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Program Evaluation of Student-Athlete Academic Support Services Unit Using the Logic Model Evaluation

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by

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Abstract

The study utilized the logic model evaluation to ascertain the effectiveness of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit at a NCAA Division I research university located in the Western United States. The logic model evaluation provided a process to determine the extent to which the unit achieved its purpose and outcomes. The logic model evaluation can be tailored to the exact unit based on the short-term and long-term goals of the program. Based on the tenets of flexibility and adaptability, the logic model evaluation was selected as an appropriate tool for the study. Overall, the SAASS unit was perceived to be effective by its key constituent groups. The evaluation highlighted the importance of the athletic academic advisor in keeping students on track to graduation and communicating issues to administrators, coaches, and professors. Recommendations are provided to potentially improve the SAASS unit under study.

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

CHAPTER I: Introduction

In the United States, intercollegiate athletics have been a significant part of the college culture for over 150 years (Crowley, 2006). Competitive collegiate sports, governed nationally by the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Junior College Athletics Association (NJCAA) are a unique amateur structure when compared to sports programs around the world (Rosandich, 2002). The United States professional leagues depend in a substantial manner on college athletics to provide them with their athletes (Branch 2011; Rosandich, 2002).

Amateurism is a fundamental principle of the NCAA, and the organization's website states a quality education is the first priority for student-athletes (Amateurism, n.d.). This principle can create potential conflicts among student-athletes and their personal goals, the NCAA, and the higher education institutions.

In recent years, television exposure, as well as post-season play, has resulted in substantial revenues and publicity for higher education institutions. While the NCAA continually modifies rules and regulations to keep the primary focus on academics, many believe that the pressure to win, combined with the revenue involved, has led to cases of inappropriate academic behaviors and several high profile academic fraud cases (Rosandich, 2002; Weston, 2011).

In the early 2000's, the NCAA commissioned Joseph Crowley to write the history of the organization and its policies. Crowley (2006) chronicled the evolution of the NCAA academic standards over a 40-year period. In an effort to strengthen the legitimacy of college sports and to protect the concept of the student-athlete, the NCAA

began to implement academic standards in the 1960s (Crowley, 2006). Crowley noted that academic performance was linked to eligibility for the first time in 1965 with the 1.6 grade point average (GPA) Rule, which was replaced in 1973 with the 2.0 GPA Rule. Over the next 50 years, standards were consistently reviewed to enhance academic achievement of student-athletes (Brown, 2014; Crowley, 2006). In 1983, passage of Proposition 48, better known as Prop 48, legislated increased academic standards and the initial eligibility of incoming student-athletes (Brown, 2014; Crowley, 2006; Petr & McArdle, 2012).

In 1990, the United States Congress passed the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act, which required all higher education institutions to report the four and six year graduation rates of all first-time, full-time students. This became known as the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR). In the same year, the NCAA member institutions followed suit by approving a requirement that all institutions report the graduation rates for student-athletes using the Department of Education FGR (Brown, 2014). The NCAA utilized the FGR as a student-athlete achievement tool until 2003, when the NCAA adopted its own Graduation Success Rate (GSR) (Graduation Success Rate, n.d.). Data measured by the newly adopted GSR tool was published in 2005 (Brown, 2014; Crowley, 2006). Because the FGR did not account for students transferring in or out of the institution, the NCAA's GSR included students who transferred in and did not penalize the institution for students who transferred out. The GSR method was considered more reflective of the actual number of graduating student-athletes (Brown, 2014). Both rates are important; the GSR is a true indication of the rate at which student-athletes are graduating from any college, and the FGR compares student-athletes with students within

the same institution and nationally (Brown, 2014).

In 2003, the NCAA adopted the Progress Toward Degree (PTD) benchmarks. The PTD benchmarks are the percentages of degree (credits) student-athletes must have completed at the end of each academic year. That is, student-athletes must have 40% of their degree credit requirements completed by the end of the sophomore year, 60% completed by the end of junior year, and 80% completed by the end of senior year (Division I Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements, n.d.).

In 2004, the NCAA instituted another eligibility benchmark for student-athletes by creating the Academic Progress Rate (APR). The intent of the NCAA was to establish a barometer of academic success, which measured the eligibility and retention of student-athletes for each institution and by team (Division I Academic Progress Rate, n.d.). If an institution did not meet the NCAA requirements, then penalties included loss of post-season play, scholarships, and practice time could be imposed (Academic Progress Rate, n.d.; National Collegiate Athletics Association [NCAA], 2014). In effect, coaches had to ensure that academic abilities were at the forefront of recruiting efforts, and that student-athletes focused on academics as well as athletic performance.

The combination of escalating academic standards by the NCAA and the publicity of academic scandals required institutions to focus on developing specialized academic support services for student-athletes. Concurrently, associations such as the National Athletic Counselors Association (NACA), which is now known as the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A), began to urge colleges and universities to establish professional athletics academic support services designed to improve student-athlete eligibility and graduation rates (National Association of

Academic Advisors for Athletics, 2016). Athletic academic advisors began to be hired to work directly with the student-athletes to promote academic success. Their work included enrollment of student-athletes in the correct number of classes and monitoring student-athletes to ensure they were making progress toward their degrees. Additionally, the athletics academic advisors began to familiarize themselves with NCAA eligibility rules for incoming student-athletes and continuing eligibility for enrolled student-athletes (C. Groth, personal communication, January 20, 2015; J. Crowley, personal communication, January 21, 2015).

The effectiveness of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit is deemed critical to the success of the student-athlete both academically and athletically. If the student-athlete does not earn the GPA needed to maintain eligibility and/or achieve graduation, then the FGR, GSR, and APR negatively impact the academic success rating of the institution (M. Marshall, personal communication, January 20, 2015). The APR requirement includes penalties that could result in a reduction in practice time, fewer scholarships, and ineligibility for post-season opportunities by sport (Academic Progress Rate Q & A, 2014). This is problematic in revenue-generating sports such as football, men's basketball, and in some cases, select women's teams, and thus could lead to a negative fiscal impact on the athletics department as a whole.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Nationally, there is limited research on the effectiveness of the SAASS units. This study applied a logic model evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the SAASS unit of a single NCAA Division I research university located in the Western United States. The data collected for the study included institutional and athletic department documents,

two focus groups with student-athletes from the men's and women's basketball teams, and e-mail interviews with the men's and women's basketball coaches, athletics administrators, sport administrators, and the athletics academic advisor. To address the overall question of the effectiveness of the athletics academic unit using the logic model evaluation, four research questions were addressed:

1. Is the SAASS unit perceived to be effective by key stakeholders?
2. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete eligibility?
3. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete retention?
4. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete graduation?

Importance of the Study

The study was intended to contribute knowledge to the research literature related to Student-Athlete Academic Support Services, an area of the literature, which has received little attention. The success of the SAASS unit can impact the success of the individual student-athlete and his/her likelihood of graduation. Additionally, the success of individual student-athletes in turn can impact the financial solvency of the athletics program.

Theoretical Framework

Student-Athlete Academic Support Services units are based on the premises of Tinto's (2012) theory of student integration and Astin's (1999) theory of student involvement. Tinto's (2012) and Astin's (1999) theories are similar in that the underlying tenet is student integration into the academic and social culture of the campus can lead to student success. Astin's (1999) student involvement theory is based on the idea that the level of involvement of the student is a result of the effort the student devotes to his or

her academics both physically and psychologically. Tinto's (2012) theory, in its simplest form, states that students who enter college bring their own set of individual characteristics, including family background, personal attributes, and characteristics. These characteristics, combined with the college or universities unique academic and social features, can determine student level of integration into the campus community (Tinto, 2012).

Given the variations in the personal ambitions of student-athletes and their diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds, the SAASS unit is intended to provide assistance for each student-athlete based on individual academic needs. The SAASS unit generally include one-on-one tutoring sessions, mandatory study hall hours, academic advising meetings with an athletics academic advisor, and check-in meetings with athletic personnel for those student-athletes deemed academically at risk. In this study, the institutional athletics department staff assumed that all incoming freshman and all transfer student-athletes were at risk, as well as students with a GPA below a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The former director of the SAASS unit stated it is intentionally structured to assist the student-athletes in their integration in the academic community, to enhance their likelihood of persisting, and their likelihood of earning a degree (M. Marshall, personal communication, January 20, 2015).

The logic model evaluation provided a process to determine the extent to which the organization met its purposes or achieved its expected outcomes (Davidson, 2005). The logic model can be tailored to a unit by determining the short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals of the program with a timeline. The logic model evaluation included asking program leaders and participants their perceptions of the individual activities and

their overall effectiveness. Further, the model included a document review to corroborate perceptions. The evaluation then determined if short term, intermediate, and long term goals had been accomplished (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004; W.K. Kellogg Foundation [Kellogg Foundation], 1998). Thus, based on the tenets of flexibility and adaptability to multiple environments, the logic model evaluation was selected as an appropriate tool for this study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions were used in this study:

Academic Progress Rate (APR) - A measurement of each team's eligibility and retention of their student-athletes by term developed by the NCAA (Division I Academic Progress Rate, n.d.).

Amateurs - student-athletes who have:

- not signed a professional contract
- not received a salary or prize money above and beyond the necessary expenses for participating in their sport
- not tried out for a professional team
- not agreed to be represented by an agent
- not received benefits from an agent (Amateurism, n.d.)

Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) - A measure of student-athlete graduation rates that must be reported in accordance with the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 as well as NCAA regulations. The NCAA acquires student-athlete graduation rate data from the Department of Education's Integrated Post-Secondary Data System Graduation Rate Survey (IPEDS-GRS). Unlike the GSR, the FGR does not account for

student-athletes who have transferred out of the institution (Graduation Rates, n.d.).

Graduation Success Rate (GSR) - Established by the NCAA in response to Division I college and university presidents who wanted graduation data that more accurately reflected the mobility among all college students. The GSR accounts for the academic outcomes of student-athletes who transfer from one institution to another. The rate compiled using the federal government's methodology does not count transfers in and counts transfers out as graduation failures (Graduation Success Rate, n.d.).

Logic Model Evaluations - A systematic visual representation used to share an understanding of the relationships among program resources, the planned activities, and expected goals (Kellogg Foundation, 1998). Further, a logic model can be defined as a diagram that illustrates the cause-and-effect mechanism(s) by which a program(s) meets (or is supposed to meet) certain needs or achieves (or is supposed to achieve) certain effects (Davidson, 2005).

Mid-Major University - An unofficial term often referred in media as athletic conferences outside of the Power 5 conferences such as Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Southeastern Conference (SEC), Pacific 12 Conference (PAC 12), Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference (Brennan, 2014).

National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) - A non-profit organization that ensures that intercollegiate athletics serve as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body, and by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports (NCAA, 2014).

Progress Toward Degree (PTD) - A set of requirements for student-athletes to maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree as determined by the regulations of

their institution, subject to controlling legislation of the conference(s) or similar association of which the institution is a member and applicable NCAA legislation (NCAA, 2014).

Proposition 48 – NCAA legislation passed in 1983 which required student-athletes who achieved a minimum 2.0 high school GPA in 11 core academic courses and a prescribed minimum SAT or ACT score (700 and 15, respectively) to be eligible to compete in athletics as a college freshman (Brown, 2014; NCAA, 2014b).

Student-Athlete - A term coined by the NCAA in 1950 to replace the terms athlete and players and to strengthen the linkage between athletics and education on college campuses (Crowley, 2006).

Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) – The academic support unit established developed to assist student-athletes with their progress towards graduation, maintenance of eligibility, academic advising, tutoring, academic and study hall monitoring (M. Marshall, personal communication, February 8, 2015).

Limitations of the Study

The SAASS unit model under study was implemented in academic year 2013-14. Data for this study was gathered for the 2015-16 academic year. As a result, the services were different for some student-athletes based upon their year of admission. Students may have participated in two different SAASS unit models, so data may not necessarily reflect the activities of the current program. This study only involved a single institution to analyze the effectiveness of utilizing the logic model evaluation to evaluate a SAASS unit; however, the results from this study could ascertain if the logic model evaluation is appropriate to utilize for similar programs in other division I colleges and universities.

The overall effectiveness of the SAASS unit can only be ascertained for the men's and women's basketball programs and only for the current cohort. The study could be strengthened by inclusion of a sample of student-athletes in all sports to be more representative of the entire population. This could provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of the SAASS unit as a whole.

In-person interviews with the key administrators, sport administrators, and the head coaches rather than email responses would have yielded richer data. Additionally, interviews with university major advisors and faculty in common majors for student-athletes would yield a more extensive perspective of student-athlete academic integration.

The researcher is employed by the athletics department under study; however, the researcher does not have a supervisory role with the SAASS unit. All data was cross-checked by a third party in the Educational Leadership department to assure objectivity.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the study. Chapter II provides the theoretical framework upon which the study was based. Chapter III describes how the logic evaluation method was applied to measure the effectiveness of the SAASS unit, data collection methods, and data analysis. Chapter IV reports the results of the interviews and focus groups as well as an analysis of the data collected. Chapter V is a summary of the findings of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future study.

Summary

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study and established a framework for the study. The background of the study provided a brief history of college athletics

academic reform and the statement of the problem. Research questions were developed based on the logic model evaluation criteria. The importance of the study built a case for why the study is valuable and how it will contribute to the body of limited research of Student-Athlete Academic Support Services units. The important terms for the study were defined in the definition of terms sections. The last two sections are limitations of the study and organization of the study.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

Chapter II is divided into two sections. In the first section, college student retention and involvement theories by Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988, 1993, 2004, 2006, 2012a, 2012b) and Astin (1984, 1993, 1999) are described. In the second section the logic model evaluation and its uses are explained.

College Student Retention and Involvement

One of the prominent scholars in student retention and success literature is Vincent Tinto. Tinto is an emeritus professor at Syracuse University and the former chair of the higher education program. He is best known for his books *Leaving College* (Tinto, 1987) and *Completing College* (Tinto, 2012). However, he first introduced his model related to dropping out of college in 1975. Since the publication of Tinto's research over 40 years ago, his theory has evolved from a focus on student departure and dropouts to identifying the factors influencing student retention and success.

Tinto (1975) introduced a model illustrating the process students experience when dropping out of college. Tinto stated that there was very little known about the mental and emotional process of dropping out. The early research on student dropouts frequently combined students who dropped out due to academic reasons with those who voluntarily left the institution temporarily with the intention of returning and/or transferring to another college (Tinto, 1975). According to Tinto, the phenomenon of combining academic dropouts with voluntary or temporary withdrawals had an impact on the dropout data and potentially influenced our understanding of higher education policy.

Tinto (1975) used Durkheim's suicide theory to explain the similarities between the suicide process and the process a student goes through when dropping out of college

(Tinto, 1975). Durkheim's theory is based on how integrated an individual feels in society. Tinto (1987) stated, "departure mirrors the absence of social and intellectual integration into the mainstream of community life and the social support such integration provides" (p. 180). The people who perceive they are rejected by society or have not fully embraced the societal norms or morals feel a sense of not being wanted or welcomed. Similarly, Tinto theorized that students are more likely to drop out of college if they are not integrated into college life both socially and academically.

Tinto's (1975) longitudinal theoretical model (see Figure 1) explained the process a student goes through and how the interactions between the student and the institution could result in the student leaving or dropping out.

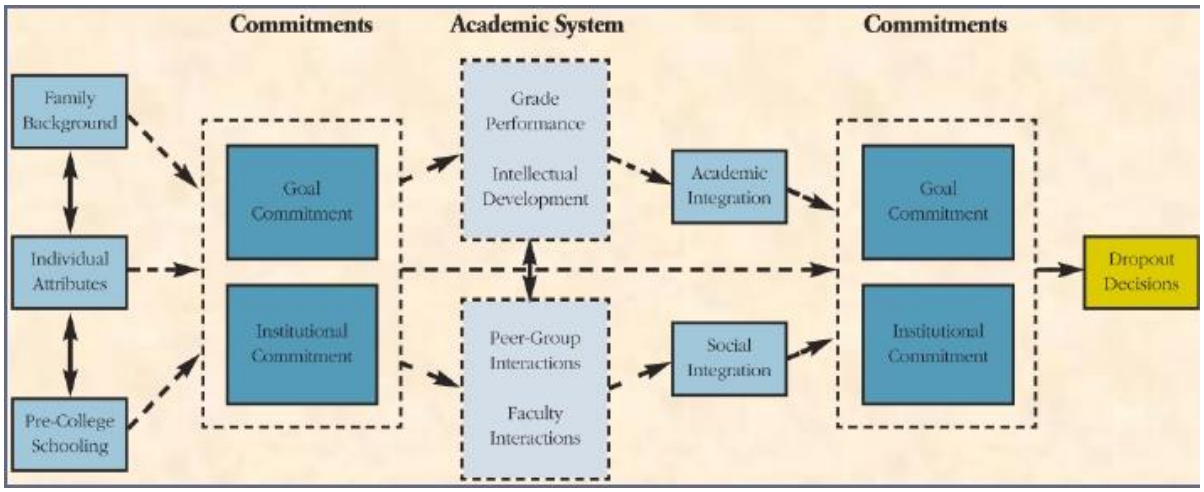

Figure 1. Tinto's Longitudinal Theoretical Model. Reprinted from Retention & Persistence Theories, In *Storify*, n.d., Retrieved January 15, 2015, from https://storify.com/ywsanchez/tinto-s-model-of. Copyright 1975 by Vincent Tinto. Reprinted with permission.

The first component of the model identifies the attributes students bring to campus. The students' family background, individual traits and their pre-college schooling all potentially impact their commitment and goals. According to Tinto (1975), each of these components has an indirect and direct impact on a student's ability to remain in college. The second component of the model refers to the student commitment. Tinto stated that the attributes a student brings to college (family background, individual attributes, and pre-college schooling) interact with the student's goals and institutional commitment. Tinto defined goal commitment as degree completion and institutional commitment as the programs and sevices the university provides to support academic success. For example, a student with a low goal commitment, no matter the institutional commitment, would most likely drop out. Further, if a student has a high goal commitment and low institutional commitment, the student may remain at the school to complete his or her college degree. In some instances the student may withdraw from the institution but transfer to another college to finish a degree. Furthermore, if the student is not committed to graduating from college, there is a higher likelihood that the student will leave or dropout (Tinto, 1975).

The academic system of a university, as shown in Figure 1, is both formal and informal. The formal refers to academic performance. The informal is the interaction the student has with university staff and faculty. In the social system of the university, there are both formal and informal interactions. The formal interaction is university sponsored activities and the informal are the student's peer group interactions (Tinto, 1975). There are connections between the environment, which Tinto (2006) referred to as the academic and social systems of college and the "individuals who shaped those systems" (p. 2).

Tinto (1987) posited there are external factors that affect students and their decision to leave college. Tinto indicated that students weigh the cost/benefit analysis of remaining in college. Ultimately, the student decides whether or not it is worth his or her time and energy to remain in college.

Tinto (1987) stated that college and universities are not unlike society in that people who attend college, in order to be successful and feel a part of the institution, must socially and intellectually integrate. Tinto stated that departure, whether it be in human communities or dropping out of college, occurs when the individual at some point did not integrate socially and intellectually into that particular culture. Tinto (1975) originally focused solely on the student, not the institution. Tinto (1987) later stated it is no longer the student who is solely responsible for their integration, instead it is a reciprocal relationship between the student and the university. Tinto stated, "An institution's capacity to retain students is directly related to its ability to reach out and make contact with students and integrate them into the social and intellectual fabric of institutional life" (p. 180). The institution's faculty and staff have a responsibility to make the student feel a part of the campus community both socially and academically. The students' responsibility is to embrace the commitment to academics and the goal of earning a college degree. Tinto (1987) supported this by stating, "The view of the effect of institutions upon student leaving highlights the intricate web of reciprocal relationships which binds students to the communal life of the institution" (p. 181).

Tinto (1987, 1988) theorized that students who leave college do so by progressing through different stages of departure based on the Dutch social anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage. Van Gennep's (as cited in Tinto, 1987, 1988)

rites of passage theory identified three stages or rites of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. According to Tinto (1987, 1988), college students experience a similar progression through stages as students must first experience separation or disassociation from their past communities, peer groups, high school, and family when they go to college. The transition period for a new college student involves the student separating from their past communities and transitioning into their new peer groups and surroundings on the college campus (Tinto, 1987, 1988). Tinto also noted that students who successfully move from one stage to another no longer have strong ties to their past communities, but may not have established firm ties to their new surroundings. The third stage, incorporation, is when the student has integrated him or herself socially and academically into the life of the campus. Tinto (1987, 1988) suggested that students who do not progress through Van Gennep's three stages of separation, transition, and incorporation invariably withdraw and drop out of college.

Tinto's (1993) model of voluntary student departure (see Figure 2) provides an expansion of his 1975 model of the process a student progresses through to departure or retention.

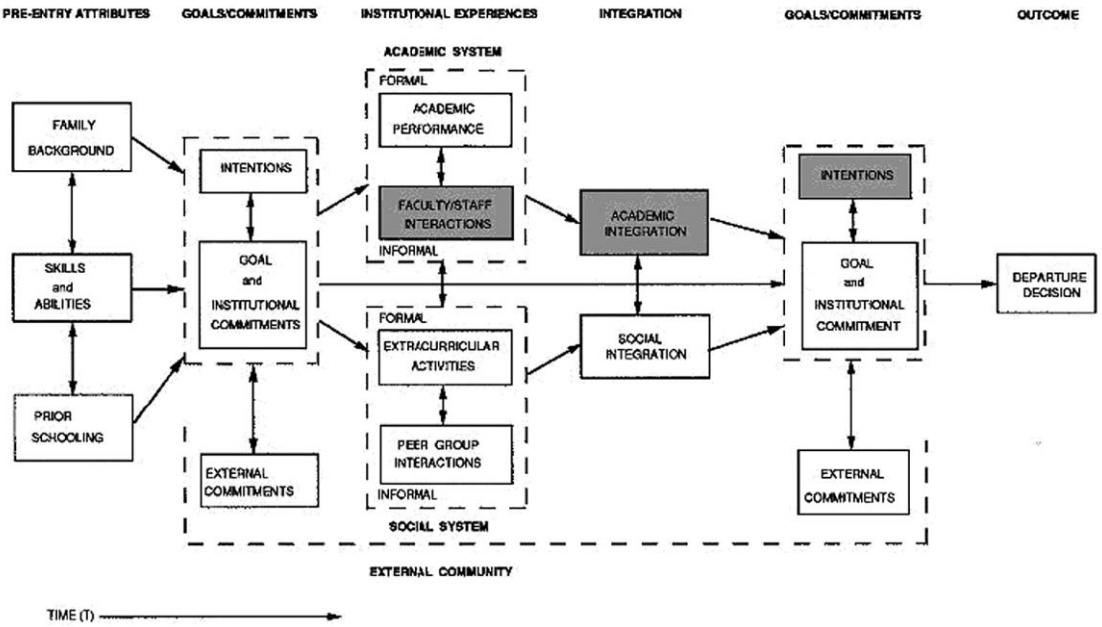

Figure 2. Illustration of Tinto's Model of Voluntary Student Departure. Reprinted from *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. (p. 114), by V. Tinto, 1993, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Copyright 2006 by Vincent Tinto. Reprinted with permission.

As noted in Figure 2, Tinto (1993) added to his model the effect external commitments have on students and their ability to either stay in college or drop out. This marked a shift in Tinto's research from a focus on student attrition to student retention and analyzing the institution's role in retaining students. Tinto (2006) stated the first year of a student's college career is the most important as it relates to involvement. In Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1988) earlier research, student retention was based on whether or not a student had the attributes, skill, and motivation to persist through college. If students did not finish college, it was considered the student's fault, not necessarily any role the

institution played. The student was viewed as not being able, motivated, or willing to complete. In essence, the student failed, not the institution (Tinto, 2006). In the 1970s, retention research began to focus on the role of the institution and how the environment impacted retention (Tinto, 2006). Tinto illustrated in his model that student integration to campus life both academically and socially played a significant role in retention and was critical in the student's first year of college. The earlier works of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988) focused on the transition students made to college, the first years of college, and the interactions of students outside of the classroom. In this later model, the role of the institution was highlighted and much of the programming often became the responsibility of student services. Retention programs were in addition to the college curriculum, not integrated with the academics (Tinto, 2006).

Tinto (2012) later outlined a new framework for institutions to enhance their ability to retain students and support them through graduation. Tinto said that much of the retention programming on college campuses had focused on areas of a student's life on campus outside of the classroom. Tinto indicated that universities needed to devote resources to first year students to combat the high level of attrition.

Tinto's (2012) framework also identified the classroom as the focal point to bolster retention and promote student success. He described four conditions necessary for student success: expectations; support; assessment and feedback; and involvement. The first condition, expectations, is one of the driving forces behind student success (Tinto, 2012). Students must first have expectations of themselves and then those expectations are coupled with the high expectations set by the institution. If students are clear about their goals for themselves and the institution sets clear expectations for them, then student

success will most likely be high. Tinto stated, "Student retention and graduation is shaped by the availability of clear and consistent expectations about what is required to be successful in college" (p. 10). Expectations fall into three areas for students: overall success at the university; success in their program of study; and success in the student's individual classes (Tinto, 2012). Tinto also stated, "Knowing the roadmap to success – the rules, regulations, and requirements for degree completion – is central to students' ability to successfully navigate the path to a timely degree" (p. 10). Retaining and graduating students depends on the effort the faculty and staff put forth to ensure that students understand what it takes to be successful and the expectations of them for success (Tinto, 2012).

Support is the second condition. Support aligns with expectations. The success of students depends on the expectations of them and the amount of support they receive academically, socially, and financially. Tinto (2012) stated that student support must be incorporated in the classroom where all students have access to support rather than just the students who voluntarily seek support or have time to access it.

Assessment and feedback is Tinto's (2012) third condition. Tinto stated that student success can be promoted if the institution frequently assesses students and provides feedback based on those assessments. Assessment allows institutions to gauge how they are performing and making adjustments to promote student success. Tinto supported this by stating,

> While entry assessment, end-of-first-year assessment, and other forms of course, program, and institutional assessment can be useful and, in varying ways, indirectly affect student retention, the most effective form of assessment is that

> which monitors actual student performance in the classroom. (p. 63)

Involvement is Tinto's (2012) fourth condition. True to Tinto's (1993) earlier research, the more a student is academically and socially involved, the more likely the student is to remain at the institution and graduate. Tinto (2012) stated,

> Among all students, regardless of ethnicity and race, those having a larger number of formal academic connections with faculty, as well as a larger number of formal and informal social connections with faculty, staff, and peers, were found to enjoy greater satisfaction and higher retention. (p. 64)

The challenge, according to Tinto, is for faculty to find ways to incorporate involvement activities into their classroom curricula.

Similar to Tinto's (2012) research, Astin (1977, 1993, 1984, 1999) was a leading researcher in the area of student retention and success. Astin was the founding director of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Astin (1984, 1999) theorized that students persist through college by investing their time and energy and staying involved in their academics and student life. "Quite simply, student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 518).

Astin (1999) presented five student development postulates:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry examination).
2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum;

that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times.

3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student's involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams.)
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (p. 519).

College student retention was described by Tinto (2004): "Increasing attention is now being paid to enhancing student retention and graduation, making sure that students not only get in the door of higher education but also are successful in staying there through the completion of a degree" (p. 3). Once a student enrolls and attends classes, it is the institution's obligation to ensure its students have the necessary tools to remain at their original institution and graduate with a college degree (Tinto, 2012).

For the past 40 plus years, both Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988, 1993, 2006, 2012) and Astin (1984, 1993, 1999) have researched and developed their student retention and

involvement theories to focus on critical factors that influence a student to persist through college and graduate. Students enter college with different backgrounds, environments, and academic and social characteristics. The goal of the student and the institutional leadership is degree completion.

The question is why do some students persist through college and graduate and some do not. Tinto (as cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) theorized that students, with their unique characteristics such as academic, family, and social, enter college with their own predetermined set of personal academic goals. As students move through their academic careers, their intentions and goals may change. Tinto indicated this occurs based on the interactions the student has academically and socially. If a student integrates into the campus environment on an academic and social level, in theory, the student then shares similar "attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 54) which results in the student integrating more into the campus community, further assisting the attainment of academic goals. Student retention theory has evolved to take into consideration the cultural backgrounds of students, the type of institution of higher education, and the role of curriculum, and faculty (Tinto, 2006).

Tinto (2006, 2012) argued that the reasons students leave college are not the same as why they persist through college. Tinto addressed the need to integrate student retention practices into the curriculum so faculty are involved on a daily basis. Historically, student retention was seen as a responsibility of student services through offering programs such as career services, counseling services, and co-curricular programming. Tinto (2012) stated that retention is also the responsibility of faculty through programs that facilitate student involvement in the classroom. Tinto prescribed

that faculty set expectations early for their students, provide support to their students, conduct assessments and provide feedback, and encourage involvement.

Both Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988, 1993, 2004, 2006, 2012a, 2012b) and Astin's (1984, 1993, 1999) theories have highly influenced how colleges and universities have structured student support services. Originally, student services were primarily the key functions of Admissions and Registrar, Financial Aid, Housing and Food Services, Student Activities, and Counseling. In subsequent years, as student demographics changed, programs evolved to address the specific needs of student demographics (e.g., international students, Women's Centers, Adult ReEntry Centers, Multicultural and Diversity offices, athletes, Greek Life, and Veterans Services). Later, services further evolved to focus more specifically on retention and student success (e.g., academic advisors, tutoring services, writing and math centers, supplemental instruction) (P. Miltenberger, personal communication, March 5, 2015).

One of the student groups that is highly visible on campus are student-athletes. As the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), which governs college athletics, placed emphasis on student retention and graduation, the need for specialized services increased. In 2003, the NCAA modified and strengthened the student-athlete eligibility standards by developing a Graduation Success Rate (GSR) to report the graduation rate of student-athletes. In 2004, the NCAA developed an Academic Progress Rate (APR). A negative APR can impact the institution's ability to participate in post-season play, provide scholarships for student-athletes, and can limit practice schedules. Due to these increased eligibility and academic standards, college and university athletic departments expanded specialized academic support services necessary to assure student success.

These athletic academic support service centers are either housed in the athletic department or as a campus student service. The effectiveness of the specialized services can be critical to a university and its intercollegiate athletics program.

Logic Model Evaluation

The Logic Model is an evaluation tool that allows the evaluator(s) to tailor the model to the unique characteristics and facets of a program. The logic model provides a simple diagram or picture of the *cause and effect* relationships of each element of the program, and assists the practitioners to understand if the program is meeting its goals or is having the intended effect on participants (Davidson, 2005). Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2004) stated,

> A program can be thought of as a hypothesis: if a program is implemented, then the expected results will follow. Logic modeling is a tool that can be used to unpack this hypothesis in order to understand the underlying assumptions and create strategies to test the hypothesis. (p. 7)

Further, the logic model provides evaluators and/or practitioners a picture or roadmap of the unit and serves as an "advanced organizer for designing evaluation and performance and identifying what evaluation questions should be asked and why and what measures of performance are key" (Wholey et al., 2004, p. 7). As described by the Kellogg Foundation (1998),

> The most basic logic model is a picture of how you believe your program will work. It uses words and/or pictures to describe the sequence of activities thought to bring about change and how these activities are linked to the results the program is expected to achieve. (p. 1)

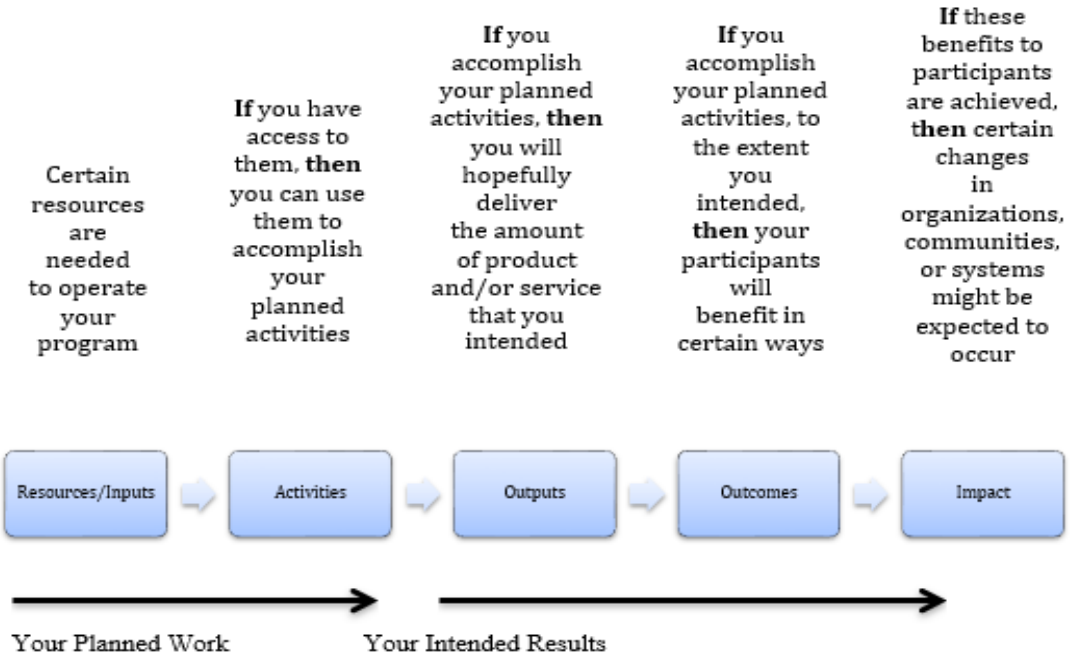

Figure 3. Description of the logic evaluation model. Adapted from *Kellogg Foundation*, 1998, p. 1

Figure 3 is a visual presentation of the logic model. The logic model shows "the program information and progress towards goals in ways that inform, advocate for particular program approach, and teach program stakeholders" (Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 5).

A logic model is an illustration as to how a program, in theory, should work (Kellogg Foundation, 1998). The evaluator and/or program staff members design the logic model (i.e., road map) that specifically describes the area or program being evaluated. If the evaluation determines that the program achieves its goals, it is deemed successful. If it works differently in practice, the logic model can be revised or adjusted (Kellogg Foundation, 1998). If the evaluation determines the program could be more successful or improved, the evaluation will indicate this and recommend adjustments that

would benefit the unit (Wholey et al., 2004). Basically, the program participants describe how the program operates so an evaluation can be conducted. Questions such as the following are considered: Is the unit achieving its goals? Do the constituents perceive the program to be effective? If not, what changes are suggested to improve the unit?

A logic model evaluation begins with identifying the long-term goal or the ultimate program outcome for the unit. Once the long-term goal is established, a time frame is developed. Then the model is built by determining the resources and activities needed to achieve the long-term goal(s) within the time framework (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004).

The Kellogg Foundation (1998) researchers discussed the outcome approach of the logic model as "a linear, columnar model [that] emphasizes the causal linkages thought to exist among program components" (p. 11). The logic model provides practitioners and program evaluators a model of how a program is theoretically supposed to operate from its resources to the achievement of the program's goals. In theory, every component included in the logic model should have an impact on the outcomes of the model. A program evaluation using the logic model determines if the program being evaluated is actually doing what it purports to be doing.

In the case of this study, the model utilized to evaluate a Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit at a single Division I university. The desired outcome for student-athletes is graduation from college. Therefore, college retention theory is critical in understanding the array of activities performed by the SAASS unit. The goal of the SAASS unit is to provide the necessary services to each student-athlete to ensure progress toward a degree, eligibility by meeting the NCAA benchmarks, and graduation.

The services are intended to assist student-athletes in their persistence toward graduation. The logic model evaluation as applied to a specific Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit will be described in detail in Chapter III.

Chapter III: Methodology

The Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit is perceived to be a critical unit in the athletics department on a university campus. Student-athletes are required to maintain National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility to participate in college sports. The SAASS unit focus is on encouraging acceptable academic progress and graduation amongst student-athletes for student-athletes to remain eligible to participate in NCAA sports (Crowley, 2006; Remaining Eligible: Academics, n.d.).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to build a logic model evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the SAASS unit of a NCAA Division I mid-major university in the Western United States. Specifically, the goal of the evaluation was to determine if the activities of the unit effectively supported academic progress, retention, and graduation of student-athletes on the men's and women's basketball teams. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. Is the SAASS unit perceived to be effective by key stakeholders?
2. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete eligibility?
3. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete retention?
4. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete graduation?

Logic Model Evaluation

The logic model evaluation was utilized to assess the effectiveness of the SAASS unit. According to Wholey et al. (2004), the logic model evaluation can be utilized for many different programs and can be implemented at any time during a program's

lifespan. The logic model enables program managers to promote continuous improvement and can be adapted to promote systemic measurement of individual or collective components (Wholey et al., 2004). According to the Kellogg Foundation (1998) Logic Model guidelines, it is important to determine how members of the program staff and program beneficiaries perceive the program is working in relation to how it was designed. In other words, are the activities effective in achieving the goals of the unit? For purposes of this study the participants are described the human resources component of the logic model. The beneficiaries of the SAASS unit were defined as the student-athletes from the men and women's basketball programs. The men's and women's basketball teams were selected for this study based on the following rationale:

1. The university provides opportunities to both sexes in the same sport;
2. The men's and women's basketball program has a higher percentage of low-income, at risk students than other sports;
3. The men's basketball program is a revenue generating sport; and,
4. Post-participation (professional) opportunities exist for both men and women in basketball. Professional opportunities may be relevant to the student-athletes academic goals and thus impact graduation rates.

A logic model evaluation was developed utilizing the goals of the SAASS unit. Questions were sent via email to the Senior Associate Athletics Director of Academics and Compliance and the athletics academic advisor to define the key activities of the unit. Figure 4 illustrates the logic model evaluation developed for the SAASS unit. The planned activities of the SAASS unit are described in detail, and the

interactions illustrated in Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Finally, the data sources, collection, and analysis are described.

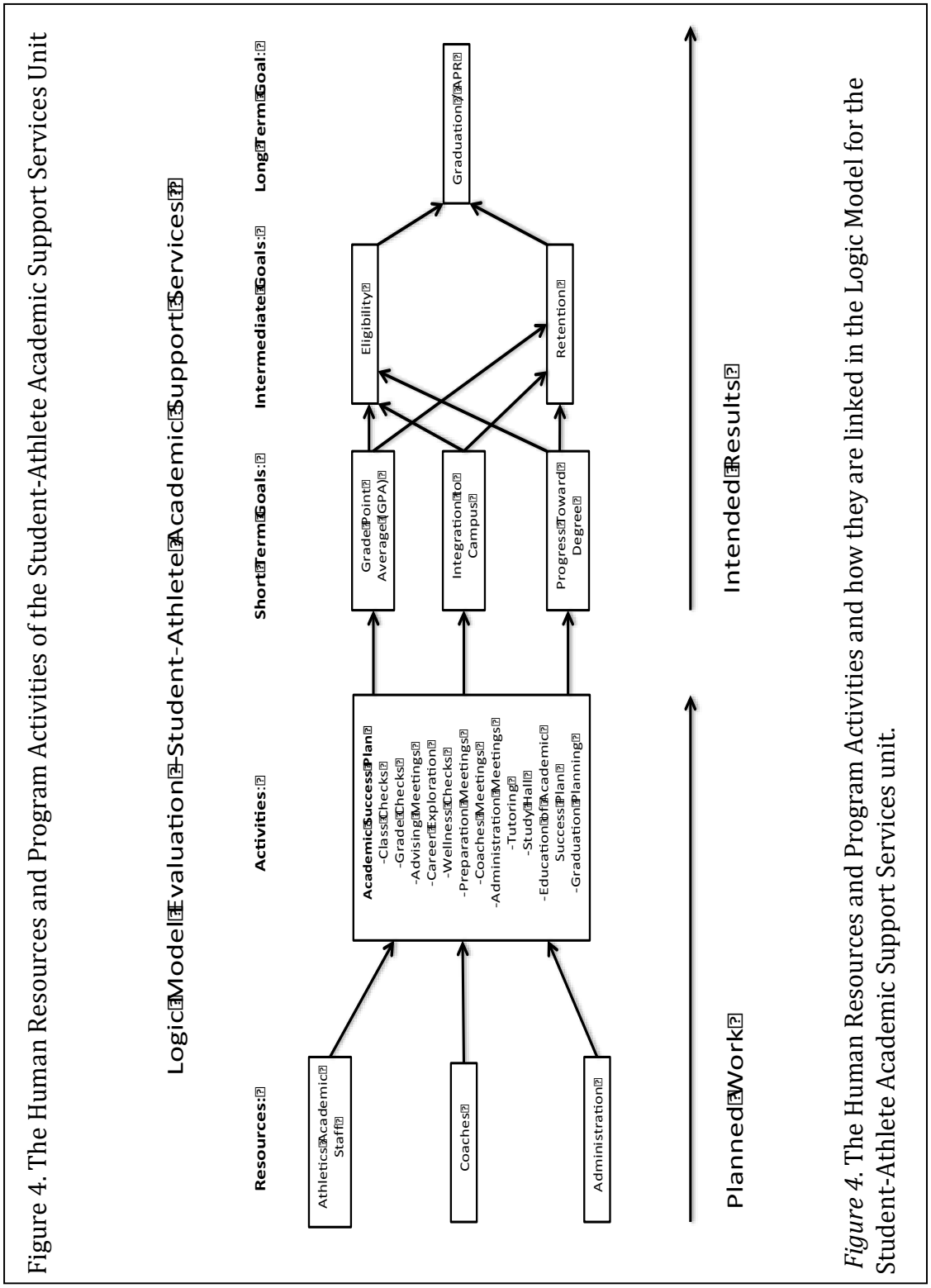

Figure 4. The Human Resources and Program Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services Unit

Logic Model Evaluation – Student-Athlete Academic Support Services

Figure 4. The Human Resources and Program Activities and how they are linked in the Logic Model for the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit.

Resources

Funding for the SAASS unit under study is considered a fixed resource. The money necessary to support the program does not have to be raised by the unit itself. The sources of funding for the institution in the study are allocations from the NCAA and the university Office of the President. This study did not address the fiscal resources or adequacy of funding.

Human resources. The Athletics Academic Staff consists of a senior associate athletics director who oversees the unit, two assistant athletics directors of academics, and three athletics academic advisors. The members of the Athletics Academic Staff are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the SAASS unit. They are present every day in the SAASS unit to assist student-athletes with any academic situations or issues they may encounter.

The coaching staff recruits student-athletes to come to the university and pursue a degree while participating in their respective sports. The coaches are responsible for the following: (a) develop and teach student-athletes the skills and knowledge needed to compete athletically; and (b) work with athletics academic advisors and student-athletes to ensure academic success, eligibility, and progress toward a degree.

The athletics administration consists of the director, deputy director, senior associate, and associate directors who oversee the operations of the sports. The athletics director is responsible for the management of the entire athletics program, ensuring adequate funding, monitoring, and supporting the student-athletes academics. The deputy, senior associate, and associate directors hold coaches and programs accountable. The coach is responsible to manage his or her program fiscally and competitively.

The athletics academic staff performs the activities of the Academic Success Plan (ASP). Each activity is designed to increase the individual team and overall athletics department APR and to promote student-athlete graduation There are activities that are completed daily, weekly, or monthly. The athletics academic staff members are assigned to advise and support specific sport teams. The athletics academic staff members are required to monitor each of the student-athletes in relationship to the ASP activities.

Figures 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the direct and indirect relationships the athletics academic advisor, the coaches, and the administration has to each planned activity.

Figure 5. Athletics Academic Staff is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit

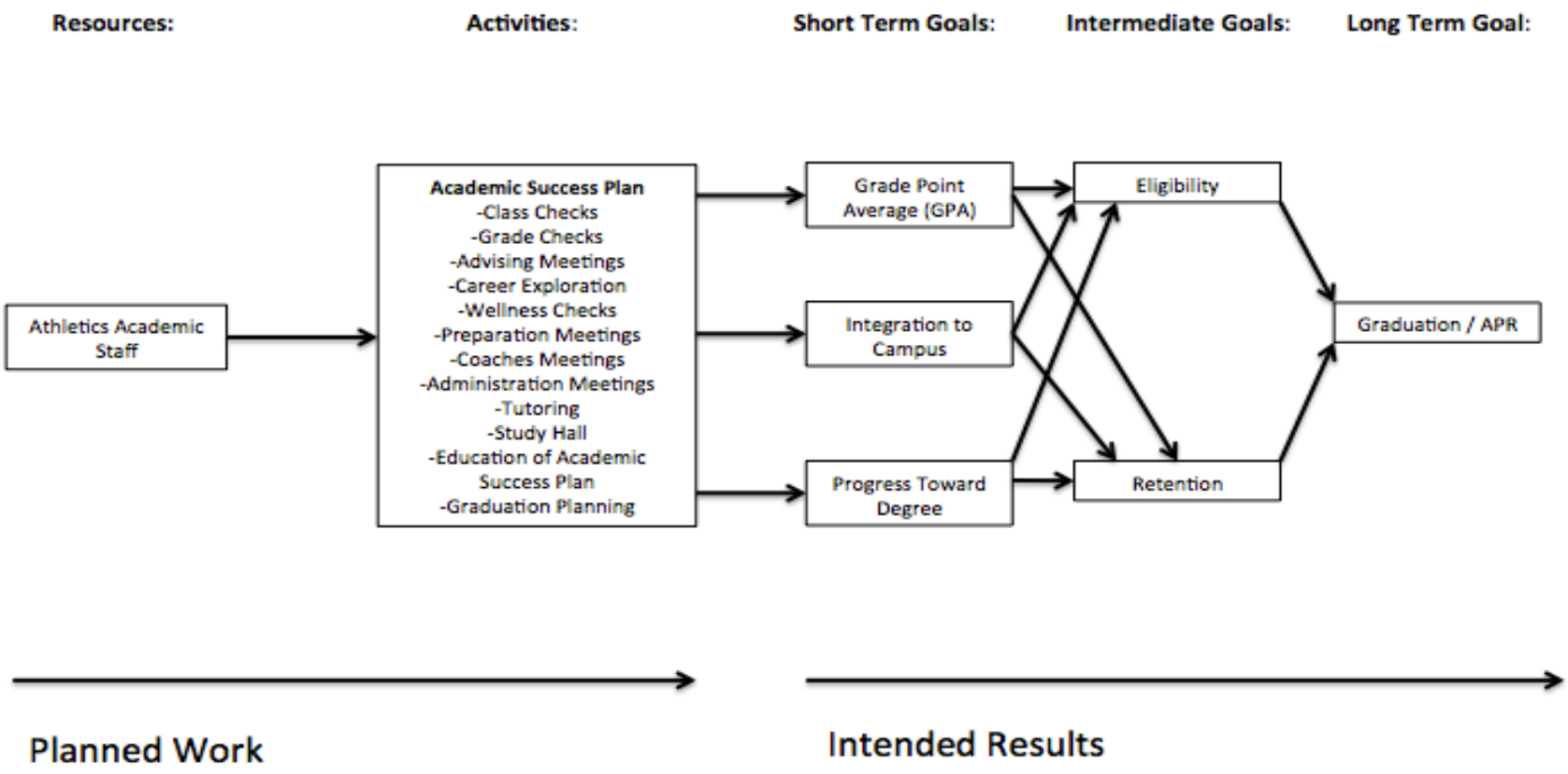

Figure 5. Athletics Academic Staff is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit Services Unit.

Figure 6. Coaches Resource is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services.

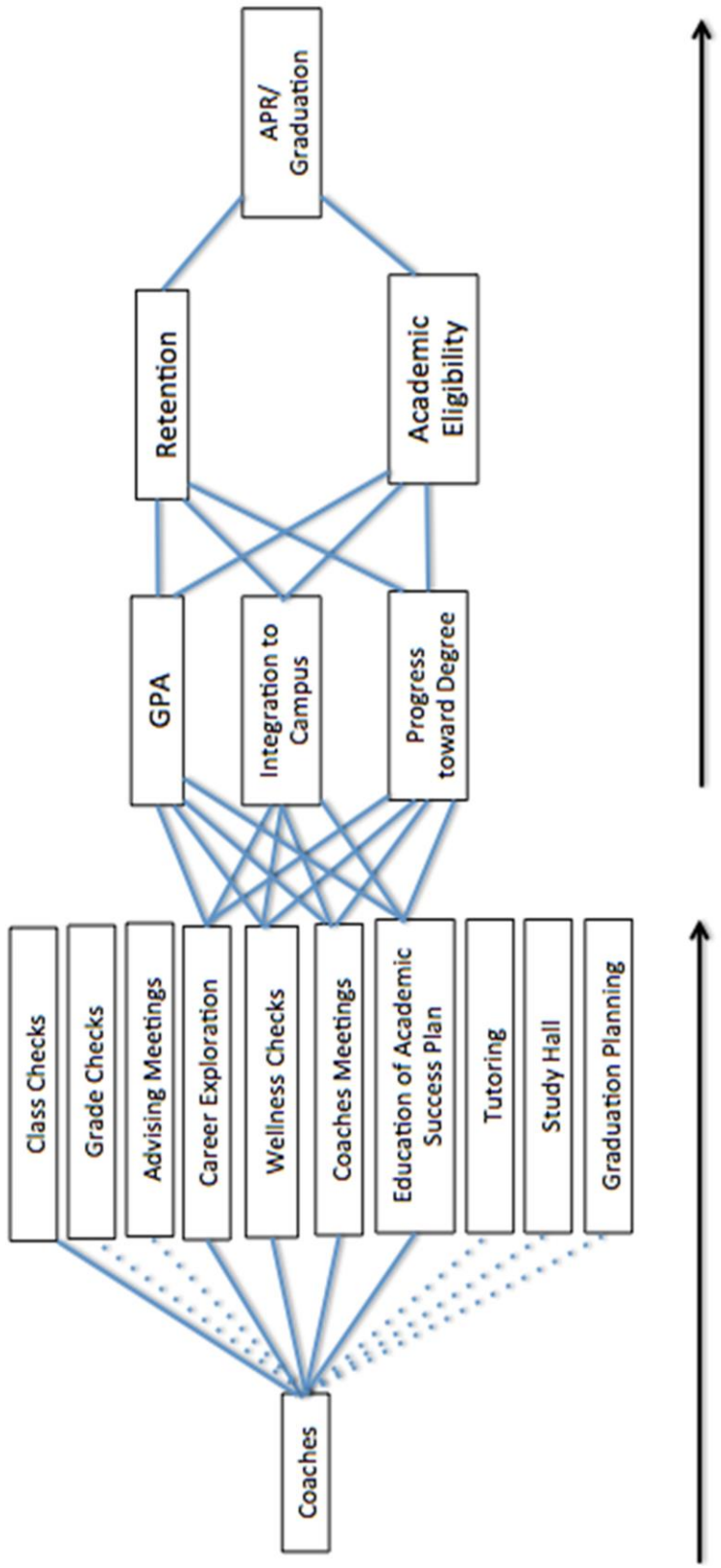

Figure 6. Coaches Resource is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit.

Figure 7: Administrator Resource is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit.

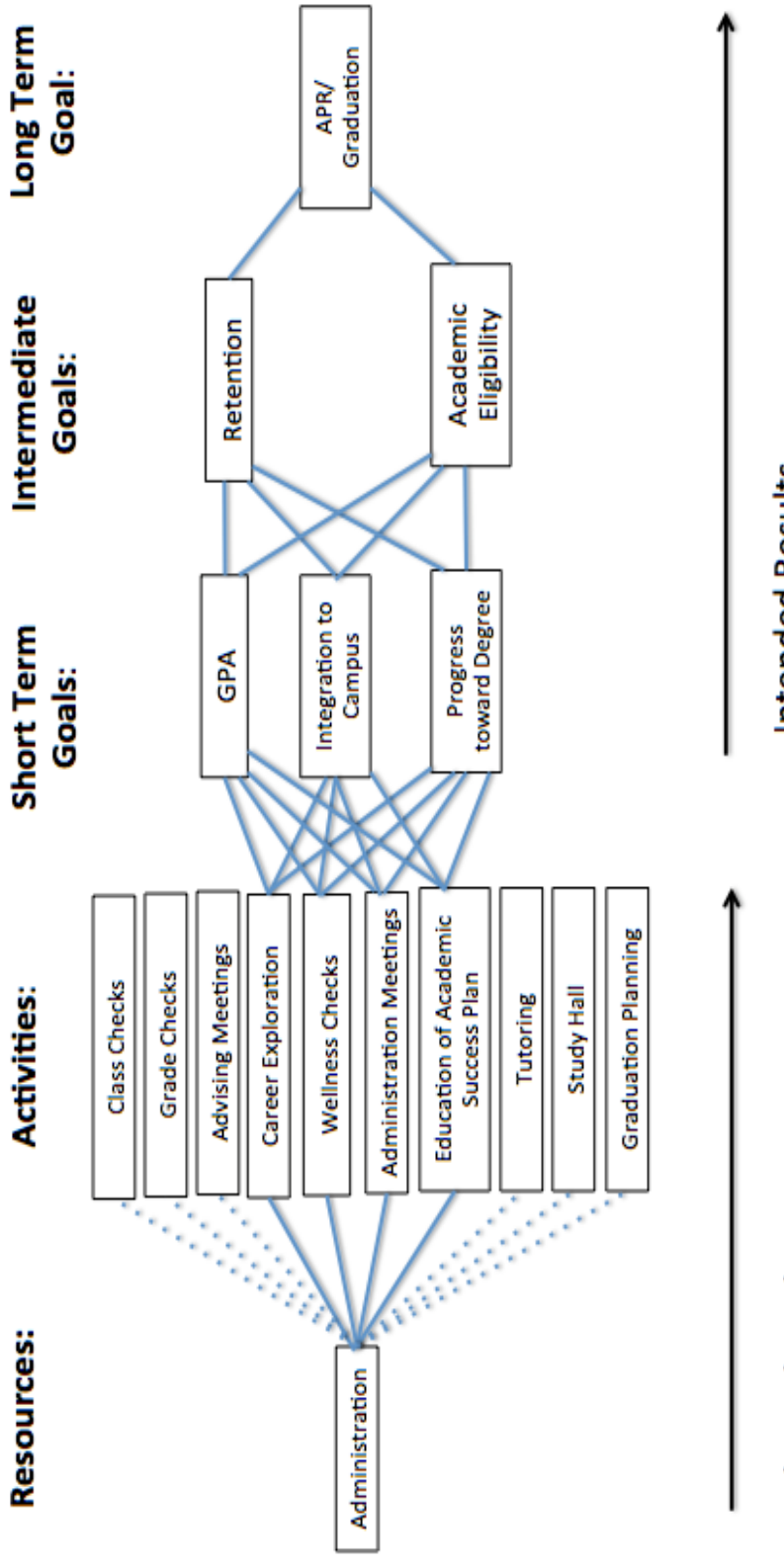

Figure 7: Administrator Resource is linked to the Activities of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit.

Planned Activities

The next component of the SAASS unit logic model evaluation is the planned activities. The planned activities are daily, weekly, and monthly events that the SAASS unit conducts to achieve short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. The SAASS unit has developed an ASP, which provides a roadmap for the activities. The ASP is the model the SAASS unit uses, which is comprised of multiple components designed to promote student-athletes academic success. As a result of the ASP activities, the athletics academic staff, coaches, and administrators are able to determine the academic progress of the student-athlete on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

This section will describe the ASP activities and a detailed description of the functions, who is involved in each activity, and the intended effect on student-athletes.

Class checks. Academic staff are responsible to monitor whether student-athletes are physically attending class. Members of the coaching staff and/or the athletics academic staff conduct site visits to classrooms to determine if the student-athletes are attending the classes in which they enrolled. Class checks are primarily focused on academically at risk students-athletes. At the institution under study, academically at risk is defined as a student-athlete with a GPA at or below a 3.0 and all freshmen and transfer students. When an athletics academic advisor performs a class check, the advisor reports the class checks to the coaching staff weekly. On the weekly report, the advisor indicates whether the student-athlete was in class, arrived on time, and if the student-athlete was attentive and/or sitting in the first two rows. Because student-athletes must be absent from class due to team travel, it is essential that student-athletes attend all classes when not traveling.

Regular class attendance is assumed to enhance the academic performance of student-athletes. If a student-athlete is attending class on a regular basis, he or she is placed in a position to more fully integrate into the campus community. Interacting with peer groups and active classroom participation may also provide opportunities for the student-athlete to be actively involved in campus life beyond athletics. Attending class is designed to ensure the student-athletes are putting themselves in a favorable position to meet PTD benchmarks necessary to remain eligible and make the necessary progress toward degree.

Grade checks. For all freshmen and all at risk student-athletes, grades are checked weekly. Progress reports are sent at different intervals during each semester using a software program called GradesFirst™. Professors complete the progress report of each student-athlete and mail the report to the athletics academic staff. The grades are logged into the weekly report, which is emailed to the respective coaches and sport administrator.

The freshmen and at risk student-athletes are required to meet weekly with their athletics academic advisors. This is a check-in meeting during which the student-athlete is required to self-report his or her grades. These self-report grades are logged into the weekly report, which is also sent to the coach and sport administrator.

The intent of grade checks is to ensure that the student-athlete remains on track to attain the GPA necessary for his or her degree and to be eligible for athletic participation. If, at any point in the semester, the student is low performing (C grade or below), the athletics academic staff may intervene and take the necessary steps to assist the student. Interventions include tutoring, appointments at the Writing Center, or, if appropriate, an

appointment with the Disability Resource Center to undergo testing. The goal is to improve the student-athlete's commitment to studying, going to class, and actively interacting with his or her professors and classmates.

Advising meetings. During the semester, all freshman and at risk student-athletes are required to attend a weekly advisor meeting. During these meetings, the athletics academic advisor discusses academics and grades. The athletics academic advisor checks the student-athletes grades, which are reported either through progress reports, the student's self-report, or the student's online account. The athletics academic advisor answers questions the student-athlete may have and discusses any upcoming assessments and assignments.

A coach can request that any student-athlete be assigned a weekly meeting with the athletics academic staff for monitoring. An example is a student-athlete who is required to maintain a certain GPA to maintain a scholarship or a student-athlete who is receiving accommodations from the Disability Resource Center. The intent of the weekly meetings is to hold the student-athlete accountable.

If student-athletes are not at risk or freshmen, they are required to meet once a semester with their athletics academic advisors after they have met with their university major advisor. All student-athletes are required to schedule a meeting with their university major advisor to plan for the upcoming semester to ensure that they are on track toward graduation. In these meetings, the university major advisor and the student-athlete develop a plan for graduation and ensure the student-athlete is taking the required classes sequentially. Following the meeting with the university major advisor, the student-athlete must schedule an appointment with his or her athletics academic advisor.

The athletics academic advisor evaluates the student-athletes semester plan and determines if the student-athlete is meeting PTD benchmarks and is not taking classes that interfere with practice or competition. The athletics academic advisor coordinates with the student-athlete's university major advisor to ensure that student-athletes are on track to graduate and are meeting eligibility benchmarks.

In the case of the institution under study, student-athletes are granted priority registration. Priority registration allows student-athletes to register for classes at an earlier date than the rest of the student body. All university and athletics advisor meetings must occur prior to priority registration each semester.

Career exploration. The athletics academic staff, coaches, and administrators are also responsible to assist student-athletes with career exploration. The athletics academic staff assists each student-athlete to explore his or her interests and aptitude for career paths. Depending on the year in school, career exploration activities vary. Coaches and athletics academic advisors work collaboratively during the recruitment process in determining student-athlete interests and an appropriate degree.

The first two years of college are critical for student-athletes in the selection of an appropriate major. The athletics academic advisor may suggest that the student-athlete visit the Career Studio on campus regarding future employment. In addition, the student-athlete is encouraged to complete a self-assessment to determine career interests.

By the end of the student-athlete's second year in school (four full-time semesters), the student-athlete must declare a major and meet 40% of requirements related to the selected degree to meet the PTD requirements. Various members of the administration team assist student-athletes with career exploration by providing Life Skill

Programming seminars. These seminars often feature guest speakers from the Career Studio or an on-line module whereby students can narrow their interests into possible career choices. Occasionally administrators meet with the student-athletes and provide career assistance by making connections with people they may know on campus or in the community. This type of support can include development of an internship opportunity or a day of shadowing someone in his or her field of interest.

Wellness checks. Wellness checks are informal activities that athletics academic staff, coaches, and administrators perform. The athletics academic advisor visits with each student-athlete on a weekly basis. The wellness check is an informal and brief check-in with student-athletes to determine how they are doing in their studies, success in integrating into college life, and determine if their health is being maintained. The athletics academic staff, coaches, and sport administrator coordinate if there is an issue with a student-athlete and attempt to provide guidance when necessary. If the athletics academic staff notices a student-athlete not behaving as usual or seeming to struggle with an issue, the athletics academic staff works with the student-athlete to determine what assistance might alleviate the issue.

Coaches see student-athletes on a daily basis. The coaches, whether they are consciously or unconsciously doing a wellness check, are asked to be in tune with their student-athletes. If a student-athlete seems to be struggling academically, socially, or competitively, the coaching staff is expected to have this awareness and refer the student-athlete for assistance.

Sport administrators periodically meet with the student-athletes of the team they supervise to review and ensure the students are doing well. The administrators may also

make random stops at the academic center or training room to check-in on student-athletes and ask them how they are doing and provide additional support if needed.

Preparation meetings. Preparation meetings include the student-athlete and his or her athletics academic advisor. In these meetings, the athletics academic advisor assists and provides the student-athlete guidance and preparation for the student-athlete's advising meetings with his or her university major advisor. In addition, the athletics academic staff member attempts to prepare student-athletes for meetings the student-athlete may have with his or her professors, the Writing Center, and/or Disability Resource Center staff. These preparation meetings are designed to equip the student-athlete with information and skills needed to be successful.

Coaches meetings. The athletics academic advisors convene meetings with all head coaches of the team members they advise to discuss the academic monitoring of each student-athlete. Specifically, the athletics academic advisor informs the coaches if there are any immediate academic or eligibility issues with a student-athlete. The coach and the athletics academic advisor discuss any potential issues based on weekly reports the advisor provides to the coach. The coach and the athletics academic advisor may discuss incoming prospective student-athletes academics and eligibility, as well. Coaches meetings are designed to give the coach an opportunity to ask more in-depth questions about each student-athlete. The coach and the athletics academic advisor may develop and strategize methods to assist the student to ensure the issues are addressed appropriately.

The coaches meetings provide a venue for the coach to request the athletics academic advisor monitor the student-athlete closer by:

- performing class checks;
- meeting with the student-athlete on a more frequent basis;
- making an appointment with the DRC to have the student-athlete tested for a learning disability;
- referrals to counseling or Health Services.

Coaches and athletic academic advisors are advised to communicate issues that pertain to GPA and create recovery plans in which coaches and advisors both have involvement.

Administration meetings. Similar to the coaches meetings, the athletics academic staff convene with the sports administrators involved in each sport to discuss the academic progress of each student-athlete. The athletics academic advisor informs the sport administrator of any current or potential academic or eligibility issues.

Tutoring. Tutoring is an activity in which the athletics academic staff schedules tutoring sessions to assist student-athletes who request and/or require additional assistance with their coursework. Coaches and administrators, through the monitoring of the weekly reports, can request that an athletics academic advisor schedule tutoring for student-athletes. The SAASS unit provides two types of tutoring sessions: drop in tutoring and scheduled tutoring. Drop in tutoring is when a tutor is scheduled to hold a certain number of hours in the academic center and student-athletes who need and/or require assistance in a particular subject may stop by and receive additional assistance. Scheduled tutoring is when a student-athlete has an appointment with a specific tutor for one of his or her classes. Tutors may also provide student-athletes with study skills strategies such as time management, organization, and test preparation.

Study hall. Study hall is mandatory for all at risk and freshmen student-athletes. Study hall is held and monitored in the SAASS unit building. Student-athletes are required to complete a pre-determined number of hours and/or are prescribed objectives set by the athletics academic advisor and are required to complete the objectives before leaving the study hall session. For instance, the objectives could be that the student-athlete must finish the required assignments for the week before he or she can leave study hall. The number of hours to be completed for freshman and at risk student-athletes are determined by the head coach and the athletics academic advisor. If a student-athlete is deemed severely at risk, the athletics academic advisor can prescribe a specific objective oriented study hall. The objectives are set by the athletics academic advisor and are based on the student-athletes upcoming assignments and assessments.

The student-athlete is required to check in and out before and after each study hall session. At the end of each week, the athletics academic advisor logs the number of study hall hours the student-athlete completed for the week. The number of hours is reported to each coach and sport administrator.

Education about the Academic Success Plan (ASP). The athletics academic staff, coaches, and sport administrators are asked to advise each incoming and current student-athlete about the specific services and activities of the ASP and services the SAASS unit provides. This education is informal and typically occurs during the recruiting process between the coach, athletics academic advisor and prospective student-athletes.

Graduation planning. The athletics academic staff members assist each student-athlete with his or her graduation planning. The athletics academic advisor, university major advisor, and the student-athlete collaborate on course sequencing, scheduling, and graduation plans. During the graduation planning process, the athletics academic advisor attempts to preserve and protect a student-athletes GPA by sequencing difficult courses in a manner that avoids a course over load in one semester. The intended result of the dual efforts of the university major advisors and the athletics academic advisor is that the student-athlete has a clear idea of his or her timeline of graduation, prepares and strategizes about difficult coursework, and capitalizes on opportunities in his or her field of study.

Data Sources and Collection

The data used in the logic model evaluation was collected from three sources: (1) written responses to questions via email (2) focus groups, and (3) SAASS unit documents.

Written Responses from Athletics Staff

Separate written responses were received via email from the two key athletic administrators, the athletics academic advisor, the two sport administrators, and the two head basketball coaches. The researcher utilized e-mail with open-ended questions (Creswell, 2009). The participants were invited to participate in person. The confidentiality of the administrators and coaches could not be guaranteed as they were identified by position. Email responses were reviewed and an in-person follow up was conducted with the head coaches and athletics academic advisor to clarify key points or expand upon answers.

The two key administrators, the athletics academic advisor, two sport administrators, and the two head basketball coaches were asked questions regarding how the SAASS unit supports the student-athletes toward academic success, how the SAASS unit supports student-athlete retention and eligibility toward the overall goal of graduation, and their overall perception of the effectiveness of the SAASS unit. The interview questions for the two key administrators, the athletics academic advisor, and the two sport administrators appear in Appendix A and the interview questions for the two head basketball coaches appear in Appendix B.

Student-Athlete Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with student-athletes of each basketball team. The researcher attended a regularly scheduled team meeting to describe the study and invite participants. Student-athletes who indicated a willingness to participate were provided an information sheet and consent form. The researcher emailed the student-athletes who agreed to participate in the study with the possible dates and times. There were two separate sessions to accommodate the student-athlete schedules. The men's basketball focus group had seven participants out of a total of thirteen and the duration was approximately 30 minutes. The women's basketball focus group had nine participants out of a total of sixteen and the duration was also approximately 30 minutes. The focus groups were conducted in a private conference room by a third party. Participants were advised that the focus group was being audio recorded. Students were reminded not to use names, and if used, all personal information would be deleted from the transcripts.

The focus group sessions involved semi-structured questions relating to their academic experiences. Prompt questions were used to keep the discussion active.

Questions centered on the key activities of the SAASS unit. Focus group questions for the men's and women's basketball student-athletes are found in Appendix C.

SAASS Documents

Tables 1, 2, and 3 includes a description of the 2015-16 academic year activity data for the SAASS unit. The data in Table 1 was collected by the athletics academic advisor, data in Table 2 was provided by each head coach, and data in Table 3 was provided by the sport administrators.

Table 1.
Quantitative Data Available for Athletics Academic Advisor for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Athletics Academic Advisors:						
	Class Checks	# of class checks per week per S/A				
	Grade Checks	# of grade checks per week per S/A				
	Advising Meetings	# of advising meetings per week per S/A				
	Career Exploration	# of meetings discussing Career Exploration				
	Wellness Checks	# of Wellness checks performed per week				
	Preparation Meetings	# of Preparation meetings performed per week				
	Coaches Meetings	# of coaches meetings held per week				
	Administration Meetings	# of meetings with sport administrators held per week				
	Tutoring	# of tutor recommendations/appointment made				
	Study Hall	# of hours completed per S/A per week				
	Education of ASP	Frequency of discussing the ASP with incoming and current S/A's				
	Graduation Planning	Frequency of discussing graduation planning with current S/A's				

Table 2.
Quantitative Data Available for Coaches for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Coaches:	Career Exploration	# of meetings with S/A's discussing career exploration				
	Wellness Checks	# of meetings with S/A's discussing wellness				
	Coaches Meetings	# of meetings with advisor				
	Education of ASP	# of conversations with incoming/current S/A's about ASP				
	Class Checks	# of checks per week				

Table 3.
Quantitative Data Available for Administration for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Administration:						
	Career Exploration	# of meetings with S/A's discussing career exploration				
	Wellness Checks	# of meetings with S/A's discussing wellness				
	Administrator Meetings	# of meetings with athletics academic advisor				
	Education of ASP	# of conversations with incoming/current S/A's about ASP				

Frequency counts were compiled of key activities shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 along with the men's and women's basketball team's FGR, GSR and APR (Table 4) for the 2015-16 academic year. The quantitative data collected for the athletics academic

advisors for each activity included the number of class checks, grade checks, advising meetings, wellness checks, study hall, tutoring, and preparation meetings per men's and women's student-athlete per week. Also tabulated were the number of discussions regarding career exploration, wellness, education of the ASP, and graduation planning with each men's and women's basketball student-athlete. The number of coaches and administration meetings held per week with each head coach and sport administrator of the men's and women's basketball program varied on program and student needs and behaviors. Finally, the number of study hall hours completed and the number of tutor appointments scheduled for each men's and women's basketball student-athlete was recorded.

Table 4.
Quantitative Data Available Using the APR, FGR and GSR Measurements

	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball
Academic Progress Rate (APR) – Multi-Year Rate (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15)	.	.
Academic Progress Rate (APR) – Single Year Rate (2014-15)		
Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) – Four Class Average		
Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) – Students entering college in 2009		
Graduation Success Rate (GSR)		

Data Analysis

A program evaluation traditionally includes interviews, document review, and in this case, focus groups. The data analysis for this study included the following strategies:

Key Informant Responses

The researcher asked respondents to answer the question by email. The two focus groups sessions were audio recorded. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings. In an effort to understand the data from interviews and focus groups Creswell's (2009) data analysis method was utilized:

1. Data were organized for the administrators, athletics academic advisor, and head coaches by interview question. Student-athlete focus group data were organized by question.
2. Written responses and focus group transcripts were read for a holistic understanding of the data.
3. All data were reviewed line-by-line to identify preliminary themes.
4. Themes were clarified using Microsoft Word search
5. Consultation was held with Educational Leadership faculty to verify themes and descriptions from the coding and searched for theme connections.

The researcher also reviewed the frequency counts from SAASS unit documents for consistencies and inconsistencies. The themes and subthemes from the interview and focus group data were developed and cross-checked with the SAASS unit documents. A final review of the patterns and themes from all three sources was conducted. The FGR, GSR, and APR were also reported and compared to internal and national rates.

Summary

The researcher conducted a logic model evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the SAASS unit of a single division I mid-major Western university. Chapter III described the purpose of the study, the application of the logic model evaluation to the SAASS unit activities and human resources, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV provides the results of the interviews, focus groups, and document review.

Chapter IV

A logic model evaluation of the Student Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit was performed to understand the role and effectiveness of the unit as it relates to the overall academic success of student-athletes among the men's and women's basketball teams at a Division I institution.

The researcher sent questions to key administrators, the athletics academic advisor, sport administrators, and head coaches via email. An in person follow up interview was conducted with the academic advisor and two head coaches. Two focus groups were conducted with the men's and women's basketball student-athletes. The frequency of activities conducted by the SAASS unit staff as well as the NCAA Academic Progress Rates (APR) and graduation rates for each team and the department as a whole were also collected.

Three themes that emerged were:

1) Support retention through building relationships

2) Keeps me on track, whether I like it or not

3) Lack of integration with the rest of campus

Support Retention through Building Relationships

The interview and focus group data consistently revealed the importance of academic retention to ensure continued eligibility as defined by the NCAA. The men's basketball coach summed it up:

> I feel as though they do the best job they can do to keep players eligible. I think they realize at the end of the day, it is their job and responsibility to make sure our guys are staying on top of their academics.

It was evident that the participants in this evaluation did not approach the issue of eligibility through a simplistic model. The academic advisor appeared to be the central figure in the process of ensuring eligibility of the student athletes. Three factors were presented as critical: the person fulfilling the role of the athletics academic advisor; the communication network established by the athletics academic advisor; and the relationship between the student athlete and the academic advisor. Perhaps the head women's basketball coach described it best: "…. the person working the system is much more important than the system." She also described the importance of the person filling the athletics academic advisor role:

> I believe that the SAASS is only as good as the person who works with my team….here at [University] I have had a near perfect experience some years, and others, a very frustrating and negative experience for my players….hiring qualified people and people who are quality individuals is much more important than the structure, as it changes regularly.

Although the staff written responses and focus group comments supported the importance of the athletics academic advisor, the role of networked communication, with the athletics academic advisor at the hub, appeared to be a primary strategy of the SAASS unit. The academic advisor was expected to have effective communication with the coaches, faculty instructing the courses in which the students were enrolled, and the student athletes. The senior associate athletics director for academics and compliance explained:

> Two things academic support does assist with in this area are: 1) sharing information promptly and frequently with coaches and administrators when a

> possible retention issue is developing, and 2) providing appropriate academic evaluations and advice regarding potential recruits – to try and minimize the number of student-athletes who are high-risk academically and thus present retention risks once on campus.

The men's basketball sport administrator added:

> While I think the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts, the most important element is 'communication'. That is to say, there needs to be vigilant communication between the advisors and professors; and advisors and each coaching staff. Advisors need to 'coach the coaches' and establish open and consistent lines of communications, particularly at the beginning of each semester, establishing the framework and expectations.

Communication with coaches was described as important, primarily through the lens of eligibility. The head women's basketball coach explained, "Most of the time, the answer is yes communication with the head coach in a timely manner assures we can all work together to stay eligible…..and we have not had an ineligible athlete since I have been here, though a few were close calls."

Communication with the university faculty who teach the classes in which the student athletes were enrolled was described as most effective when it was two-way. The academic advisor was expected to be in communication and develop a relationship with the faculty to allow the faculty to report if a student was either struggling with course content and/or missing classes. One player mentioned the relationship her advisor had with professors and how it helped her:

> I think they are also a really good like liaison between us and professors; sometimes, like I have had issues like with schedules and stuff and a professor was not going to be understanding and [Advisor] is willing to like go and email them for me or someone is willing to email them and kind of back me up so it's not just me versus them.

Communication with student athletes was described by the staff and students more in terms of the relationship they had with each other. One men's basketball player noted that the academic advisor personalizes his approach when he said, "Nobody is treated the same, you know what I'm saying? I receive probably way more text messages than he receives, you know what I'm sayin? It's just a different type of like relationship overall like on personal personal." The men's basketball players also talked about the importance of the SAASS unit, specifically the academic advisors, in developing personal relationships:

> Yeah, I think like the schoolwork and personality wise, just being like a person, you know, he really helps us. I remember one time I stayed like until 8 o'clock that night in the academic center. He was with me there the whole time. Like he clears his space out to help other people.

Another men's basketball player thought it was important that the academic advisor was a former student-athlete:

> Yeah I think so. [Name] like he was a student-athlete before. So, I mean, he knows how that feels. I mean that's what he says to us. But, I mean, playing your sport is what you are here for so he tries his best to get us in classes so we are going to be eligible to play.

One men's basketball athlete followed up with the importance of other SAASS unit staff members having respect for him and his teammates and building trust:

> That's true, though, I mean, say like personality wise man, like, if how you come at me or you talk to me, stuff like that, could really give you a rep of how I feel about you. You know, as, like with our academic advisor, I mean yeah sometimes he does get on our nerves and stuff, like that, but he is doing his job and at the same time he knows if I come up to him and want to talk on a personal note, you can talk to him.

The women's basketball student-athletes also discussed their personal relationships with the academic advisor and motivation:

> I think the best part about it, um, our academic advisor, he actually cares about us. Like um, he really wants us to succeed and so when he knows when we are not fulfilling, like, our full potential, he gets on us and like motivates us to do better in our classes.

Another women's basketball player felt that the SAASS unit staff, outside of her own advisor, are approachable and willing to assist them. She stated, "I think in general, they're all pretty open to like, if we need anything, even like conversation or just like clarification on things, their doors are always open. That's like with everyone, not just our own advisor." Another player mentioned that her advisor cares enough to say hello:

> Our advisor now is good about, if he runs into you in study hall he is like hey how is this class going? You're doing good? Oh great! Like oh you're not, talk to me if you need a tutor. That kind of thing. It's a lot informal, I think like as you get older. A lot of that comes with knowing what you are doing.

Strong communication skills along with the ability to connect with the student-athletes was discussed as a quality the academic advisor and the SAASS unit must have to be effective. The academic advisor for men's and women's basketball discussed the importance of his relationship with the students:

> The SAASS unit has to make sure that they are able to develop a positive relationship with the student athletes, so they are comfortable working with them and helping them with their success. Developing life-long relationships with the student athletes is a must in the process. Once you are able to formulate trust and honesty with the student-athlete, it makes for a better working relationship.

In addition to the personal qualities of the advisor, the effectiveness of the unit is related to the need for consistency of the personnel in the unit. The women's basketball coach stated that leadership in the SAASS unit in the past years had been variable due to turnover. She stated, "I think the high degree of turnover in leadership in this area has really hurt its effectiveness long term."

The academic advisor explained the ideal role of the SAASS unit in assisting student-athletes, "The SAASS unit is to serve students, coaches, staff, and the university community by fostering teamwork and relationships through invested time, support, and guidance. We maximize availability and communication in order to create a framework for optimal student achievement." The advisor followed up with the SAASS unit is there to make every effort to assist student-athletes in their academic success:

> I feel that the SAASS unit is to help the student-athletes stay on task with their work and assignments. Accountability is also another factor that is taken from the SAASS unit. Student-athletes must realize that they have so many resources to

> utilize for them, but it is their responsibility to make sure that they are seeking out the help that they may need. There are so many rules and requirements that must be met by the student-athletes, and it is nice to have a unit that is constantly checking to make sure that the requirements are met.

Along with the relationships and the ability to communicate and connect with the student-athletes, the ultimate goal of graduation was discussed on several occasions. The men's basketball coach indicated that the SAASS unit does a good job of putting the men's student-athletes in a position to remain eligible. The academic advisor appeared to understand his role to assist the student-athletes in being academically successful with the goal of graduation, however, he also emphasized life after graduation:

> The primary purpose of the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit is to ensure that the student-athletes are receiving all academic resources in order for them to be successful. The unit helps them develop plans and strategies that allow for them to succeed in the classroom, receive as much assistance as possible (tutoring services), and prepare them for life after sports.

The academic advisor elaborated more about his role:

> I feel that the SAASS unit will do as much as they can to make sure that a student-athlete graduates from the [University]. Working with a variety of student-athletes may be challenging because they all learn and process information in a different way, and there is not one strategy that works for every student-athlete, and that is what we (SAASS) has to remember. Patience is very key while working with the student-athletes. Throughout a student-athletes career they will face many ups and downs. They put an ample amount of time into their

school and sport, and they face a lot of adversity that many 18-22 year old students do not face. Student-athletes are held to a very high standard, and they have to always make sure that they are doing the correct thing. Watching the student-athletes develop over their careers, athletically and academically, is a joy to see. The biggest accomplishment is seeing them walk across stage to receive their hard earned diploma.

The centrality of the role of the SAASS academic advisor was illustrated by the key administrators and coaches while emphasizing the importance of the advisors personal characteristics and communication style. The administrators and coaches focused on the qualifications and *fit* of the advisor and their abilities to communicate with the SAASS unit constituents, as well as the need for them to keep the student-athletes eligible and on track to graduate. The student-athletes and their advisor emphasized the importance of relationships. It appeared to be important to the student-athletes to establish and maintain a positive relationship with their academic advisor. The student-athletes felt it was important that the SAASS staff to respect them as people and get to know them. The academic advisor and the SAASS unit was there to help the student-athletes navigate the university system in balancing their class load and communicating with professors.

Keeps Me on Track, Whether I Like It or Not

The second theme was how the SAASS unit and the academic advisor keep the student-athletes on track to graduate, whether they liked it or not. In the focus group with the men's and women's basketball players, graduation was referred to several times. The student-athletes agreed that the SAASS unit, particularly their academic

advisor, was there to keep them on track. One men's basketball player stated, "They keep you on track. That's pretty special right there. I mean that obviously the goal, we are students first, then athletes, you know; getting your degree is a real big accolade." Another men's basketball student-athlete described the athletic department's culture of graduation:

> No there is a culture. You see everybody is asking when you graduate. I feel like at some other schools it's not the same like I speak, like in my high school everybody that asks what college you going to. Some other high schools it wasn't like that. Are you going to graduate? So here, it's like you graduate like winter, spring, you know what I'm sayin? It's like, so I feel like the culture. I mean there are a lot of smart athletes at this school, you know, um they have banquets for certain GPA and there is a whole bunch of athletes there and we feel that kind of speaks on that.

One of the men's basketball players illustrated how his academic advisor assisted him with mapping out his classes:

> They kind of tell you or [Name] will lay it out for you. Like if you take this class and this class this summer and this credit wise you need 26 credits then you're going to graduate in one year; you know what I'm sayin? So, or like, if you want to graduate in the winter, we can knock two more classes out in the summer. Like, he will lay it all out for you. I can't speak for anybody else and I definitely think that some academic advisors are much better than the others or care way more than others; but, uh, as far as ours, I think he really does a great job of laying that out for us.

Another player agreed the advisor helped balance her class load when she said, "He helps us pick out classes, just like what classes to take, something not too heavy, like, he keeps it balanced." The women's basketball student-athletes also spoke about the topic of organization and its effect on academic success:

> I agree in, like, just getting a plan, like what, you know, when it's a good time to start working on your minor as opposed to making sure your percentage done to stay eligible in your major and just all that kind of stuff. Stuff that we, like, really wouldn't know coming in, kind of be, like, hung out to dry. If they weren't tell you like, hey you need to make sure you take this class now. Or like it's not going to fit later it's a prereq for this, this and this.

Another player stated, "It's their job to make sure that we are eligible and are getting solid grades to graduate or get us on the path to graduate. That's like their job." One men's basketball player described how his academic advisor assisted him when he transferred to the university:

> Yeah they like try to help you reach your goals academically, I mean, I am a transfer. Last year was my first year, so there is a lot going on in my classes and figuring out what I need and, uh, but, like, I mean, the goal when I came here was to get my masters because I was going to be here an extra year so [Name] has really helped me do that by getting classes waived or telling me what classes to do or telling me, ok your load has to be heavier this semester since you are not playing…

Building on the importance of relationships and trust between the advisor and student-athlete, one women's basketball student-athlete stated:

> Uhhh. I mean I graduate in four and I think they really, yeah, they just stay on top of what you need to take, and if you, if they do trust you to go sign up for your own classes. That's when they review it. If it's not on track, they will change your classes for you and make sure that you are on track. And they take into consideration, into account, how many sessions we are going to be here for the summer and stuff like that. But I don't think there's really a way, if you're passing all your classes, I don't think there is a way to not graduate in four with their help.

Another women's basketball player stated that the goal of graduation may be different for men versus and women. There are less professional sports opportunities after college for women than men:

> Um, even though, the ones we do, it smart for us to graduate first. And I think, and I not saying all guys do I think there are a lot more guys who say 'Oh I can go pro or I can do; this I can go play overseas.' And I mean, they can, like, they just have more opportunities to do so. So I see why there is maybe that mindset. But I'd say it's, it kinda depends on the sport. But I feel like all of us, like the culture of our team is, we're expected to graduate. That's something our coaches have put upon us like for sure, but I wouldn't say that the academic center as a whole maybe.

Another women's basketball player differentiated between men and women's basketball players regarding graduation:

> I feel like it depends on the sport to be honest. Not like I think just even as like females, we're more inclined to graduate, just because we don't have like; let's

> just be real, we don't have nearly as many opportunities like after like college to continue to play our sport.

The men's basketball coach highlighted the unique culture of men's basketball and how it relates to the opportunity for graduation:

> The SAASS unit at [University] does their best to make sure student-athletes are retained. I feel as though in Men's Basketball, with the transfer rate being really high, it is more indicative of the culture of Men's Basketball and not academics; why the transfer rate is so high in Men's Basketball.

One women's basketball player specifically stated that it is the goal of the whole athletics department for student-athletes to graduate:

> I think the goal for them is like, is for everyone in the athletic department, is for everyone to graduate. And if an athlete decides to take a different path, then that's what they are going to do. But while they're here and while they're playing. As long as you are passing your classes, you're most likely going to graduate because they're not going to put us in a class, like some, like your major is, like math, and you are taking some random art class, they're not gonna do that. And so, I think their goal for us is to graduate regardless of what we decide to do on that path.

One women's basketball student-athlete explained the culture when she stated, "I think it's even, and I think there is that that aura of, I mean, they are trying to keep us eligible, which is also keeping us on track to graduate." Another women's basketball player stated, "no choice but to graduate" and mentioned the stereotype of athletes on campus:

> I feel like for us athletes, there is not really a choice for us to not graduate because there's already like a stereotype that like teachers have against us. Um, they don't,

> they are not necessarily fond of athletes and they already think that we are already catered to um and we get everything easy. But that's really, not the case, um so so like us so, if someone doesn't graduate, that's basically proving to them like, oh we knew that you aren't going to it like because you're lazy, you don't work hard. You know that's what they think, so I feel like for us graduating like proves everyone that we can play we can play our sport full time and go to classes full time and still get our degree.

Another women's basketball player said that the SAASS unit is a "safety net" and if the student-athletes do everything the academic staff says they should do, then graduation should not be an issue:

> Um I think they act as a safety net. And if you take advantage of it and listen to them and do what you say, err uh do what they say, pass your classes like. I don't think there, like I said, I don't think there is any way you won't graduate in four. There's no way you won't be eligible. Like it's just, I think it's up to you to actually use what they are offering and take responsibility and initiative of yourself.

Several men's basketball players used the term "organization" for keeping them on track. One men's basketball player said, "Um or I was thinking, he keeps us like organized. Keeps me organized. Uh making sure we are on top of everything just knowing what we got to do." Another player stated the advisor's skills assisted him with his organization:

> Yeah, I really think it helps a lot um, just for, you know, especially for our academic advisor, it's hard to speak for everybody else cuz, you know, we only

> have [advisor] but um, he is really organized you know he's he has all his stuff together which helps get our stuff together. So, um I think that really helps.

Another player said being organized helped him be successful, "So him just keeping us organized just like that's the one problem I have, like, while I may not do so well in the classroom, like they just keep me organized and keeps me on point and having good grades."

While students appreciated the support of the academic advisor for keeping them on track for graduation, there were some activities the student-athletes did not appreciate as much. One player said they are required to attend tutoring sessions even if they have good grades in their classes:

> Sometimes like, ok ok, I got an A in a class like in Math or something like. Sometimes we don't even need tutoring; like, we finish our work, like, we should like, have a way to get out of tutoring right? Because sometimes we just don't need it.

Another player said they are required to attend tutoring even if they do not have assignments to complete and they get punished if they do not attend, "Or like we don't have work for a week or something we still have that tutoring session, yeah like two hours a week or something. If we don't go, we get in trouble but when we go, we not doing nothing because we nothing to do." One player felt it was disrespectful of their time to require them go to tutoring appointments, even if they do not have school work, "At the same time, I mean everybody's got personal lives you know. We don't want to waste a whole hour on something we could have did at home or something viable for our lives, you know what I'm saying?"

The players spoke about what happens if they do not go to a tutoring session. One player said, "Yeah if you keep missing, you get kicked out so you might as well just miss it." The women's basketball student-athletes discussed the tutoring program as well:

> I think that the tutoring range can be kind of broad sometimes. For like a class, I don't know, like a foreign language class, I don't know, like Sign Language or something like, there's not, like there's tutoring for Math, English, Econ, stuff like that. But I think some of the classes, like more, not a lot of people take, that if they don't have tutoring, they don't have study hall, like they should be able to point us in the direction to get some kind of tutoring for those type of classes.

Another player stressed the issue of advanced tutoring:

> Yeah like there are a lot of classes that we take that there is not tutoring for. Like it's more, so, just the main classes in study hall. There are also main major classes is that there are no tutoring for, like Bio stats and like. I know my class last year, there was a ton of people in there and like, they all had to like work together, because there was no tutor, so that was a struggle, um yeah.

In addition to tutoring, the athletes spoke about class checks. One women's player stated:

> Like sometimes I know like, if I was a freshman, like I wouldn't go to class unless I knew I was going to be class checked. Or like, the fact of knowing I was going to be class checked made me go to class and like stay the whole time. And with tutoring make sure I am on track with class. I know what's going on with math. Like for me, you build on everything, so if I miss one day I'm not going to get what's happening the next day.

The men's and women's basketball student-athletes appeared to agree on the established culture of graduation in the athletics department. However, there were mixed feelings about the value of some of the SAASS activities. For example, some felt that the tutoring was not specific enough and some felt they should not be required to attend tutoring sessions if they did not have any test coming up or assignments due.

Primarily, the student-athletes had an expectation that their academic advisor would keep them on track. While some athletes acknowledged their responsibility in the process, most indicated it was the job of the advisor and the SAASS unit to assist them with their academic success by keeping them on track.

Lack of Integration in Rest of Campus

The third theme that emerged from the focus group data was whether or not the student-athletes felt integrated to the rest of campus and their fellow students. One men's basketball player stated:

> I was just talking about this the other day. Like how I don't really know what's really going on, on campus. Or I kind of feel like an athlete, honestly just an athlete. I don't feel like I'm a part of [University] or whatever but. But I kind of just feel like I'm just on the basketball team and that's what I'm here for.

Another men's basketball player stated the SAASS unit should help inform the student-athletes of campus activities:

> I feel like they should at least let us know about certain things that are going on on campus cuz then it is ultimately, obviously, our choice to integrate ourselves into some academic. Or say someone wants to be on the chess team or something, you know what I'm saying? Like believe it or not like, for real, there are student-

> athlete out there who want to do other things, but don't necessarily think they can. And or know about it. And that's where it begins, to actually having that knowledge of, oh this is happening or this is happening, I think that.

Another men's player talked about being judged by people on campus:

> That's just how it is around campus. People look at us like, oh, basketball player, but like we're still, like, you walk into a classroom and, oh he plays basketball, but it's like, but you don't want to be seen like that all of the time, like you kind of just want to know what's going on around school. It's not like athletes don't feel like they can't do other things, but it's like we don't really know and then other people, like oh, and other students look at us like, oh athlete. It's like, I mean, you kinda went here, you get the vibe on campus that everyone on campus looks at us differently, like they put us in a different category, which isn't always fair sometimes. We just want to blend in too.

Another player stressed feeling judged as well:

> I feel like it's because, like, I feel like no one knows or they don't know. Like. I don't know a lot of them, but I feel like they just make, like, they make assumptions kinda, and they don't really get to know us and know how we are as people but…

One men's player said he tries to go to the library on campus to feel more a part of campus life. He said, "I feel separated. That's why I go to the library to go do homework. Cuz like, if I have a lot of homework to do and I go to the library, I feel more like a student you know, instead of going with a whole bunch of athletes."

A women's basketball player referred to her feeling of separation from the rest of campus. She said, "I personally feel like we are really separated from the campus community. Like it's athletics up there and everything we do, all of the services, which we are grateful for and stuff, but it is definitely segregated."

Another women's player stated, "I mean it is like all of our buildings here right and the rest of the campus here." Another player noted *regular* students go to the library to study and student-athletes go to the athletics academic center to study. When athletes want to feel like regular students they go to the library to study. She said, "And like regular students will go to the library, we go to study hall instead; so it's like everything we do is separated."

One men's player stressed that it is the student-athletes prerogative to be involved. He said, "If you want to be involved, you will be involved. You make yourself involved, right? It's not on them." Another men's player noted that some type of information of what is occurring on campus would be helpful when he said, "I'm not sayin, but even if we knew, just like posters in the academic center or you know, cuz." A women's player noted that the specialized help that the SAASS unit provides to student-athletes is the cause for the separation. She stated, "I feel like it comes with the additional help that we are asking for. Like one on one sessions. Is that what you want? Cuz, like we can't do that with other people around. I don't think the segregation is necessarily a bad thing."

Another player explained the separation is due to the student-athletes demanding schedules and she does not have time to integrate into campus outside of her basketball and academic demands. She stated, "Since our schedules are, like, so demanding, um,

well for me personally, I don't have like a lot of time to like get out and do stuff with the campus community cuz I am, like, so tied up with school and basketball."

The women's basketball players said that the separation just happens and it is not the intent of athletics or the SAASS unit for it to occur. She said, "It's not intentional, it just happens." One player even said it is good that there is a separation:

> It's not like a bad thing and I think honestly I think it's kind of a good thing sometimes because, like, I know personally, I would be annoyed if I had to go, like, to the library where there is, like, a gazillion people there. And like personally, I would like fall asleep in the library or probably, but if, like, I am in study hall someone is going to come over and, like, 'wake up, do your work' kind of thing. So I don't think it's a bad thing. I don't think they enable it. It's just that's our area to do our work, to get our own personal, the personal help that we are asking for. You can't just go to the library and be like, I need a tutor for this right now and they are going to bring someone out for you. So I definitely don't think it's a bad thing. It's just how it is.

Other students felt they had choices on campus where they could study outside of the SAASS unit. One player said:

> And you really do still have the option, like, to go to the library. Like, I have had study hall hours since I first got here and I can, like, I can go do my homework wherever, like, I've been to the DeLaMare library or the Knowledge Center to do stuff if I need, like, a change of scenery, or I am meeting a big group of people who are not athletes, or something. So it kinda, it's another option and great resource and therefore, it has to be separated for us to get what we need out of it.

Another women's basketball player noted it is not the job of the SAASS unit to make sure the athletes integrate to campus:

> Nope. I don't really think that is their job either. They are here to help us succeed as student-athletes and so like we need our separate resources. We need this, that, and the other and it's not there to, like, if we want to go be part of the community, like, I guess we need to take initiative and go, like, do that. I feel like at the same time we are our own community, so like, she said it's like your option, your job to go out, if you want to. Cuz not everyone wants to be a part of huge community when we have this athletic family.

The topic of not feeling comfortable on campus and the unwillingness to integrate was also mentioned in terms of campus diversity. One men's player stated:

> Like me personally, like, I could probably, like, just talk to my whole team for, like, a whole year and not care what other students are doing you know what I'm sayin? It's cuz I'm not really that the type that really wants to get involved in things, you know what I'm saying? Plus, like, this type of school, no offense, but like, it's more like white people besides the athletes. So I'm not trying to really get involved like that cuz, you know, it's what they do. I probably don't do what they do. What I do, they don't do. You know what I'm sayin? But I feel like if I went to a black school, I would love to be involved where everybody else is doing, you know what I'm saying.

Student-athletes generally agreed their roles and academic support services contributed to a sense of separation. In some instances they felt there was a lack of information about the rest of campus that created the separation and in

other instances it was by choice as their schedules did not allow for it and/or the campus was not as comfortable to them as they would like.

The planned activity career exploration was rarely mentioned in the interviews and focus groups. In the model the SAASS unit staff indicated that there are meetings discussing careers and/or life after sports.

SAASS Activities

Tables 5, 6, and 7 reflect the activities the SAASS unit that the advisor, coaches and administrators perform to support student-athlete success. The table illustrates the frequency at which the activities are performed with the men's and women's basketball players who are deemed at risk and have a GPA below 3.05 and the players who have above a 3.06.

Table 5.
Quantitative Data Collected for Athletics Academic Advisor for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Athletics Academic Advisors:						
	Class Checks	# of class checks per week per S/A	1	4-5	0	2-3
	Grade Checks	# of grade checks per week per S/A	1	2	1	2
	Advising Meetings	# of advising meetings per week per S/A	1x every two weeks	1x every week	1x every two weeks	1x every week
	Career Exploration	# of meetings discussing Career Exploration	3	6-8	3	6-8
	Wellness Checks	# of Wellness checks performed per week	1	2	1	2
	Preparation Meetings	# of Preparation meetings performed per week	1x every two weeks	Every time I meet with them. Constantly asking them what they want to do.	1x every two weeks	Every time I meet with them. Constantly asking them what they want to do.
	Coaches Meetings	# of coaches meetings held per week	1	Coaches and I usually meet 1 time per week, but if there is ever an issue that needs to be addressed it is communicated with the coaches immediately.	1x every other week	Coaches and I usually meet 1 time per week or every other week, but if there is ever an issue that needs to be addressed it is communicated with the coaches immediately.
	Administration Meetings	# of meetings with sport administrators held per week	1	1	1	1
	Tutoring	# of tutor recommendations/appointment made	1	4-5	1	3
	Study Hall	# of hours completed per S/A per week	2-4 hours	6-8 hours	2-4 hours	6-8 hours
	Education of ASP	Frequency of discussing the ASP with incoming and current S/A's	2	1x per week	2	2
	Graduation Planning	Frequency of discussing graduation planning with current S/A's	At least 2 times each semester	At least 4 times each semester	At least 2 times each semester	At least 4 times each semester
.			As needed			
	Tutoring	# of tutor recommendations/appointment made				

Table 6.
Quantitative Data Collected for Coaches for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Coaches:	Career Exploration	# of meetings with S/A's discussing career exploration	As needed			
	Wellness Checks	# of meetings with S/A's discussing wellness	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
	Coaches Meetings	# of meetings with advisor				
	Education of ASP	# of conversations with incoming/current S/A's about ASP				
	Class Checks	# of checks per week	Weekly if needed	Weekly if needed	Weekly if needed	Weekly if needed

Table 7.
Quantitative Data Collected for Administration for Each Key Activity of the SAASS Unit.

Human Resource:	Activity:	Quantitative Data Collected:	Men's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Men's Basketball GPA Below 3.05	Women's Basketball GPA Above 3.06	Women's Basketball GPA Below 3.05
Administration:						
	Career Exploration	# of meetings with S/A's discussing career exploration	As needed	As needed	As needed	As needed
	Wellness Checks	# of meetings with S/A's discussing wellness	As needed	As needed	As needed	As needed
	Administrator Meetings	# of meetings with athletics academic advisor	As needed	As needed	As needed	As needed
	Education of ASP	# of conversations with incoming/current S/A's about ASP	As needed	As needed	As needed	As needed

Tables 5, 6, and 7 illustrates that the activities were performed on a more frequent basis with the men's and women's basketball players who had a below 3.05 GPA than the players who achieved a 3.06 GPA or higher. Frequency reflects the SAASS units focus on the at risk student.

Table 8 provides a snapshot of the academic measures of the Academic Progress Rate (APR), the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR), and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR)

for the men's and women's basketball teams. These indicators are the academic success measurements the NCAA and the federal government use to evaluate a university's athletics program's academic success.

Table 8.
Quantitative Data Collected Using the APR, FGR, and GSR Measurements

	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball
Academic Progress Rate (APR) – Multi-Year Rate (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15)	.957	.987
Academic Progress Rate (APR) – Single Year Rate (2014-15)	.941	.984
Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) – Four Class Average	17%	70%
Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) – Students entering college in 2009	50%	0%
Graduation Success Rate (GSR)	58%	92%

Academic progress rate. The Academic Progress Rate (APR) measures the eligibility per NCAA rules and the retention of a student-athlete. Ideally, one student-athlete on an athletics scholarship who is eligible from one semester to the next and remains at the same institution earned two points: one for eligibility and one for retention. For one academic year, the result for one student-athlete receiving athletics aid could total four points total: two for eligibility and two for retention. If a program scored 1.000 on the APR on the multi-year rolling average and the single year average, this meant that every student-athlete who received an athletics scholarship remained eligible from semester to semester and remained at that institution from semester to semester.

The APR is measured for each program. There is a one year average of all student-athletes on each team receiving athletics aid and a four year rolling average. The men's basketball program at the university being studied, the four year rolling average for the years of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 was .957. The one year average for the men's team for 2014-15 was .941. The women's basketball program's four year rolling average for the same four years as the men's team was .987 and the one year average for the women's team was .984.

The men's and women's basketball programs remained above the NCAA minimum requirement of .930 for the APR, the women's basketball team had a little more success than the men with eligibility and retention. On a national scale, the men's basketball program was a little below the national multi-year average which was .961 compared to .957 at the institution under study. On the single year average, the national average was .965 and the men's basketball team under study was a .941. For the women's basketball program, the national average for all women's basketball programs was .975 and the women's program under study was .987. On the single year average, the national average for the single year average was .980 and the women's basketball team studied was .984. The men's program fell just below the national average and the women's program performed above the national averages for APR.

Federal graduation rate. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) measures the number of student-athletes who enter college and graduate within six years. The FGR of those student-athletes who entered the university under study in 2009, compared to all students who entered the same year, graduated at lower rate. The student-athletes who entered college in 2009 graduated 54% compared to the all-student cohort of which 62%

graduated. The FGR also has a four-year class average, which included the cohort of students who entered college in 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and the 2009-10 academic years. The student-athletes who entered during these four years graduated at a higher rate when compared to the all-student cohort. The student-athletes graduated at 63% and the all student cohort graduated at 55%.

The men's basketball student-athletes graduated 17% for the four-year average, as compared to the all student cohort, which graduated at 55%. During 2009, the men's basketball student-athletes graduated 50%, while the all student cohort graduated 62%. There were no women's basketball student-athletes in the 2009 cohort; therefore, there was no FGR percentage logged for that particular year for women's basketball. However, for their four-year average, 70% of the women's basketball student-athletes graduated as compared to the all student cohort rate of 62%.

Graduation success rate. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is an NCAA measurement that does not include a comparison to all students at the same university. The GSR, similar to the FGR, includes freshmen student-athletes who receive athletics aid and graduate in six years from initial full-time enrollment. However, the GSR also takes into consideration those student-athletes who enter at the mid-year point and does not penalize the university for those student-athletes who transfer to another university and are eligible when they transferred out. The GSR for the university being studied for all of the student-athletes was 79%. This means that for those freshman and student-athletes who either transferred in or transferred out, 79% graduated. For the men's basketball team specifically, 58% graduated and for the women's basketball team, 92% graduated.

Based on these indicators, the women's basketball team outperformed the NCAA APR and the institutions graduation rate. The men's basketball program did not perform as well as the women's program. The men's program achieved above the minimum NCAA APR standard, but were less successful with their graduation rates.

Chapter IV presented a summary of results of the interviews and focus groups of key constituents as well as an analysis of the SAASS unit data elements. Chapter V will provide a summary of the study, discussion of findings, implications for practice, recommendations to improve the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

A logic model evaluation was conducted on a Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit at a NCAA Division I mid-major university in the Western United States. The intent was to ascertain if the logic model evaluation method was a useful tool to evaluate an SAASS unit. The logic model tool was used to differentiate unit activities as well as obtain perceptions of key constituent groups, including students, of the program. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. Is the SAASS unit perceived to be effective by key stakeholders?
2. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete eligibility?
3. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete retention?
4. Do the key activities of SAASS unit support student-athlete graduation?

The evaluation provided insight into the questions posed. Overall, the key stakeholders reported that, at the time of the study, the SAASS unit was effective in ensuring that students were eligible for athletic competition. No single SAASS unit activity was reviewed as more important in its contribution to eligibility, retention, and graduation. In contrast, the role and personal attributes of the athletics academic advisor was found to be most important in the factors contributing to academic success. In summary, the data from all sources indicated that collective activities of the SAASS unit were instrumental in eligibility, retention, and graduation.

Three themes were identified in the written responses and focus groups:

1. Support retention through building relationships
2. Keeps me on track, whether I like it or not
3. Lack of integration with the rest of campus

Each of these themes was perceived to support student-athlete academic success resulting in eligibility, retention, and graduation. These themes suggest that there was a shared vision among the key stakeholders of the SAASS unit that all student-athletes will graduate. This shared vision was realized by ensuring that the athletics academic advisor was central to the process. Of equal importance was that the SAASS unit activities were the reasons that student-athletes were successful academically. The theme of integration relates directly to Tinto's theory of student retention. Tinto (2012) wrote about the importance of academic and social integration. The student athletes, in the study, noted a feeling of lack of integration to the campus as a whole, but felt integrated with the other athletes and the athletic department staff. There is a trend in higher education, as institutions have become larger, for students and faculty to create enclaves or *silos* around student type or student majors. Thus, academic and social integration is occurring at a *micro* rather than *macro* level.

This chapter is divided into four sections: discussion; implications for practice; recommendations to improve the study; and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine if the key stakeholders of the SAASS unit perceived the SAASS unit to be effective relating to the academic success of the men's and women's basketball programs. Based on the mission and goals of the SAASS unit, effectiveness was measured by the academic success of the student-athletes. The women's basketball program was found to have a higher graduation rate than the general student population of the university and achieved an APR rate well above the NCAA minimum of .930. The men's basketball program performed at a lower rate in comparison

to the women's program and to the overall university student population. The men's coach contended this was due in part to the culture of college men's basketball, as there are more opportunities in men's basketball for players to opt out of college early and obtain professional contracts. Even though these professional opportunities exist, the student-athletes stated there is a desire and support system encouraging them to graduate from college as their primary goal.

Based on the interview and focus group data and the SAASS documents, the SAASS unit appears to be effective. Three key findings from the data emerged:

1. Shared vision of graduation
2. Advisor is central
3. Dependence on the SAASS service to keep them on track

Shared Vision of Graduation

Interviews with key stakeholders, including the students-athletes, revealed a shared vision of the purpose of the SAASS unit. Responses of the key administrators, sport administrators, and head men's and women's coach were in agreement on the role of the SAASS unit as it relates the academic success of the student-athletes. Senge (1990) identified a shared vision as essential to the success of an organization. If individuals within the organization have a commitment to the shared vision, then they will work to accomplish that vision. At the university under study, the interview and focus group data illustrated an established culture of graduation as part of the shared vision.

The coaches described their dependence on the athletics academic advisor to assist their student-athletes with their eligibility and to keep them on track to graduate. Athletics staff agreed that a key function of the athletics academic advisor was to

communicate with coaches about their student-athletes academic progress and to support the student-athletes toward graduation.

There appeared to be an enculturation that every student-athlete who enters the university will compete for their program and graduate. Not only was competition identified as important, but equally, if not more importantly, was for the student-athletes to retain their eligibility through their four-year careers, remain at the university, and graduate with a college degree.

The success of the SAASS unit, like any enterprise or business, hinges all constituents understanding the ultimate goal set for everyone to achieve (Senge, 1990). The vision shared by all constituents was to assist student-athletes with their academic success toward the main goal of the graduation.

Advisor is Central

All groups identified the significance of the athletics academic advisor and his or her ability to communicate and build relationships. Each constituent group relied upon the advisor to identify needs, target services, and monitor progress. Thus, the athletics academic advisor was found to be central to the effectiveness of the SAASS unit. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: The Role of the SAASS Academic Advisor

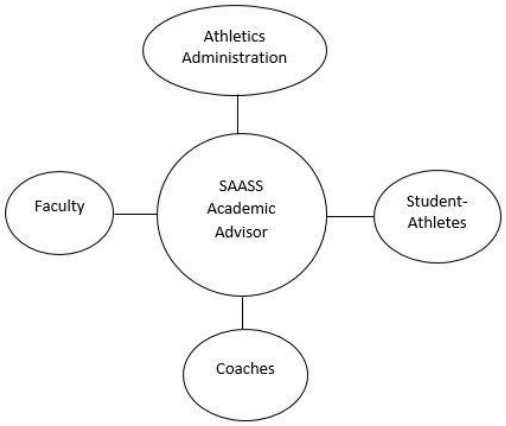

Figure 8: The central role of the academic advisor. (Figure developed by researcher based on study finding.)

The student-athletes discussed the importance of their individual meetings with their athletics academic advisor. The actions of the advisor to keep the student-athletes on track to graduate, for example, keeping them organized with school work and exams, and willingness to personally assist them and be available when needed, were reported as critical. Student-athletes focused on the importance of their relationship with the advisor. The student-athletes noted that the advisor's personality and genuine care for the student-athletes mattered.

Both coaches and the student-athletes noted that prior personnel were not as effective as current staff; therefore, the evaluation process suggests that the type of person hired in the position is critical. The women's basketball coach said:

> I believe that the SAASS is only as good as the person who works with my team….here at [the University] I have had a near perfect experience some years, and others, a very frustrating and negative experience for my players….hiring

> qualified people and people who are quality individuals is much more important than the structure, as it changes regularly. The person working the system is much more important than the system……overall I believe they do this well.

The coaches stated they depend on the athletics academic advisor to ensure that their student-athletes are getting the attention that they need to be successful academically. The coaches also depended on the advisor to communicate issues relating to eligibility to them.

The written responses, focus group, and SAASS unit data revealed the centrality of the athletics academic advisor. The academic advisor is critical to the success of the student-athlete because he or she wears many hats. Due to the central role of the advisor, it is critical that the individual be able to communicate effectively with coaches, faculty, administrators, and student-athletes. If the advisor is not a good *fit* for all constituents, the academic success of the student-athlete could be impacted because the student-athletes are highly dependent on effective interactions.

Dependence on the Academic Advisor

Building relationships surfaced as key to academic success of the student athletes. The student-athletes explained on several occasions that SAASS unit was there to keep them organized, help them stay on track for eligibility, and support successful graduation. Several student-athletes reported that it was the responsibility of the academic advisors to "keep me on track." It was important to them that their advisor was organized, made sure the players knew assignments, and informed them about exams.

The women's basketball student-athletes described how their advisor ensured each student-athlete was organized, managed their progress to graduate, and provided

appropriate tutoring. The women said that once they were excelling in their course work and were not academically at risk, meaning they had a GPA above a 3.06, the advisor trusted them to not have to use all the activities of the SAASS unit. One student mentioned that the SAASS unit served as a *safety net*.

The student-athletes' relationship with the academic advisor and SAASS unit relates to the research on locus of control and motivation. In general, there is a mutually dependent relationship between student-athletes and the institution they attend. A student-athlete is recruited to attend college and compete for the university. Some student-athletes are primarily focused on their accomplishments as athletes and rely heavily on the others to assist them with their academic accomplishments. Other student-athletes may focus on their studies and see athletics as a means to a scholarship, to graduate from the university. The university's dependence on the student to *perform* both in the classroom and in sport impacts funding and reputation. The student-athletes' expectations and dependence on institutional resources to keep them eligible are examples of external motivation.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000) motivation falls along a continuum from internal to external. For example internal motivation occurs when an individual performs because what he or she is doing is enjoyable and interesting. External motivation occurs when the individual's performance leads to a desired outcome that is reinforced by outside forces. For some student-athletes, playing a college sports is simply a means to an end. Initially, for some of the student-athletes, graduation is dependent on university resources to assist them toward that goal. The student-athlete may be more internally motivated to compete at his or her sport and thus, externally motivated to remain eligible

through academic success. It appears that the student-athletes understood that in order to compete in their sport, they must do well academically. Student-athletes, through their academic studies, however, may increasingly become more internally motivated to earn a college degree. Consistent with Tinto's (1975) theory, it is possible that a student-athlete's goal commitment may change as they progress through their college years thus moving them toward greater internal motivation.

As noted in Table 1 in Chapter IV the data indicated that if a student-athlete was at risk, the frequency of SAASS activities, such as required hours in study hall, number of advisor meetings, number of tutoring sessions, number of grade checks and class checks, increased. Some student-athletes expressed a desire for expanded tutoring services. It was particularly noteworthy that while the academic advisor mentioned life beyond sports, the student-athletes did not discuss any level of career exploration or after college services provided to them.

Implications for Practice

The centrality of the academic advisor's role demands that the advisor be many things to his or her student-athletes. They are expected to have extensive knowledge about learning strategies and academic competencies. There is an expectation the advisor to be able to relate to the student-athletes on a personal basis. The athletics department may wish to consider the complexity of the advisor role and hire a learning specialist to assess student learning styles, develop learning strategies, and focus resources to specific student needs. This would allow the athletics academic advisor to focus on relationships to monitor student-athlete progress, and to keep students on track.

A key theme among the coaches and the student-athletes was the importance of the personal and professional qualities of the athletics academic advisor. The coaches mentioned the need for a highly qualified person who communicates well. The student-athletes conveyed the importance of the advisor caring about them and getting to know them as people. It is recommended that when hiring new SAASS personnel, the athletics administrative staff needs to consider individuals who are a good *fit*. This could, in part, be achieved if student-athletes are represented on the interview committees.

Student-athletes expressed mixed views on the mandatory study hall times. Instituting an objective based or outcome based study hall requirement instead of a specific required number of hours could be a more effective solution. An outcome based study hall is structured so a student-athlete has a predetermined number of assignment or objectives to meet before he or she can be released from study hall. If the student-athletes complete required objectives, they would be able to leave. The prescribed objectives would be determined by the athletics academic advisor or a learning specialist with feedback from faculty.

Student-athletes acknowledged that there was a need for separate services and activities. They understood that their demanding schedules and travel time required specialized services. How and when the athletes interacted with non-athletes and campus events varied. The SAASS could provide the student-athletes with a centralized bulletin board of campus events, upcoming sporting events, and potential activities of interest to the student-athletes. The lack of participation on campus activities was due, in part, to a lack of knowledge about events. The SAASS staff could invite campus clubs and

organizations to present to the athletes about their programs and events to elicit greater campus involvement.

Future Research

According to Tinto (2012), the motivation of student-athletes to graduate may impact academic success and integration. An assessment of student-athletes motivation, utilizing Deci and Ryan's self-determination instrument, could assess each student-athlete's motivation toward graduation. Based on student's goal orientation, the SAASS unit could tailor resources and activities for each student-athlete. In building a future logic model evaluation an assessment of student's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be incorporated into the short term and intermediate goals.

The Kellogg Logic Model Evaluation includes an analysis of fiscal resources along with human resources. A future evaluation should include an analysis of the fiscal resources and staffing patterns. Due to the dependence of students on the services and the breadth of the role of the athletics academic advisor, it would be helpful to know if there was adequate staffing of the unit.

It is common for athletics departments to have separate services to support student-athletes (i.e. study hall, tutoring services, and advisors). The research could investigate the value of *integrating* student-athletes to regular campus student support services.

Student-athletes discussed the negative stereotypes of athletes. A research study regarding the perceptions of faculty members of student-athletes academic competence could identify means to improve student retention. Tinto (2012) stressed the importance of faculty teaching strategies and classroom practices in improving retention.

Conclusion

It appeared that the student-athletes in this study were externally motivated. Thus the academic success of student-athletes was dependent on the role of the athletics academic advisor and the activities of the SAASS unit. The person in the advisor position mattered and could impact the student-athletes ability to graduate. When considering a person for the advisor position, the athletic department's staff must not only determine if the person is qualified to handle various duties within the role, but also assess their ability to communicate effectively with all constituent groups. While students appreciated the SAASS activities to keep them on track, they also noted areas for improvement. The logic model evaluation served as a useful tool to determine the overall effectiveness of the SAASS unit as it related to the men's and women's basketball student-athlete academic success.

The logic model evaluation provided the road map to determine the SAASS unit's effectiveness in achieving its short, intermediate, and long term goals. From the written responses, the focus group interviews, and the SAASS documents, the SAASS unit could be considered effective in achieving its goals. Students valued their relationship with the athletics academic advisor and credited him with keeping them on track for eligibility and graduation. However, there were areas to consider for improvement in the study hall, tutoring services, and integration to campus. An analysis of adequacy of resources and staffing would strengthen the evaluation.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions with Key Athletics Administrators and Sport Administrators

1. From your vantage point, tell me what the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit does to support student-athletes?
2. Do you feel the activities conducted by the SAASS unit provide effective academic support for student-athletes? If yes, how so? If no, what else could they do?
3. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure student-athletes remain eligible? If yes, how is that? If no, what should they do that will allow for this?
4. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure student-athletes are retained? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do differently?
5. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure student-athletes graduate? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do differently?
6. Tell me about your overall perception of the effectiveness of the SAASS unit?

Appendix B

Interview Questions with Head Coaches

1. From your perspectives, tell me what the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) unit does to support student-athletes academically?
2. Do you feel those activities conducted by the SAASS unit provide effective academic support for student-athletes? If yes, how is that? If no, what should they do that will allow for this?
3. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure our student-athletes remain eligible? If yes, how is that? If no, what should they do that will allow for this?
4. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure student-athletes are retained? If yes, how is that? If no, what should they do that will allow for this?
5. Do you feel the SAASS unit maximizes their efforts to ensure student-athletes to graduate? If yes, how is that? If no, what should they do that will allow for this?
6. What is your overall perception of the effectiveness of the SAASS unit?

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions with Men's and Women's Basketball Student-Athletes

1. What do you think about the academic center staff does to support you as students and athletes in your academics?
2. Do you think what the academic center staff does (class checks, grade checks, study hall, wellness checks, tutoring etc.) helps you academically? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do?
3. Do you feel the academic center staff helps you remain eligible? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do?
4. Do you feel the academic center staff helps you feel a part of campus community and athletics department? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do?
5. Do you feel the academic center staff helps keep you on track to graduate? If yes, how so? If no, what should they do?
6. Tell me about your overall perception of the effectiveness of the academic center staff?