

FOLLOW-UP NOTES

“Are Institutions Being Held Accountable for Delivering on the Promise of a Meaningful Education?”

The Drake Group Education Fund Webinar Series – Critical Issues in College Athletics -- Hosted by 2aDays.com

Thanks for attending or registering for our March 30, 2023 webinar on critical issues in intercollegiate athletics. A regular feature of our webinar series is “Follow-Up Notes” which provides links to the recorded webinar, answers to questions from the audience which panelists did not have the time to address or those emailed to us from telephone participants, and information on our next webinar.

1. Webinar #21 RECORDING

In case you missed any part of the March 30, 2023 webinar, you may access the recorded video here:

“Are Institutions Being Held Accountable for Delivering on the Promise of a Meaningful Education?”

[ACCESS RECORDING HERE](#)

2. UNADDRESSED QUESTIONS FROM WEBINAR ATTENDEES

Following are answers to questions from the audience symposium that panelists did not have time to address. Responses are from Drake experts including some of the panelists.

Q1: Have there been any studies comparing the educational outcomes for varsity athletes and club sport athletes, i.e., between recruited athletes who have to answer to coaches and administrators, worrying about eligibility, and self-selected athletes who answer only to themselves and their teammates?

A1: To our knowledge there are direct studies, but this is an area that is picking up some empirical interest. As institutions continue to cry poverty and look to drop programs (certainly not needed nor a mandate) some schools may look to the existing club sports system as way to continue participation opportunities without having teams under NCAA control. This of course may affect current rules reflecting minimum sports sponsorship in the future. Lots to consider but this is not an area that has been extensively looked at. Some reference to the possibility of club sports being more widely used are discussed in this book by Drake Group Board Member, B. David Ridpath <https://www.amazon.com/Alternative-Models-Sports-Development-America/dp/082142291X>

Q2: What percent of Power Five football or men's basketball players go to college first and foremost for education rather than their first priority being to play professionally?

A2: We are not aware of data that addresses this question directly. However, NCAA estimates of the percentage of NCAA Division I athletes who were drafted by the NBA, WNBA, or NFL in 2019: 52 (4.2%) of 1,224 draft eligible athletes were selected in the NBA draft, 249 (3.8%) of 6,490 in the NFL draft, and 31 (2.8%) of 1,120 in the WNBA draft. The WNBA players all played in the WNBA. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2013/12/17/probability-of-competing-beyond-high-school.aspx>. However, the Division I football and men's basketball numbers are over estimates because some may have never made it to opening day and because the NCAA methodology does not account for the fact that college players can go into the NBA draft after one year and into the NFL draft three years after the graduation of their high school class.

Q3: Hoping you might address university-provided academic cheating. Jack Swarbrick's name has been mentioned, and Notre Dame has had 3 major academic cheating scandals in the 2000's, and one in 1999. This obviously affects the academic experience, and also graduation and eligibility rates.

A3: Recommended reading which also provides great overviews of the dysfunctional NCAA enforcement and infractions process:

- *Cheated: the UNC Scandal, the Education of Athletes, and the future of Big-time College Sports* by Mary Willingham (<https://www.amazon.com/Cheated-Scandal-Education-Athletes-Big-Time/dp/164012246X>)
- Chapter Three-"Academic Integrity" in *Unwinding Madness: What Went Wrong With College Sports and How to Fix It* by Gerald Gurney, Donna Lopiano and Andrew Zimbalist (https://www.amazon.com/Unwinding-Madness-Wrong-College-Sports-ebook/dp/B0BL84BJGZ/ref=sr_1_1?crid=U3I943J0NKE8&keywords=Unwinding+madness&qid=1681071307&s=books&sprefix=unwinding+madness%2Cstripbooks%2C98&sr=1-1)
- *Tainted Glory: Marshall University, The NCAA and One Man's Fight for Justice* by B. David Ridpath <https://www.amazon.com/Tainted-Glory-Marshall-University-Justice/dp/1469790874>

Q4: Why would the athletes come back to get a degree if they can go pro without needing to pursue one to play?

A4: The athlete who makes it to professional sports and receives its economic benefit is not the issue. The issue is the recruiting promise of a better chance at a professional sports career AND a meaningful education to the 96 percent who don't make it. These students may not have the financial resources to return. The NFL and NBA limit the eligibility of players for the draft, preferring to let colleges and universities pay the bill for their “minor leagues” and scimming the cream” off the top. It is also important to note that many athletes are coming back post eligibility and post pro career to work on their degrees. We believe there should be long-term options for college athletes to pursue their degrees long after their playing days are over.

Q5: The Models that you propose generates the question of “Why tie these Sports to Colleges.” You are recommending a Semi-Pro or Professional Sports Model. Anyone can take College Courses on their own or as desired.

A5: Unfortunately, the embedding of competitive sport in USA education systems is here to stay at least in some form. There are many researchers exploring alternatives like the Alternative Models book by Ridpath, but for the foreseeable future, our primary elite development model will be embedded in education and we have to make a choice—is it truly about education as the NCAA PR machine states or is it professional sports under the guise of education? Therefore, the issues are academic fraud (fake classes, selecting less challenging courses/majors, etc.) and granting special admissions (waiver of normal academic standards) or otherwise admitting students knowing they are not prepared to compete in the classroom with non-athlete peers are issues that must be addressed. When either of these two things occur without a concomitant commitment to remediate, provide sufficient academic support, or temper unrealistic time and coach demands on athletes, the result is “exploitation for economic gain.” We believe that the design of academic support and advising programs is flawed. We also believe that eliminating “special admissions” is not the answer, because four-year colleges are more likely have the resources to remedy academic deficiencies than junior or community colleges and if they went to 2-year schools, JC coaches would similarly exploit them in an effort to produce athletic success that might get the coach a shot at a job in a four-year university.

Q6: With enrollment numbers moving downward how would the panel address the cost aspect associated with a student-athlete attending school part time and/or completing their degree after their eligibility is exhausted?

A6: There is much debate on this and some wisdom to allowing relief from full time status while competing and training at such a high level. This also applies to having access to degree completion and post baccalaureate options that can be covered by the immense amount of money generated by the NCAA and the new CFP. We always seem to have money for coaches, administration and facilities but not for educational opportunities that really are beneficial and at least make the model more about education.

Q7: How would you define a "meaningful education" or a "good education"?

A7: A "meaningful" or "good" college education should be:

- In a major of the student's choice and time to pursue that major even if it means being late occasionally to practice etc.
- One that values access to that chosen major and not an athletic friendly one geared more toward eligibility maintenance that access to a desired educational outcome
- One where education is priority over athletics and remediation is provided so that the athlete can compete academically and discourages academic fraud
- The same education as other students in that major (legitimate courses as well as out-of-classroom experiences)
- Results in economic success and career satisfaction after college that exceeds that of the person who did not go to college

Q8: Have you looked at the extreme fallout of athletes that return to communities after not having achieved an education and were injured early. Injuries resulting in a short pro career or no career. The cost of having these individuals in our communities?

A8: Some of this is discussed in Tainted Glory directly but there are numerous stories of athletes who left without having access to the promised educational outcome. As far as studies, there have been mainstream media stories like Kevin Ross, Dexter Manley and others that show the real cost of prioritizing athletic success over educational primacy.

Q9: Thank you for the differentiation of "profit" athletes versus "loss" athletes. Does the data for "loss" athletes track more closely to regular full-time students, including more broad selection of college majors?

A9: Certainly, the academic issues are not as acute in the non-profit driven/Olympic sports, but they are not non-existent and this has been documented in several studies. Still overall the academic metrics such as academic persistence, GPAs and graduation are stronger in these sports but as stated in the webinar it is difficult to actually compare athletes' graduation rates to the student body because athletes must be full time and current NCAA grad rates metrics compare to student body populations that are often enrolled part time at least once during their enrollment and take longer to graduate. It skews the numbers more toward inflated athletes' graduation.

Readings:

Eckard, E. W. (2010). NCAA athlete graduation rates: Less than meets the eye. *Journal of Sport Management*, 24(1), 45-59.

The Game of Life College Sports and Educational Values
<https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691096193/the-game-of-life>

Ridpath, B. D., Kiger, J., Mak, J., Eagle, T. & Letter, G. (2007). Factors that influence the academic performance of NCAA Division I athletes. *The SMART Journal*, 4(1), 59-83.

Q10: How do we bridge the gap between faculty and coaches?

A10: There needs to be boundaries between coaches and faculty just because of the conflict of interest. Simply put coaches are hired and fired on one thing—winning and if they feel academics gets in the way, oftentimes faculty have been leveraged via friendships, contacts, threats etc. Certainly, we are not for restricting personal relationships but there has to be an absolute understanding of this boundary—coaches cannot get involved in academics at all-period. Just like they would never let a faculty member come over and draw plays for a game, they should not be influencing the faculty in any way. All institutions should have a clear and unambiguous rule that coaches cannot under any circumstances contact faculty directly or indirectly about academic issues with their athletes, nor should academic advisors, those questions should only come from the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) to another faculty member. This is similar to a doctor-patient or lawyer-client and a coach would never give a faculty member a game plan just because they are pals. That has to be a bright red line.. If coaches can respect this boundary and faculty abide by their ethical code, then yes there should be opportunities to meet the coaches, get to know them, go to a practice, guest coach programs, invite a coach to class etc. These things can happen—but it must start with what cannot happen.

On the other hand, faculty should feel able to connect with staff in the athletic department who work most closely with college athletes regarding academic success and accessing a meaningful education. The FAR can play a major role in facilitating this kind of meaningful and educationally-focused connection. In an environment where it is far too easy for athletes to be isolated in the athletic geography of our campuses, crossing that divide can mean finding ways to increase the partnerships between athletics and the rest of the campus community, including faculty.

Q11: From your experience research/practice, how has the question of “meaningful education” affected International college athletes?

A11: We are not aware of any direct studies in this area, but a related study is listed below. International athletes do tend to perform better academically overall, but this is a great idea for future research.

Readings:

Ridpath, B. D., Rudd, A., & Stokowski, S. (2020). Perceptions of European athletes that attend american colleges and universities for elite athletic development and higher education access. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 5(1), 34–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2019.1636402>

Q12: Can you really expect faculty to stand up to the athletic department?

A12: Comments of attendees worth reiterating to those who could not attend:

- “Asking faculty to stand up to the athletic department is asking faculty to destroy their careers. I think it can only work at institutions where faculty are unionized, and the union chooses to do that.”
- “With tenure you won’t get fired for standing up, but you may/will get ostracized and have your opportunities disappear for other things from your institution. I stood up against my university’s Native mascot and suffered the consequences.”

This is a brutally tough question and very understandable. The Drake Group has long recognized faculty and others who are willing to stand up and affect positive change concerning academic integrity and intercollegiate athletics. Many of our own members have felt the brunt of athletic influence and pressure. Still, at the end of the day faculty have academic freedom and have tenure along with groups like TDG that will be there to assist. Some are more willing to stand up than others, but we must. Faculty are the guardians of academic freedom and are often the last line of defense—it is a moral and professional obligation. It doesn’t even have to be at the front publicly—little things like enforcing academic standards in the classroom, not negotiating directly with athletic department for grades that insure eligibility, enforcing admission standards of the institution and/or advocating for athletes to be properly remediated before competitive eligibility commences, pushing through the faculty senate to have academic services for athletes under the control of an academic entity are just a few things that can be done with little controversy. It is not easy—no doubt, but doing the right thing is never easy.

Further, academic support practitioners who work specifically with college athletes often hope that faculty on their campuses would leverage their academic freedom in support of the change and academic integrity. These staff often feel trapped in a system that they want to change and feel powerless to change. While it is easy to identify academic support professionals who have committed egregious acts, professionals who are dedicated to supporting their students’ growth are more plentiful, toil in an environment that is toxic, and need help from campus colleagues who possess some power.

Readings:

Ridpath, B. D. (2008). Can the Faculty Reform Intercollegiate Athletics? A Past, Present, and Future Perspective. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*.

Duderstadt, J. Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University
https://www.amazon.com/Intercollegiate-Athletics-American-University-Perspective-ebook/dp/B00ZGKUKFO/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2IGYA1NNJLMUL&keywords=duderstadt+athletics&qid=1681248622&s=books&prefix=duderstadt+athletics%2Cstripbooks%2C158&sr=1-1

Q13: Does anyone have ideas for specific reforms ideas (toward improving education) that might be implemented in the short-term while the political will is built for more radical reform.

A13: See previous answer but first thing is to make sure academic services for athletes are under the control and are paid by an academic entity. This function must have independence and not be

under the thumb and threat of athletics. Also effect academic remediation for underprepared athletes so they can compete academically and faculty need to control their classrooms and curriculum. These things can be done quickly and will have long term positive effects. We also believe if more institutions start small reforms like this, it will mushroom and help political will.

Q14: Can you provide a link to Lisa Rubin's book?

A14: Implementing Student-Athlete Programming: A Guide for Supporting College Athletes by Kristina M. Navarro, Lisa Melanie Rubin and Geoff Mamerow. <https://www.routledge.com/Implementing-Student-Athlete-Programming-A-Guide-for-Supporting-College/Navarro-Rubin-Mamerow/p/book/9781138732438>

Q15: Other sources of pressure on an institution are the concerned alumni and fans. What metrics, structures, or narratives should we ask for from our institutions?

A:15 Most alumni still want their institution to be thought of in a positive academic light as it gives them even more value to their degree than athletic success does. Alumni can also put pressure on if they believe academic integrity is being threatened. The Drake Group has long believed in transparency as mentioned in the answer below. Alumni and others can join us and request that the institution show as detailed below through public available information without identifying the athlete personally-what exactly is going on education wise for the athletes at the institution. Remember it has been public exposure more than anything else that has changed the lack of academic integrity at college institutions in the past regarding athletic programs. Look no further than North Carolina, Auburn, Michigan, Tennessee etc. Transparency is the key and alumni and donors along with faculty should demand it.

Specific academic measures that many alumni find informative:

- academic profile of college athletes
 - by academic year
 - by race
 - by gender
 - by socioeconomic class
 - by sport

Q16: With regard to the clustering of athletes into certain majors (as an indicator that they are being shepherded toward less rigorous courses of study), I have noticed that whereas in the past, this information was usually available on the roster pages of most schools/conferences, it has become more common that there is no mention of it in player biographies. For example, I can usually find it for Big 10 schools, occasional Pac 12, rare for SEC or Big 12. Has there been an effort to remove this information? If so, is there any reason given such as student privacy?

A16: Athletes sign away their privacy and other rights with all the paperwork they must fill out at the beginning of the year. Technically, that does give the institution permission to publish majors but they typically only do it when it is a net positive. However, some of this information is also directory info which is typically public and it can also be requested from the institution under state

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws. Jon Ericson, a founder of The Drake Group, worked on this for years saying that this information can and should be public to shame universities, but schools will lean on privacy when convenient to shield themselves from bad press, while happily discussing majors and classes of Academic All Americans. The bottom line answer is that this information can be released by the institution unless the athlete forbids it. However, like I used to tell the athletes, “you sign or you don’t play because we need full unfettered access to all of your records.” Institutions release stories about only the “good” and HIPPA and FERPA to perpetuate myths that such information cannot be released. See great article on this by Ericson and Salzwedel in 2003 Wis. L. Rev. 1053 (2003) [Cleaning up Buckley: How the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Shields Academic Corruption in College Athletics](#)

3. 2023 SACK SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

All video sessions of the one-day The Allen Sack National Symposium – Advancing Integrity in College Sport “*Realizing the Promise of Graduation*” are now posted [HERE](#) along with the Symposium program and reference materials.

4. OUR NEXT WEBINAR – COLLEGE SPORTS BETTING

The finances of college sports are in peril. Desperate for cash, college athletic departments are embracing sports betting. Many colleges have entered partnerships with sports book companies and some schools receive a payout whenever a student opens an account with the sports book. The threat to college life is at least threefold: (1) the integrity of the competition may be undermined; (2) by most estimates there will be tens of thousands of addictive gamblers in college dormitories; and (3) some college players may be subjected to violence if their team does not perform as expected. What are the dimensions of these threats and how will they impact intercollegiate athletics?

OUR NEXT FREE WEBINAR! Thursday, May 18, 2023 – 2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

5. ACCESS RECORDINGS OF PREVIOUS WEBINARS

[CLICK HERE](#) to enter The Drake Group Education Fund Video Library for recordings of all previous webinars.

WEBINAR #1 -- "Wild West or Brave New World – National Experts Share Their Thoughts on College Athlete Compensation"

WEBINAR #2 -- "Millionaires or Minimum Wage? Current and Former College Athletes Speak on Athletes' Compensation"

WEBINAR #3 -- "Experts Speak Out on College Athletes' Mental Health"

WEBINAR #4 - "The Transgender Athlete in Girls' and Women's Sports: The Collision of Science, Law, and Social Justice Explained"

WEBINAR #5 -- "Title IX and the NIL Marketplace: Subterfuge or Opportunity to Remedy Historical Inequities?"

WEBINAR #6 -- "Keeping Everything We Love About Collegiate Sport While Fixing Its Failed Governance Structure"

WEBINAR #7 -- "A Continuing Disgrace: Addressing Intercollegiate Athletics Race Issues"

WEBINAR #8 -- "The Disintegration of the NCAA: The Price of Rejecting National Governance"

WEBINAR #9 -- "Lack of Accountability for Athlete Abuse in College Athletics"

WEBINAR #10 -- "College Athletes' Freedom of Speech and Expression – or the Lack Thereof"

WEBINAR #11, #12, #13, #14 -all sessions of the May 19, 2022 The Allen Sack National Symposium – Advancing Integrity in College Sport,

WEBINAR #11 --SESSION 1 -- “GIVING COLLEGE ATHLETES THE RIGHT TO UNIONIZE”

WEBINAR #12 -- SESSION 2 -- “MANDATING A COLLEGE ATHLETES’ BILL OF RIGHTS”

WEBINAR #13 -- AWARDS LUNCHEON -- “A VISION FOR THE FUTURE”

WEBINAR #14 -- SESSION 3 -- “NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS – CHAOS OR OPPORTUNITY?”

WEBINAR #15 -- “Critical Issues for Athletic Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities”

WEBINAR #16 -- “College Athletics Reform – Where Are the Faculty?”

WEBINAR #17 -- “Brain Trauma: Are We Doing Enough to Protect College Athletes?”

WEBINAR #18 – “Students, Employees or Both? Is There an Alternative Educational Model for College Sport?”

WEBINAR #19 “The Future of the NCAA -- Transformation or Preservation of the Status Quo?”

WEBINAR #20 “Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) 1.5 Years Out - What Have We Learned and Potential Pathways Forward?”

6. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DRAKE GROUP EDUCATION FUND AND 2aDAYS.com

The Drake Group Education Fund (TDGEF) is a new 501(c)(3) non-profit education sister organization whose mission is to ensure that the promise of college athletics is realized for all stakeholders. TDGEF produces *The Allen Sack National Symposium on Integrity in College Sports* and the *Critical Issues in College Sports Webinar Series*, conducts fact-based research on intercollegiate athletics and develops position papers and other educational materials that influence public discourse on current issues and controversies in college sport. To access a full library of print and video educational materials on current issues in intercollegiate athletes, visit www.thedrakegrouppeducationfund.org. All educational materials are available free of charge. If you believe The Drake Group Education Fund is doing good work, please also consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our webinars, educational research, and programs. You can donate and learn what we do [HERE](#).

The Drake Group (TDG), a sister organization to TDGEF, is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization whose mission is to educate policymakers and advance legislative initiatives that foster academic integrity and athlete well-being in intercollegiate athletics. For the most current information on The Drake Group and college athletics related bills being considered by Congress, visit TDG [HERE](#). TDG needs volunteers to contact their senators and representatives to advance collegiate athletics reform legislation. Learn about legislation and [VOLUNTEER/JOIN HERE](#).

2aDays.com. Interested in helping high school and college athletes learn more about athletic programs at institutions they are considering attending – and the ratings of coaches in these sport programs? Check out our webinar partner [2aDays.com](#).

7. THANKS TO OUR WEBINAR #21 PANELISTS



BRUCE SMITH Ph.D. (Moderator), Director of Empowerment Strategies/CEO, ACES Group has worked in K-12, higher education and intercollegiate athletics for more than two decades as a teacher, professor, administrator, and coach; as a higher education administrator, his work focused on student life, athletics, and equity and justice at both small private liberal arts colleges and flagship state institutions in California, Arizona, Colorado, and Oregon; Smith specializes in managing comprehensive student support; mentoring and supervising staff; creating connections between curriculum and co-curriculum and developing equity and justice institutional strategies; as a professor, his work focuses on African American life and culture; the sociology of education;

sport studies; and American studies with

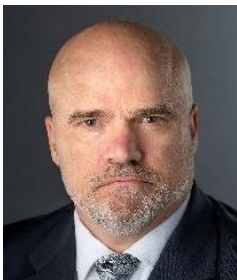
an emphasis on developing engaging, student-centered, identity-conscious pedagogy.



LISA M. RUBIN, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Education, Kansas State University, current Co-Editor of the *NACADA Journal*, Dr. Rubin is a recipient of the National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A) 2020 Research Award, 2019 Professional Excellence Award, and 2009 Professional Promise Award; She is a recipient of the Big 12 Faculty Fellowship and the NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant in 2018 and was named one of the Top 25 Woman Leaders in Higher Education and Beyond by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* in 2017; her research interests are ethics in intercollegiate athletics, advising and developing student-athletes, the changing environment of college athletics, NCAA reform and women in intercollegiate athletic administration.



RICHARD M. SOUTHALL, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, University of South Carolina, Director of the College Sport Research Institute which sponsors an annual conference on U.S. college sport, publishes the *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, and produces college athlete graduation rate reports; Dr. Southall has published 15 book chapters, over 100 research articles and technical reports, and is often quoted in major media outlets such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *ESPN*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*; served as a consultant for the plaintiffs O'Bannon v. NCAA litigation and testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation; Dr. Southall is the co-editor and author of a forthcoming book: *The NCAA and the Exploitation of College Profit-Athletes: An Amateurism That Never Was*.



DAVID RIDPATH, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Sports Business at Ohio University, College of Business; former Assistant Professor of Sport Administration at Mississippi State University and has over 15 years of practical experience in intercollegiate athletics in administrative and coaching capacities at Marshall University, Weber State University and Ohio University; Dr. Ridpath is often cited by major media outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *CNN* and *ESPN* as an expert on NCAA and intercollegiate athletic matters, has appeared before Congressional committees, and served as an expert witness in numerous cases involving intercollegiate athletics and college athlete rights; he has authored over 30 academic journal articles, over 10 academic book chapters and monographs and two books; his latest book is entitled *Alternative Models of Sport Development in America: Solutions to a Crisis in Education and Public Health*.



HOWARD CROOM III, Ed.D., Associate Athletic Director, Chief Diversity Officer & Director of Student Services, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, Oregon State University leads the Athletic Department's diversity, equity,

inclusion, and belonging strategy and efforts; oversees a number of areas related to the holistic development of college athletes including Student-Athlete Development, International Services, and liaisons to Academics for Student-Athletes; Dr. Croom is a member of the graduate faculty in Oregon State's School of Language, Culture, and Society; he has spent a majority of his career in academic and career support for student-athletes, with previous stops at Oregon State (2010-2012), UC Irvine (2013-2014), and USC (2014 – 2021); Dr. Croom's research interests include racial equity in higher education, student-athletes' academic and career-related outcomes, anti-Blackness in higher education, and commodification of Black student-athletes.