familiar with what was exactly being done, and decided that each semester I would have a meeting with all those tutors and explain to them how important their role was and how I trusted them. How I wanted them to understand that they’re not gonna have that much responsibility, maybe in their whole careers, or maybe in their careers, they’re not gonna have the whole university’s reputation riding on their relationship with one student-athlete. And I said, “There is no student-athlete worth it to cross that line for. I don’t care what. I don’t care if they’re the best we’ve ever had. It’s not worth it, don’t do it.” So I did that every semester and I slept a little better as a result of it. [Orlando]

I think North Carolina, unfortunately, is because it’s so public right now is extremely great example of where athletics got too big. I think they were not monitoring, and they even admit that they were not monitoring as well as they probably should, the students they were admitting, could they be successful at North Carolina. And then they got them there, they weren’t being successful and so I think the panic set in and people were—that’s how classes get created where nobody attends and little or no work occurs, and grades are given. And some other things that I think were influenced there is a lot of pressure were placed on what would be the Vickery Hall at North Carolina to do things above and beyond the call of duty. And when you put students in that kind of situation and there’s that much big business they can get involved in, it can influence a lot of people and I think there were many administrators in North Carolina that saw it happening, but didn’t know what to do or how to respond to it, and I think a lot of that is being admitted now. I know they’re putting steps in place to hopefully prevent it again. [Eric]

But there's definitely with courses that are offered, majors that are offered, influences on faculty members. Stress is placed on them as well to—I think some of them felt like, “I need to get this kid through, he's an important basketball player,” or an important baseball player, or a football player, whatever it may be. And so I don't think we have that here. I've not seen it yet anyway but I know nationally it exists. [Eric]

I've read about everything that has come out of the North Carolina thing, the Penn State thing, and all that. And I honestly don't know how the problems they had at North Carolina persisted for so long without anybody noticing. I am certain that here, we would notice that and it would be addressed somehow because I think we have enough people with eyes on the thing. Our policy that limits the enrollment to 25% of student-athletes unless the department raises it. Well, the checking of that would just simply expose classes where there's nothing but student-athletes, semester after semester. And so questions would be asked and that department would have to address that long before so I don't know how that actually persisted as long as it did in that environment there. [Anthony]

Well, I'm not sure if you have anything in place to control a rogue professor. I think that the departments and the way we check on athletes and whatnot, I think we would report those concerns to our faculty rep if we noticed that. So I don't know exactly what we have in place to prevent that. If we did, I'm sure North Carolina would be down here wanting to know what is was, so I just think the deans of the colleges, the department heads, they need to make sure they know what's going on with their instructors. [Fred]

No I don't think it's a concern here. I think we're on top of a lot of things. It's certainly an embarrassment to the institution's academic integrity, and to me, what was going on had to be known by several people. Whether it was academic advisors that put people in there to just get eligible. They can say well “we put people in there because they wanted us to take the classes,” but they still had a responsibility to kind of say, hey what material are you covering, when is class, and if they've been doing this for a long time, probably knew that you didn't have a whole lot of expectations in that African American studies. So you know, whether that guy did meet or whether they didn't meet or whatever, it's just a lot of autonomy with a faculty member, when they close that door, they can pretty much say what they want. But somehow, there needed to be some policies procedures of class needs to meet three or four times, there's some expectation. It just sounds like there was no accountability. If I wanted to give you an A, I gave you an A or if I wanted to give you a B, I gave you a B. I just think it hurts the reputation but I think what we have in place, and let's face it, we haven't had academic issues with the NCAA but we've had probation issues with the NCAA. So I think that has made us more, back in the 80s, early 80s and late 80s. So I think that is something we learned to be more in tuned to what's going on. And I

don't think it's fair to the student. He's here to get an education. For us to give him a grade and not go to class, that's not fair to the kid. [Fred]

A major issue and a major probation, you can look around the ACC and see these schools that have had major issues. North Carolina, the major academic issue that probably nobody there saw coming, they should have, but they didn't. And now the relationship between faculty and athletics is totally different. So it can turn on a dime and I think athletic administrators know that. They're very vigilant in their oversight and compliance in academics, and very eager to work with faculty members when they need to. So I think it's good, but it's subject to things that are happening. [Paul]

I know Florida State is still dealing with it and I think the situation that happened at North Carolina is much more corrupt. I think it will be decades before they get over this. It's not going away, I think it's going to linger, because they actively had a department on campus that was partaking in this. At Florida State, you can say, hey that was really one person, it wasn't even the department. It was one person that gave out answers to a test and it was one time. At North Carolina, it was a department, it was a certain chair of the department, it was dozens on courses, and there were hundreds of student-athletes that were affected over a 10-year period that they're looking back into now. I'm not sure where it will end up but to me it's something that's gonna take a while to get over and really, I know the faculty have to be very upset that this happened, and I know athletics is embarrassed and upset it happened, but those two miseries aren't going to enjoy each other's company. They're gonna make sure it's prevented and doesn't happen again and when you do that, sometimes policies are made and sometimes uncomfortable things have to be said and I think that's what they're looking to get into within the next couple of years. It will be a while before they probably have a positive relationship with each other. [Eric]

The findings in the theme, *Learning from the Past and Others*, showed that Clemson has made mistakes in the past that caused major tensions between athletics and academics, but has made a conscientious effort to not go down that path again. While technology and external groups can have an influence in Clemson deciding not to commit any future violations, the primary reason is that Clemson is committed to integrity and doing things the right way. Participants had a consensus that Clemson had the proper mechanisms in place to avoid an academic scandal like the one that occurred at North

Carolina. It has been over 20 years since Clemson has had any major violation. Many of the participants attribute to athletics and academics working together to ensure that the integrity of Clemson will not be damaged in the future. The remaining themes will further delve into the interactions between athletics and academics, the impact both areas have on each other, how tensions were/are addressed and ways to improve the interactions.

Behind the Communication

In order to determine the nature of the dynamics between athletics and academics, it was important to learn how both sides interact with one another. The theme, *Behind the Communication*, focused on the nature of the interaction between athletics and academics. Participants were asked about their interaction with academics or athletics based on their position. They discussed the nature of their interactions and the reasons behind it. Due to the complexities of the interaction between athletics and academics, this theme is separated into the following sub-themes: (a) the interaction and (b) the disconnection.

The Interaction

For participants that are athletic administrators, their interaction with academics varied. Athletic administrators appeared to have more interactions with university administrators than the faculty. Athletic administrators discussed their interaction with academics:

I would say my interaction is relatively limited. As a sports administrator, there is some interaction from the standpoint that I'll watch what our baseball team is doing and making sure the student-athletes on that team are doing what they're

supposed to be doing. But really our coaches manage that more than anybody, more than me. [Darren]

I get an opportunity to interact with faculty and it's very limited and it's just because of the different committees or meetings I may attend on campus, but outside of that, I don't have any direct contact with faculty members. It's just mainly in the committees and things that I've been assigned to. Athletic councils, the President's Commission, those type things, but outside of that no. [Giselle]

I taught a sports [management] class. I wasn't compensated for it, I did pro-bono. But it gave me an opportunity to interact with students that are non-athletes and it was a fun class. I served on the administrative council with administrators. You had of course interaction with the provost, particularly when it came to admissions issues, cause if there was a sticking point on a particular individual, you're gonna have to interact with the provost and possibly some faculty members with regard to why you believe this person could have a chance to be successful. [John]

Going back to the structures that we have in place that we have certain individuals when it comes to the time to talk business, there's certain areas of our department that are responsible for that discussion. But I think we also have an environment where coaches and professors, and general athletic department staff and professors can interact, can collaborate on some things that are not necessarily hot button issues. I think it's all positives but I can't speak from a faculty member's perspective. [Darren]

One of the athletic participants, Giselle, acknowledged that the interaction with academics is important for her and others in athletics to do their jobs:

We can't do our jobs here in athletics without the support of the groups on campus that support athletics. Working closely with admissions, because it's a tedious process in getting our student-athletes in compared to the general students. Because it's no secret, our student-athlete population, and we have some that meet those requirements, but our student-athlete population, they don't look like the general student population. So where as admissions may be able to admit a student as soon as they apply and they've received an official transcript without that date of graduation on there, that's not something we can do for our student-athletes, because we still have to wait for the eligibility center, because one of the requirements at the eligibility center is, you're definitely not gonna be a qualifier until we see a date of graduation on your transcript...And again, there has to be some level of support from the faculty, because our student-athletes are missing these classes and again, I haven't heard any major issues with that from the faculty group. [Giselle]

Participants that are university administrators had constant interaction with athletics due to important matters such as admissions, financial aid, budget approvals, etc. However, faculty members did not have a constant interaction with athletics. Faculty participants discussed their interactions with the athletic department:

As a faculty member, and most faculty members, I have very little contact with athletics administration. I think that's done for multiple reasons. I don't know for most faculty if they would recognize the last three athletic directors if they saw them for instance, or the associate athletic directors. So it's a very much sort of a structure that has faculty directly involved with student-athletes, directly with Vickery, but very little contact beyond that, and I think there are some good reasons for that. So it's a little hard to describe that part of the relationship. [Charles]

I've informally known a lot of people who were in the athletic administration and coaches. So I feel like I have a lot of, you know, some informal contact. I'm not a guy who wanders around Jervy regularly and talks to staff or coaches and has a lot of ongoing interaction, but I sort of had lots of different varying roles of interaction throughout the years. [Martin]

So I've never had a conversation with the athletic director. I've seen him in meetings and on the other side of meeting and things like that and I'll probably will be meeting with him soon, but I've never had a meeting. And if I did have to have a meeting, I would have to schedule it to talk about X, I could not just say, "hey can all the athletic people and faculty people get together for lunch sometime?" Now that I think about it, maybe we should do more of that. [Brad]

As a faculty member, prior to being on the athletic council, very little interaction with athletics, other than the normal kind of daily transactions that might take place when you have athletes enrolled in your class, you're going to receive information on when they have to travel and that kind of thing. But no direct contact with the coaches or the athletic staff people. [Paul]

While there has not been much interaction between faculty and the administrative side of athletics, faculty members' primary interaction with athletics is through the student athletes and Vickery Hall. Members of the academic community discussed their interactions with student athletes and Vickery Hall:

And for me to be honest, the relationship is much more me with you as a student as opposed to meeting with the athletic department. So I don't hear from the athletic department. I hear from Vickery. So that's not a very strong relationship just because it's almost like living in two different neighborhoods and I don't go to their neighborhood and they don't come to my neighborhood. I see the kids, the athletes, so that's a much more personal relationship. [Charles]

Throughout my years as a faculty member, I've had student-athletes in my classes. Since I teach [Math], there are some programs that athletes are majors, athletes that take a [Math] course that I might have been teaching and others don't. It's sort of varies as to how many, and which athletes, and which sport, but I've taught a number of student-athletes for years. [Martin]

The person you would most likely hear from in athletics as just a regular faculty member, would be the director of Vickery Hall, who would be contacting you about feedback on performance or notifying you that athletes will be traveling and will have to miss classes. [Paul]

Furthermore, one of the participants from athletics also emphasized how Vickery Hall primarily interacts with the academic side, rather than the athletic department:

Even though we are a member and work with the athletic department, most of our interaction really is with the academic side, whether it's myself communicating with faculty about student-athletes and how they're progressing in class, or attending meetings. We were attending meetings about the new majors coming on campus and really our kind of expertise is the academic programming of what happens on campus and how we can best provide that information and support our student-athletes. [Eric]

While there appears to be limited interaction between athletics and academics on an individual basis, there is a group, known as the Athletic Council, which serves as a liaison between athletics and academics. The Athletic Council is comprised of faculty from each college, students, and athletic and university staff that meet monthly to address issues in athletics. Some of the participants currently serve or previously served on the council. They discussed the Athletic Council and the role it has in the interaction between athletics and academics:

You have one from every college and undergraduate student body, and grad students, and all of that and they're suppose to be our eyes and ears back to the campus. They're suppose to take what we say back and answer back any questions and bring in any questions that the faculty have back to us. It's pretty hard to do. And some are very active in what they do and some probably not as active in athletic council. [Neil]

Well in the role of the member of the athletic council, you have interactions with athletics through monthly meetings in which athletic officials give reports to the athletic council, respond to questions. And then generally you are a member of a subcommittee on the athletic council, which might—should be proactive in their assigned area. For example, there would be an academic integrity subcommittee on the athletic council, which might review not only the grades of athletes, but the academic support system and things like that. So at that level, you are interacting with people that might not normally come to an athletic council meeting to give reports, but they have some day-to-day responsibility for an area, and you would be interacting with them to see what they do and how they do it. [Paul]

Though the Athletic Council serves in an advisory role for the athletic department and university administration, members do not have decision-making power or power in influencing any change. Two of the participants, discussed the role of members on the athletic council:

We have an athletic council that's a group of faculty members, that oversee some policies and makes recommendations as well. They can't enforce anything, but they can view and analyze and make sure that, again, Clemson is operating the way we want it to and student-athletes are representing the university the way we want them to. [Eric]

You would like to think that the athletic council would help establish policy, but that is not the case. More often than not as a member of the athletic council, you would receive the policies and you might have an opportunity to comment, but basically you're being handed information about how we do things. [Paul]

There is a consensus that athletics and academics have limited interaction with one another. Unless participants are in a position that is required to have interaction with one another, such as admissions, financial aid, Vickery Hall and the Athletic Council, the interaction is otherwise finite.

The Disconnection

The second sub-theme delves into the reasons behind the limited interaction between athletics and academics. Participants discussed the disconnection between athletics and academics, which can result in tension.

Support from faculty. The findings revealed the tension between athletics and academics tends to be between athletics and faculty. Participants also discussed this tension and how it impacts the support of athletics from faculty. Academic participants shared the following:

I think on some levels there is, and again, we're talking more about different sports, but I think the disconnection is almost a philosophical one. My interest—here's how I put it before, it may not always be accurate. My interests in students is seven days a week, whether athletes or not, I care what you're working on Saturdays and Sundays as I do on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. And I believe for all students, my job is to make you competitive in the classroom, competitive in whatever job you take. That's me. I think in some cases in athletics they're really concerned about their students on Saturday game days and couldn't care less about them on the other parts. So all the preparation is geared towards are you competitive on Saturday. I've said this to coaches and I don't care if you are competitive on Saturday, I want you competitive on Monday morning in your anatomy class. So I think that difference sometimes makes it hard to sort of have that relationship. [Charles]

I think in the context, I think you can still find some negative with some of the faculty. Some of the faculty have been here as long as I have so there are still those individuals. [Hank]

I have a sense and it's just a sense that your information, your data may find out about this that more and more faculty are far removed from football, particularly don't care. I think in the early 80s, '81, '82, I heard that lots of faculty supported, they had season tickets or they did stuff. I hear very little of that anymore and I don't know and that's just in this department but I don't hear much sort of faculty being strong football, they like when Clemson wins, but being strong football fans, you know. [Charles]

And when it comes to auxiliary units like athletics and things like that, their concern tends to be, is that siphoning away from the primary mission of the

university, which is generating knowledge and passing it along to kids. And it can siphon in two ways. One, it can siphon funds. So most Division I-A schools have an athletics program that costs the university some substantial amount of money. There's often times some creative accounting to hide that fact. The bottom line is, it ends up costing the university more than the university gains from it if you're just thinking about money. There are other arguments we can make, but if you just think about money, and faculty don't really like it because their attitude is, "it's a university. It's about generating knowledge and disseminating knowledge. It's not about people running around in colorful uniforms and hitting each other. That's not—that might be nice to do on the side but it should be a like sideline." It can also siphon away the intellectual energy so if students spend a lot of time worrying about the football game and going to the football game and drinking at the tailgate and all that kinds of stuff, that's time they're not studying and learning about physics and literature and whatever else they're supposed to be learning. So there's that kind of intangible loss you get and faculty don't like either one of those. [Brad]

And sometimes I think the faculty feel like they don't have—they should have the upper hand but they don't because they don't own a bunch a money or TV time. No one is going to bring GameDay to campus to talk about the latest guy in physics who did something really cool. It's just not gonna happen. And no one is gonna really throw \$2 million dollars his way. He may get a big grant for his machine but he's not going to make any money off of that. So there's a lot more popular support on the athletics side of the house and I think faculty sometimes feel like they constantly have to fight that, sort of keep that at bay. [Brad]

I think it's good. Of course the faculty is a very, very diverse group. So on any campus there will be a subset of faculty that don't see any value to athletics and see it as a drain. There'll be some faculty on the other extreme that might go overboard to be involved in athletics. And then a whole bunch of people in the middle that don't have a lot to do with it. I think the general relationship is very good. I think athletics, and not only at Clemson, but I think in general, athletic administrators on college campuses have figured out that you have to get along with faculty. And so a smart athletic director is going to be a good communicator. For example, here at Clemson, once a year there is a report to the faculty senate on the state of athletics and the athletic director is part of the report. The faculty athletics representative is there as well. An athletic director, the ones I've worked with here, are going to show up if the faculty senate has questions and want to ask about something, they're going to show up and explain it. Over time, I think the faculty has become more accepting of the role of athletics. It's huge. And they're pretty good here and they follow the rules and their academics are good, so there's no reason really for the faculty to be up in arms about athletics. [Paul]

No I just think it's a general feeling of, "What is the purpose of intercollegiate athletics?" Now intramural athletics involves everyone, so there's physical fitness involved, I think everyone can see that. But when you look at intercollegiate athletics and the way it has grown and become a big business, you certainly can't make the argument that promotes good health and exercise. Most of us are sitting in the stands or at a tailgate party drinking beer. The small number of participants are obviously benefitting from it. So I think some will never buy into that and I don't think it's anything peculiar to Clemson. And I don't think the people that hold that view are very vocal here at Clemson. They're just kind of in the background. Every now and then someone might write a letter or have something published in the faculty senate newsletter or something, but it's not a vocal group. I don't think it has anything to do with Clemson, I think it's the general feeling that intercollegiate athletics has become so professionalized that it doesn't have—and of course most athletic departments are not making money, so there's student fees. And there's lots of questions in the mind of an ordinary faculty members who sits in an office and has trouble getting supplies needed for his or her classes, they may look at athletics in a different way. [Paul]

Athletic administrators also provided their thoughts on the tension between athletics and faculty:

You know, on every campus, you're gonna have the naysayers. I'm not saying that they've never understood athletics. They probably never attended an athletic event and they're all focusing on academics. Just as athletics, we're focusing on athletics. [Irene]

I think it's always a tough balancing act. I use to work for the NCAA and I spent a lot of time in member schools and there's always some tension between athletics and academics. You're always going to find faculty members who think it's crazy that you pay a football coach a couple of million dollars and yet a world-renown researcher just make \$200,000. Those kinds of tensions have always existed. [Karen]

And also, you find out through that process that there's a lot of faculty that really don't embrace athletics, and they don't want to cooperate. They feel like the student needs to do their own thing. You don't need to be provided an intervention. [Fred]

Well I think that's the perennial question on every campus. There are many who would believe and I would say there's some substance to that belief, that there's an imbalance between emphasis between athletics and academics. I'm not sure what you can do to balance the scale when someone has that perception. There are some wonderful faculty people that could care less about athletics and don't

believe it even ought to be on campus. It's not an intellectual experience, as they would see it. But my argument is this, whether it's persuasive or not, for the most part it wouldn't be, but it provides really wonderful opportunity for kids that have unique abilities in a particular area of athletics that enables them to not only develop that part of their life, but gives them an opportunity to develop their academic part of life as well. It provides that opportunity. It provides opportunity in different social settings for young people that maybe they would not have had that opportunity. [John]

The one thing that I think kind of puts a strain on that is over time, I think our student-athletes are out of class more and more because TV dictates they play a midweek game where as opposed to before it was only Thursday, Friday, Saturday or something like that. That you may have a game on a Tuesday or a Wednesday, I mean you can have a game any day and we don't always play at home. So there's travel associated with that, more teams, and more exposure in terms of TV. I think that our student-athletes' responsibility is on them, and the pressures on them to miss those classes, I could see that at some point becoming, "Okay, wait a minute, they're not even here during this term cause of all the travel." And it's something we need to be careful about. But again I think it's something—and again it goes back to the dynamics and the individuals involved on campus that it's just been managed, it's been managed. [Giselle]

One recent example of tension the participants discussed is during the 2013 football season, Clemson hosted a Thursday night game as part of their contract with the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). Since the stadium is on campus, the university had to close early in order to prepare for game. As a result, faculty had to cancel their afternoon and evening classes and staff had to take paid time off. Participants discussed their thoughts on the Thursday night game:

Yeah I'm not a fan at all of that. And we hadn't done it for a long time. I understand it was our turn but that was a very sort of symbolic day in terms of what rules Clemson. Literally, you couldn't park in the parking lot after 2. You had to leave. Friday classes were just ridiculous because of football. So that's a good event that probably does give you a lot more information than the final football score in terms of the value and importance. So I was opposed to it, I said it many times. I thought it was ridiculous, but anyway, it was a necessity. [Charles]

Faculty were really pissed about that because it's sort of a clear situation where a choice had to be made between athletics and academics, and academics lost. And a lot of faculty will tell you, yeah that petty much always happens. I'll tell you who were even more pissed about it that was the staff here at Clemson, because the staff were required to take leave time. Faculty were partially pissed off about the academic thing. They were also pissed off on behalf of the staff that it's really not fair to force someone to take vacation time for a football game. Now there were legal reasons why we had to do that, but it really did not come across well. If we didn't have a competitive football team, we wouldn't have to worry about that. [Brad]

Eric, one of the athletic participants, understood why some faculty and staff were upset about the Thursday night game, but wanted to put the game in a different perspective:

That Thursday night game is something that doesn't happen often, matter of fact it's been 11 years since Clemson had one so they tried to not to do it but the way business is and sports are and ESPN calls and says, "We want you for a game," and there's so many dollars behind it, money goes back to the university as well. [Eric]

But it is a tough one. You can see the faculty side, "Why do I have to cancel my class because you have a game Thursday night. Athletics should never overrun academics." I don't know if you're ever gonna win that argument but I'm hoping they wouldn't see it as much as someone telling them to do something as it would be that we're providing an experience for our student-athletes and our students in general to be a part of. I know it was a big deal for our students in general and to have that opportunity for a Thursday night game is something that may not happen for another 10 or 11 years. And so those students that were here are gonna always remember that. [Eric]

Faculty and student athletes. The findings also revealed a large amount of tension occur between faculty and student athletes. Participants from both areas discussed these tensions. From the faculty perspective:

Well of course, at least officially, all athletes are first and foremost students. (laughs) This is one of the tensions, whether or not it's really true. It's always an issue when students sort of want some special dispensation so they can do their athletics. They want a class to have a make-up test or something like that. That's always a problem. Of course there are problems that sometimes occur when students don't make good enough grades, one of which can be pressure is applied to the professor to change the grade. That's never happened to me, but you hear

these rumors and so it wouldn't surprise me too much if there have been some instances at Clemson. In fact, I guess I'd expect that there's some. I don't know how common they are. I don't think they're real widespread, but if [your starting quarterback] had a problem making a grade in a particular class in the middle of the season last year, I don't know. I don't know what would've happened, but I would've not been shocked to find out that someone had a conversation with a professor and said, "Can't you just give him an extra paper and then sort of find your way to giving him a C," or whatever. That kind of thing could happen. [Brad]

I think that the negative is when it's very clear to me who the athletes are in my class, cause I've had, and there may be other faculty instances, where student-athletes and not just student-athletes were disruptive in class for instance because they're just not following what's going on and so they're constantly talking to each other, and that's a negative part of that. We certainly get lots of reports that athletes, and again I'm talking more football and basketball athletes, who are for instance, are not very participative in group outside activities, particularly. A lot of times that's scheduling because these football guys are busy everyday and afternoon from 2-7, I believe. So it's not uncommon that in small group activities, the athletes do not do well. They're just not there and I believe that is disruptive. I think honestly, one of the greater costs of that is that other students get a very negative perception of the academic abilities of athletes because they are not participating. [Charles]

Eric discussed the level of difficulty athletics has in trying to interact with some of the faculty when it comes to academics of student athletes:

I know some faculty who don't understand or don't really see it maybe the way that athletics does. The fact of the matter is, Clemson is a university member of the NCAA, not the athletic department. And so Clemson University has made a decision, how I see it, has made a decision to be a member as a Division I institution in the NCAA. So when we are sending those student-athletes out nationwide for these events, then you would hope there would be a fair and appropriate accommodation to allow that student to either get work while they were gone, missed whether it's notes or information or if there's a test or quiz that takes place while they're absent, that there's an appropriate accommodation for them to have an opportunity to complete that exam or quiz. [Eric]

You know, and I don't know how you reach all the masses, that's always the hill to climb. We interact with every faculty member that has a student-athlete in their class. Here in a few weeks we're gonna send out progress reports so there's gonna be about 5,000 courses that we're gonna ask for information on. Well, we won't get back—we'll get back some great responses. Some will never respond because

they choose not to engage in that process, which is their absolute right and we understand that. Sometimes I don't think they answer because they don't know why we're asking. And what we do and I'll tell them when I get in front of faculty is I always thank them for that participation and getting feedback and emailing us and communicating with us, because many times it's hard for us to do our job until we know what the real problem is. Until we know that student is not doing this in class or what can we do to kind of coach them up to be better in your class, to be better engaged, to be more responsive, to be a better student, and really just kind of teach them that and I think that's a service all students can benefit from. [Eric]

Athletic administrators also acknowledged and discussed how they try to address the tensions between faculty and student athletes:

I think that, at least while I was in Vickery Hall, we tried to address faculty concerns, we tried to work within the framework of having our student-athletes working in the framework of what was established in the classroom and did the best job that we could to keep them involved and informed of travel obligations. [Karen]

But all you can do is make sure your student-athletes are respecting that professor. To make sure they love what they do and you need to learn how to love it too and respect that professor for what they're getting ready to do, which is teach you an education. [Irene]

People, faculty would say, "Hey I've got student-athletes asleep in my class. I've got student-athletes that don't come to class. I've got student-athletes that come late. I've got student-athletes who don't give the excuse on time," the travel verification. So you know we were able to kind of get feedback through that and address a lot of those things. We came up with firmer policies and you don't turn in your travel verification when you come back. And I think a lot of that was alluded to a little bit of the athletes embracing some entitlements. You know, "We're playing at North Carolina State this week." It's like you're suppose to know. The faculty don't ever follow all of our sports. So we kind of had to educate both groups and there was a lot of interaction, really good feedback from faculty. [Fred]

Cause it's not always easy to work with a student-athlete as a faculty member just cause it's—you know it doesn't happen a lot and if you don't have very many in your class, it's like when they travel, how do you work that out and what's appropriate for the student as far as giving them accommodations, because student-athletes are to receive fair treatment but not necessarily equal treatment. So, we want to make sure they are being treated fairly so we communicate with

faculty and faculty communicate with us. Sometimes they want support with student-athletes that may be not quite as engaged as they would like to see. [Eric]

I think, and I was told this but I think it's true, you're gonna have a third of the faculty that are somewhat on the edge of overzealous. They really want athletes in their class, they want to be able to say, "Hey I've got [Terrence Jones] in my class." You got to be careful about them because they could do some things that, over the edge a little bit. And then you have a third that understands your mission and they're gonna cooperate. And then you have a third that's probably aren't interested. They're into their research, they're into their teaching, they probably don't come to the games, they're not familiar. And I think you need to work with those two-thirds and try to educate that third the best you can with the understanding that there are some people that could care less. [Fred]

Lack of understanding. Participants believed the reason a disconnection occurs between athletics and academics is due to the perceptions of athletics. Participants also agreed that a lack of understanding contributes to the disconnection and tension between some members of the athletic and academic communities. Participants discussed the lack of understanding between both sides. Brad, one of the academic participants, provided his thoughts:

Whenever there are two sides arguing about something like this, there's always an element of lack of understanding. This is my personal view but I think it's true. It can be different creed, but you can imagine a situation where part of it is that people don't understand each other, but even if they did understand each other perfectly, they would still completely disagree. I may not understand perfectly a mafia boss' perspective, and I'm probably closer to his way of thinking about things if I really understood where he was coming from but I don't think I would fully agree with his way of doing business. (laughs) That's probably an extreme example for athletics. [Brad]

On the other hand, there's always, always tension, and I think most faculty at Clemson don't really know a whole lot about athletics, but they don't like that there's so much attention paid to it. They suspect it's probably costing them money and revenue and they'd rather avoid it as much as possible. If you ever put anything to a vote with faculty involving athletics, the faculty will almost always going to vote that athletics shouldn't be done or should be less emphasized, or something like that. [Brad]

Orlando, one of the university administrators also commented on the misunderstanding between faculty and athletics:

The ones that are probably the most tempted to misunderstand are faculty members. They may have come from a different school, which didn't operate the way we do, or they may come with certain prejudices about on how important the role is. Or they may be angry that football coaches make 10 times as much as they do. So there were times I met with the faculty senate and leaders of the faculty senate about disparity between coaching salaries and teachers' salaries, faculty member salaries. And it makes no sense in the way the world should be. But if you're gonna have a capitalist system, which we do, then market drives that and you have to accept that. And the same way an English faculty member makes a different salary from an engineering faculty member. But that's always a source of tension. [Orlando]

The different backgrounds of members of the athletic and academic communities can contribute to a lack of understanding of each other. While there are always exceptions, participants highlighted that faculty, university administrators, and athletic administrators most likely had different educational experiences. Some of the faculty participants discussed this further:

And from a sociological perspective, I think it's probably worth noting that very few faculty are the sorts of people who were athletes themselves. That's not the kind of person that tends to go into academia. Academics tend to be the people who were the nerdy, really amazingly good students, right. So there's probably some baggage there going back to high school. (laughter) [Brad]

But again, so faculty members tend to be people who are doing what they are doing because they started off as nerds and they were really good in the classroom. Most of them were probably not very athletic. You know to stereotype, you can say the same thing about people in athletics. By and large these people were successful athletes when they were in high school. They probably weren't usually the best students. And so, there's just a sociological disconnect. They don't quite get where the other one is coming from and I think that all faculty can tell is a story about interacting with someone from athletics, whether it's an athlete or coach or somebody who clearly has their priorities completely wrong. [Brad]

And then there is another factor, where we mention about student-athletes and their experiences as part of the student body, the fact that many of them might be underprepared as students and so forth. Well to a large degree, our coaches came through that same system. None of our faculty came through that system. As a rule, everyone one of our coaches participated in intercollegiate athletics as a student. Hardly any of our faculty participated in intercollegiate athletics, right. So there's just a background difference right there that makes it hard for this friendliness and trust to develop, I think. I mentioned, you occasionally have a student-athlete who couldn't write a paragraph, I've known some coaches who couldn't write a paragraph, you know. But they came through that system so there's a difference in how you deal with it. There's a difference, you can't pretend it's not there. If you pretend it's not there, then nothing is gonna happen. [Anthony]

The reasons behind the disconnection between athletics and academics are not new. The findings in the documents revealed multiple surveys conducted in 90s about perceptions of athletics (Admissions and Scholarship, 1992; Athletic Council, 1994; Campus Relations, 1991b). Results indicated that there were wide gaps between perceptions and reality of the athletic department. The Campus Relations Committee, a subcommittee of the Athletic Council, made several recommendations in trying to improve the communication between athletics and academics (Admissions and Scholarship, 1992; Athletic Council, 1994; Campus Relations, 1991a, 1991b), but the communication issues appear to still exist.

The theme, *Behind the Communication*, provided an overview of the interactions between athletics and academics and the causes of disconnect between athletics and academics. The Thursday night football game was an example of tensions that can occur between athletics and academics. Tensions between athletics and academics occur when one area is impacting another area. At times, an already preconceived notion of one area causes tensions, which results in a disconnection between athletics and academics.

Furthermore, a lack of understanding between athletics and academics contributes to the disconnection.

Priorities

The previous theme, *Behind the Communication* addressed the interaction and disconnection between athletics and academics. The disconnection between athletics and academics can be attribute to what they believe Clemson University prioritizes. The theme, *Priorities*, focuses on the priorities of athletics and academics and how it reflects the overall priorities of Clemson. In athletics, priorities focus on winning and student athlete excellence, while priorities in academics focus on academic integrity and excellence. Participants discussed the priorities of athletics and academics and how that contributes to the dynamics of the relationship between the areas, both positively and negatively. This theme is separated into the following sub-themes: (a) goals and values, (b) competitive equity vs. academic excellence, and (c) in the right direction:

Goals & Values

The priorities of an institution are influenced by its mission, goals, and values. To get a better sense of what drives the priorities of Clemson, participants were asked to discuss the goals and values of their respective areas and position. Faculty participants discussed what they value as a faculty member:

In terms of being a faculty member, I think people go into higher education for all kinds of reasons. But I would say they primarily go because they're deeply interested in some particular area that they want to pursue. They may be motivated by teaching, or may be motivated by research, or motivated by the desire to be involved with students. So I think it's a complex motivation and I would think most faculty would find their satisfaction in those things...But regardless of what your motivations are, there are these values, and personally, I think the primary responsibility is to the students, for a whole lot of reasons. And

then I think there is—if you're part of a department that has a major, like most of ours, say mechanical engineering, then you're responsible for that major. We're responsible for the curriculum. We're responsible for being what it ought to be. You're responsible for the students, that major, that discipline, you know.

[Anthony]

I'm very student-oriented. I think students have the right to learn and we have the responsibility to make sure they learn. I think it's fair to say if anyone talks to you about me that I value engagement by all parties, whether that was a senate president or with students, as a department chair, that everybody is important in the decision making. I value equity and fairness and equity in teaching and learning and how you treat people, those kinds of things. [Charles]

Well I certainly think of a lot of that goes across many professions, honesty, integrity, hard work, loyalty. I haven't thought of exactly those things but I think those apply certainly to many positions in life, certainly in being a faculty member. But also things like having a desire to see students learn, to enjoy working with students and to receive personal satisfaction from seeing students achieve their objectives and maybe develop these values and other values and characteristics. It's certainly a rewarding part and a good part of being a faculty member. [Martin]

Well there are the standard academic intellectual values. So, free exchange of information, freedom to explore your own intellectual questions without constraint, academic freedom or the freedom to teach as you see fit, those are the basic ones. [Brad]

I think it's just integrity, what you do in your research, and your activities in the classroom. In the classroom, it's making sure you are delivering content that's appropriate and assessing it and evaluating student work fairly. And in research, it's integrity of data collection, and analysis, and reporting, and writing. [Paul]

While faculty value integrity and other aspects of their job, there appeared to be a common value of responsibility to students in different capacities. Participants from athletics discussed the goals and values in athletics:

It was a different time in the 1970s and 80s and 90s. You didn't have the Internet, call-in talk shows, or recruiting analysts. So our goals were to win, be successful, be a positive influence on the university, be financially solvent because we were an auxiliary, so the university would not subsidize us, whatever we made is basically what you had. To graduate our student-athletes and to live by the rules. Integrity, honesty. [Neil]

I don't think the goals will ever change. The goals are to get positive influence, to recruit student-athletes, to win, and do it within the rules, those kind of things. Those goals should never change [Neil]

You know I think working in an athletic department is very similar to working in any other department on campus. And you know there's a significant business aspect to our department here at Clemson and we can't deny that. Dan reminds us everyday that our mission is really a non-profit mission. We're not here necessarily just to make a dollar. We're here to create resources so that we can provide these opportunities to interact with—for student-athletes to interact with each other. To develop these skills and values of teamwork, work ethic, those kinds of things. That's what we're here for. Pretty much every program we have other than the one that fills Death Valley, I mean if you were a business, strictly a business, those programs wouldn't exist. So that and the atmosphere within this organization is dictated a lot on those missions and those tasks that are sent from others. Not necessarily replicated from the teamwork that you see on the football field, baseball field or basketball court. [Darren]

We want our coaches to win championships, that's what we're looking for. It's not just within the ACC, it starts there first and then you can achieve your national recognition. But that's an important goal as a president. I want my student-athletes to graduate, I want my student-athletes to meet the president's dean list, I want my athletes to be a part of that. But I want my athletic department to win championships. That's how you get on the map. When you win championships everybody sees you. So you just can't cast that to the side, cause like I said, a lot of people chose Clemson because they saw it on the website, Clemson Tigers, and they flew to it. [Irene]

Similar to faculty participants, athletic participants also discussed their goals and values as it relates to student athletes:

Our idea of winning is to make sure that our student-athletes get a degree. I think our student-athletes have done that at a very high level. We also want to do it within the rules of the NCAA and the ACC, so we go to huge lengths to avoid appearance of academic dishonesty. We spend a lot of time educating out tutors and our part-time employees on what is permissible, what is not permissible in their interactions with student-athletes. We hit it hard with our student-athletes that this is the kind of academic support we provided and this is what you will not be provided. So I think we work really, really hard to win, that our kids graduate, that's what I mean by win, and we operate within the rules. [Karen]

Again, what our first goal is here is them graduating. We make that commitment when we recruit them and I believe that's our mission in this department is to give them every resource to be successful in that endeavor. [Eric]

But first and foremost, it's academic integrity and then it's about developing responsibility and accountability and trying to help that young person grow into a mature adult so that when they leave Clemson, they leave with the skills to be successful. And so it always starts with academic integrity and really goes down to those core values that it takes to be a successful college graduate. [Eric]

Well, certainly the very first thing that we usually convey to recruits and parents, is we want our student-athletes to get a degree. The window of competing in athletics is fairly small and it's kind of like the Nike commercial. You know there's 460,000 athletes but only a few of them are gonna go on and play professional sports. And we want our student-athletes to embrace the opportunity to play professionally, but we also want them to balance the fact that they can get a degree and they can have something to fall back on if that professional career doesn't work. [Fred]

I think the other value is just the fact that being an athlete takes discipline, it takes persistence, it takes time management, all the qualities and characteristics of just making a commitment are I think the things we embrace. We want to do the right thing. We want to do everything we can to help our student-athletes academically but we're not gonna do it for them. We want them to develop as students, we want them to develop as athletes, and we want them to leave here looking over their shoulder to be able to say, "I could've went to South Carolina or North Carolina or Georgia, but I picked the right place." So we want that experience to be something very positive. [Fred]

Clemson, and that's one of the things when I was even looking at this job, is that it's known for its integrity. It's known for developing quality student-athletes that are good citizens, that are dependable, that are accountable, that are responsible. And so no, I think our athletic department has that same vision and I think that's why there's really a pretty nice marriage and great reputation nationally for producing such quality student-athletes. [Eric]

The values of Clemson Athletics. I'll start with for me personally, when people ask me what does Clemson Athletics mean, because we actually had a group come in and we kind of did something like this, "Tell me about Clemson Athletics?" And for me Clemson Athletics is family. The other thing I would say is integrity. [Giselle]

In college athletics, we're surrounded by stories everyday of people not doing the right things the right way, and that's something that we try to pride ourselves on

here at Clemson. Everyone wants to be successful in athletics, but we want to be successful in athletics doing it the right way. I say that because we're not perfect, people do make mistakes but when people do make those mistakes, they're upfront about it and they let us know because we have a duty to report violations to the ACC and to the NCAA. And our coaches, we have a good enough relationship where they feel comfortable in doing that, so we're not just discovering things after the fact and having to deal with some of these major issues that you read about or see on TV that the other schools are doing. [Giselle]

You want to bring in people that have an opportunity to be successful in their sport. Not everyone is going to hit a thousand percent on hiring staff, you're gonna make some good decisions, your coaches, and some you're not, but you try to make the best decision that you can. One thing that has to be, it must be consistent is, are they honest, do they have character, do they have integrity, and do they care about the kids. Do they want them to be successful in other areas of their lives. You should be hitting close to 100% on those types of traits [John]

Well I think athletics in general espouse certain values that aren't always present and I think it's a challenge, especially in college athletics, the level we participate and we support programs. It's a significant challenge to balance some of those values because of the focus on commercialism and really establishing the brand of the school [Darren]

That's a value of athletics, of an athletic program, is to help establish the brand of a university or the school. Which can sometimes be scary for a university because your most visible program is a program that may or not may be in line with the overall mission and values of the university or the school. Specifically to the values associated with sports, so getting beyond scholastic sport, you know I think teamwork is there, work ethic in general is there, understanding that there is something greater than you. There's something more than what you immediately want. [Darren]

But the basics, the work ethic, the teamwork, communication, anytime you're working with a team, there's values associated on how you communicate with people, how you relate with people. Personal interaction, those are values that you don't always get in a classroom setting. It's hard to get that. It's hard to recreate that in a classroom setting. It's just not as natural. But you get that in team setting. You get into the professional world and you got to know how to communicate with others. You got to know how to interact and get along with others. The best classroom for that at a university, from my perspective, was the practice field, the locker room, the bus, because we're driving from here to there to play games. That can change. It depends on what your college experience is. It could be a fraternity or a sorority house. It could be a different organization, but specifically to athletics, that is a value that I think—and I think it's true even beyond

scholastic sport. The interaction that takes place within a team is relatively unique, but it's really not replicated, you know exactly when you get into the workforce, into an organization like a business or something like that. But it's more closely associated with that type of interaction than any other thing that I have experienced. [Darren]

One of the values that we value is success. It's competitive excellence. But it can take a dirty turn depending on where we are along the way. Those are some thoughts as you move outside, move throughout the layers of constituents in our program. [Darren]

Darren, one of the athletic participants, also discussed the values of athletic constituents and how that can influence athletics:

Part of what influences the values within athletics are the constituents outside of focus. Obviously we have staff—we'll take it one layer at a time away from the real focus of this department. Because the focus of this department really should be, I believe it is, is our student-athletes. If you go beyond that, the first layer you have staff, you now staff has their own agendas. They have their own focus, and so, sometimes their focus, does it lineup with those values. And that's key. You've got to create a culture within your department that aligns with the values that you expect your student-athletes to be gaining on the field. [Darren]

Next you have your fans, your boosters, there could be a difference. Boosters is someone that actually offers financial support. Then you have donor type of person. Obviously, they give money for various reasons. Mostly it's transactional, but there is some altruistic giving that is from the heart, "I want someone to have a great experience, that's why I'm giving this money or that's why I'm giving whatever I'm giving to the program." But their values, where do they line up? Sometimes when it's transactional, the value isn't the student-athlete experience. But I would say most of our fans do care about our student-athletes to some extent, at least on a superficial level. But, it's more what about my parking space, what about my seat, where's my name go on this, what's it gonna look like, I want to determine what the facility looks like. Those are sometimes values that get inserted from that group. [Darren]

And then you go beyond that to fans. You're Twitter fans, your Internet fans, people that are on blogs, sometimes these people are intermixed, but folks that are on discussion boards. I was reading something the other day about a prospective student-athlete de-committed from Michigan and was more than likely going to head to Ohio State and all of the fans from Michigan that were on Twitter and the discussion boards were just blowing him up. Just talking about how bad—so he goes from the greatest thing ever one day to he's getting blown up the next day.

So the value is more, I don't know, the quality of their football team, the success, and that it actually true along the way. [Darren]

University administrators were also asked about their goals and values in their respective areas. Common responses were “academic excellence,” “integrity,” and “diversity.” However, Orlando also discussed the values of Clemson as a whole. Below are his thoughts:

It's the sort of answer to the question that you sometimes hear, when people from Clemson and people not from Clemson say, “What's is with you Clemson people? You're just crazy, you see things differently.” And I think the answer to that is what is with us Clemson people is Clemson is a very patriotic school. Having grown up as a military school and never really losing that sense of patriotism, I think that's part of who we are. I think we're a school that places real value on the individual, no matter how big or small we are as a school. And that's symbolized by names on the sidewalks when you walk around of Clemson graduates or on Cemetery Hill. The value of the individual still comes through very strongly. [Orlando]

Other things that make us different is that we have a real sense of civic responsibility, the idea of service, which we got marks on campus like the Military Heritage Plaza, and the new addition to that which emphasizes service, and how people have served. But I think it's being a land-grant school, where you don't keep research bottled up in a lab, you want to put it to use out in the state or in the world to solve problems. I think there is a special relationship between faculty and students. Those are some of the values I think that make us distinctive. [Orlando]

And I think we are very competitive, that's another thing I would say. We will invent a way to hurt one another in Frisbee, (laughter) we're just inherently competitive, somehow people who are attracted to Clemson are competitive. People try to outdo each other when it snows here to go down the levee, who can go the fastest or can do the most outrageous things. And I think there's an inherent competitive spirit here that's stronger than most any place I've ever seen before. And that's part of who we are, which speaks to the notion of athletics. I think people are interested in athletics who come here, not just watching, but participating. Our participation in intramurals is one of the highest in the country, if not the highest. So I think there's a competitive spirit within us academically, athletically. We compete in national championships all the time and we win them. In debates and ethics competition and Pershing rifles, forestry clubs, everything. Tell us the rules, we're gonna beat you. We're gonna be good sports, but we're

gonna beat you. That's our attitude and that's partly what makes Clemson tick. [Orlando]

Based on the responses from the participants, the goals between athletics and academics are different, as they should be, because they have different purposes. However, the values between athletics and academics are similar, even when the perception is that they are different. Athletics and academics both value students and take responsibility in their success.

Competitive equity vs. Academic Excellence

With any school that wants to be successful in athletics, there will always be a concern of athletics getting too big to where priorities shift to winning over academic excellence. Academic participants provided their thoughts on the priorities of winning and having a successful athletic program:

Faculty worry priorities are being set in the wrong way. I guess one way to sort of put it is what faculty would like a university to do is to make academics clearly the number one priority and everything else is secondary. And if they sent that message consistently, faculty would probably be ok with athletics. If it was more like intramural athletics. No faculty really cares about that because it doesn't impact their studies and nobody is making a whole lot of money in intramural athletics so you don't have all of that potential problem. Whenever money enters the situation, weird things can happen (laughs), right. Even if you're careful, you get thousands and thousands of people who really care about the result of the game and if they got money, it's hard to police that perfectly. [Brad]

I think we're doomed in a sense that the board of trustees, obviously care about success on the football team. Alumni care a lot about the success of the football team. Students, I assume, still do. And that anything that seems to diminish that is seen as a negative. Whereas to me, diminishing that, I view that as a positive because I get reaffirmed from an academic institution. [Charles]

Yeah I mean it's cynical but I think it's probably true. There's a saying in business, you get the behavior you incentivized. Incentives in athletics are all about better athletic performances. That's where all the incentives are. And even well intentioned people are going to be affected by that to some extent. [Brad]

And 1981 to me was very similar to 2014 right now, because I think the winning that we're doing now tends results in greater pressure to keep winning. In between that when we weren't as successful as football team, I think Hatfield was the coach, for instance, actually athletics was much more integrated in the university but winning was not happening. So I think it's almost this strange dynamic that the more we win, and I'm talking more about football and basketball. The more we win, the more difficult it is to have that athletic-academic tie because the shift is more toward the winning, in some ways, more toward the athlete part of the student-athlete. [Charles]

Faculty participants continued to discuss priorities in athletics as it relates to competitive equity. They acknowledge that Clemson wants to be successful in athletics and would not want to be at a competitive disadvantage, therefore, certain decisions are made that may not please others:

Now the other huge part of it is where some of these things come into conflict is to remain competitive equity. So you don't want the rules to afford an advantage to one institution over another and we want to eliminate behaviors or reduce behaviors tend to produce competitive inequities. Now, what the rules tend to do, whatever you establish as the minimum, becomes the norm and everybody converges to that but at least you can set those boundaries there. [Anthony]

Well we, in many ways athletics has been involved in an arms race. We build fancy facilities that we don't really need in order to attract coaches and student-athletes. I mean, here the true genuine need for an indoor football practice facility—I don't know how to judge that because we don't have bad weather here (laughter), you know. It doesn't get 20 below and so I'm not sure. But I feel we got to have it because everyone else does. [Anthony]

I know there are people on this campus who are concerned about they don't ever want to put Clemson on a competitive disadvantage in athletics. So a lot of these decisions and policies are not driven by what's best for the student or by what's best academically. A lot of it is driven by what's Florida State doing, what's Georgia Tech doing, and we don't want to do anything that would put us, recruiting-wise for instance, beyond those places. It's an interesting dynamic. It is this sort of different goals in the admissions process and my goal obviously is academics and his goal may be winning football games and the person caught in the middle of that is a 19 year-old kid from wherever who is sitting in my classroom 8:30 in the morning and on the field 4:00 in the afternoon. Can he do both? [Charles]

A coach should never be paid a million dollars. He was getting paid more than my faculty combined in salary. That's just ridiculous and no one else said that but me. I got hate mail. I got people calling me names for even proposing such a thing because we need to win football and if it takes paying a coach a \$1 million, then we're gonna do that. Well that's sort of a value system and that's fine but there is no coach whose value is based on winning or losing, who's gonna care much about the classroom. [Charles]

I think at the very least it would be really hard for a school like Clemson to separate athletics from academics unless everyone else were doing it too. Cause what your basically asking Clemson to do is unilaterally disarm in the race to get good students, and to some extent good faculty, but really good students. And that's hard to see how that would ultimately be in our best interest. Again, like it or not, it attracts students. [Brad]

Coaches' priorities. Participants from athletics and academics had different views when it comes to the priorities of coaches. Participants continued the discussion of the priorities of athletics by discussing the coaches' priorities when it comes to winning and student athlete academics:

Not all coaches, but I do think as more coaches get more successful in revenue sports, I don't know if they become successful because they're so focused on winning or if they focused on winning, they become more successful. [Charles]

I think the model of the coach as sort of part of the student's scholars—the student-athlete's life has disappeared. I think the coach—and they're never gonna admit this and the spin you get in the media is never gonna say this. I think the coach blatantly is interested in the athletic part of the student-athlete and is only interested in the student part because of eligibility. Not because they don't think college is important. Not because they don't want them to graduate because frankly their future and their coach's is based on what happens on Saturdays and not what happens, I'm being redundant, on Mondays through Fridays. [Charles]

But I think, listen, Dabo might agree that the students probably need to be in my class on Friday morning, but he also knows that if they are not at that team meeting doing a walkthrough, it decreases the likelihood that they're gonna win on Saturday. What do you think Dabo will say? He's gonna say, "sorry, we can't do it," and I'm just as closed-minded. I am. Even if I think coming to my class is gonna ruin their Saturday performance, I'm gonna tell you my class is more important than a Saturday game. So I'm no different than they are. Just I think the

student part is what's important and athlete is supportive of that. In other words, better student, better person. I think highly paid celebrity coaches are focused on the athlete part of that and the student helps that eligibility, then they're all for it. I think it's gonna be—I think we created a system that is almost impossible for basketball and football coaches to care much about academics, other than the eligibility. Personally, they may, that's a gross overstatement but that's been my observation. [Charles]

And of course your coaches are changing all the time, assistant coaches, head coaches, but I feel like we established that culture here. It doesn't mean that we don't make mistakes, but that's part of that relationship, that pride and that striving for excellence. [Orlando]

Now with regard to whether they can actually get the job done in the role of a coach, a head coach, whatever the case may be, that's a function of winning and losing. And sometimes you put someone in there that either been successful in other places or that you can project to have some success, and sometimes you just hope the best will happen. Sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. There's been coaches, who were good quality people, great character people, genuinely cared about their kids, but putting the pieces together and being successful athletically in their sport, they just couldn't get it done. And it is a competitive business, it means if you're gonna play, you need to compete. [John]

Now our coaches, they are behind academics, to the top. We have some athletes, they have class conflicts with practice. That coach will tell that athlete, "Take care of your business academically, we'll work around your schedule." That sends the right message to the academic world because they're here first for their academics. Athletics would be second. [Irene]

I think that our coaches are very adept to recruiting and understanding what it will take to be successful in the classroom. And our coaches don't—unless they're desperate, they're about to lose their job, and they know the following year is the last time they can get things turned around, they understand that to have a student-athlete flunk out, that affects their APR, so I think our coaches are pretty wise about who can and cannot be successful. [Karen]

One is the nationwide push that to get in you needed to do something in high school besides play football and basketball or baseball or whatever the sport was because if you couldn't stay in school then you couldn't continue to play with the hope to be able to get in the majors or the NFL. I think a lot of high school coaches stressed the importance of academics. The more that did that, the better the students that came out and the better some parents saw the importance of getting an education. Black, White, or whatever. "If you want to have a better life than I have had, then you gotta get an education." [Hank]

Student athletes' priorities. During the discussion around athletic priorities, a few of the participants also mentioned the priorities of student athletes. Participants discussed how the priorities of Clemson impact student athletes balancing their athletic and academic commitments:

So I'll give you an example. So you probably know this, but students get excused absences from classes and they have to go to faculty to get excused absences. I give those and I don't object to those. But, more and more there's been excused absence creep. So for instance, when our football team had an away game on a Saturday night, I was expected to give them an excused absence for Friday morning, which I don't agree with. There's some tension for me as a result of that between sort of the athletic, the football and basketball side, and being a faculty member. The other athletes it's not there. I think we've done a great job of integrating athletes into the general student body. And I think to me, that model is the true student-athlete model. I think we failed a little bit with sort of the revenue sports to do that. [Charles]

The problem is that the higher that gap is, the larger that gap is, the more difficult it is to defend that they're really student-athletes first. If you're student-athletes are graduating 25% less than your normal students, then I think at that point you're fooling yourself if you think that they're athletes first—I mean they are academics first. Obviously they're athletes who you're trying to construct a fiction that they are students. [Brad]

Now it depends on which gender cause if it's football, in their minds, "Yeah I'm gonna play sports but academics, I'm gonna see it through, see it here, see that grade." But the female sports, they know there are very limited options beyond college, they don't have the pros opportunities, so they take care of their business academically, they have pride in it. But when you have a lot of money dangling in your face to go to the pros, that's why you find a lot of football players thinking, okay I'm gonna play for three years and then I'm out. But they will not be a part of the stats, only a small percentage will go to the pros. [Irene]

During the interview, one of the faculty participants, Charles, was concerned about how athletic priorities impact the academics of student athletes, in particular, football and basketball players. He shared one of his stories:

But the negative side of it is clearly, it sometimes forces, and again I'm talking about mostly about athletic sports that raise money, to make some choices that you don't have to make. I'll give you an example. So when I was asked to give excused absences to a Friday morning 9:00 class for a 7:00 Saturday game in Atlanta, I didn't want to do it. So I talked to someone in Vickery and they said, "Well Charles it certainly is your right to not do that, and we understand that. But the unfortunate truth is when you do that, the people that are gonna suffer are the football players because coaches are gonna punish them if they don't come to their pre-game meetings" or whatever they call them. "You're gonna punish them if they don't come to your class, in terms of missing points or whatever, and so the people in the middle of that really are the football guys." And I asked the football guys, so what would you do in this case and every one of them said, "Unfortunately even though your class is important, we don't mean to insult you Charles, we're gonna go to the football thing that coach wants tells us we have to be at because we want to play and we don't wanna sit the bench and have to do extra laps." [Charles]

So that's an example I think where academics has a negative impact on the players because they're expected to do this stuff, but they know they have to do that stuff and I think when it's starting to get in the way of each other, rather than complement each other, then there's a lot of tension. I think most of our football guys and basketball guys, and maybe even others have to make the athletic choice, because they're on scholarship and I think that can be detriment to the academics choice. And I think they're almost—even though they're the ones that take the hit, they're the ones that have relatively few choices. It's sort of you have bold responsibility but never the opportunity. So they have to be at practice, I'm not naïve enough to think they don't. They, particularly the ones that are really good, pay a high price, maybe even professionally to not be on the field. And it's unfortunate. [Charles]

So I think that's the case where academics probably harm athletics because you're putting more pressure on these kids to do things and make choices that honestly, they shouldn't have to make. It's ridiculous. I really do feel great sympathy for the football guys, who are under tremendous pressure to perform on Saturdays. And I do think it affects not only their performance from Monday to Friday. [Charles]

I think the reality is that as long as your concern is primarily, I think it is unfortunately, that we need to be one of the Top 10 teams in the country or we need to go to a BCS bowl or we need to be in the NCAA Final Four. Almost by definition, you're dividing, not unifying. I just don't think that it's possible even at a school like Stanford for example. That you can be competitive on Saturdays and still have that group or that activity viewed as just and integrated part of the university. It's just a different world. You're talking about student-athletes and

football players who spend, I don't know how many hours, 30, 40, or 50 hours playing a game. They make millions of dollars for Clemson University. I think we're sort of at point where millions of dollars are more important than my classroom on Friday. [Charles]

Ideal athletic program. Participants agreed that in order for Clemson to be successful in athletics, it has to remain competitive. Faculty members appear not to have an overall problem with athletics. Their issue with big-time sports programs is when they feel the school's priority is athletics over academics. Some of the faculty participants provided their thoughts on what they would consider an ideal model athletic program:

So I hope that the new president, new provost, the new athletic director sort of at least consider there may be other perspectives that don't eliminate athletics and don't reduce the winning and don't give us a competitive disadvantage. I would have to think we're smart enough in how we do all that, but still get academically stronger in terms of athletics. We're smart people. There have to be answers to that. So my hope would be that Clemson actually takes the lead on some of this. I mean every university faculty member will tell you very similar to what I'm telling you, but I think everyone else feels the same sort of hopelessness and hopelessness to change that. And some university, is gonna be smart enough to figure it out and be the leader in that and I hope it's us. [Charles]

I think if athletics views a sport as a money generator, in which football and basketball are, I wish they would go away to be perfectly blunt. If athletics really viewed a sort of developing sound mind, sound body, people who are physically healthy and well, I think that's a great model. I think that is the model for a lot of like people in track, or tennis and rowing, I think there is more much of a model of certain well-rounded person who athletics is an important piece of their life but not the main reason they're at Clemson. [Charles]

I think a lot of faculty would like us to have a football team in the same way Harvard has a football team. Yeah there's a football team, but the few academics that are interested in that kind of stuff go out there, but they never win unless they play Princeton and nobody really goes to the games and cares that much. It's like that's what they want. That kind of thing. [Brad]

Certainly the Ivy League model is sports are good, but you're not there to play sports. Sports is just another part of like playing in the jazz band, it's no different in that. It's that whole person is important. And that's what I naively would hope sports would be here, and I think it is here for like the women rowing team, I see

up there in the morning, 6:30 rowing, and they're still in class by 8:00 and they're just extremely well rounded people who have certain multiple aspects to their lives. That would be my model. [Charles]

I think it's great for instance that the Northwestern players want a union. I think all athletes should want a union to protect themselves because they are the ones who are in the middle of these forces with very little power themselves and I think the union, this is beyond your topic I'm sure, will help give power to the kids that are really—they're the producers of the income for instance with nothing as part of it. But that wouldn't help sort of the academic-athletic integration unless that's what the athletes wanted it to be. But they should have the right to say, no we don't want to have to miss a class on Friday and you can't penalize us for doing this. And if you do, we have a union saying, we're not gonna let you do it. But anyways, until there are other mechanisms like that, at least the revenue generators, and the academic part will probably separates more not less. [Charles]

Charles also discussed how an ideal athletic program would have all student athletes fully integrated within the university:

My sense has been that in minor sports such as Olympic sports or whatever you want to call them that those students are much more integrated as students than football and basketball would be. They're not different in any way. So to me when I walk in a classroom and someone is on the soccer team or the rowing team or the baseball team even, it's very hard to differentiate between them and other students. I do think more and more here that the basketball team, men's and women's, and the football team, there's become a bigger gap between them and out other students, and it shows more academically then it use to. It cycles through and as a result of that, it's a very different dynamic that faculty have with the athletic department, here anyway, as it relates to those students, I think there is a certain amount of expectation. [Charles]

I would love to have a class where I don't know that's a football player, basketball player, a rower, or a track person. To me, that's seamless sort of integration of athletics in the classroom is what I want to see. [Charles]

Another faculty participant, Paul, discussed the college requirement to play professionally should be eliminated:

I don't think it's fair really to force somebody with tremendous athletic potential to do something, to go to college, when what they really want to be is a professional athlete, and they need the money and would rather go that route. [Paul]

The problem I believe is, if you are a world-class athlete and you want to play in the NFL or NBA, especially the NFL, you pretty much have to go to college, whether you want to or not. I think if you remove those barriers, so the gifted athlete can go directly into professional sports, and let the people come to college that want to be here. College baseball comes pretty close to doing that. You get drafted, you can sign, go into the minor leagues. If you want to try your luck in college, you're not sure you want a degree, you can do that. That's a better model I think. [Paul]

The major concern of competitive equity, in order to remain competitive, it is at the expense of student athletes who play football and basketball. Remaining competitive impacts their welfare and academics, because of their athletic commitment. The welfare of student athletes are the primary concern of the academic community, which some believe is not the priority in athletics.

In the right direction

While there may be concern around the priorities of Clemson in pushing successful athletics, participants agreed that Clemson is in the right direction in wanting to be successful academically and athletically:

Part of what our marketing thing is, is that we're sort of a good school with a good football program but we do it right. And so it would hurt Clemson enormously if there was another recruiting scandal or cheating scandal, that would be really bad. And I think that the administration does a pretty good job of hiring coaches who also want to balance integrity with winning, but then I don't know all the coaches personally. I don't know. [Brad]

There hasn't been a NCAA violation here for like 20 years. The academic progress rates and the graduation success rates, put us pretty high on the totem pole in the NCAA. And generally, the athletes are good students. You're gonna have occasional incidents like you would with any group of young people, but it's mostly pretty positive. I think there are a lot of flaws in the concept of intercollegiate athletics, but given what it is, we do it as well here as anybody I think. [Paul]

Not all faculty think athletic programs and university athletics are important, and obviously I do, but I think at Clemson, more faculty than not support athletics. I think most faculty feel like here we have a priority on recruiting student-athletes that, in the most part, interested in getting a good education. And for the most part, have good character, so they're young men and women that we enjoy having in our classes and are happy to work with. So I think the attitude, as a student-athlete in many cases, is sort of the frontline of interface with the faculty and the fact that that's typically pretty good at Clemson helps the opinion of the faculty of the athletic program and of the athletes. Then I think the fact that some athletic funds are used to help support academic programs and academic infrastructure, is an important thing that you may not have at every campus. [Martin]

One reason that the relationship between athletics and academics is viewed as positive is due to the support of athletics from the university administration and the board of trustees. Participants discussed how the level of support for athletics impacts the relationship between athletics and academics:

Having an upper administrative team and university who sees a strong and varied athletic program being an important part of the whole university is a way that, you know, an upper administration, the board of trustees and the faculty, that feel like they are here first and foremost for academic reasons can also help support and help encourage an athletic program. [Martin]

I think overall Clemson has fared a lot better than schools like Georgia, Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Miami, you know I could go down the long list. And I think it's partially because of the board. The board is a very dynamic group of men and women who have very distinct views and very distinct impressions in what they feel Clemson should be. Or what it was been and what it should be. And they're very proud of what Clemson has been able to accomplish. But they're also not afraid to straighten out a problem if they think they have a problem. I think that's been evident if you go through the firing history of people being terminated and what reasons were going on at the time. [Hank]

Well to be honest with you, every president is different. They all have their strong points. Some might be good in finance, some may be great in fundraising. But the president sets the tone, he is the ultimate person on campus. [Neil]

But you can't as an [administrator], muck with athletics, you can't get involved. You can't run athletics. You have to have a great AD, which we did in Bobby Robinson and then when he retired, Terry Don Phillips, and you trust them. But if they're not doing what you want, you have a chance to say, "Look, you're not

being strong enough on this. Or I won't tell you how to do it but this is the expectation I have. [Orlando]

The findings in the theme, *Priorities*, showed that Clemson has priorities in academics and athletics. Clemson has a priority of academic excellence and integrity, as well as a priority of being successful in athletics. Though it appears that athletics is seen as a priority over academics, participants also believed that Clemson is working in the right direction in balancing both academic and athletic priorities. The findings also showed that athletics and academics have similar values, even when their overall goals may differ.

Academic Impact

Student athletes have both an academic and athletic obligation to the institution. While athletic obligations (e.g. travel, practice) can have an impact on the academic obligations of student athletes, academics can also impact athletics. Participants discussed the academic impact on athletics at Clemson as well as the impact it has on student athletes. The theme is separated into the following sub-themes: (a) admissions and NCAA requirements, (b) academic quality of student athletes, and (c) curriculum impact. Before the sub-themes, the comments began with the benefit of having a strong academic program:

Solid faculty members that have national notoriety and recognition. I think when you offer programs that people want to major in. I think knowing that as a freshmen being recruited that people are here and conveying that hey, we're gonna help you get your degree. I think that's important as well too. Every recruiting weekend, we use probably 15 faculty members to give their spill about their department. We don't do it, we want them to do it. They know their curriculum, they know what they have to take and all that. So I think it's a good bond, it's a healthy bond. [Fred]

I think in some ways academics just it doesn't impact it, it's part of the holistic thing we want students to experience. I hope every student would be engaged outside the classroom activities whether it's student government, arts, or sports. So I don't think it necessarily impacts it when it's in its pure form that I like. I think it's just integrated into it. So I'm practicing my sport and I'm coming to class and I don't have my class self and my sport self, I just have myself, and all these things makes me what I am. They don't define me. I almost see not having an impact in a positive sense other than the person who does it. [Charles]

As part of my role as sports supervisor, once our students are set to graduate, we do exit interviews with them. And this fall when I did my exit interviews, one of the questions we ask is, "What we told you on your visit, did the expectations we told you to expect academically meet your standards?" And every student I met with said that it exceeded it just because of the opportunities they have now leaving Clemson. "Athletics was great but I could have not picked a better school academically." One, because of the support they had academically, the networking opportunities they had, and just the recognition of I have a degree from Clemson. [Giselle]

Well, I think Clemson has a good academic reputation. I think there are student-athletes that have come here that have been impressed with the academic reputation of Clemson. And they feel good about the worthiness of their degree. [John]

And I think in the 70s and 80s, the athletic graduation rate was probably 40% and I think long-term we started realizing that we needed that if we were going to systematically recruit in certain areas, we had to stress to them, the importance of students getting an education before they came to us. There were a lot of students that needed a lot of special needs and I think we realized that to be fair to the students and fair to everybody, we needed to continue to get the best quality students we can. [Hank]

I think having a strong academic program. A good quality, but also being a really good breadth of offering of programs helps give you an academic environment that you can sell to prospective student-athletes. So I guess I'm saying, there being a big enough university or if you're a smaller university, having a good breadth of programs as well as good quality of those programs, helps you recruit some of the better student-athletes. [Martin]

And that's where it takes a strong foundation of who and what you are and I believe that our coaches sense that. They know that it's an elite institution, we produce some of the best graduates in the country, number 21 public ranked institution by the Princeton Review this year and it really is. So when they look at their students, they look at them from an academic, but also you gotta find the

right people when we're recruiting our student-athletes to be here. And I think that's where our institution from having that review committee and really the communication from the faculty athletic rep to the athletic director on down is that we're looking for a certain type of student and that's who we're gonna admit only. [Eric]

We actually have a heavy influence from academics onto athletics, which is fantastic from my standpoint and it develops a much better culture than what exists on many campuses. That there is a provost manual that speaks specifically to how athletics will interact with academics and vice versa. [Eric]

Admissions Requirements and the NCAA Impact

Admission requirements impact all students in determining whether they are eligible to attend Clemson University. For student athletes, there is NCAA initial eligibility requirements as well as the institution's admissions requirements that can impact whether a student athlete can be admitted. This sub-theme goes into further detail about how Clemson's admissions standards impact athletics and how the NCAA's minimum standards can cause conflict with the institution's higher standards.

The trend of admitting student athletes, regardless of their grades and test scores, was common among institutions before the NCAA eligibility certification process. While the NCAA has minimum standards for eligibility, they are often lower than the admission requirements for institutions. As Clemson kept working on their goal to become a Top 20 university, they had to increase their admission standards. Having high admission standards can impact the athletic program in recruitment. Participants discussed the impact of Clemson's admissions requirements and the NCAA minimum on athletics:

Obviously admission standards are critical. That's a key component because you are recruiting these kids in athletics. And a university has to, depending on where the admission standards lie. Well that impacts on whom you can recruit to come to campus. Obviously there are NCAA admission standards, but anything above those minimum, could impact your success as an athletic program. [Darren]

But very few institutions are willing to go along and have standards substantially above the NCAA minimum because they feel like it puts them at a competitive disadvantage. And it's very easy to enflame your fan base like Clemson's fan base. Institutions like Clemson seem to be hampered more than lots in terms of doing a little bit more than the NCAA minimum. So the effort has been to continue to increase the NCAA minimum. [Anthony]

I think obviously when you're one of the Top 25 public universities in the country, your admissions standards are so selective that for a student applying as a regular student, who is barely meeting the NCAA minimum, would not be competitive for regular admission here. Again, this goes back to that task force and some things out of that where I kind of got an idea of what I'm looking at in prospective student-athletes, what I can look at, how I need to prioritize and evaluate, again making sure addressing the academic integrity of the university, and at the same time, making sure that we're competitive in intercollegiate athletics. [Luke]

The good thing is, in the year 2016, the minimum numbers go up, because nationwide I think you're seeing some of these students that have been admitted, haven't been prepared, yet they met NCAA standards. So many institutions feel like, "Well if they've met the standards. If I don't take them, then the next institution is going to take them, or the next institution is going to take them, and their team is gonna be more competitive than ours." [Eric]

All prospective Clemson students, including student athletes, have to go through the general admission process. For student athletes that may not meet all of the requirements, exceptions were provided if they met the NCAA requirements. However, after Clemson's 2001-02 NCAA Certification Review, the NCAA Committee on Certification ruled the NCAA minimum standards resulted in student athletes being admitted without considering each individual's potential for success (Athletic Admissions Review Committee, n.d.). As a result, Clemson created the Athletic Admissions Review Committee (AARC) to evaluate student athletes, who were below the general standards, on whether they can be academically successful at Clemson. If student athletes had the potential for success, the AARC would provide the

recommendation to the Director of Admissions. Some of the participants have been involved in AARC. Participants discussed the role of the AARC:

The NCAA has a lower standard with regard to eligibility than Clemson would have on admissions. And that's where they have—the university has an athletic admissions review committee, any time you have a youngster that comes in and they're below the standard of a normally admitted student. So that committee, under the jurisdiction of the provost, it's got faculty members on it, and one athletic rep. Your faculty athletic rep is going to be on it and it's a balance. At the end of the day, you have a youngster that meets the NCAA standards but yet Clemson standards would be here, so it becomes a balancing of, "Ok this is really a good student-athlete in their sport. Given the support that we have in the academic center, do they have a bona fide opportunity to be successful and eventually graduate from Clemson University?" That's a question that this committee has to answer and it's a balance. [John]

But the academic review committee was really formed to make sure that we've taken people in that I felt could actually graduate and that's the basis for that committee. And again, if we presented a good case, a student was doing enough, it was not an issue. If they weren't good enough then, they didn't get in. But I never felt like athletics and academics were apart on that one. I thought they worked pretty well together through the years. [Neil]

We track how well coaches have done, so when we admit student-athletes to a particular team, and they're not making it academically, the next time that coach comes, he's going to have some explaining to do. So there's a process there. It's not pretty, it doesn't work perfectly, but it's an attempt to make sure the coaches are accountable that he has a good reason to believe the student will be successful at Clemson. And they have been. Our graduation success rate, our academic progress rate are all good so it has worked. It's not perfect, but it has worked. [Paul]

Between the NCAA requirements, Clemson's admissions standards, and the AARC, Clemson tries to bring in student athletes who have a chance of succeeding. However, decisions made about admitting or not admitting certain student athletes can cause controversy. Luke mentioned the following:

Then I guess it was about 2006/2007, we had a sort of a high-profile case, where we had some young men that were wanting to sign football grant-in-aids and they were turned down for admission, prior to their signing and it created a big

firestorm as you could imagine all over. From out of that came a task force that was appointed by the president. And it was at that point that we developed the current system that we have for reviewing potential student-athletes. [Luke]

Documents did highlight tensions between athletics and academics over two recruits. In 2007, before the national signing period, Clemson denied admission to football players Jo Jo Cox and Dwight Jones (Strelow, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d). Cox, a long-standing commitment, was denied admission in 2006 and was recommended to attend an academy before trying to reapply to Clemson in 2007. Tommy Bowden, Clemson's football coach, was upset about the process that eliminated some of his recruits that he believed could be successful at Clemson, given his academic track record (Strelow, 2007a). Outrage sparked and concern of whether Clemson was putting itself at a competitive disadvantage by its admissions process. In 2007, the AARC decided to complete its reviews before signing day instead of reviewing through April (Strelow, 2007d). As a result of the early reviews, recruits that were not approved by the AARC, did not receive a letter of intent, while those under appeal received a letter not guaranteeing their admission (Strelow, 2007d). President Barker stood by the admissions process, but he authorized a review of the admissions process and called for a cease-fire between the football staff and academic officials (Strelow, 2007b). As a result of the review, the AARC was allowed to bar coaches from issuing letters of intents to recruits with questionable academic credentials (Williams, 2007). In addition, the AARC added a representative from athletics as a non-voting member (Williams, 2007).

The gap in Clemson's admissions requirements and the NCAA eligibility requirements can cause a concern in recruiting top-athletes that may not have high

enough grades and tests scores to enroll into Clemson. While that could possibly be a competitive disadvantage, Clemson is committed to being a program with high academic standards.

Academic Quality of Student Athlete

Student athlete academics are always a continuous debate. The debates are usually centered around two points: (a) academically underprepared student athletics and (b) how student athletes' academics compare to the general student body. Participants discussed their perspective surrounding multiple aspects of the academics of student athletes.

There has been a long stigma that student athletes are not academically prepared for college. Part of what contributes to the stigma of being a “dumb jock,” is the perceptions that people continue to have about student athletes. Athletic participants shared their thoughts on the academics of their student athletes:

We're so fortunate to have strong academic students and they are very proud of what we do academically. [Irene]

And our GPAs, if you go back and track our GPAs, they are fairly close to the student body, male and female, scholarship and non-scholarship, through the years. Not as high, but we've improved and we've gotten better, now better than we ever been. [Neil]

So I think the dumb jock thing is not a fair thing to assess, I think that you may have student-athletes that have been marginalized in their preparation. I would say the majority of them—I would say 90% of them ended up earning degrees. I can count on one hand, the number of high-risk admission decisions, that did not work out. That's a tribute to our coaches, it's a tribute to the character of young men and women who we took those chances on. [Karen]

I've seen swimmers come in here with 1500 and flunk out of school. And I've seen kids that barely qualified and do well and graduate and go on and all of that. [Fred]

Well if handled properly, and hopefully we've attempted to do that, is it could bring a good positive perception to the university. If you have the type of student-athlete that could only perform in their particular sport, but they're a good representative in regards to public service, what they do academically, and their involvement with the university. And I do feel good from that perspective that I think we, for the most part, and I know no one is perfect, we all recognize that, but for the most part, we've had very good quality student-athletes that perform well, they're active in community service, they were good students, they went on and got their degree and now they're out making a living. If you can have good representation, not only on whatever sport it may be, but how they represent themselves, their families, the university, it does create a good feeling toward the university because we're on the sports page, we're on the six o'clock news. [John]

Academic participants also shared their thoughts on the academics of student athletes.

They shared the positives as well as things that can give faculty a negative perception of student athletes' academics:

Well I think as far as NCAA is concerned, the graduation rate of student-athletes is higher than non-student-athletes, NCAA, all sports wise. Even if you take out the managers and others. Clemson is not quite there. Our student-athlete graduation rate is little lower than the overall student body. And honestly that doesn't trouble me much. If it was dramatically different, it would trouble me greatly. If it was opposite, I'm not sure quite what that mean exactly here. 'Cause you want to be competitive, so you got to be smart about that. But that gap has closed over a period of time and I think that where it is, is not something I'm not comfortable with, but I do think it's unconscionable to accept a student at Clemson who can't graduate. [Orlando]

But if you measured what the overall SATs and class ranks of our student-athletes compared to the rest of the student body, student-athletes are lower. So you gotta dig a little deeper. If you're gonna do that and that's what we've done and so-but that graduation rate is the ultimate measure is where we need to be focused. And so far, we're doing well I think. [Orlando]

So I think in that context, we have gotten a better student overall at Clemson, a much more prepared student. If you consider that our average SAT is over 1250/1260 on just the math and English piece, those are pretty intelligent people. I don't think you're necessarily—the highest percentage of your athletes have pretty good SAT scores, some are down there and again these are the kids that probably weren't motivated by someone to do well in high school. But if they go there athletically, they can gain something academically, which was a fallacy 30/40 years ago, cause they couldn't. [Hank]

The graduation rate is much lower for Black football players than Caucasian football players. [Charles]

Again, I think other than speaking to that, a university administration, faculty, and coaches addressing that repeatedly over the years to say as coaches, we're trying to recruit the best students we can, we encourage them to be truly students. To have the faculty help them be better students. To have the upper administration also saying we're recruiting and aspire to recruit true student-athletes. I think a continual voice of we want to have our athletes as engaged as possible as students, helps reduce that stigma, helps have a better perception of the student-athlete. [Martin]

Brad, a faculty participant, shared many thoughts on academics of student athletes:

I think most IPTAY supporters probably wouldn't mind if you brought in kids that would really have no chance of getting into Clemson on their own, as long as you are not gonna get nailed by the NCAA, that's fine. And they're good players, they gotta be really good players. I think most IPTAY people would really be ok with that. And that faculty just aren't ok with that so I can't see a true partnership. [Brad]

Are they good enough that they can make it through Clemson like any other student and graduate and then have successful careers? Frankly, my impression on that is the data is not clear. So one thing you get into with athletics is that these debates over graduation rates like there's different ways to fudge those numbers. And so, everyone wants to be able to say that our graduation rates for athletes is higher than the other guy's graduation rates. But then you get into these weird things of how they're categorized graduation rates over 6 years and it's not clear how that compares. So it gets really complicated. My guess would be if you had perfect data, you would find that at a school like Clemson, which is pretty good, the students don't graduate as well. [Brad]

So yeah there's that and to be fair, this is another thing that faculty sometimes lose track of, if you take athletics as a whole, a lot of the student-athletes are really good students. So I always find that it's really impressive that anyone that can have a full load of classes, or even close to a full load of classes, and go to all of the practices and all of the games. That's basically a full-time job. When my kids went to college, I told them don't take a full-time job, that's just crazy. Your full-time job should be being a student. So I think, particularly when you get outside the money sports, you talking about the rowing team, the golf team, they tend to be perfectly good students. And even on the football team that takes a lot of shit, there are some of those kids that are just fine. They're doing amazing things in the classroom. But I think it's fair to say, if your scholarship is paid by

the football team and it's a top 10 football team, your first priority is probably athletics and academics is a second priority, for some a very distant second priority. [Brad]

In fact, I would say that the majority of our student-athletes are not as academically prepared as the general student at Clemson. The sports where it's more glaring than any other where the most of the noise is are men's basketball and football. Those are the sports. Part of that is a value surrounding competitive excellence, success of your athletic programs. The wins, winning is a value. Some will look at it as, well that's a good value, "If you're not in it to win, then you shouldn't play the game." That's the mindset and in most cases that's a fair mindset. In this case, the key to that is students should not be admitted to a university like Clemson if they cannot be successful academically here at Clemson. That's the bottom line. And that's really the mission of our admissions program. [Brad]

Academic participants also discussed the stigmas that surround the student athletes' academics:

I think you can still find some hostility but also overall, the quality of the athlete scholarly-wise is much higher than what it was in the 70s and in the 80s. So you would never had heard of a basketball player, who was an architecture major and a very high GPA, and still be a first-string basketball player. And the fact that we have a high percentage of our athletes graduate. [Hank]

Well the first thing to say about any broad claim about athletes is that they're always inaccurate. Even if it's true that as a class, the athletes at Clemson are less academically gifted than the regular students, it certainly doesn't follow that they're all like that. You always have to say the outset of that. Even on the football team, there are really smart kids with really good grades and maybe on the golf team there's a real idiot. [Brad]

But the other things that I learned a long time ago, a young man who plays football well is not dumb. They have the ability to learn because there is no way in God's green earth, unless you are an intelligent individual, can you learn your offense and defensive structure that you got to learn in football today. You can't be dumb. (laughs) There is just no way cause you're not gonna end up succeeding [Hank]

I think overall, although there are lots of athletes that do well, and this is true for probably every school that has a major program, the students are not just as well prepared. And this is another thing that pisses off faculty, because why are they getting any kind of special buy at all. [Brad]

I think there is that stigma, there has been for years. As a former student-athlete, I see how that stigma comes about because I was in an athletic program where some of us were very good students, some of my teammates were mediocre students, and some were not very good students. So I think through the years having some not very good students who didn't pay much attention to their studies and just felt like they were there to participate in their sport, understandably developed the image of the dumb athlete who is not interested in being the true student-athlete. That's been there throughout and I think there are people who still feel that way. [Martin]

I don't think there is no longer perceived that an athlete is necessarily admitted for his athletic only. That most of them are very good students as well. In so doing that the athletic doesn't have to do a balancing act like they had to do in the past. [Hank]

Student Athlete Special Admits. While Clemson has a strong academic record for their student athletes, there are students athletes that are admitted who are considered "at-risk." Questions always continue on whether at-risk student athletes can be successful at Clemson. Participants discussed the student athletes that come through the AARC:

Well I think that there are going to be individuals who are going to continue to believe that. And quite frankly, there are kids that are admitted that are really right there at the bubble. They can go in either direction. The ones that have come in, they get a lot of attention be, I think there can be legit criticism that I don't believe it's justified, but when you bring in what we would determine at-risk student-athlete, you've got to give a lot of attention to that individual. That is where the criticism comes in on whether they're underprepared. Can't argue, facts are facts. [John]

But at the end of the day, if you can take a person that is on paper underprepared and take them to a point where they graduate, be able to go out and make a good living, you have probably saved someone from going off the cliff. And I think it's not only beneficial to that person individually, but for the university as well. But that criticism is always gonna be there, whether we like it or not. Sports, particularly your sports that produce the revenue primarily, there are young people that pass through that's not gonna be serious about their academics. But if they get an opportunity to get the guidance they need to have, and the counseling they need to have, and the support they need to have. Not doing the work for them, in a nurturing environment, you got a chance to turn some people around. [John]

So if I was in charge of the world, my first policy would be, we're not gonna admit you unless we really know you're gonna do the work and you're gonna graduate. It's not fair to you to do that. I don't think we do that. I think we still have this notion that if a coach wants that kid to come here, a coach essentially is an admissions officer, which are all some awful red flags. That leads to the problem of students who probably aren't prepared to be here, probably shouldn't be here, and probably are the kids Vickery has them taking their biology 200 class in their senior year, knowing, which I think is awful and unethical that they're probably not gonna need that class but we need to keep them eligible and those kinds of things. So I think my first policy really would be that there has to be more of a tie when a student comes in and assurance that he or she is gonna get out with a degree. Who cares if you come to Clemson. What I care about is you can get out of Clemson. I think in some ways, in terms of football particularly, some people are more concerned of can you get in than can you get out. So my policy is if I could rule the world is that I want more stringent or much more stronger certainty that if you come to Clemson, that you can get out of Clemson. And that may be with a 350 SAT because there are other reasons students have low SATs. I have no belief that the metric should be the number on that, but I think there has to be some way to make sure that if you come here, you can do well [Charles]

You know PRTM is really the fallback for a lot of students who don't have the same academic standards honestly as Engineering. You see a lot of these students and you know they're not gonna make it here. [Charles]

There was just a report that you may have seen from the University of Pennsylvania on the illiteracy rates on college athletes. I think at Clemson there's a 15% or 18% of our athletes were below the literary standards maybe 300 or 350. You have to wonder about admitting that many students who you don't think are gonna get out. So I think at the minimum we have to be if you have a 320 or 350, we're gonna have to find some other metrics to make sure you belong academically. Not that we're gonna reject you, but we're not gonna open the doors because you happen to run a 100 yards faster than anyone else we're recruiting. So I think a lot of the policies for me would revolve around, do we have a clear standard that if you get in, we're promising you have the ability to get out. And we're gonna help you do that and that's where Vickery comes in. That's hard to do now. [Charles]

I would say there's a small percentage of student-athletes who are profoundly lacking in their ability to read and write—small, small. But if an instructor just has one person that cannot get a sentence, cannot get a paragraph written, then that illumines large because the contrast is so stark. So it over emphasizes that thing. But I have had students in engineering; you hardly have football and

basketball players. When I first started teaching, no one had ever heard of learning disability. But I had students who were just very, very poor writers but I don't remember who they are. I don't remember ever having any bad student-athletes. People tend to remember the students who have another identity and I think that amplifies the problems or belief that all student-athletes are marginally qualified. [Anthony]

Cause many times you see students, not just student-athletes, normally when they do not do well is because they're disinterested. If they can do well in certain areas, they normally can do well in others, they just haven't placed the priority there. They're intelligent enough, they're smart enough, they've just not have been engaged so that's why we'll have 200 appointments a day for tutoring for student-athletes in this building. That's why we have four learning specialists that can sit down with students and kind of teach them how to write and to develop content, and to do research on their own and really coach them up on, this is what it means to be a student and how you are to look at this and this is how you can pull information for your research project, site correctly and do these types of things. Just guide them while teaching them to do it on their own. [Eric]

Well when I was looking at the high school transcripts of all these student-athletes over the years, there were some things that were kind of hard to measure but I think looking at the transcript, if you see marginal grades in English and lots of absences, it's a kiss of death. They can be bad in math, but you cannot do anything without reading and writing. If you see throughout their academic history, weakness in English and coupled with a lot of absences, that just sends a big red flag. But that's not captured by the SATs so much, and it's not captured by the high school average grades and things like that. So those are the students—what's awful in my experience is a student-athlete who has gone through high school, he comes here, he has no reason to expect things to be different than they were in high school. He did fine in high school and comes to college and thinks it's the same. Well it's not the same. And quickly, the student-athlete is shocked and surprised to realize how much the gap is between him and the rest of the people in class. That's where Vickery helps. We try to make the student deal with the realization and say ok let's deal with it. We cannot pretend it's not there. Let's fix it. Let's move ahead. But that was really, really hard for a lot of students, you know. I don't know how you ever get that out of the system. You just have to have good people who are willing. You know if everybody involved got the student-athlete's interest at heart, then I think we can get those things done. But I think you have to prevent people from thinking that ok the way we help them out is not being able to meet the standard. We got to help them meet the standard. Not let them dodge the courses, let's get them through the courses. [Anthony]

Also from a student-athlete standpoint, we have student-athletes here that do not meet the general academic profiles of our general students. But guess what,

you're in the classes and the professor, they're gonna teach to the general student population. They're not gonna teach to you. I just come back to we can't hide you. You gotta get in there and you're gonna have to get the work done. If you feel like your struggling, then let's set you up in Vickery Hall. How can we set you up with some tutors and something like that, some strategic tutors that's gonna help you manage your time and teach you study skills. Because at the end of the day, you're gonna have to do it or this is not the place for you [Giselle]

While there may be a continuous debate about admitting underprepared or at-risk student athletes, participants agreed that if an at-risk student athlete is admitted, Clemson has a responsibility to provide the resources so that student can be successful. Participants discussed the following:

So my view is if that we—this is my view—I argue this many times. Hardly anyone argues against it. My view is that we have an obligation that if we bring in a student who is at a disadvantage, it is our obligation to support or try to mitigate that disadvantage. But, the gap is so wide between our regular admission standards and the NCAA minimum that we do have individuals who are not as well prepared as others. [Anthony]

But I think you start with the student-athlete and say, “Ok they're not gonna make all of them, every one of them is going to have a life, whether athletics is the last competition in college or 10 years after that, so what are we gonna do?” We've got to make sure they have a chance to graduate from Clemson and we've done a great job at that, I think. We weren't doing such a great job at the time, but we kept getting better and better and coaches kept enforcing it, and Vickery Hall keeps getting better and better, and our graduation rates is one we can look at in any sport we have right now, is one of the best in the country, period. Football is amazing. [Orlando]

If you recruit students with the potential to be successful, you give them support services, you ensure that they're in class. If you don't, you have coaches who won't let them play, won't let them start, who backup what the support staff is trying to do to help them be successful students. Then I think that over time removes or reduces that stigma, because faculty see, other students see, the public sees that most of the participants in athletics are succeeding in the classroom and are successful students, and graduate. I think they've accomplished their objectives on their academic as well as their athletic side. [Martin]

Well if they're a qualifier and they were admitted through the committee, what we do is that we analyze all incoming freshmen student-athletes, test scores, high

school GPA as well. Once the athletic review committee has admitted or recommend admissions anyway, and the director of admissions makes all of the decisions, and then once we get that information, we prepare over the summer for that fall class that's coming in and depending on what we see their deficiencies to be, we would then advise them a certain way, but then we would also setup resources for them to make sure we are addressing those deficiencies. Then also not addressing them but remediating to try to get them to really support them to achieve to a higher level. [Eric]

In addressing underprepared student athletes, some of the participants shared great success stories:

And when I see a lot of us here, knowing their stories are like mine, this why I'm here. Cause a lot of people don't believe in them. I sat on committees, AARC, this is a committee that says if an athlete can survive at Clemson, and they will say yes or no. And I told them, "You're looking at me. I'm just like one of the students that you're looking at. Don't judge the color. Don't judge the title. Open the book and read and learn the person. All of them probably want to achieve academically, but they don't have the tools. But if you surround them with the right people and stay behind them, they'll make it. They will make it." I made it because of her [points to photo]. She's not Black, she's White. But you have to believe in them, you have to support them. Now fuss at them, put your foot on them, but don't assume that they can't make it. Don't assume that they can't make it. You just have to stay behind them. And when they walk across that stage, then you can pat yourself in the back and say, "I helped that kid survive." We need more of that, we need more of that. I'm not saying when I take off, because they won't miss me a bit, but we need people who can relate as administrators on those tables to fight for those kids. It's important, it's very, very important. [Irene]

One of our track athletes. She's the fastest runner in the country and in the world. When she was put in front of AARC, I was on that committee. That's when I told them, I said, "Look, this is me. So are you just gonna allow that kid to stay at home and not do anything? If the coach is gonna support that kid, then trust that kid, trust that coach to follow behind that student-athlete. Don't cast her out. Let her in." I watched that girl for four years. She was very successful. She just graduated. She's gonna be our golden award winner in the Olympics. Instead of that group looking beyond her transcripts, look at the person. That girl comes up, I'm probably poorer than she was. She's from Miami, single parent, she didn't have anything. Now look at her, she has a contract, a Nike contract, she's taking care of her family. Open your eyes. A lot of people, we don't have the academic background, we don't get it. But when you give us an opportunity, and if you capitalize on it, you'd be just fine. But that's why it's so important to hire the

right coaches, to have the right people on the administration table to fight for people like us. [Irene]

Now, we had one student who went on and played professional football for a while. He came here with marginal credentials but he graduated, he could've graduated in three years, but he graduated in 3 ½ years. And his grade point ratio was 2.0 or something, but he never failed a course. He never dropped a course. He went to school every summer, they paid for summer school, and if you never failed a course, never dropped a course, went to school every summer, you're gonna graduate right? And keeping him from dropping courses, keeping him from—just doing what you have to do to not fail the course. That seems like that ought to be nothing you have to worry about but that is harder than it sounds, you know. I always felt like that student-athlete you could hold up as an example more so than the one who might made a 4.0 or something because he just did what he had to do and he was not a rocket scientist but he graduated. So the problem though is illuminated and aggravated if we have too many of the underprepared students in the same section in a course. [Anthony]

And I think Clemson, again this predates me, I think they've done a really good job of that. Cause there are youngsters that have come through the program that, "Well we just don't know how they could be successful," yet they have been. So at the end of the day, is what kind of person you're putting out when they leave here. I think we've been very blessed to have some really quality young people that through the support and nurturing process, they had to fight like heck academically because they didn't have the same background as a lot of these other kids. We've got some really smart kids on this campus and very well prepared kids. So I think Clemson over the past several years, before I got here, they've done a good job and it all started with the vision of having a place that would be fully staffed with people that genuinely cared about the welfare and the academic welfare of the kids. They've had some very good success with that. [John]

Vickery Hall. One way Clemson supports its underprepared student athletes is through Vickery Hall. While Vickery Hall has been mentioned in the previous chapter, it still plays a vital role in the current dynamics between athletics and academics. Vickery Hall is the academic support center for student athletes, but they especially support students who are considered at-risk to help them succeed academically at Clemson. Participants discussed the benefits of having Vickery Hall now:

That facility is going on, I think, 26 years, the building and the program, and we have been fortunate not to have any real cheating scandals, plagiarism scandals, tutors unethical conduct and all of that. So I think what they did was certainly beneficial. [Fred]

I think Vickery is a great addition, the athletic academic center. They do a superb job there. I think they're very much easy to work with. They seem to be motivated very much toward student-athletes and their performance. [Charles]

An important problem is when your admitting students who have 350 on their SAT and they're sitting in a classroom with other students who on the verbal have a 600 or 700 SAT, you have a problem as a faculty member about who do you teach to. And that's where Vickery steps up and tries to elevate that 350 kid to the other level. Sometimes they greatly succeed and sometimes they don't. [Charles]

But I think it's worked out to be a good role model that Clemson's known for, so I think you gotta have some pride in it. Now we just have to keep up with other people that are making advancements and doing certain things. How many learning specialists can we afford and how many do we have? Are we taking people with learning disabilities and meeting that unconscionable standard by saying, "Can they graduate?" And with the right kind of attention, it looks like they are having a pretty good success rate. [Orlando]

I think people understand what Vickery is and I think that our coaches understand that it's probably the most essential recruiting tool that we have. Cause it's kind of a keystone, it bridges athletics and academics, parents love it. So I think we have good relationships [Fred]

And a lot of it has to do with the type of individual you recruit. Do you recruit—and the admissions people, they're very good to work with, but at the end of the day, they've got to come down and make a decision whether or not if you admit this particular student-athlete, do they truly have an opportunity to be successful academically and graduate? And if they can't say, "I think they have a fighting chance," given resources at Vickery and the things that are going to be available to help them to be successful as a student. If they can't in good faith say, "We think this student could do it," then people just can't get in the school. And rightfully so because at the end of the day, you have to look in the mirror and that's to Clemson's credit. And that started well before I got here. [John]

And I'll tell you that we sometimes have student-athletes that are game changers. They're student-athletes that can drastically affect the success of our teams, and at times, we have admitted those student-athletes and they don't match up with our student population and they're a bit off from our student-athlete population, but we do an excellent job of providing academic support and if they'll buy into it,

working in that building 20 hours a week, meeting with tutors and meeting with learning specialists and learning, trying to make up for the gap that exists because they didn't pay attention in high school. [Karen]

While many believe Vickery Hall plays an important role in the success of student athletes, they also believe that students can become too dependent on the services:

And also, you find out through that process that there's a lot of faculty that really don't embrace athletics, and they don't want to cooperate. They feel like the student needs to do their own thing. You don't need to be provided an intervention. [Fred]

Now being old-school, I'll be honest, I think we have enabled our students to some fault because we have not told them, step it up instead of relying on somebody to tell you that you need to get your work done, you should know to do that. We didn't have that, so you had to realize that it's your responsibility but I think we have enabled somewhat with today's generation. We kind of watered that down a little bit. [Irene]

Now, if this person does not engage in our academic success programs, chances are they're not gonna be successful. They're gonna fall out of here. Now we've got student-athletes that don't need to engage in that academic support. And I would encourage them as soon as possible to wing them off themselves from that academic support. Because they need to be experiencing Clemson, college, just like the general student does. But that support system is in place for a reason. I think it's valuable. I think it's worthwhile and I think it's ethically responsible based on the current dynamics that surround intercollegiate athletes at the college football playoff level. [Darren]

It's been huge. I think my only complaint about Vickery is in a perfect world, our student-athletes would start out in Vickery Hall and end up more independent. We would sort of teach them how to function on a college campus and do all the things college students would do. But it doesn't work that way. So it's kind of handholding in a way. It's done very professionally, there are very strict guidelines on what the academic support people can and cannot do, they know the rules, they get reminded of them frequently. [Paul]

But generally, one of the student-athletes in a high-profile sport who's admitted through the special admissions committee, more than likely will have a learning specialist for the entire four years. The advisor is pretty much going to work with that student to register, to find classes and register them. I believe the student is not ever gonna sign up for a class, it's going to be the advisor and the student will agree on what the person is going to take, somehow it happens. The books

magically appear. They go to the bookstore, bring all of the books in, and student-athletes come to the Vickery Hall conference room to get their books. So you're really not doing what a college student does, but you have all these other responsibilities, so that's the way it is. But we would not be able to function in our athletic program at the level we do without those kind of support services, and that's not all to imply that they're doing anything inappropriate. They're just keeping these kids focused, they're the academic coaches. [Paul]

While there may be concerns around why student athletes that do not meet Clemson standards are admitted, there are more resources available to help these students be successful at Clemson, such as Vickery Hall. Participants agreed that if these student athletes are admitted, then Clemson has an obligation to help them. Participants also shared many success stories of student athletes graduating that without the opportunity may have not gone to college.

Curriculum impact

Another form of academic impact on athletics is the curriculum. All participants agreed that Clemson has a narrow and strict curriculum that impacts the majors and courses that student athletes can select. Participants discussed the curriculum impact:

I don't really anticipate that it's going to change. I think that Clemson wants to continue to be a very strong academic institution. They're not going to make exceptions. They're not going to build a major of basket weaving so that we can have an athletic program. Our student-athletes are going to have to engage in the curriculum or they won't be eligible. [Karen]

The only tough thing about Clemson is here academically, is that we have a narrow curriculum. So it's not a broad base curriculum, where you can get so many types of majors and sometimes it's difficult to find the majors that you would be able to put student-athletes in. [Neil]

I don't think athletics should impact academics in this sense. I don't think your academic offerings should be designed to assist your athletic department become successful. I think it does happen. I think there are courses that have been introduced that has to be with faculty members that are willing to do it. But I think we are guilty as many schools are of tweaking our academics to make it

more attractive to those we want to recruit and retain and do well that help our sports team. I don't agree with that, but I do believe that does exist. [Paul]

The degree, though it is an extremely important, I don't want to come across saying someone would come play a sport without the opportunity to earn a degree, but it's somewhat secondary. But that's not always the case. I say that it's probably 80% of the time is this case, 20% of the time someone is actually looking for a specific degree program and may exclude a school because they do not offer that specific degree program. That can impact athletics obviously. The actual course offerings impacts athletics. If all your courses, if they're scattered all over the place, so that you I've got a course offering at 8:00 and then you get this other course they have to take at 4:00 and you got another course they have to take at 12:00, well when are they going to practice? When is their athletic course gonna take place? And from an athletic course standpoint, you are trying to bring an entire team together so even when it's not so extreme that one student has a schedule spread out like that, it's a chance an entire team will have their schedule spread out like that. That impacts athletics [Darren]

While some student athletes do want to continue to play professionally, others may want to continue to work in the sports field in some capacity. Participants from the academic community addressed the following during the interview:

We ended up with some courses for the general student, for the education major who was gonna go out and be a teacher and also teach a sport, train students. There were a lot things that they were able to get as courses now that would help them in the high schools that they wouldn't gotten if we didn't have an athletic component. It wouldn't been extensive. I think now we have 20 or 30 courses on a wide variety of athletic-related type courses to teach or to train a student. I think part of it has been kind of important. [Hank]

And the number that are gonna participate in professionally, play professionally, is pretty small. But you got these kids who have a strong interest in sports so the percentage of them are gonna be involved somehow in sports in their later lives. They're gonna be coaches, teacher, or rec directors, or coaching little league or whatever else. And for that reason, I think we ought to afford some academic opportunities for them to get good at those things. We have a few sports related things but we don't have a physical education major here. We don't have sports management or some of these things some places have looked at it kind of sideways as weak majors. But I don't think they're necessarily weak majors but a significant percentage of people on teams have interest are gonna be served in the future by continuing to be involved in athletics. [Anthony]

When the school establishes a goal to be a Top 20 public institution, the bar is raised academically. They're recruiting kids that now how to function in an academic environment that's moving up. So that's hard. I don't really blame them for looking for some wiggle room and talking about courses and majors and seeing if they can get the provost to listen to some of their ideas. I don't blame them a bit. I don't think it should happen that way. So academics affects the way they function significantly. And they have to adapt. [Paul]

Members from the athletic community discussed how the curriculum at Clemson and the NCAA continuing eligibility requirements impact students who may want to change majors:

Once you're here, and it's also kind of difficult for our student-athletes to, once they come in, they almost have to commit to a major because the chances of them becoming ineligible because they get so far into one major and then decide they want to change, and a lot of those courses don't match up then they may not be hitting their progress toward degree. [Giselle]

At that point you're having this conversation with the student is, "Do you want to continue in a degree you're not happy about anymore or do you want to change it and risk not being athletically eligible?" For a lot of those students who are on scholarship money, they need to be eligible because they may not have their scholarship. And that's the fear in their minds so they're having to kind of choose. And you always get this for coaches that we don't have some majors that students are interested in and that's why we lose them. But I really think is—I don't really think it's the majors. That once you're here at Clemson, you have to do the work. We can't hide you. You can't be successful here if you're not gonna come in and do the work and it's just not gonna work [Giselle]

Most people on campus would never know, none the wiser, they just know about the NCAA, but they don't really know the restrictions that it places. Which is one of the things I often struggle with. Sometimes, unfortunately, students have to choose "Do you want a certain degree or do you want to play your sport?" Especially if they go in to college and they end up changing their major because every term in college, a student-athlete has to achieve certain milestones and they get to a point where you get a couple of years in and you change your major, and you may not be able to meet those milestones in a different major and so I see that as one of the negatives that the NCAA provided on an academic side anyway. [Eric]

I think it's positive because they've put student-athletes on a plan to graduate and they have to reach a certain percentage toward degree every year or they don't get

to play. So there's an extreme positive there, but the problem is that you can have a 4.0 student that's majoring in engineering and they want to change to biology for pre-med because they're extremely gifted, but they may not be able to do that because they won't be able to meet percentage towards degree. Those two curriculums are not going to match up. You have an extremely gifted student, they've done nothing wrong, but they may not be able to pursue their dream academically. So that's one of the things that I really struggle with the NCAA and some of the things that they've put in place [Eric]

One, that keeps people on the path to graduation, but what it also does, sometimes, is it winds up sending students to the majors that have the greatest flexibility in the choice of courses and electives, you see. So it's good, it's gonna make you graduate and you might wound up putting a bunch of students in majors where there's a great deal of flexibility purposefully. [Anthony]

Academic participants are also concerned with the NCAA eligibility and the impact it has on student athletes. Charles, a faculty member stated the following:

For me, I think Vickery does a great job. We have lots of athletes that come through Vickery and I do notice improvements in students who go to Vickery. Some of it is just performance, in terms of their behavior, because Vickery makes sure about that. But a lot of it I think is their ability to learn, and integrate and make sense out of it, so Vickery does a really good job, that's the positive. And I think the negative in some ways is some of the athletes, Vickery really has them majoring eligibility. In other words, they help you identify the classes, they will stack your curriculum a certain way. I think that's the negative part. I don't think it happens too often but it's like when I see a student-athlete who has delayed taking an entry level math class until their last semester here or a science class, I get really worried about that because that's a curriculum design to keep you eligible as opposed to a curriculum designed to get you to graduate. I see that sometimes and I think Vickery is probably is in that position of they take the pressure from the coaches and the athletic department, whereas I don't have to. Sometimes I think that pressure is enough that they fix the schedule, so that it keeps the student eligible, which I don't think it's fair to everyone. [Charles]

Anthony also discussed how there is a section limit in courses to the number of student athletes in one class:

You just can't have a section of just football players. One, if you got these really underprepared students and you put three of them in a section, they sit together, they reinforce all their bad habits, they get too cool for school, they put their hats on backwards and go to sleep. If they're in their by themselves, they don't do that.

So we got a rule here, it was a struggle to get this but we would not permit more than 25% student-athletes in any one section, unless the department itself raised that limit. And that was to eliminate this concentration of certain sections and certain majors and things like that with the idea of fundamentally that it was better for the student-athlete. Maybe they have to take a more demanding structure but we try to keep them students, not a bunch of student-athletes going to one section. [Anthony]

Clemson's narrow curriculum has an impact on the academic offerings student athletes can choose. Some majors offer labs and other courses at times of the day, that student athletes may not be able to take them due to practice or other athletic obligations. Therefore, depending on the sport, they are limited to certain majors.

The theme, *Academic Impact*, focused on the impact of academics on the athletic department and their student athletes. While having a stronger academic program has impacted the recruitment of some student athletes, and the majors they can select, it has also provided better quality student athletes, academically. For student athletes that are deemed underprepared and do not meet the general requirements, Vickery Hall has been a resource in helping them matriculate at Clemson.

Inseparable

Another reoccurring concept from participants is the separation of athletics and academics. Participants discussed how athletics and academics cannot be separated at Clemson because athletics plays an essential role in the success of Clemson. The theme, *Inseparable*, explores the athletic impact at Clemson and why it cannot be separated from the institution. This theme is separated into the following sub-themes: (a) President Barker's academic and athletic goals, (b) admissions applications, (c) branding and

visibility, (d) impact on the student body and community, and (e) role in educational mission.

President Barker's Academic and Athletic Goals

One reason that it is difficult to separate athletics from academics is because Clemson has a goal to be successful in both. President James Barker, Clemson's immediate past president, had a vision of Clemson becoming a Top 20 institution that also won national championships:

I look at President's Barker's goals, he wants us to be ranked 10th in the nation, he wants us to win national championships. That's an important role. [Irene]

We were going to be an academic institution, we've gone so far that when he came into office, I think we were number 57 or 59 in public universities, and he left and we were number 21. That's incredible. 1998, we weren't good at anything but baseball and golf, we've always been good at men's golf. Now we've almost won a championship in women's track, we're very competitive in men's soccer, we're competitive in football, women's basketball seem to be getting better, so it's been a big change. I think we're just more competitive. [Karen]

I think we have a healthy relationship between academics and athletics, and I think having a president that was a former athlete in Jim Barker, and for him to set those goals, I thought were probably a little out of reach, you know to win another football championship and go to Final Fours in basketball. We did win a golf championship under him. I think it's healthy. I think it's positive. [Fred]

Yes the Top 25. See I was here for two years after Jim Barker and he's the first one I know that set a public standard. "This is what we're gonna go and become." And actually developed what they called the roadmap, and how you prioritize how you fund it and those type things. [Neil]

I think President Barker did a phenomenal job when he took over as president when I was still in school of trying to blend the two images and bring those two athletics/academics together. [Darren]

Again I think it's helped us. Overall, I think it has been attractive to some kids who otherwise would have looked at other universities. I think it's helped athletics. I'm going to go back to where we were when we started in 2002 and President Barker had just been on board just two or three years. I know during

that period of time, we were in 2002, a very average football program. And this year we won the Orange Bowl Championship and we had two back-to-back Top 10 finishes in football these past few years. We went to nine straight NIT/NCAA basketball tournaments [five NIT, four NCAA]. We had some really good kids academically during that period of time and that was a historical first. Clemson has never gone to that number of basketball tournaments in a row. [John]

But, because of the expectations and where we wanted to be, there are things that we needed to do to get where we are now. We didn't have good facilities, and if we were going to attract the type of young person and have an opportunity to take Clemson in that direction, we had to develop our facilities, and our priority in that point in time was the west end zone facility, and there's a quality facility. But you got to keep improving, you got to keep developing those facilities. So the statement of goals is good. That puts some pressure on you. How are we going to get there? The last two years, we've been in the Top 10. Well that's not the national championship and I understand that, but being in the Top 10 is a far cry from where we were in 2002. I'm not sure if we were in the Top 100. We probably were in the Top 60 I'm sure. [John]

But those types of goals were good and Clemson is capable of winning a national championship in football. Clemson is capable of going to the Final Four in basketball. But you got to continue to improve, that's why facility issues are important. You got to continue to tweak those programs that can bring recognition to your university that will help you in other programs, such as track and field, men's and women's tennis, anything, golf, it provides notoriety for your total sports program. But there's a cost attached to it. You've got to raise money, you've got to build facilities, you've got to make it attractive for the highest level type of athlete for them to say, "Hey I think that's where I want to go." And the articulation of the academic reputation helps you. [John]

President Barker's goals set the precedent that both academics and athletics are necessary at Clemson. Participants continued the discussion on how academics and athletics are inseparable:

So yeah, Clemson wouldn't be what we are today without the athletic component. [Hank]

I think they're one. There's Clemson University and within Clemson University, there's Clemson Athletics. Within Clemson University, there's Clemson's whole academic enterprise too. But it's not—you're beginning with the idea that there's two, and I would argue that the athletic department functions within the university

as opposed to separate from, so there's not two bubbles on that diagram, there's just really one, which athletics is a part of the university. [Orlando]

So I think just holding it up and saying is that what we really want, I think most people said no we don't, we want to be one, we want to be united. And then there were those voices that said, "Well you can't be good at both. You can't be a great academic institution and an athletic institution." I said, "Well, tell me about Stanford. Tell me about Michigan. Tell me about other schools in the Top 20 that are both." [Orlando]

I've spent most of my life trying to figure that out. We're different from other schools. I would list the following ways we are different: we are distinctive. [Orlando]

Clemson probably does it better than anybody, honestly. We haven't always done that and it doesn't mean that we can take it for granted, but I think we are doing very, very well. And I'm not just saying that out of pride or anything else. And the reason that we might be doing well is because we work hard at it, and we don't take it for granted. And there's danger because it's been so good for a while, that you could take it for granted. [Orlando]

Athletics was critical to the success of the institution, both academically as well as even in the research area, because it's one of those things, there was an effort to put in the research side to get creative people here that have heard about Clemson because of the athletic side. Of all the things that were going on, people come in to Clemson today because of what's going on. The cutting edge, the unique things that have come out of it... They are too closely intertwined to separate them to say one necessarily without the other. But yeah it's kind of unique. [Hank]

I think the notion that excellence is a part of both environments, what we strive for and taking great pride in that work. And again, never getting close to the line. [Orlando]

When you look at a student and they look on the website and I want to figure out where to go to college, guess what they see first on the website? Yes. They'll look at the football results. If I gauged 100 regular students and say, why did you choose Clemson, well, "Football. The excitement, the family tradition, yada yada yada. Yeah I like the academic piece, but I want to come here to be a part of it." You can't separate that. Now if we're not successful in football, we'll see a different enrollment number. But I bet you, especially this past football season, a lot of those kids want to come because of athletics. Hand-in-hand, you can't separate them. [Irene]

Go back to the learning center for undergrads. Wouldn't have it today probably if we hadn't done anything for athletics. To show what type of process could do to help a student, I think athletics has done a lot to show—they had to, the caliber of students they were getting, they had to keep them here for three years or try to get them to graduate, they had to have a learning center. We wouldn't have that today for the other students, we wouldn't have as big as a counseling center as what we have today. [Hank]

There's a lot of guys that have graduated from Clemson that have gotten into some types of research, because of what they saw involved with the athletics. Athletics also utilized some talents here on campus, grass, horticulture, lots of different things, to increase the facility, which in so doing, let academics go down a road that they didn't have the opportunity because there was no money and athletics had the money. I think there has been a lot of things athletics has supported that dealt with the academic side that furnished assistantships to people that they wouldn't gotten if athletics hadn't been here or that athletics hadn't been as successful as it has been here at Clemson. [Hank]

Admissions Applications

There is a belief that successful athletic programs help the university because it increases the number of admissions applications. Studies conducted have implied and refuted that a strong athletic program increases the number of admission applications. Clemson has had a steady increase in applications over the years. Some believed the increase in applications began when Clemson won its football national championship in 1981:

Well I think when we won the national championship in 1981, we won the Orange Bowl, I think universities always tell me this, and other schools, that there is a direct correlation in how well you do and the number of applications you get. [Neil]

One of the most significant things we ever saw was two events. One was the 1981 national championship. I want you to realize overnight, Clemson's applications, and I could be wrong about the exact number, but we went from something like 9,000 or 10,000 to almost 17,000 or 18,000 applications and we've been that way ever since. It transformed who we were, who we are. [Hank]

Participants continued to discuss how athletics impact admissions applications and the type of student that attends Clemson.

Well I think it impacts it tremendously, I'll give you an example. For this year, I know our admissions department is going to have over 20,000 applications for 3,200 spots. Now even our admissions director has indicated that the win against Ohio State and having two ESPN GameDays here, give your university a lot of exposure. [Fred]

I think the fact that Clemson is in the national media for having quality athletic programs and having a big campus-wide interest in athletics, helps increase the number of applications and applications from a lot of students that help us populate a strong student body. [Martin]

And whether we like it or not, whether the world should be this way or not, the fact of the matter is when our football team does well, our applications go up dramatically. And what that allows us to do is be more selective about who we admit, which means that the student body is better, which makes our research better. Maybe in a perfect world, people wouldn't think that way but this is not a perfect world so people so think that way. [Brad]

So I think that the spirit and all of those things that come with intercollegiate athletics are one of the big things that helps Clemson draw students. Now I've had a few in here before over the years and you say, what got you interested in Clemson? Tigers. Tiger this and tiger that, and to those you want to almost say, "Look, season tickets will be a whole lot cheaper than tuition, maybe that's what you need to do." But the students that we draw in are looking for that balance between the academics and the athletics and a lot of schools offer one or the other and we're blessed to be able to do both at a very high quality level. [Luke]

If you've been watching a game all week and it's like, "Oh Clemson is on the brain, I'm gonna take a shot and apply." But I think, and again it goes back to athletics and the more exposure now with TV and it's not just regional, it's national exposure that the university is getting. Because I don't know if you ever watched an event on TV, there's always that ad for the university in itself, and it's to the point now where people expect to see. It's like ok here's your shot to kind of get a glimpse of Clemson University when you're watching this. And I don't want to say it's free because nothing is free, but because athletics is participating in this event, the university is getting an opportunity to showcase this but not really having to pay that ad space. [Giselle]

Well I think it creates an interesting university. Without really knowing, there are claims that there are studies made that after successful seasons, particularly in

your high-profile sports like football and basketball, that there's more interest in as measured by admissions applications at a particular university. [John]

Without knowing, this is subjective, I suspect our Orange Bowl championship this year has helped drive some additional admission applications, simply cause the nature of the beast. And there have been some studies, how structured those studies were with regard to admissions applications after successful seasons in your high-profile sports, there appears to be a correlation of interest in the university and success of your athletics. [John]

While many of the participants believed that the success of the football team has increased admissions applications, Luke, one of the university administrators shared the admissions data and provided his thoughts:

We've had a steady increase in applications over the years. As you can see [shows admissions data], like I said when I took over, we were at 9359. Last year we were at 18,600 and this year we are at 20,200. The biggest increase from one year to the next was right here from '04 to '05. That was, I think I'm telling this right, that was the year that we had the fight with South Carolina and didn't go to a bowl game. (laughter) So it doesn't always play that way. [Luke]

We're running about 2100 applications ahead of last year. If you think about it, we finished the regular season 10-2, only lost to Florida State and South Carolina. The year before we were 10-2, lost again to Florida State and South Carolina, (laughter) but still had 2100 more applications. Having GameDay on campus, all of those things kind of figure into, but I think the university has done more in terms of marketing and outreach to prospective students as well. It figures into that increase. [Luke]

Most of the participants believed the successes of athletics, in particular football, have resulted in an increase in the number of admissions applications to Clemson. While admissions data has shown that applications has steadily increased each year, there is a perception that athletics helps creates a quality student body.

Branding and Visibility

One reason that athletics and academics cannot be separated is due to the brand of Clemson. When you think of Clemson University, athletics more than likely will come

up. While there is debate on the impact of athletics on admission, athletics definitely provides exposure to the university. Participants discussed the impact of having a visible athletic program and its impact on the university:

I think more people know about Clemson because of our athletic program, our football team in particular. So I think we are a wonderful front door to the university nationally. We've appeared on primetime television several times, we've had ESPN GameDay here, our board of trustees is very involved in our athletic—the chairman of the board helped search for an athletic director, which is very unusual, but that's the way we did it here. I think the athletic program is very important to the university. [Karen]

Well I think that the first thing I would say is that I think that all universities understand that athletics is a very visible part of your institution. And sometimes the way your institution is viewed is really viewed through athletics. I'm sure Notre Dame has a great chemistry department but you never hear of it. [Fred]

I think the more successful athletics was, as far as those type things, the better it was for the university, because they get free—you couldn't even afford to pay for advertisement that you can get from an athletic event. And that's just across the country. We have the Orange Bowl on TV, that audience is national, international really. And that puts our best foot forward. [Neil]

Back in the 70s, 80s, and even the 90s, you didn't get on TV like you do today. Now basically every football game, home or away, is on television. Every basketball game, women's athletics is on, baseball is on a little bit now. The world has changed. When you have ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, you got Fox and CBS sports, they're all looking for inventory. That's why you get so many. You get track and field swimming, volleyball, you get everything on TV now. Because they need programming and that's just an advertisement for the university. [Neil]

I think the academic part of the university recognizes that there's some direct benefit support from the athletic department. As well as most of us realize strong athletic programs, visible athletic programs definitely help the university recruit better students and be a stronger university. Recruiting better students who are not athletes because of the visibility of the athletic program, so I think that helps that positive relationship and certainly my perception of the fact that there is a good relationship between academics and athletics. [Martin]

Athletic programs that are certainly stronger have more publicity. This past year having an outstanding football team that had GameDay be on campus twice in the same season, certainly gives us an enormous amount of national publicity that

helps us recruit students nationwide, who are outstanding students. Even if they're not particularly interested in athletics, because the name of Clemson is put out there prominently, especially if they're interested in athletics, even if they're not potential student-athletes, but they've been high school athletes or they just like intramural sports. [Martin]

Further I think the front door to the university is often times athletics. The most visible component of what we do. You're not gonna get 85,000 people to come watch a math competition at Clemson or a speech competition. [Orlando]

Anytime the word Clemson is mentioned, we want it to be a deposit in the brand bank. And we want athletics to see making more deposits than withdrawals, and to be beyond just wins and losses. That helps. Winning the Orange Bowl is a big deal. It was a big deal. I'm confident that people who are thinking about making a gift to engineering, didn't make exactly that connection, but they wanted to support a winner, a winning environment, a school on the move, a school that has momentum. And all that can be wrapped up in the brand bank and athletics makes those deposits too. [Orlando]

Athletics at an institution like Clemson is really going to drive the brand of the university. Most students who come to Clemson are familiar, at the very least, they're familiar with the athletic program at Clemson. At some point in time, they've seen the tiger paw, which is technically the athletic brand of Clemson, though it has assimilated itself into all brands within Clemson. So that connection of athletics and its impact on the overall university, obviously is real. [Darren]

Athletics can also play the role of communicating the values of the university. So not only can it be this marketing arm or this branding arm, it could be—you can utilize athletics. [Darren]

Unfortunately, academics don't get on ESPN that much. It's all about athletics and those things that are positive whether it is making the NCAA tournament and winning the Orange Bowl championship, two back-to-back Top 10, things that we've been able to accomplish in the past few years that hadn't been accomplished since the 80s. That just helps the overall perception of the university. Athletics is probably weighed fairly heavily in the psyche of the American public. That's just how our society has grown over the years. Athletics creates a lot of conversations and by virtue of that, it creates a lot of conversations in various schools, and it creates a perception for young people and their parents for what they may or may not believe about a particular university. [John]

Due to the notion of athletics and academics being inseparable, whatever happens on one side can impact the reputation of the other. Participants discussed how athletics impact the reputation of Clemson:

So it's the front door, it's the face, it's the visibility. Our student-athletes, whether they want to or not, carry the reputation of the school. We remind them of that constantly. Sometimes we fail. But it's amazing to me how much attention student-athletes get when they fail compared to another student. So I think it's critically important from the standpoint—either that or you don't compete, and that's not Clemson. So we've got to do it and we've got to do it right. [Orlando]

So I think those programs that have these bad reputations of misbehaving and doing all kinds of bad things are probably the ones that cannot attract the better students, you know. And so, I think now, we're doing a very good job with that. Look at our star players, they're delightful people. You know here and there they get a scrape but a scrape like other students get into that's not athletics-related things. And so, if you don't have those things, if you can avoid those problematic aspects of team on campus, then the association is far more positive. [Anthony]

If you take a look at the dynamics of institutions and the dynamics of the athletic programs versus the growth of the institution, you will find that when Clemson became a factor in athletics, we became a factor in lot of other things, and without it, we wouldn't be where we are today. And in so doing, the reputation of an institution is from a lot of aspects. Athletics, academics, faculty, PhD faculty who have graduated from your institution or master's students that have graduated. The negative can be just as easily created from the same individuals. [Hank]

Clemson, and that's one of the things when I was even looking at this job, is that it's known for it's integrity. It's known for developing quality student-athletes that are good citizens, that are dependable, that are accountable, that are responsible. I think our athletic department has that same vision and I think that's why there's really a pretty nice marriage and great reputation nationally for producing such quality student-athletes. [Eric]

And if you have a strong reputation academically and you have a good program, it's going to help you recruit some kids that you otherwise couldn't recruit. I think the predominate university, in my opinion, where the academic reputation brings kids from across the country is Stanford. They've got some great players there, but they've got great students. It helps appeal to some kids that otherwise it wouldn't have appealed to. They would have looked somewhere else. They'd look to Stanford, they'd look to Duke. Those qualities at Northwestern, those quality of schools. And we've gotten some really bright kids that have come into

our program and I have to believe it's been very helpful with what President Barker did in his tenure year in trying to enhance and work toward a significant improvement to the perception of the Clemson degree. [John]

I mean students get in trouble, it happens. You can go through our entire student body and you're gonna identify people getting into trouble. Underage drinking is a problem everywhere. Drug use is gonna be a problem on any campus. Other violations that are basic, you're gonna find them on campus. But when those things occur within an athletic department or program, especially an athletics program like at Clemson. Maybe in another school with less recognition of their athletic program it's not as much, but at a school like Clemson, one or two issues like that from your athletic department can really create a lot of noise about your overall university. [Darren]

And losing teams within your athletic department can impact the overall mood, if you will, or sentiment toward your university. Alumni aren't as happy. They don't come to campus as often. If we're not winning in football, the seven Saturdays of the year that we have 80,000 people visiting this campus, you might as well go ahead and knock off about 20,000 of those folks and those are typically 20,000 people, give or take, that you want coming to campus, that you're entertaining not only from an athletic standpoint but from a university standpoint, trying to develop relationships, develop opportunities for future support. So athletics plays that role for sure. [Darren]

Sometimes you have just as true as if the student-athlete does the common thing of having a minor in possession, it hits the front page. You can have a student-athlete that's a quality individual just like you have student-athletes in the student body who are very quality individuals who are gonna go out and do great things. But this individual is gonna be lifted up and can be a spokesperson for not only your athletic program but also your entire university. Someone who is, "Hey we're glad this individual is representing us," like a [TJ Brown]. So those kinds of things are all ways that an athletic program can impact the university. [Darren]

Impact on the Student Body and Community

The benefit of athletics and academics working in cohesiveness is the impact it has on students. Promoting athletics and academics tends to attract a certain student body. While the academic reputation of Clemson may attract students, athletics play a large role in the college experience for Clemson students. Participants discussed how athletics enhances the college student experience:

I know you're getting your PhD Chereese, but you're probably not gonna come back for a reunion for an 889 class. You're gonna come back around an athletic event. So I think it builds consensus, conviviality, it's something that everybody can get behind, there's emotions and all that. So I think athletics is a critical part of the university. [Fred]

Now I'll add again, since I'm weird, I'll add, I think faculty don't always fully appreciate what athletics does bring to the school. It may be that students spend too much time thinking about football. But on the other hand, going to a school that has a real athletics program, makes it more enjoyable. That's part of the college experience. I actually like being at a school that has a football team that can compete for a national championship. You know it's not the biggest thing in the world but it's kind of cool. [Brad]

I think it's also realizing the importance of having a well-balanced, all encompassing, campus college experience for students. Why are we here? We're here for the students. And anybody who's not is in the wrong business and really trying to develop—and Clemson goes above and beyond, which is why it has one of the highest rankings of students appreciating and enjoying their college experience. Choosing, if they had to do it all over again, they'd choose Clemson again, and that's because we provide them a wonderful experience with collegiate athletics, intramural sports, theaters, plays, fraternities, sororities, and other great organizations that our students can get involved in and really grow and develop and I think that's one of the things you provide. [Eric]

Student body, they like to enjoy themselves and I think athletics do provide a window into the persona of the university and in particular, successful athletics. [John]

But not having an athletic program tends to not draw a certain type of student. It's one of those things where you have to have something to get that camaraderie that a student body has. So you always see most institutions that have on-campus housing, have some kind of team, either basketball, baseball, volleyball, whatever. [Hank]

So I think having a strong major athletic program probably helps attract a student body that likes athletics, wants to go to those games, support those intercollegiate programs, and in such, they like sports themselves and want to participate in club sports, intramural sports, and so I think it tends to help you attract a physically active student body of people that have multiple interests, like to get out and do things, rather than just the sort of students of very limited or narrow focus, who are just focused on their studies. [Martin]

Furthermore, the influence of athletics has created academic opportunities for the general student body, such as the Academic Success Center. Orlando and Eric both discuss how the center became into existence:

So for student-athletes, it's unconscionable that we would not give them every opportunity to graduate. That's what Vickery Hall was intended to be and you know Vickery Hall was so good, our students who were not student-athletes came to see me and said, "how come we don't have one of those?" And I said, "I don't know, (laughs) that's a very good point." So the Academic Success Center, which has now been built, and the programs came out of that conversation. So now everybody has that kind of opportunity to—if you work hard, you should graduate. And so, I think that's the starting point for the relationship between the influence of one over the other. [Orlando]

I know that's one of the reasons, I remember talking to President Barker when I got hired, you know he had a general student come up to him and say, "Why don't we have a Vickery Hall for all students?" And he couldn't think of a good reason to why they couldn't and shouldn't so he ended up developing the Academic Success Center because of that. "You know what? Yeah you all need somebody to go to. You need advisors and learning specialists and tutors and we can develop programs in there that can support all students to help coach you up to be a better student. Because we can all use a little help, especially that freshmen/sophomore year along the way when you're trying to realize what college even is." [Eric]

In addition to enhancing the college experience, Clemson University has an important role in the community. There are many local businesses that are supported by Clemson staff and students. In addition, when football season occurs, there are thousands of people patronizing businesses. Participants discussed the athletic impact to the Clemson community:

I think when you think about the economic impact on this community. Restaurants, bars, grocery stores, gas stations. You think about when 80,000 people come to town, they spend a bunch of money when they are here. That means a lot to the local businesses and the base of the economy. If we had to take a year off, I don't know what this town would do. People are very dependent on that. And I think also that if you come here, if you move here, you kind of know that's how it's gonna be. It's gonna be a little tough getting around on Saturdays. It is a big part of what we do. [Luke]

And it's important for the city too because those home football games generate a tremendous amount of revenue for the community of Clemson. Whether it's the restaurants, the hotels, the businesses, and the university in general because if people are downtown and they're on campus, then it really help boost that experience and we can provide. [Eric]

I think the community can have a huge influence and I think it really has had a huge influence around here. That's one of the reasons there's a tremendous amount of pride at Clemson and tradition and I see that on both sides. And I see that on both sides because I think it's taken place on both sides and I think it takes place together. Clemson is also recognized by the Princeton Review for it's town-gown involvement and so that connection with the community I think athletics provides another avenue for that to happen. Our university is very connected with the community and so I really think you have both athletics and the university that is surrounded by the different cities whether it's Clemson or Seneca or Greenville or Anderson and there's a tremendous amount of outreach there. I know we do as far as athletics, you know go out into the community whether it's for community service, whether it's to go out to schools and do programming at the elementary level or high school level, to mentor, to be pen pals or whatever it is but then athletics on the booster side is reaching out and gives a great opportunity for them to be involved with their university even beyond. I know when you have that pride and tradition, you want to stay connected to your university and one very easy seems like way to do that is through athletics by coming back. And it gives an avenue for those alumni to come back on campus and enjoy college again and to enjoy their degree again. They get to come back on a Saturday afternoon and walk around campus and enjoy Clemson and then go to a football game. And it gives them that opportunity to do so. [Eric]

There's a very passionate fan base, very loyal people, wonderful people. And they deeply care about athletics and the people that are heavily involved in the program from the outside that help us raise money, help us develop the facilities and provide scholarships, they truly care about the university. It's not just a one-sided thing, but their real emphasis with Clemson is athletics, but they're graduates of the university and they care about the university. [John]

Role in Education Mission

While participants acknowledged that athletics is an important to the success of Clemson, they also agreed that athletics should never overpower academics. Participants

discussed the role athletics should play in the educational mission at Clemson. The academic participants shared their thoughts:

I guess the big-timeness of football and basketball right now, I don't think is really harmonizes with the general academic mission of an institutions. So basically it has become this entertainment enterprise. And you have a lot of arguments about whether we exploit the student-athletes or whatever. But, it's not the same as enabling a group of kids to be part of a team and getting the benefits and being part of a team, that doesn't seem to be the motivation, and the team being a part of the institutions. But it does unify the university community, that interest does. So, I would say that an athletics program is compatible, complementary to the rest of the institution's activities, but I wouldn't say all parts of big time sports currently are. You know, there's flaws and there's so much money I don't know how we are gonna control that. [Anthony]

I think in the dynamics of an institution, the athletic piece is just as important as a lot of other things. It's part of your infrastructure, I guess it's what I call it. To draw students to your institutions so that you can educate them and make them part of the family. [Hank]

Pretty much what it's doing. (laughter) That's a quick and dirty answer. And you know why I say that because I've already said I think having a pretty strong program, which I think we do, and a good emphasis on athletics helps us recruit non-athletes as well as athletes help us populate a good student body. It helps provide publicity and some other spin-off importance of that good publicity. And I think we're doing a pretty good job of that and I think it's appropriate. I think having a strong emphasis on athletics that it helps promote these other things that we've talked about is the right way to be doing it and I think it's pretty much what we're doing. I can't say oh well we ought to divert more general university revenues to strengthen the athletic program or we got a bowl game, we get a lot of money for that, that ought to be put into academics, which would mean we wouldn't have as big of a recruiting budget, and equipment budgets or whatever for athletics. I think the balance that's struck now is pretty good, it's pretty healthy. I don't see any reason that ought to change greatly. I think it plays an important role and it should and we're pretty much there in a reasonable way right now. [Martin]

So the way faculty think about the educational mission is, education is the kind of thing that should be done by content experts right. So if you want to learn about English, you need to go to someone who has formerly been certified to be an expert on English. He may be an idiot, (laughs) but at least he's got the formal certification. One thing that we're really sensitive to is to people who want to teach but they don't necessarily have that disciplinary certification. And this

happens a fair amount not with—I'm not sure if it has happen with athletics but I wouldn't be surprised. But there's all kinds of units at Clemson that are sort of not really disciplinary units like student affairs, and they want to do some teaching and you know it depends on what they're teaching. If they're teaching time management, ok who cares, but sometimes what they teach sort of veers over into what faculty would say is academic territory and we tend to really defend that line because if you're not careful what will happen is that you get lots and lots of people who are teaching things that are not content experts, then there's all kinds of problems that occur. [Brad]

That's the sort of thing faculty really worry about. Anyone who is teaching academic subjects need to be clearly qualified to teach that. If I even heard a proposal that athletics wanted to teach something, my initial reaction would be vey negative. I'd be like, "let's find out what we're talking about here because if it's not something that anybody can teach, we have a real problem. [Brad]

I do not think athletics should have any role in the academic offerings. [Paul]

I guess I don't know how to answer that because I think we should recognize that it is part of the educational process. You do learn things as a participant in intercollegiate athletics, you learn a lot of things. There's no doubt about it. Things that you probably wouldn't learn if you participated in the same sport on an intramural level. And that's because you're dealing with the media, you're being interviewed, you're on the spotlight. But I do not believe that is the primary—I think we're in trouble when we allow that to impact our academic policies. I think it can be so big and so important that has an influence it shouldn't have on academics. But I do acknowledge and I think everyone should, that it does have an educational component to it. But it's a business; it's a big business. You could achieve some of those educational objectives, not all of them but some of them, through an intramural program where every student is required to participate in athletics in some sort of fashion. That's just my take on it. [Paul]

Athletic administrators also shared their thoughts:

Athletics can play that role as kind of the beacon of the university and I think athletics needs to be managed in such a way that the high-profile coaches, the high-profile students, understand that they have an increased responsibility that they can't flip somebody off because they cut them off in traffic, kind of thing. That was always the example that President Barker used. "Just because somebody cut me off in traffic, doesn't mean I can yell at them because I got Clemson President on the back of my car", and on my back or something like that. (laughs) It's that kind of mindset, but athletics can definitely help further that mission, that academic mission, more from a marketing perspective than anything. And that can propose a challenge [Darren]

I don't know. I think that whatever the educational mission, whatever is established that they should make sure that their activities support that. [Karen]

I think we need to support the policies of the university. Whatever those standards are to be admitted, to continue, to graduate. You know it's our responsibility as athletic leaders and coaches to support the mission of getting a degree and to do everything we possibly can to help those student-athletes do that. [Fred]

Well we're just part of the university. We're no different from the English department or engineering. We don't set the agenda. We can make suggestions on what we like, but our goal is to recruit high quality student-athletes and graduate them. We don't set academic policies; we go by whatever the policies of the institution are. [Neil]

But I don't think that athletics should dictate anything in terms of the academics of our university. Because even though the way things are set up, we're separate in terms of financially, but we are still under the university's umbrella and the university should guide where it wants to go from an academic standpoint. I just think you kind of get into trouble when you have athletics, dictating the mission of the university. [Giselle]

I think that should be athletics' role is to continue to promote the institution, any opportunities that they have. I do think we should do a better job in athletics of making sure that our student-athletes can voice what the mission of the university is. [Giselle]

I think that's the role athletics should play is being those ambassadors when they have the opportunity to either travel and to be able to speak on the mission and the values of the institution and allowing that extra TV coverage for others to kind of see. I don't think athletics should dictate academics or any of those things. Yeah it's great to have a seat at the table to hear and to bounce the ideas off, because it will affect you, but I just don't think athletics should dictate what the university does. Again, and that is solely from my compliance background, because I could see trouble coming if that happens. [Giselle]

I think it should be a supportive role and that's it. I think the university should make all academic decisions about their programs, their majors, their staffing, and how they want to run a university. I think it's the athletics side to be a part of that mission. I think that's where the president has to set the tone, down to the provost, down to the deans and departments, and athletic departments can do the same thing on their side but at the end of the day, our students are Clemson students and they need to be a part of the mission that every other student is. And as athletics, my department is here to support that. We're here to support them in

earning that degree, admitting quality students, and helping them along the way to earn those degrees they deserve. [Eric]

Well, from an education perspective, you want to bring in young people that have an opportunity to be successful academically and leave here and make a living and contribute back to society. [John]

If you can hit that balance, where a student-athlete is coming in and they're successful in their particular sport, they're successful in the classroom, and they leave here with a good experience and go out there to their respective communities and do a real good job out there, you accomplished a whole lot. From the university perspective if, you can continue to perform at a high level, again liked we talked about a while ago, on the admissions applications, you're going to generate a lot of interest from people nationally in Clemson, simply the nature of the beast. [John]

Unfortunately, academics don't get on ESPN that much. It's all about athletics and those things that are positive whether it is making the NCAA tournament and winning the Orange Bowl championship, two back-to-back Top 10, things that we've been able to accomplish in the past few years that hadn't been accomplished since the 80s. That just helps the overall perception of the university. Athletics is probably weighed fairly heavily in the psyche of the American public. That's just how our society has grown over the years. Athletics creates a lot of conversations and by virtue of that, it creates a lot of conversations in various schools, and it creates a perception for young people and their parents for what they may or may not believe about a particular university. [John]

The theme, *Inseparable*, highlighted that athletics plays an important role in the success of Clemson University. Athletics serves in numerous capacities for the university that some in academics do not realize. For one, they serve as a marketing arm for the university because of the visibility of the programs. The football team provides free advertisement when the games are televised. Secondly, athletics enhances the college student experience at Clemson. Athletics is ingrained in so many aspects of Clemson, such as orientation, when you first learn the fight song, or Solid Orange Fridays. Athletics also helps the local community. When football season occurs, it has a large economic impact for the local businesses due to the number of people that are in town.

While Clemson University has a strong academic reputation, it wouldn't be where it is today without the help of athletics. However, athletics should continue to play a supportive role in the university, and not cross the line of dictating how the academics side should run.

The Possibilities

While some of the themes indicated that the relationship between athletics and academics is positive, there is room for improvement. This theme, *The Possibilities*, will cover building a strong academic and athletic relationship. It will cover supporting of athletics, ways to improve the relationship, and what the future relationship may hold. This theme is separated into following sub-themes (a) change in the athletic-academic dynamic, (b) improving the relationship, (c) understanding athletics and student athletes, and (d) the future of the athletic-academic dynamic.

Change in the Athletic-Academic Dynamic

In order to improve the relationship, it is important to understand how the dynamic has changed over time at Clemson. In the last 30 years, Clemson has gone through a transformation in how they address issues in athletics. Participants that have been at Clemson, since all of the major violations occurred, reflected on how the relationship between athletics and academics has changed over the last 30 years:

I think there's been in the last 15/20 years, a better working relationship between athletics and the administration...I think at several points in Clemson history and you could go back and look at what was transpiring, what the news was going on, and you could go back and see the board did some firing. The dynamics weren't working. I think some of the board members felt that things were getting out of control and to get it back in control, they felt they had to fire this way and that way, kind of semi-clean house. [Hank]

When you have a higher quality of student in general, the faculty don't see that separation between the athlete and the regular student. And it was just too great in the 60s, 70s, and early 90s. So in that context, the athletic department doesn't have a lot of the issues, the infrastructure is there to help an athlete every which way possible. [Hank]

Yes in some ways. I think from the time I arrived on campus in 1971, I would say in those years through now there has been what I consider a fairly positive relationship and mutual respect and cooperation between athletics and academics. And I don't know if that's necessarily grown, but I think if anything it has gotten stronger, not weaker. I think that relationship was pretty good going back 30 or 40 years ago. [Martin]

I do think that with the emphasis of the university on academic enrichment programs like Vickery Hall, and the emphasis on the athletic department to recruit true student-athletes that have good credentials as students, and like I said, high character young people that, that emphasis has only grown stronger through the years. I feel like now we probably have better student-athlete quality support in the whole package than we did 20 years ago. Or from 20 years ago, it improved to 10, and from 10 years ago to now, all of those services and programs and attitudes on campus that help support student-athletes has grown stronger and richer. [Martin]

It shifts. I've been here for over 30 years and so it's been different relationships at different times. I think recently—it's hard and you probably get this from other people, it's hard to talk about athletics as a whole because my experience is that football and the expectation of football players and the resulting expectation of faculty for football players are different than they are for the rowing team, for instance. [Charles]

It cycles through. I think it's probably somewhat like it was more in the 80s, than the 90s, which is a little strange. But I think we do have probably somewhat more stringent requirements now. I remember when I was first here—my first semester here, there was a football player, his name I always forget literally could not write. I don't mean he couldn't physically write but he didn't know how to put a sentence together. You don't see that as much now. So I think there's been somewhat of an upgrade to the standards. I think when I first came here, certainly we didn't have that many women athletes as we have now. Trying to think of a good thing we've done. There was no Vickery when I first came here so there wasn't no support services for those students. I think we've done much better with that. I think, and a lot of those things were late 80s/90s things what I'm saying, but that was sort of better in some ways than now. I think the philosophy toward athletics at Clemson has gotten much more professional-oriented in terms of winning is everything. Winning then also but I think the dominance of football

and Clemson life is probably bigger now than it was in the early 80s when we were winning, but not like this. [Charles]

Even with the conflicting views of the priorities of athletics and academics, participants had a positive view of the relationship between athletics and academics at Clemson. Participants provided their thoughts on the overall relationship between athletics and academics based on their experiences. Athletic participants expressed the following:

Yeah. I think the relationships are good. When I was a student here, I mentioned that President Barker came in, I felt like he was very visible. I think he was visible at as many student functions as he possibly could be. You know and it's one of those things where when the leadership, you got your guy out front, who is your president and their visible and they interact with your department, whatever it is, whether it's athletics or we can go back to the English department. That makes, that creates an environment that's extremely positive. So from an athletics perspective, I thought it was a really good relationship there. [Darren]

Everything is working beautifully as I see it and I've been in the trenches. But it has worked beautifully because of the relationships with the committees, with athletics, academics, having those meetings together to kind of make sure we're flowing between academics and athletics totally. It looks good to me on the inside, but the outside person probably says, "Gosh, this is awesome." But I see it on the inside as woven beautifully because of the building relationships we've had on those long hours of conversations and meetings. This is why we are where we are and you cannot tear that down. No way. [Irene]

I just think academics understands that athletics is an important part of the college experience and when our athletic programs does well, our university does well. But I think that they're very staunch and sticking to their academic principles and athletics. I do think the academics sets the tone and if Clemson ever allowed athletics to set the tone, then we'd be out of wack. We would end up having major problem. [Karen]

I think it's been fairly standard and consistent. We haven't had any real problems. We haven't done anything to give faculty a red flag to say, "Hey they're cheating over there or something." We educate our tutors, they go through a certification process. Our president comes and talks to tutors. So I think it's been fairly consistent. We've had good faculty reps that have given us good direction on how to approach things, how to convey things. I think the board of trustees has

approved six new majors, some of those attractive to athletes. So I think it's remained fairly consistent throughout the years. [Fred]

Academics has always helped with athletics, and I think athletics has helped—we've had issues and that's never helped for the university, but for the most part, I think it's a good partnership. [Neil]

Clemson is a great place. It has supported athletics, back long before I was born and you see a small school and a very small population right here and you get 70,000-80,000 people here for a football game, somebody is doing something right. Cause it means something for those people to come. We just got to make sure enrolled students while they're here, they stayed involved because they are your future. [Neil]

There's a lot more positives than negatives. And I haven't been to a lot of places so I can't say it's a fact, but my understanding is there's a lot of schools where there are a lot more negatives than positives in terms of that relationship. [Darren]

I think under his leadership, I think nationally, Clemson has a good reputation, academically, and I think it has a good reputation athletically. My opinion is I think it's a positive force on campus. I know there are those who would disagree with that, simply because it's such a big enterprise. [John]

Academic participants expressed the following:

I have to admit that over the 40 years, there were great athletic people and there were great academic people. I have to say that 95% of the time, they were all there trying to do what's best for the student regardless of who the student was. This Clemson family is something that has come out about a trademark basically. I don't know how much longer the Clemson family can hold on to the concept that used to be, but I think you've got to realize that something did happen special at Clemson that not necessarily happened at a lot of other institutions, and for whatever reason and for whoever was involved. I think if a student spends any time at Clemson studying, they leave Clemson, regardless if they get a degree or not, a better person with better credentials than they had when they entered the door, even if you're only here for a year. There has been a lot of people who cared about the students regardless of who they were. [Hank]

From my perspective, I think it's very good as a whole. I think a lot of the faculty are supportive of athletic programs. I think here the upper administration, some upper administrators more than others in my long career, but typically as a whole I would say the upper administration has been supportive of athletics. And I think that provides a league that's a cue that a lot of faculty follow. If it's something

upper administration tends to deem important, it's something that I should try to make a positive relationship with regard to and probably hold important. [Martin]

I've already said I think having a pretty strong program, which I think we do, and a good emphasis on athletics helps us recruit non-athletes as well as athletes help us populate a good student body. It helps provide publicity and some other spin-off importance of that good publicity. And I think we're doing a pretty good job of that and I think it's appropriate. I think having a strong emphasis on athletics that it helps promote these other things that we've talked about is the right way to be doing it and I think it's pretty much what we're doing. [Martin]

I actually think Clemson does—if you grant that we're a major football school and if you compare us to other major football schools, I think we actually do a pretty good job of setting the right tone that we're not just trying to win football games that the kids actually have to be students. I think we do a pretty good job of supporting them. So for example, I would be a little surprised if we had a major cheating scandal. It's not impossible, but I would be a little surprised hearing that from Clemson. I wouldn't be surprised hearing that from a Penn State. So I think we're probably a little bit better along than that and that helps because faculty care about that kind of stuff. [Brad]

In one particular occasion, it was after a very tight budget year, where some academic building projects had to be put on the back burner, but athletics continued construction of the west end zone and some of the capital improvement projects. Well on many campuses, that would be an outrage for faculty. It wasn't an issue here and I told the athletics staff the reason I thought that was the case is, there's no reason to be upset at us. If we broken a bunch of NCAA rules, we're on probation, our academics are poor, people would be looking at us and saying, "They're building an empire while everybody else is starving." But that isn't the case; it hasn't been the case here. So I think the relationship is good, but it's always continuous. [Paul]

In terms of getting along, the relationship between coaches and others, we get along very well. I don't see them very much, they're just as busy as we are over here. I don't know if that answers your question but we get along well. I always say this, not with just athletics, but all of Clemson. I say we disagree with a smile. We get along pretty well, it's not a nasty relationship by any means. Someone asked me one time how I got along with Coach Swinney and I said, "Well I'm gonna tell you the truth, he's the head football coach and I'm the director of [registration]. We're not always gonna agree eye to eye, but we get along very well. We respectfully disagree with each other from time to time." [Luke]

I think it's a big part of the flavor of this campus. It's a big part of who we are. But at the end of the day, it's still an academic institution. And it's key for the

university to find that balance. I think we do a good job of keeping that balance.
[Luke]

Improving the Relationship

While the relationship is overall positive, participants on both sides agreed the interaction between athletics and academics has room for improvement. Members of the academic community discussed ways for the relationship to improve:

The conditions don't exist for that familiarity to develop anymore. And I think it's a lost. It was an important one, it was much more of that general awareness of who people were and their personalities and that sort of thing. So that results in sort of a divide. And the divide is not a good thing. I think we need to bridge that. We had a football coach here, he was part of Tommy Bowden's staff and he left before Bowden left. He name was Thielen Smith. He was wonderful. I liked him and he would walk over here and eat lunch in Harcombe or eat lunch in Schilleter or eat lunch in the food court over there. He would see students. He would just do that. And I said he walked over here, he couldn't park then, he would just walk over here to campus just to have lunch. But, I noticed that because he was the only one that did it. And I wish we had more that were motivated to do that, you know just enjoy walking on campus, having lunch around a bunch of kids that sort of thing. We don't seem to have that anymore. I sound like an old fogie saying I like how it use to be, but some of those things that I thought were kind of beneficial are not there anymore, you know. I guess if there's a division, there's just the fact the conditions contribute to physical separation. People aren't in the same place at the same time. Athletics is over there, academics is over here. There's no time for them to be in the same place and so that the truth, then you don't know those people. [Anthony]

I think it would require people rubbing shoulders. It use to be, it still is a bunch of people would play basketball during lunch down at Fike, you know faculty and so forth. And it use to be that lots of coaches would play. That would be their exercise for the day. I don't think any of the athletic coaches are on any of the lunchtime basketball teams anymore. Now so I really—somehow people were bumping elbows together, seeing each other and talking to each other but I don't know how to make this happen [Anthony]

My suggestion is to him is what I think he [athletic director] should do is take one of the football players who has a 350 coming in, struggling with academics. You should take on of the Calhoun Honors kids and you should make those guys roommates to the benefit of both. Both of those kids would come out better for that. And I think any series of very personal one-on-one or two-on-one

interactions that marry these groups is way better than what we have now.
[Charles]

But again to me, if we're gonna be in this together, it is partly policy and the big picture, cause that matters. But it only works if it's sort of at the troop level, which is you're about football quarterbacks and here's your roommate, the full scholarship, a student you guys interact, you're gonna rub off on each other and it's gonna eventually translate into a great thing for us. So I would say, don't put athletes apart whether it's their learning center or their living center or anything else. Bring everybody together, and then if you mean it, it's gonna be a much better sort of sense that we are One Clemson as opposed to athletics and academics. That's what I would do. [Charles]

I could offer a suggestion that I don't know how to implement. I think if you could have such as thing as required faculty member that all faculty had to go to that had the athletic director and a support staff person or two or three coaches talk about some of these things we are talking about here. I think there are probably young faculty that heard of Dabo Swinney stand up and talk about we talk to potential recruits for three or four years, we visit their home, we talk to them when it's allowed, we talk to them on the phone. I think faculty who haven't been as interested in athletics as me probably don't realize the degree of developing long-term personal interactions that happens on the recruiting front and how through that, coaches get an idea of whether someone is a high-character potential athlete, and whether they really want to recruit them, and how they are going to fit in their campus. So I think just hearing prominent coach or two, stand up and say, "Here's how we go about trying to recruit young men and women that you would be proud to be representatives of Clemson University. And we want them to do the very best we can in the classroom, and we want you to hold them to the same standards that you're holding all students, and we want it to be academically rigorous and enriching." If you can have that faculty member that says, "Oh I've got so-and-so linebacker in my class. They come all the time, but they don't pay much attention and they're not working that hard at it. And I don't think the coaches care and I don't think they get on their case." And have that coach there saying, I do care, I'm on their case, and I'm communicating with Vickery staff who are on their case. We're not just giving lip service, we want them to develop as students. We want them to become more knowledgeable, develop, in some cases, better work ethics, we want them to learn to become people who would be stronger interviewees, interviewing for jobs in the future. We're trying to develop people on all fronts as rigorously as possible. We do everything we can to do that and do that well. I think if all of the faculty heard that firsthand from the right slice of the athletic department, it could help make an impact on some people. But, I'm a realist to say if you set something up, said well March 20 from noon to one over lunch hour, athletic department officials are gonna be there to talk to faculty about we appreciate what you do and we're all in

this together. You wouldn't have but 43 faculty shown up when you wanted to have 700. So you know what I'm saying, just the reality is I think hearing what I know is the opinion and the desire of a lot of the athletic folks, I don't think I need to hear that. I think I'd pretty much know what they would say. But I think there are faculty that if they heard that firsthand, it could make an impact but I don't know how you entice them to be there to hear that and to listen and believe, hey there's more emphasis on what I'm trying to help with in student development than I realized it was. [Martin]

I think we want to give our student-athletes a degree. We want to give our coaches a sense that they're part of the teaching environment here. And they should take pride in that. And every now and then, they can be an example for one of our faculty members. I mean really, they are great teachers. I'm inspired when I go to the English department to observe teaching. I'm inspired when I go to practice to observe teaching. I'd like to get the English department faculty member with an assistant coach talking every now and then about how they do what they do. They're two separate worlds in many ways, and maybe they're two separate worlds between two departments here. But more of that communication we can have, the better off we would be. [Orlando]

Well since you said can and rather than is, I think there is potential there. One of the advantages that athletics has is that they have a huge amount of money. So compared to the rest of the university, they're swimming in cash. And one of the things that athletics could do would be to devote a small percentage of the money to supporting academics directly. If they did that, I really think that would go a long way toward helping faculty see the benefit because the other benefits are kind of intangible. Just to give you an idea. One of the things I'm thinking about pitching to our current athletic director. I'm not saying it's going to work but, "Why don't you give us say, \$2 million a year to the university and earmark that for programs that improve campus diversity." So this is one of the things we were talking about at the last meeting. Campus diversity, if you really take it seriously, it's going to cost some money and the university doesn't really have a lot of money. But if the athletic department were seen to be funding something like that academics do really care about, that makes the university a better place, I think that would go a long way towards reducing the amount of conflict. People go like "well maybe I don't like big-time football that much but we wouldn't have this amazing diversity program that's really changed the face of campus if it weren't for that money. So that's what I'm gonna try to get them to do. I don't know many schools that have succeeded in that kind of stuff (laughs) so I'd be surprised if it works. But maybe. [Brad]

Well, now I'm gonna sound naïve. I actually believe that having people talk to each other on a regular basis is a healthy thing. So, I think it would be a very good thing to have faculty leaders and athletic leaders get together on a regular basis

just to talk. It doesn't have to be about a particular policy. See that's what tends to happen now. We get together whenever there's a policy someone wants or there's a problem. [Brad]

The truth is complex and unfortunately the solutions are also probably pretty complex. Nothing is gonna get fixed quickly. Or it would've been fixed already. If there was an easy way to fix this, given a whole bunch of people are thinking about it who are really smart, it would've been fixed already. So to some extent, this is a social problem. Just like diversity. Ultimately a social problem. [Brad]

I think a savvy athletic administrator knows that he or she has to coalesce on a college campus, has to get along with the academic area. And it's just not showing up once a month at an athletic council meeting and giving a little report. It's being responsive attending a faculty senate meeting, if there's an issue. Working well with the faculty athletics representative, those types of things. [Paul]

You almost have to trust people, and you gotta trust the communication you have and keep working at it every day. And every now and then you'll have a breakthrough and it improves things. But that's the key, the communication. So that the faculty member's office is over knows just a little but more of what is happening over in athletics. And the president can be that facilitator, but there has to be a starting point of trust, or everything you hear reinforces those prejudices, you see what I mean? [Orlando]

So those differences aren't going to go away but if you have trust across there, then that's what we want. One of the ways I think you have trust is if everybody knows everybody. But those folks in athletics, nobody knows who they are, they're suspicious of everything they do, and it's happening the other way around too. [Anthony]

Well one thing, if I think back to the time I was an undergraduate, Frank Howard was the football coach and everything was centered in Fike, that's where all the dressing room were. And so, I think then, I knew all of the coaches, most of them, I knew all of the head coaches and they all knew me. And not just me, the rest of the student-athletes too and they would tend to come to track meets. We had faculty members who came out and helped at our track meets and things like that and there was a much more familiarity between athletics personnel and the people on campus. The town was smaller, student body was smaller, everything was smaller, it was just a different time. Now other than the faculty who are fans who follow athletics, I don't think any would recognize anybody other than Dabo because he's on TV frequently. They wouldn't know who the assistant coaches are or probably would recognize Jack Leggett. [Anthony]

Participants from athletics also discussed how the relationship could improve:

As far as if there was a platform for us to get on and really talk about why we do some of the things we do and really bridge the two together and I think the same thing can happen on the academic side because when policies are made on the academic side, there are times where it can effect maybe how we even recruit students. And athletics is saying, “You’re restricting me from who I can go recruit, and that’s hurting me as a coach and my job as a coach is to win.” And if I can’t recruit nationally for students, that other universities can and they see that as a disadvantage and it was never meant to be that way and it was never intended that way I’m sure on the academic side but I think that’s where we can develop a platform where we can share kind of some of those concerns. I think that is something that would be beneficial. [Eric]

You know, and I don’t know how you reach all the masses, that’s always the hill to climb. We interact with every faculty member that has a student-athlete in their class. Here in a few weeks we’re gonna send out progress reports so there’s gonna be about 5,000 courses that we’re gonna ask for information on. Well, we won’t get back—we’ll get back some great responses. Some will never respond because they choose not to engage in that process, which is their absolute right and we understand that. Sometimes I don’t think they answer because they don’t know why we’re asking. And what we do and I’ll tell them when I get in front of faculty is I always thank them for that participation and getting feedback and emailing us and communicating with us, because many times it’s hard for us to do our job until we know what the real problem is. Until we know that student is not doing this in class or what can we do to kind of coach them up to be better in your class, to be better engaged, to be more responsive, to be a better student, and really just kind of teach them that and I think that’s a service all students can benefit from. [Eric]

I’m one that I don’t meet no strangers, I’ll talk to anybody. The relationships that I had with some of the professors, they were so very professional. I didn’t bother professors, but they would always respond back to my emails and my telephone calls and it’s because of the relationships I’ve built with them prior to asking them for information on our athletes. It was very enjoyable, it really was. If I decided to leave my desk and to check on one student-athlete, knowing that professor knew I was going to come by and check, they would call me or email me and say, “Mark didn’t come to class that day.” That’s because of the relationship you have to have with your professors. They have a job to do and sometimes they go beyond the call of duty, but it depends on what type of relationship you will have with academic advising or Vickery Hall with the professors. I’m sure it’s still working, but this happened in the late 80s, early 90s when I was in Vickery Hall, but the relationship was awesome. It was awesome. [Irene]

I think we have to continue to keep academics, the professors, be involved in the process. For example, when we travel on the road, we provide a travel verification form to the professors, so that professor will know, okay Irene is going to be traveling with the track team, she will miss ABCD. That's a way to communicate with the professor to realize, this student is not just staying out of the class, but that person is representing Clemson University as an athlete. So the communication link is stronger and stronger and stronger, as far as I've seen it since 1978. [Irene]

But that's the only way, if you have a professor that doesn't understand athletics, then just reach out to that person, but the most important thing is for that student-athlete to realize that that professor loves what he or she does, and you need to respect that. [Irene]

Understanding Athletics and Student Athletes

Participants from athletics and academics both agreed that understanding athletics as a whole and the student athlete experience could be a possible solution. There was a consensus that the inner working of athletics is not understood as well as the experiences of student athletes. Athletic participants shared their thoughts:

I really think you have to get inside of it. Several members of the athletic council have had an opportunity to kind of travel with a team. And every single one of those faculty members have said, "I have a completely different understanding because I had no idea what they did." A lot of times, people only see the product on game day. They don't understand that 20 hours that week, the student has been engaged in the other activities and they're trying to balance their academics, because we require them to do both. But again it comes back to that understanding that the pressure the student-athlete is under, particularly those scholarship student-athletes, because there is a fear among student-athletes that, "If I can't get it done athletically, then I'm gonna lose my scholarship. So without my scholarship, I'm not here. My scholarship is a means for me to get my education. It's a means for me to participate in athletics." And if they just could see the other part of it, other than what just goes on game day and to really get a feel of what our student-athletes go through. [Giselle]

I just really think if people could see the inside, instead of just the outside, they would have more a different—and maybe that's something athletics needs to do with the university is give others on campus an inside look at what really goes on and not always try to paint that pretty picture of "Oh this is athletics. It's so

good.” To really see some of the struggles and what it takes to get to that end result. I think that would be a good idea. [Giselle]

The key thing is for Clemson itself is that athletics is an auxiliary, which means you generate your own revenue, what you raise is what you can spend. But the other thing is, is we can't do anything autonomously, we're not an incorporation, athletic association or something like that. We go by the same rules, everybody on campus goes through, same processes through the state, our employees are state employees, and those type things. The only thing that's changed really is that people know everything that is going on. [Neil]

So it's this instant gratification I think sport allows us to step back from that because you don't just win the game. Well maybe for us, you and me, on Saturdays we go to the stadium and we either win or we lose and it all happens on Saturday. And that's my experience now. I don't have to go out and practice, I don't have to do all the things they've got to do. I just show up on Saturday. I don't really have an impact on the outcome of the game, but I show up on Saturday and I am emotionally invested but that's an instant gratification thing for me. When they're participating in the sport, they have to delay that. They have to go through two-a-days. They have to do all the game week preparation that takes place before they can get to Saturday, before they can get to that opportunity. And I think that's something is huge. I think it's a huge teaching point more so now than it probably was when I was in school and when I was actually participating. [Darren]

Absolutely, but to hear the backstories a lot of times. One, what it took these students to get here and a lot of times when they get here, we have student-athletes that don't want to go home, because they don't want to go back to that environment. This is the only positive environment, they've ever been involved in. And if I think if people really understood that, and you add it with their responsibilities as a student, and you add that with responsibilities as an athlete, and then you have those that are still trying to work, just because again, they're having to send stuff home. We have student-athletes and the only meals they have are the meals that we're providing to them because they selected the smallest meal plan or they didn't select a meal plan, because they're not a full scholarship and didn't have the money to get it, and they're just trying to cut wherever they can so that they can kind of help their parents out. I think if they could really just see the inside, instead of just looking at the product on game days, where you have all of the bells and the whistles and try to paint it up and make it look real shiny and pretty. It takes a lot for some of those students to get there. And I think if they really understood that part of it, they would see a different side. [Giselle]

I traveled with one of my teams and it was funny because every time we stopped, whether it was on the bus, or at the airport waiting, every time there's a down

moment, our students are in their books. Because they're just trained as, "if I stop, I have to study," and to see that they're not just throwing it off. They're taking every moment they can because they don't have a lot of time. You figured in 15 hours a week for class, if they're in season, they can't practice more than 20, so that's 35 hours right there. And sometimes they have 10 hours of mandatory study hall, which is a good thing, but again it's more time taken away from them. So when I saw them do that, they take any little minute that they have to try to study or to try and do something. [Giselle]

So I think the same thing today is, there's not any sport here, except football and basketball, that earns money. We don't make any money off baseball or any other sport. So basically those two sports pretty much fit the bill for everything. For the salaries, what we make in football and basketball. So I think, and I've heard a lot of people say that if athletics were a business, they'd have two sports, football and basketball, you wouldn't have all the other sports. Unfortunately, we're not just a black and white business, we're into opportunities and those kind of things. [Fred]

But relative to our counterparts, we don't receive very much. We're not getting a lot of resources from the university from that perspective. We basically have to pay our way from what we can generate from ticket sales, donations, and sponsorships, television, licensing, and all those other areas. We do get a university fee, which I would argue to do away with the university fee, just have an all-sports ticket. And you have a reasonable number of student seats so that you can still do what you need to do with the general public but still take care of the demand for your students. But it's a voluntary expense for a student as oppose to right now there's some that will argue that you shouldn't have a fee. [John]

As an athletic administration, you can say I wanna build a new coliseum, but the president is going to say yes or no. You can say I wanna hire Chereese for \$500,000, but it still has to be approved by the university. We're just another department in the university. We are not separate in any way. If we get raises, they have to be approved by the president, or the finance committee, or the salaries committee, on the board of trustees. [Neil]

People are very passionate and I will say this, that a perception, and this is not a negative perception, but sometimes people get this impression that the athletic department at Clemson has all these resources. And quite frankly when I came in, I had that impression. But Clemson is very sound financially in their athletic department, but they just don't have money to throw away and there's a lot of people who think that we have all this money and we are doing this. [John]

Some of the academic participants have had a better insight into athletics. They also shared their thoughts in understanding athletics:

Well there is one thing that influences this thing a bit. Let's take—there's a difference between the athletics department and say the department of mechanical engineering or the physics department. Here, athletics is what we call an auxiliary enterprise, so is parking, so is the dining facilities, and so forth. Which means they have to support themselves. So now if you're gonna—how does athletics make money. Well they sell tickets, they get money from the conference, for television appearances and things of that sort. And then we have IPTAY, which support scholarships for things related to scholarships. So if they have to generate all of their revenue, they have to be given some considerations that you don't have to give the mechanical engineering department. The business, so there are some differences there. Then the success of athletics is measured by wins and losses, championships, and things like that. And that's not the way the success of mechanical engineering is measured or physics or anything else. So there's a different sort of necessity associated with athletics than there is associated with all these other things. The fact that the necessities are different means that it might be disagreements, and separation and everything else. But, there's a difference in what you do if you are running athletics and if you're running mechanical engineering. So those differences aren't going to go away but if you have trust across there, then that's what we want. [Anthony]

I had a chance, two falls ago, to travel with the football team. Went up to a game in Wake Forest, Thursday night football game. We got back 4:30, we came back after the game and they had to shower and do interviews and had to go through airport security and all that stuff. I got home by four, those kids were expected to be in class by 11. I'm still in the bed at 11. It's a different set of expectations, these kids have obviously made some choices that they want their college experience to include intercollegiate athletics. The university wants them to participate, but because of that, you can't always expect them to operate like the other students. [Luke]

We basically have a net zero movement between the two. There are, when you take a total of all the things, now there are scholarships that IPTAY gives, the revenue from IPTAY goes to scholarships that are open to all students. They pay for all the scholarships for student-athletes. They make a major gift to facilities, but those are all there. So the things that actually come to Clemson from athletics, to Clemson academics through Clemson athletics is a major scholarship, one of the largest that exists. The things that go the other way are the tuition charges for out-of-state student-athletes for example, we don't charge out-of-state student-athlete tuition the same, they're the same as if they were in-state. So it's a savings that comes there. When you total those up, there's just about a wash between the two. [Orlando]

It appears that those in academics usually have a different perspective when they better understand the student athlete experience. They understand the differences in the pressures and expectations as compared to the general student body.

The Future of the Athletic-Academic Relationship

While the participants believed the overall relationship between athletics and academics is positive, they also discussed what could destroy the relationship.

Participants also discussed how the relationship between athletics and academics could become too close:

It's one of those things that you have to nurture it, you have to grow it, you've got to ensure that it always remains positive for a university and not a negative from being run in the wrong direction. [John]

Let me make another point. It is possible for that separation within the Clemson umbrella to be too close. You don't want to get so familiar that a coach and a tutor have a relationship, such that you don't see the importance of keeping some sort of separation, you see what I'm saying? [Orlando]

If it's so close, you're starting to get into each other's territory and responsibility, then you began to get confused about whose responsibility is this, and then I think you went too far. I think we are doing fine with this. [Orlando]

That being said, I think you have to be very careful to make sure there's as many firewalls as possible so that the money pouring into athletics doesn't have a bad influence on academics and that the athletic people don't sort of encroach on the purposes of the academic side. I think it can be done and I think Clemson does a pretty good job of doing it. But it's a constant struggle, because there's a constant pressure, maybe that's the right way of putting it, from the athletic side to get more involved and they've got the money to make that happen. [Brad]

If there's anything else I can say is to keep a positive relationship is to make sure we are doing everything in our power to prevent any sort of academic dishonesty. Because that will ruin an athletic and academic relationship between an athletic department and a university faster than anything. And it's something that you just don't get over. [Eric]

Furthermore, they discussed the where they saw the future of the academic-athletic relationship:

Athletic staff appreciate what the faculty do, but if you take that to the student level, you'd like to see that students strongly support their fellow students and their athletic endeavors and what not. It seems that attendance and student support is very good for football, but it just hasn't been as robust this year for men's basketball as I would have expected it to be. It's not ever as strong for women's basketball as you'd like it to be or for baseball. I don't know. I guess I'm just saying I don't have magic ideas of how to do it, but I think somehow—I already said the very good athletic programs kind of tend to attract a student body at some extent is more interested in participating in sports-related things and that would include supporting intercollegiate athletics as spectators and yet I don't see that being as quite as strong as it could be. [Martin]

Now I do think this, I think not only at Clemson but going forward with escalating salaries of college coaches, with the building of facilities, that they're spending significant amount of money on, not just here, but everywhere, I think faculty is eventually emerge its head and say, "Wait a minute. You guys are spending a lot more money than we are investing in the institution." And I think you might see a little bit of a crevice happening because everybody is gonna fight for what they think is you know—and we are kind of spending a lot of money, and there is a lot of money in TV, and there is a lot of money in athletics but I do think that the university, even here, I think our infrastructure, could be more buildings, more classrooms. So I think you're gonna see somebody that says, "Hey wait a minute. You're gonna spend this over there, what about building us a business school," you know, or something. So I think in the next couple of years, you're gonna see a divide. [Fred]

Well I think what you're gonna have is you have some skewed investments. I mean nobody on campus makes \$23 million in the next eight years except Dabo, even a president. I'm sure you have faculty members who are on the verge of doing something with cancer—so I think you're gonna—they understand Dabo has a great visible role, but I think you're gonna see academics kind of raise its head a little bit by saying, "Look, now we know you're paying them a lot. We know you're putting a lot," so I think you're gonna see a little bit of a divide where athletics is gonna want their investment into the campus as well as in athletics. I don't think they're opposed to us, but I think when it gets skewed, I think that's when they're gonna rear their head a little bit. "Hey we need a new business school. We need a new nursing school. You guys are building a new basketball facility." So I think you're gonna see that down the road. [Fred]

So I hope that the new president, new provost, the new athletic director sort of at least consider there may be other perspectives that don't eliminate athletics and don't reduce the winning and don't give us a competitive disadvantage. I would have to think we're smart enough in how we do all that, but still get academically stronger in terms of athletics. We're smart people. There have to be answers to that. So my hope would be that Clemson actually takes the lead on some of this.
[Charles]

If all of us, even though we'll have our differences about things, can agree that we're gonna be great at both and that is one step taken in a positive direction, one area is a step taken in the other, back and forth. Then we really have a bright future and I think that's where we are and I that's why I feel really good about what's unfolding here and what Clemson's potential is and if we just keep this momentum going, we'll do some great things. You ain't seen nothing yet.
[Orlando]

In the theme, *The Possibilities*, participants discussed different ways for the interactions between athletics and academics can improve. While they may not always see eye-to-eye, there is an opportunity for the dynamic to be stronger.

Chapter Summary

The findings in this chapter focused on the dynamics between athletics and academics during the President Barker era. This chapter presented how athletics and academics currently interact with each other, based on the experiences of the participants. Documents also further supported the findings. The findings also showed that the current dynamic between athletics and academics is influenced by what occurred in the 80s and 90s. Based on what happened in the past, athletics and academics worked together to create better policies for student athletes, while also trying to avoid any future violations. There are still some perceptions that athletics is seen as a priority over academics, however, Clemson has been committed to being successful in both, as reflected by the leadership of President Barker.

Chapter Six provides a discussion of the findings, including how the findings were applied through the theoretical framework. In addition, implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. The study explored the role athletics has played at Clemson and the interactions between members of the academic and athletic communities from 1980 - 2014. In particular, the study explored the dynamics from the experiences of current and former athletic administrators, university administrators, and faculty. The participants selected in this study were those who had decision-making power and had interacted with the other area in some capacity.

Textural and Structural Descriptions of the Athletic-Academic Dynamic

According to Moustakas (1994), textural descriptions provide a description of what was experienced by the participants and structural descriptions provide a description of how it was experienced by the participants. For this study, the textural description describes what the participants experienced in the dynamics between athletics and academics. The textural descriptions for the study are as follows:

Athletic administrators experienced positive interactions with academics. They believed athletics could not do their job without the help and support from academics. While they have positive interactions, athletic administrators also felt there is a misunderstanding of athletics from academics. Learning more about athletics and communicating with one another can improve the dynamics.

University administrators experienced positive interactions with academics. They have a consistent working relationship with athletics, which has built a strong and

trusting relationship. While participants had a strong interaction, they believed overall, academics and athletics needed to communicate more with each other to build trust.

Faculty experienced positive interactions with athletics, however, they felt disconnected from athletics. The disconnection at times results in tensions between academics and athletics. Faculty members felt athletics and academics need to interact outside of progress reports and campus-wide committees to build a stronger dynamic.

For this study, the structural description is the context in which the participants had the experience in the athletic-academic dynamic. The structural description for the study is as follows:

Participants experienced the athletic-academic dynamic through the experiences they had working with members from the other area. Participants' experiences were influenced on the constructed views they created about the other area based on prior knowledge and experiences. These experiences determined whether they had a positive or negative perception of the athletic-academic dynamic.

The textural and structural descriptions are synthesized into a composite description of the essences of experience of the whole phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The essence of the experience of the dynamics of athletics and academics is as follows:

Based on the experiences of the participants, the current dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University is overall positive because of the commitment made to excellence and integrity in both areas. Athletics has played

an important role in the growth and success of Clemson University. Participants' experiences also indicate there is a disconnection between athletics and academics due to the lack of understanding on both sides and limited communication. Constant, open communication between athletics and academics will continue to build trust and a stronger relationship, where both sides see the value in each other.

Summary of the Findings

The historical themes, *NCAA Infractions*, *Student Athlete Admissions*, and *Vickery Hall*, provided an overview of the dynamics between athletics and academics during the 1980s and 1990s. The findings revealed, as Clemson University was becoming a major factor in athletics, the behavior of the athletic department, in particular coaches, caused concern from academics. NCAA infractions and the special admissions of student athletes were the major sources of tension between athletics and academics. As a result, Clemson had to make a decision to move in a different direction, and not continue to go down this path. By Clemson committing to academics, they increased their admission requirements and developed policies to prevent similar violations from occurring. In addition, to take a better interest in the academics of student athletes, athletics and academics worked together, despite the tensions. As a result, they created the philosophies and programs for Vickery Hall.

The dynamics between academics and athletics at Clemson University has not always been portrayed as positive. In the theme, *Learning from the Past and Others*, findings revealed events that occurred that created great tension between athletics and

academics. Participants briefly discussed the major violations that occurred at Clemson during the 80s and 90s and how that impacted the dynamics. In addition, the findings revealed that Clemson looks at what is occurring at other universities to learn from their mistakes. Furthermore, new technology and social media provides opportunities for external constituents to try to find and report violations as well as try to influence the recruitment and admissions of student athletes. Due to all of these factors, athletics and academics have worked together over the years to establish new policies and preventative measures to avoid a repeat of prior violations, such as a stricter admissions review process, and to prevent future violations.

In the theme, *Behind the Communication*, findings revealed the day-to-day interactions between athletics and academics. Findings revealed there are more interactions between the athletic department and the university administration due to the decisions that impact student athletes such as admissions, financial aid, and eligibility. The findings revealed faculty have more interactions with Athletic Academic Services (Vickery Hall) due to having student athletes in their courses. There is limited interaction between the athletic department and faculty. The only time faculty members tend to interact with athletic administrators is during task forces and other campus committees. The findings also revealed the Athletic Council served as a liaison between athletics and academics, where academic representatives can communicate items about athletics back to their respective areas. While the athletic council served as a liaison between athletics and academics, members on the athletic council can only make recommendations and not

enforce anything. Therefore, it is not a good representation of athletics and academics forming a partnership on campus.

Findings from this theme also revealed the disconnection between athletics and academics at Clemson. The disconnection was primarily between athletics and the faculty. The disconnection is due to the perception that athletics has more power than academics. This perception has led to tensions between both sides, such as having to excuse athletes for travel during the week or having to cancel classes for a Thursday night game. The findings also revealed there is a lack of understanding between both areas of how each area functions, which results in a disconnection.

In the theme, *Priorities*, findings revealed Clemson gives priority to both academics and athletics, because it had a goal to be successful in both. The findings revealed the difficulties in Clemson being competitive while trying to remain an institution of academic excellence. Being competitive in athletics can result in decisions that do not please academics such as facilities and coaches' salaries. The biggest concern among the faculty participants was the priorities of student athletes, in particular football and basketball players, where athletics becomes a priority over their academics. While the participants in academics do not want Clemson at a competitive disadvantage, they also discussed their version of an ideal athletic program.

The findings in the *Priorities* theme also revealed the goals and values of athletics and academics and how that influences their priorities. Athletics and academics have different goals and values in their respective roles, but they both have in common is the academic success of students. While there is this concern about Clemson giving priority

to athletics and academics, the findings also revealed that Clemson is moving in the right direction to be successful in both.

The findings in the theme, *Academic Impact*, revealed the academic impact on athletics in Clemson. Participants discussed that having a strong academic program increases the quality of the student body and also helps in recruiting student athletes. The findings revealed Clemson's admissions requirements and the NCAA eligibility requirements impact the recruitment and admissions of student athletes. Clemson's admissions standards are higher than the NCAA eligibility requirements, so they are selective in which student athletes they choose to admit. While some may think it puts them at a disadvantage because they may turn down an athlete that another school will accept, Clemson has made it clear that they will not lower their standards. While Clemson has higher admissions standards, they also do provide opportunities for student athletes that do not meet the requirements to be admitted. The Athletic Admissions Review Committee evaluates student athletes that did not meet the admissions standards to determine if they can be successful at Clemson.

The findings revealed there are conflicting thoughts on the academics of student athletes. Participants in athletics discussed that the academic quality of student athletes is higher than in the past and has continually improved over the years. Academic participants agreed to a certain extent that the student athlete academic quality has improved, but still had reservations about how close they are to the academic quality of the student body. However, the process of admitting student athletes that do not meet the admissions standards appears to be the source of conflict between academics and athletics

when it comes to student athletes' academics. Participants addressed the stigma about the student athlete being academically underprepared and whether they can be successful at Clemson. While academic participants agreed that students who do not meet the requirements have the potential to be successful at Clemson, there was a conflict on whether student athletes below the requirement are being admitted due to their potential to succeed or if they were being admitted primarily on their athletic talent, knowing they will not succeed academically.

Regardless of the academic background of the student athletes, all of the participants agreed that once a student athlete, or any student, is admitted, Clemson has a responsibility to ensure all of the resources are in place for that student to be successful. For student athletes, this is where Vickery Hall comes into play. Vickery Hall provides the academic support for student athletes to help them navigate and be successful academically at Clemson. Participants shared success stories of student athletes that did not meet the admission requirements, but graduated.

Clemson's goal of being a Top 20 institution with national championships supports the notion of athletics and academics being inseparable. In the theme, *Inseparable*, the findings revealed the athletic impact at Clemson and how it has played a vital role in the success of the institution. The findings revealed that athletics provides an outlet to give Clemson national exposure. Athletics serves as a marketing arm to the institution and its visibility helps in recruiting students to apply to Clemson. Since athletics is a marketing tool for the institution, its reputation can also positively and

negatively impact the reputation of the overall university. As a result of the athletic impact, athletics and academics cannot be separated at Clemson.

The benefit of athletics and academics being inseparable is the impact it has on campus. The findings revealed that having cohesiveness between athletics and academics enhances the college experience for students. It also attracts a certain type of student to Clemson who wants a great academic program with a successful athletics program. However, while athletics has made a tremendous impact on Clemson, the findings revealed that athletics should not reach a point where they overpower academics. Participants from both athletics and academics were clear that athletics should continue to play a supportive role in the success of Clemson.

In the theme, *The Possibilities*, the findings revealed how athletics and academics can build a stronger relationship and improve their interactions. The findings revealed how the participants believed the athletic-academic dynamic has changed over the last 30 years. The findings also revealed athletics and academics both believe there needs to be more interactions with each other outside of mandatory formal interactions (e.g. committees, classes, admissions). Athletics believed academics should get more insight into athletics and the student athlete experience, which can help improve the understanding and the disconnection. While there is room for improvement in the interaction, participants also cautioned that the relationship between athletics should not get too close, where boundaries are being crossed. They also cautioned the direction intercollegiate athletics is going as a whole in regards to increased commercialization, can potentially impact the current and future dynamics. Participants had mixed thoughts

on the future of the athletic-academic dynamics, but some remained optimistic about the potential for a stronger relationship.

Many of the documents further supported the themes that emerged out of the interview data. Common themes among the documents also focused on the role of athletics, academic policies, admissions procedures, violations, and sources of tensions between athletics and academics. Some additional information also emerged out of the document analysis that was not found in the interviews, such as the tensions between athletics, football primarily, and academics surrounding the issues of admissions of student athletes.

The Dynamics between Athletics and Academics

The central research question in the study asked about the nature of the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson. The study found the dynamics between athletics and academics to be complex. Participants discussed how the dynamics between athletics and academics are positive, mainly because athletics has not been in any trouble. There are more positives than negatives occurring so that contributes to a positive perception. Also, in comparison to other schools with high-profile sports, Clemson is doing a good job in balancing academics and athletics. Clemson has a great academic reputation and overall the student athletes are also doing well academically.

While overall it appears that the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson are positive, the dynamics between athletics and the faculty are unsteady. Overall there is a sense that faculty are supportive of athletics at Clemson. However, on any campus with a high-profile athletic program, there is always going to be a percentage

that is anti-athletics, regardless of how great the program operates. Participants discussed that for those who are anti-athletics, with the exception of a few, they are not as vocal on Clemson and tend to ignore it, unless something major occurs. However, for the faculty that support athletics or believe there is value to an athletic program, there are still some underlying tensions between them and athletics. The underlying tension is the result of the limited interaction between the athletic department and the faculty. Faculty members tend to only interact with Vickery Hall as it relates to students in their classes. They do not have an opportunity to interact with athletic administrators outside of the selected ones who serve on the Athletic Council and other committees. Since there is limited interaction, it leads to a misunderstanding of athletics that creates a disconnection between the two areas. As a result, shared meaning about how the athletic department operates is created and institutionalized.

The first sub-research question further explored how the dynamic has changed from 1980 – 2014. The 80s and the 90s had an impact on the current dynamic between athletics and academics. Clemson won its first football national championship in 1981, thus making Clemson a factor in football. With the increased in commercialization of sports, Clemson had to keep up to remain competitive. During the 80s and early 90s, the academic standards were not as strict for Clemson or the NCAA. There were student athletes being admitted primarily for their athletic ability. In addition, Clemson had four major NCAA violations in football and basketball. All of these factors contributed to a divide between athletics and academics.

However, Clemson reached a point to where it had to start doing things differently. New infrastructures and policies were created to help Clemson move in the right direction. In 1991, Vickery Hall was formed and became the first standalone academic support center for student athletes in the nation. As a result, 23 years later, the academic quality of student athletes is higher. The process of admissions for student athletes changed, making sure that multiple administrators evaluate the documents to avoid any NCAA violations. There were multiple policies that were created with the help of members from academics. Without these changes, Clemson would not have the same positive dynamic between athletics and academics today.

The second sub-research question explored the dynamics through the role athletics has played at Clemson from 1980 – 2014. Athletics has been an important factor for Clemson since the 19th century. It has served as a branding tool to help recruit students to Clemson as well as recruit potential donors. During the televised broadcasts, Clemson has commercials that promote the academic side of the institution. A student who wants a great education, but also loves sports, can find both at Clemson. Having a well-rounded, high academic student is beneficial to the academic side of Clemson. Clemson is recognized for its town-gown relationship and athletics has played an important role in the community. When football season arrives, there is guaranteed of about 80,000 people in town and many of them are patronizing the local businesses. The football games also provide an opportunity for alumni to come back and show their pride and love for Clemson.

As other schools can attest to, the role of athletics also impacts the reputation of academics. Clemson has a reputation of having great academics and athletics, however, anything that happens in athletics can put Clemson in a bad light academically. The past violations can attest to that. For example, if Clemson had a top-ranked student athlete, but it is publicly known that he has a 3rd grade reading level, that would impact academics because that side would be questioned. While there are general students who struggle academically, student athletes receive the most attention when it comes to their academics.

The final sub-research question explored how the historical developments impacted the dynamics between athletics and academics that included Title IX, diversity, and academics. Title IX and diversity, both important developments had more of an indirect impact in the athletic-academic dynamic. Out of the historical developments that were discussed in Chapter Two, only one emerged in the findings to better inform about the dynamics between athletics and academics. The academic development findings focused on the academics of student athletes, which included the admissions of student athletes and the development of Vickery Hall.

The academic impact was a strong factor in the dynamics between athletics and academics from 1980 - 2014. As discussed earlier, the academic quality for student athletes has improved tremendously since the 80s. The gap between the grades and tests scores of student athletes and the general student body continues to narrow. Since Clemson's goal to become a Top 20 institution, they have higher admission standards, which help recruit student athletes with higher academics.

While the interactions between athletics and academics vary, what they both have in common is that they have to interact with student athletes. Both academics and athletics want student athletes to be successful and graduate, but there appears to be a view that athletics is priority over academics. Faculty tend to believe this because of the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics. Student athletes are missing classes due to travel during the week or mandatory team meetings, making it difficult for them to be successful in the classroom. In addition, tension occurs when discussing whether student athletes who do not meet the minimum standards should be admitted. Some in academics believe that athletics are just admitting underprepared students that are great athletically. However, for student athletes that do not meet the minimum, athletics has tried to only request admittance for those they believe can be successful at Clemson. Coaches may want a certain athlete, but if the AARC believes he or she will not be successful, the student athlete will not be admitted. The study revealed that athletics and academics are on the same page when wanting to admit students that can be successful, not only those that can help win games.

Discussion through the Lens of the Theoretical Framework

The study used the theoretical lens of institutional and neo-institutional theory to explore the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. Chapter One provided a theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) in how the dynamics between athletics and academics were explored. The theoretical framework for this study utilized Scott's (2001) three pillars of institutions. The regulative, normative and cultural cognitive pillars influenced each other in the athletic-academic dynamic. According to

Scott (2003), the pillars are “always in a state of dynamic tension—each existing and changing somewhat independently of the other while at the same time exerting continuing influence on the others” (p. 20). Organizations legitimize their behavior based on their beliefs, which become so powerful that they conform to the norms, even if there are no advantages to it (Scott, 2001). The findings revealed differences in the rules, norms, and shared conceptions within the old and new dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 display the differences and how each theme fits into the theoretical framework.

The Old Dynamics Between Athletics and Academics

In the old dynamic between athletics and academics, the normative pillar influenced the regulative pillar. The normative pillar consists of the themes *Student Athlete Admissions* and *Priorities*. It was a norm to admit student athletes into Clemson who met the basic NCAA eligibility standards. Clemson’s admissions standards were pretty loose as well. The priority was to keep winning and to bring in the best athletes that could do so, regardless of their academic quality. This was prevalent among the fans and even the board of trustees. Coaches were legitimizing their actions based on the norm to win at all costs. Winning national championships and going to tournaments legitimized their behavior. However, winning by any means necessary sometimes resulted in rule violations, which punished Clemson for some of its actions, as reflected in the theme, *NCAA Infractions*, located in the regulative pillar.

The *Behind the Communication* theme is located in the cultural-cognitive pillar. Due to some of the controversies, there was a shared understanding among academics

that athletics was becoming too big. This shared understanding impacted how academics viewed athletics, whether the perception was accurate or not. The athletic department was committed to student success and the integrity of Clemson, but it was the coaches, well some of them, that were becoming more powerful than both the athletic department and the administration wanted, thus influencing those shared conceptions among academics.

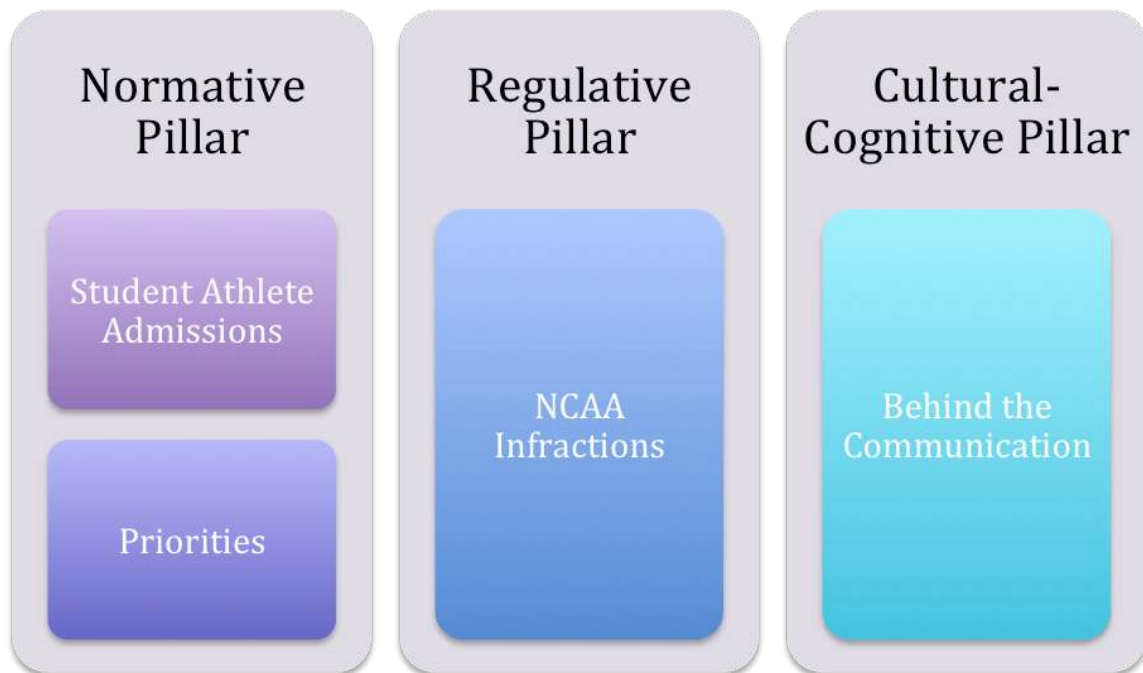


Figure 6.1. Theoretical Framework of the Old Athletic-Academic Dynamic at Clemson University.

The New Dynamic Between Athletics and Academics

Themes in the old norms may not be in the new dynamic, because as rules change, new things become norms, which also changes the symbols associated with athletics and academics. In looking at the current dynamics between athletics and academics, the regulative pillar consists of the themes *Learning from the Past* and *Others* and *Academic Impact*, the normative pillar consists of the themes *Vickery Hall*,

Priorities, and *The Possibilities*, and the cultural-cognitive pillar consists of the themes *Behind the Communication* and *Inseparable*.

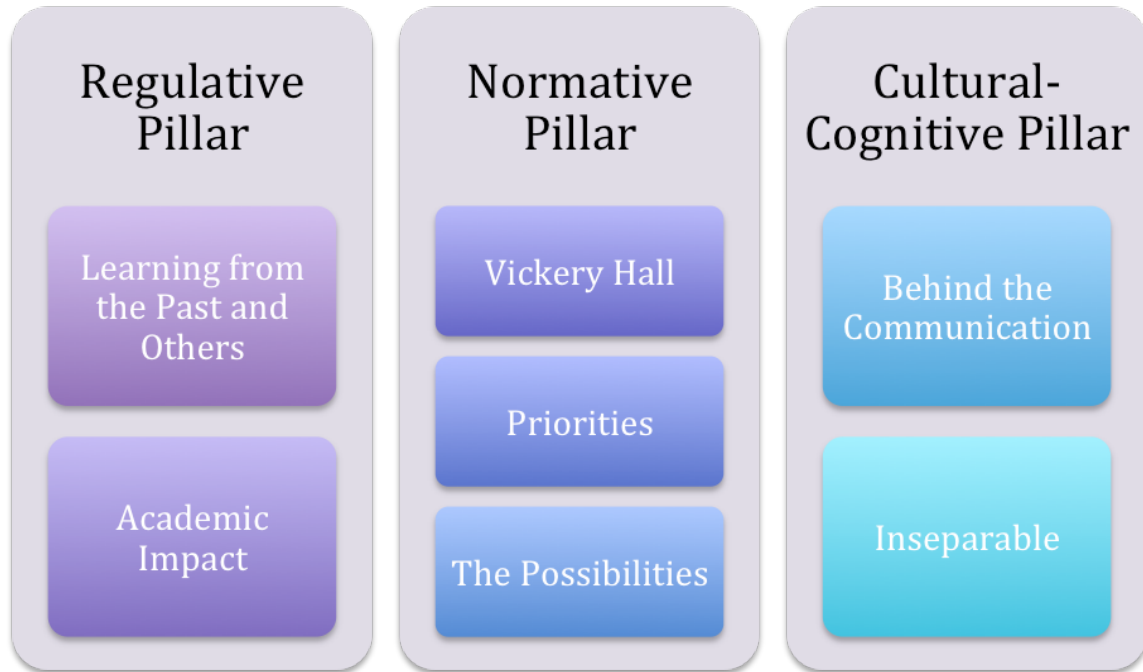


Figure 6.2. Theoretical Framework of the New Athletic-Academic Dynamic at Clemson University.

In the new dynamic, the regulative and normative pillars influence each other. As a result of old norms in the past, athletics and academics created new policies and preventative measures to avoid any future major violations. While winning was still a norm, winning within the rules became the new norm. Furthermore, the academics of student athletes became a priority, so Vickery Hall became a norm to help address the academic needs of student athletes. While some on academics may still believe that athletics is a priority, they can all agree the academic quality of student athletes has improved.

President Barker's goals for Clemson to become a Top 20 institution that won national championships created a new norm of athletics and academics both being a priority emerged. This resulted in creating higher academic standards and a shared understanding that Clemson wanted to excel in both athletics and academics. Athletics needed academics to attract high quality student athletes. Academics needed athletics to attract more students, therefore increasing the academic quality of the general student body. While there were some in academics that still believed that athletics did not value academics, the findings revealed that there is an perception that the dynamics between athletics and academics are positive. The theme, *The Possibilities*, is a future norm. If athletics and academics communicate more and attempt to better understand each other, it can result in a new norm that athletics and academics need each other in order to thrive at Clemson University.

Additional Discussion of the Theoretical Framework

The regulative pillar consists of rules that reward or punishes behavior (Scott, 2001). In athletics, the NCAA, the ACC, and Clemson have policies and regulations that impact their study. In academics, the university, individual departments, and the government establish rules, regulations, and policies that impact the behavior of members. In regards to the study, the regulative pillar is applicable when academics establish rules for athletics. While members in academics believe that they don't have any influence over athletics, the findings showed that they do. For example, athletics has to follow the curriculum requirements in order for their student athletes to graduate. Student athletes also have to abide by the classroom policies in order to pass their

courses. The regulative pillar indicates that the curriculum and academic policies constrain the behavior of student athlete academics. The selective curriculum and the class times for certain classes force student athletes into particular majors. While a football player may want to be an engineering major, the lab times are offered when he is most likely at practice. On the administration side, there are rules in place where athletics cannot move forward with any projects such as facilities building, without the approval from the university. In addition, the regulative pillar indicates athletics is constrained by schedules created from the television contracts and conference requirements that forces Clemson to have student athletes travel during the, even if they prefer them to be in class.

The normative pillar consists of the norms and values that guide the behavior of institutions (Scott, 2001). One of the themes, *Priorities*, highlighted the values in athletics and academics that guide what they prioritize. The academic participants valued academic freedom, honesty, integrity, teaching, and research, to name a few, which guides how function in their job responsibilities. The athletic participants valued honesty, integrity, teamwork, and winning within the rules. Academics and athletics both mentioned honesty and integrity as their common values, but they also have a common value in student success. Academics valued student learning and achievement, which guides the participants' teaching and advising. While faculty may believe that the "student" in student athlete is not first, the normative pillar indicates that providing opportunities for student achievement is the main priority in athletics. Athletics participants also valued student achievement in regards obtaining a degree, but they also wanted their student athletes to value discipline, responsibility, commitment, and

persistence. While the end goal is for students to be successful and graduate from Clemson, the values in academics and athletics guide how they implement different practices for student success. Elements of the values in athletics and academics can be found in the overall values of Clemson. The study also found that Clemson as a whole values family, tradition, civic responsibility, and a competitive spirit academically and athletically.

The cultural-cognitive pillar consists of the shared conceptions that create meaning within the institution (Scott, 2001). The study revealed that members in the athletic and academic communities constructed different meanings of the athletic and academic dynamic. The views on the dynamic are based on their role at Clemson. Academic participants had a tendency to have similar views and athletic participants had a tendency to have similar views in describing the athletic-academic dynamic at Clemson. This is primarily based on the interactions between the two areas. For example, faculty participants, that have limited interactions with athletic administrators, shared similar thoughts on that the athletic department prioritizes athletic commitments over academic commitments for student athletes. Academic participants that had more interactions with athletics shared similar views that athletic priorities are focused on student athlete academics. Athletic participants shared the same views that the faculty tend to be the ones to misunderstand athletics, and are usually the most vocal about their views.

Scott's (2001) three pillars of institutions allowed the researcher to further explore why members in athletics and academics hold certain views of the other. These views

impact how the view the dynamics between athletics and academics. The theoretical framework highlights that there is at times a misunderstanding on both sides in viewing the other area. If there is a better understanding of what impacts the behavior on both ends, then newly constructed views of the dynamics can occur within the cultural-cognitive pillar, thus also influencing the normative and regulative pillars.

Limitations

The study has several limitations that impact the data collection, data analysis and findings of the study. As mentioned in Chapter One, this study is not generalizable. The study interviewed 16 participants that described their views on the athletic-academic dynamic based on their experiences. While participants offered in-depth descriptions of the dynamics, they do not represent views and experiences of all athletic administrators, university administrators, and faculty at higher education institutions, where the dynamics may vary. However, the participants do provide insight into the athletic-academic dynamic that may have commonalities at other institutions.

A second limitation is the data collection process. During the interviews, participants' responses could have been affected by the possibility of being identified due to the nature of their position. In addition, the documents collected are limited because of potential missing documents that can provide an accurate account of the dynamics between athletics and academics. Archival data cannot be checked for accuracy and the researcher does not know the reasoning behind the creation of the documents. However, using interviews and documents together increased the strength of the study and provided a complete picture of the athletic-academic dynamic.

A third limitation was the actual documents collected. In looking at the archival documents related to the athletic and academic dynamics, documents from Athletic Council were the most prevalent. Athletic Council documents consisted of meeting agendas, minutes, and reports from the council and its committees. In addition, newspaper articles were prevalent in the documents and provided additional information about what was occurring at Clemson. While the perspective from newspaper articles can be biased, it helped the researcher further look into some events that she did not discover in the documents that were initially found. What appeared to be absent from the documents is the perspective from other committees or groups on campus. While the athletic council and committees have members from the academic community serve on it, there is a perspective missing from those that do not serve on those committees, but may serve on other councils or belong to another group that may have views on athletics.

Implications for Future Research

This study provided another lens for understanding the dynamics between athletics and academics. Studies on the dynamic tend to be from the lens of the experiences of student athletes. This study used administrators from athletics and academics to gain insight in the athletic-academic dynamic. In the role intercollegiate athletics plays in higher education, it is important for continued research to explore the athletic impact in higher education. Therefore, this study has multiple implications for future research.

One, the study can be replicated and study each administrative group separately. This will provide the opportunities to interview additional members in each group. For

example, one study could include faculty experiences in athletics and expand the study to all faculties regardless of interaction with athletics. This study only used university administrators from academic affairs, but it could be expanded to administrators in student affairs and other academic affairs areas that were not represented.

Second, this study could be replicated at multiple institutions to explore whether the dynamics are different at other institutions. The study could look at institutions with high-profile sports, but in different conferences to determine if there are any differences for those in the larger Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) conferences from those in the smaller FBS conferences. Furthermore, this study can explore the dynamics in other divisions (e.g. Football Championship Subdivision, Division II, III).

Third, this study could use other methods to explore the dynamics between athletics and academic. The researcher could use quantitative or mixed methods to examine the dynamics. Using quantitative methods allows increased access to a larger number of participants. Mixed methods would also be a beneficial method. For example, a quantitative study could be added to the current qualitative study to see if these views are similar across multiple administrators at Clemson.

While this study focused on institutions with high-profile sports and the findings centered on the dynamics based on Clemson football, this dynamic can be explored at looking at other sports. There are more research possibilities with this study.

Implications for Practice

The implications of the findings are also applicable to practice at Clemson, and possibly other institutions. While the study highlights a great athletic-academic dynamic

with positive interactions, the primary practical application is building a stronger dynamic. The findings revealed a need for athletics and academics to improve their interactions with one another.

The first practical implication is improving the communication between athletics and academics. If academics were aware of what is occurring in athletics, outside of academic council, committees meetings, and faculty senate meetings, they may not have certain perceptions toward athletics. If athletics is more transparent, that helps build trust among the academic side.

The second practical implication is making an effort to understand athletics. Athletic administrators indicated they would love for members in academics to learn more about athletics. Some members in academics have had opportunities to travel with a team or observe a team on game day. These experiences provided better insight on what occurs in athletics. Expanding these opportunities can result in a better appreciation for athletics and student athletes.

A third practical implication is athletics reaching out to academics. One way to increase support for athletics is to communicate with different constituents on campus. Athletics could setup informal meetings with faculty, staff, and students across campus so they can learn more about athletics. Hosting a reception could be a good idea to entice people to come meet members in athletics. While this may seem important for only academics, it does benefit athletics. A trend has shown a decrease in attendance and support from students at certain athletic events. It's important to keep the students engaged because they will be the future donors.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the study on the dynamics between athletics and academics at Clemson University. It also discussed the findings through the theoretical framework of institutional and neo-institutional theory. Lastly, the researcher highlighted implications for research and practice.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Initial Email Invitation

Good Afternoon (Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms.) XXXXX,

My name is Chere Fine and I'm a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program. Under the guidance of Dr. James Satterfield, I am working on my dissertation and would love to have you as a participant.

My dissertation explores the interaction between athletics and academics at Clemson. Attached is an invitation letter explaining the details of my study.

If you would like to have a meeting before considering to participate, please let me know. I hope that you will consider participating. Thank you for your time.

Chere Fine

Appendix B

Invitation Letter

Dear _____:

My name is Cherese Fine and I'm a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Clemson University. For my dissertation topic, I am conducting research that will explore the interactions between Clemson University and its athletic department. The study will be conducted under the guidance of Dr. James W. Satterfield, faculty member at Clemson University.

I am interested in your experiences as a former/current (insert position) and how you were involved in these dynamics. Your experiences will be able to inform the researcher of what occurs between athletics and academics. Your participation will involve one informal interview that will last about an hour. This research has no known risks. This research will benefit the academic and athletic communities because it helps us to understand the interactions between both entities, as well as possibly dispel any myths that are perceived about this dynamic.

Please know that I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study. All interview data will be stored in a secure location and destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you have any additional questions, regarding the study, please contact me (cfine@clemson.edu), or Dr. Satterfield (satter3@clemson.edu). Thank you for your time and I look forward to your consideration in participating in my study.

Sincerely,

Cherese Fine

Appendix C

Informed Consent

Information about being in a Research Study
Clemson University

The Interactions between Intercollegiate Athletics and Clemson University: A Phenomenological Approach

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. James W. Satterfield and Chereese F. Fine is inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. James W. Satterfield is a faculty member at Clemson University. Chereese Fine is a doctoral student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Satterfield.

The purpose of this research is to better understand the interactions between Clemson University and its athletic department. This research is for Ms. Fine's dissertation.

Your part in this particular study will be to participate in a one-on-one interview with Ms. Fine. During this interview you will be asked your opinions about the interactions between Clemson University and Clemson Athletics and your involvement. At the conclusion of the interview, you may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview if Ms. Fine has any additional questions.

It will take about an hour to participate in this study and the interview will be audio recorded. The audio recording will be used for transcription. All audio recordings will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet at the primary investigator's office. Only the research team will have access to the audio recordings. All data will remain locked until the conclusion of the study, at which point will be destroyed.

Risk and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

Possible Benefits

We do not know of any way you would directly benefit from taking part in this study. However, this research study will help us better understand the interactions between Clemson University and Clemson Athletics.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research group that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. All interview data will be coded to remove any identifiers. Since Clemson's name will be identified, there is a chance that you may be identified based on your high-level position.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide to be in the study or stop taking part in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. James W. Satterfield at Clemson University at (864) 656-1322.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at (864) 656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, (866) 297-307`

A copy of this form will be given to you.

Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

The Dynamics Between Intercollegiate Athletics and Clemson University: A Phenomenological Case Study Approach

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Cherese Fine

Date
Setting

Interview Protocol

Script: Intro...

Q1: Tell me about your current (or previous) role at Clemson

Probe a: How long have you been (or were) at Clemson?

Probe b: Have you served in any other roles at Clemson?

Probe c: Did you attend Clemson for school

Q2: What is the nature of your interaction with Clemson academics/athletics?

Probe a: How often do you interact with Clemson academics/athletics?

Q3: What do you believe are the rules, norms, and shared conceptions in your area? (Will ask each one separately)

Q4: How would you describe the relationship between academics and athletics?

Probe a: Has this relationship changed over time?

Probe b: How do others in area perceive the relationship between athletics and academics?

Probe c: Do you think there is a disconnection/misunderstanding between academics and athletics?

Q5: How does academics impact athletics?

Probe a: How do the institutional goals of Clemson University impact athletics?

Q6: How does athletics impact academics?

Probe a: What intended and unintended roles has athletics played at Clemson University?

Probe b: What role, if any, should athletics have in the educational mission?

Q7: How do policies impact the dynamics between athletics and academics?

Probe a: Clemson became coeducational in 1955 and racially integrated in 1963.

-How has Title IX impacted the university/? Athletics?

-How has the diversity trend impact your area?

Probe b: There's a stigma across the nation that student athletes are entering colleges and universities academically underprepared and that they have an advantage in the admissions process over others.

-How does Clemson address this stigma?

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