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Intrusive Academic Advising Student-Athletes At A Division III University

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Intrusive Academic Advising Student-Athletes At A Division III University

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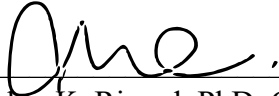
Higher Education Leadership

Intrusive Academic Advising Student-Athletes at a Division III University

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of education
in the National College of Education
National Louis University

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Higher Education Leadership


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Abstract

There are many factors that affect the graduation of collegiate student-athletes. Factors include student-athlete characteristics, academic advising, engagement, and relationships. These factors affect student-athlete retention at the university. Student-athletes must navigate their academic and athletic success with assistance from academic advisors and other university support systems. The ability of the student-athlete and the academic advisor to communicate and cultivate a relationship that is built on regularly scheduled meetings, sharing of the student-athlete's personal goals, suggestions for personal and professional improvement culminating in trust is paramount to the success of the student-athlete. This research focuses on the relationship between the student-athlete and the academic advisor at a Division III Midwest university through survey and interviews. Through survey and interviews of student-athletes, this research shows the engagement and relationships between student-athletes and their academic advisor, and the university outside of athletics.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	7
Introduction	7
Problem Statement	10
Purpose of the Study	12
Importance of the Study	12
Theoretical Framework	13
Research Questions	15
Definitions	16
Methodology	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
Academic Advising	22
Intrusive Academic Advising	23
At-Risk Students	26
Advising Programs	28
Relationship between Advisor and Advisee	29
Advisor	29
Scheduling	31
Impact of Relationship	32
Internal and External Factors	33
Admissions	35

Special Admissions	35
Retention of Student Athletes	37
Factors in Retention	37
Previous Research	40
Impact of Advising Student Athletes	44
Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Methodology	49
Conceptual Framework	49
Academic Advising	49
Relationships and Engagement	50
Retention	53
Methodology	54
Data Collection	55
Participants	56
Context	56
Instruments	57
Variables and Measures	57
Analysis	58
Figure 2. Variables and Measures Table	59
Chapter 4: Results	63
Survey Analysis	63

Perceptions and Engagement by Sport	89
Interview with Student-Athletes	103
Interview 2: Susan	108
Interview 3: Becky	110
Interview 4: Dison	113
Interview 5: Angelique	116
Chapter 5	119
Results	119
<i>Conclusion</i>	126
Implications	128
Study Limitations	130
Recommendations for Future Research	132
References	135
Appendix A	143
Appendix B	148

Chapter 1

Introduction

There are many factors that affect the graduation of collegiate student-athletes. College students are part of the university's culture and participate in campus activities. College students attend class, study sessions, meet with student services, and some are employed on campus or in the community. Collegiate student-athletes also are a part of the culture of the school and participate in all the activities that non-college student-athletes do. In addition, collegiate student-athletes are required to participate in practice, travel, and sometimes are injured. If an injury occurs, the student-athlete must still perform in the classroom (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Studies have also acknowledged the important impact college counselors, instructors, and advisors have on student-athletes success as they develop goals for their college studies (Ting, 2009). Ting found that joint ventures between the university and athletic department to educate the student-athlete on goal setting outside of athletics was beneficial to the long-term academic achievement of the student-athlete.

Student services for student-athletes, such as academic advising, have transformed over the course of twenty years. Academic advising for student-athletes was once the responsibility of assistant coaches and the athletic department. It has transitioned, in some cases, to the academic services department. This transition occurred because of the backlash of community and university stakeholders that saw the overall university graduation rate decline with the inclusion of athletic data outcomes (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

The focus on graduation rates instead of the academic advancement of the student-athlete is but one of the current issues that face academic advisors serving these students. (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). Broughton & Neyer suggest that academic advisors establish the

student-athlete's academic and personal athletic goals. They state that the student-athlete life skills developed through strong academic advising assist the student-athlete with problems they face on the college campus and beyond. These problems may include poor athletic performance, social isolation, or fear of success or failure. With assistance from academic advising, student-athletes develop mentorship relationships, and have the opportunity to enhance their academics through life skills training and other opportunities.

Every academic advisor should evaluate the on-campus academic and athletic climate, faculty and student attitudes toward athletes, advising issues for student-athletes, and sport specific and special needs and concerns (Gruber, 2003). Whether working at a large Division I institution or a small Division III non-scholarship-based athletics program, the academic advisor must understand the "climate surrounding the athletics department to contribute to the success of the student-athlete advising program (Gruber, 2003)". Faculty and student attitudes toward student-athletes have been shown to reinforce stereotypes toward athletes. Academic advisors should be aware of campus climate and the potential for encounters with these stereotypes. The collaboration between the athletic academic advisor and the university staff can bolster the academic success of the student-athlete. As a student-athlete, there are issues that are unique and different from nonstudent-athletes. The balance of time, academic workload, social interactions, and athletic success or failure are matters that academic advisors educate students on and encourage them to explore. To achieve academic success, academic advisors must be aware of the educational role that the athletic department has on its athletes.

This dissertation focuses on the intrusive academic advising model with the goal of examining its relationship with persistence to graduation for student-athletes. The intrusive

academic advising model is characterized as a collaboration between the advisor and the advisee and builds communication beyond scheduled meeting to inquiries of engagement and relationship opportunities that enhance the post-graduation career opportunities.

Through survey and interview of the student-athlete, this work aims to examine the impact of intrusive advising on the success of student-athletes. The scope of the research will be academic advising of student-athletes at an upper Midwest college. The student-athletes will be given a survey that will ask about their experiences with the academic advising system, and their engagement and relationship with the university. The survey will ask for volunteers to also be interviewed on a deeper level about academic advising and their engagement and relationship with the university.

Understanding the student-athlete and their needs is but one step in the collectiveness of assistance for the student-athlete (Watt & Moore III, 2001). Without proper understanding of the perspectives of the student-athlete, it can be difficult for an athletic academic advising department to move forward.

This research will provide insight into the student-athletes experiences with academic advising department, student services, and other engagement, as well as their reflection on those experiences. The academic advising system is one part of building the relationship between the student-athlete and the university. A substantial relationship can yield student development, career pathways, mentoring opportunities, and a high retention and persistence rate which can translate into a high graduation rate (Altungul & Nacar, 2017). This research will provide insight into intrusive academic advising of student-athletes and its potential impact on student retention.

Problem Statement

Academic advising is a critical component to the welfare of the student-athlete. When student-athletes do not receive necessary support from advising, they may disengage from both advising and the institution (Woods, Price, & Crosby, 2019). The problem is the lack of support for the student-athlete, which unchecked, can result in disengagement from the academic advisor and the institution. The focus on the student-athletes' perspectives in their own words will provide first-hand accounts of the impact of intrusive academic advising.

Academic advisors may incorporate relationships and engagement opportunities outside of athletics to enhance academic, social, and career opportunities. This support for student-athletes may help them build relationships that are non-athletic and engage at the institution in other ways that further academic and post-graduation goals. The responsibility for student-athletes' persistence can be disconnected to the point where the student-athlete is lost. Who is responsible for the student-athlete course selection, graduation master schedule, social interaction, institutional engagement, and student growth (Jennings, Henderson, Erla, & Gillum, 2018)?

The National Collegiate Athletic Association mandated academic support for student-athletes in the early 1900s (Rubin, 2017). Support for student-athletes by academic advisors covers several facets: "academic, athletic (eligibility), and life (time management)" (Rubin, 2017). In the time since the start of athletic academic advising, few research studies have focused on advisors' work responsibilities. Research to date has focused on 4-year, large institutions, large revenue sports (e.g., football and basketball) that have their own dedicated academic services department. There is no work that has been done to examine the impact of intrusive advising on the retention of student-athletes on 2-year and 4-year, mid-size and small

institutions, as well as sports other than football. Research is needed to examine the advising of student-athletes at these other institutional types and in other sports programs.

The impact of the student-athletes' engagement on campus must be recognized as a concern to retention and the overall educational experience (Woods, McNiff, & Coleman, 2018). Previous studies have been conducted on academic advising and engagement of Division I athletes, African American athletes, Division I conferences, but their findings indicate differences. These differences are based on who is the influencer, sport, ethnicity, etc. There commonality is that their research was conducted using Division I student-athletes.

The impact of the relationship between the advisor and the student-athlete starts during the first encounter (Sacken, 2008). One problem can be that student-athletes do not know they have a dedicated academic advisor that can address their individual needs as an athlete and as a scholar. Once student-athletes understand that the student-athlete academic advisor is present for the benefit of their success academically, the building boxes of relationship building begin. The relationship between student-athlete and advisor can mature to assistance with tutoring, suggestions for courses and graduation planning, career planning, and life skills. The benefits of the relationship are nearly boundless. Another problem for student-athletes can be understanding that there is an athletic academic advisor and that they use the intrusive academic advising method (Sacken, 2008). The need for this research is to understand aspects of the intricate puzzle of advising student-athletes at a Division III university, the role of the relationship between advisor and student-athlete, the impact of engagement and relationships has on retention.

This research will benefit future student-athletes who attend Division III universities. Academic advisors will be able to use the findings to improve practice. Examination of the perspectives of student-athletes will allow academic advisors to focus academic resources that

better target the need of the student-athlete. This research can help Division III universities athletic programs attract student-athletes that have an equal desire to succeed academically as they do athletically. In addition, new strategies can be created to assist student-athletes, and be duplicated to assist the entire student population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the academic advising and support programs for student-athletes to determine if they facilitate successful academic advising, engagement of the student and relationships built between advisor and student, and retention. This research may expand understanding of the intricate relationship that advising departments have with student-athletes and the support that they can provide.

Importance of the Study

The academic advisor plays a pivotal role in role in the maturation of the student-athlete, and it is important to determine best-practices. By researching the current academic advising system at a Division III institution, we can better understand the plight of student-athletes, development strategies for academic advisors to benefit student-athletes and prepare future athletic academic advisors (Junior, 2015).

This research will allow for a better understanding of academic advising at a Division III institution that has multiple campuses and personnel with varying responsibilities. It will amplify the voices of student-athletes around advising and engagement with the university while attempting to excel athletically and academically. The need for understanding and acknowledgement of the current system, and the advancement of new strategies is at the cornerstone of the research in the field of study (Burnett & Peak, 2010). This voice of the student-athlete is important and can be used to support all students. By considering student

perspectives, institutions can better understand their athletes and how they can assist in the process (Noble, Vermillion, & Foster, 2016).

The application of this research follows previous research that has been done on different aspects of student-athletes' academic achievement. A student-athlete's sense of being disconnected from the institution can result in negative experiences (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). The examination of the current system through the voices of current student-athletes can equip administrations with the tools that are necessary to adjust course to better align with the current best practices of developing the student-athlete's academic abilities along with their athlete ones.

Research has been conducted on the lived experiences of students-athletes after graduating (Haslerig, 2018). The student-athletes' experiences while in school, and balance that they have to achieve between academics and athletes is documented in the constant conflict between the two. This balancing act and constant conflict that is present can hinder the post-graduate career aspirations of the student-athlete. To mitigate the affect that this conflict can present, it is important to understand the underlying aspects of the student-athletes' experiences while they are still attending the institution.

Theoretical Framework

The academic, engagement, and relationship building application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides the framework for this research. Self-Determination Theory can be used understand the motivation of student-athletes to build a relationship with their academic advisor, engage with the university academically, and develop relationships that assist university retention strategies. Using SDT, the research can assert that universities can meet the needs of students through supportive environments (Burt, Young-Jones, Yadon, & Carr, 2013). The way

to enhance academic motivation is by creating meaning support for the student-athlete. By exploring the different relationships between perceived and actual academic support, we can expand the application of SDT.

The drive that is inherent to all student-athletes' to be dominant in their athletic environment is also present for their social and academic circumstances (Harrison, Martin, & Fuller, 2015). The link between self-motivation and positive educational outcomes can be expressed through the need to seek out assistance to become competent in all aspects of their lives. The relationship and engagement that academic advisors facilitate through influence develops the student-athletes' decision-making processes and creates a sense of individuality with their interests and values at the lead. Self-Determination Theory supports the intrinsic motivation for areas in one's life. (Harrison, et al., 2015)

Engagement is one of the most important factors for student-athletes' retention (Gayles & Hu, 2009). The factors that are essential to engagement are student-faculty contact, participation in student groups, and participation in academic related activities. To be successful academically, student-athletes must balance academics and athletics, but the academic advisor is the key person to assist in the prompting of engagement opportunities. It is the relationship between the academic advisor and the student-athlete that allows for the desired outcomes of academic success, retention, and graduation. The desired outcome of graduation with attainable post-graduation career goals is important because of the scrutiny that is placed on collegiate athletes. (Gayles & Hu, 2009)

Student-athletes also face the challenge of balancing athletics, academics, and this desired engagement. Student-athletes are required to participate in athletic responsibilities for up to three hours a day, and also required to maintain academic eligibility (Woods, Price, & Crosby,

2019). The challenge for the student-athlete to attempt to engage with the institution after a full day of academic and athletics can be daunting. Support systems on campus play a critical role in locating and encouraging different engagement opportunities that suit the varying career goals and objectives of student-athletes. This active and collaborative learning environment that academic advisors form lends itself to exploring ways that can engagement the student-athlete with faculty, engagement to the institution outside of athletics, and an enriched educational experience. Engagement with the academic advisor, as well as the institution, expands the student-athlete's educational environment, which increases sense of belonging, improves views of the institution, and increases the likelihood of retention.

Research Questions

The research questions for this work address the three categories of the conceptual framework (covered in detail in Chapter 3). Best practice of academic advising includes the combination of engagement, academic advising, and opportunities that have an overarching effect on the students' academic and personal well-being during their college and post-college career (National Academic Advising Association, 2019). This work seeks to examine each of these elements with regard to intrusive advising of student-athletes and their impact on retention.

The research questions are:

1. What is the relationship between instructive academic advising and retention of student-athletes?
2. What part do student engagement and relationship-building play in the retention of student-athletes through academic advising?

3. How does the relationship between the advisor and the student-athlete contribute to academic and social success, and ultimately retention of the student-athlete?

Due to the possible differences between previous research done at Division I institutions and the lack of research at Division III institutions, it is important to investigate the dynamic of academic advising at various Divisional institutional levels (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). This investigation of academic advising, relationship building, and engagement outside of athletics is a key component to the continued academic success of the student-athlete. The success of the student-athlete academically culminates with graduation and career opportunities that are built not solely through athletics, but also through relationship building and engagement opportunities that were suggested and encouraged by academic advisors.

Definitions

Some definitions that might be unfamiliar to the reader are the different academic advising styles. The three academic advising styles are developmental, prescriptive, and intrusive. The developmental style of academic advising can be defined as, “a systematic process to help students achieve educational, personal, and career goals through the use of institutional and community resources (Weir, Dickman, & Fuqua, 2005)”. Prescriptive academic advising can be defined as, “authoritarian relationship (Weir et al., 2005)”. Prescriptive academic advising is used when the student is deemed unmotivated and the academic advisor assumes the responsibility to inform and make decisions for the student. Intrusive academic advising, also known as proactive advising, can be defined as, “a combination of the positive aspects of prescriptive and developmental advising offered in an aggressive and proactive outreach to students (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016)”.

When they are using the intrusive academic advising model, advisors proactively address key variables. The variables that intrusive academic advisors address are related to integration socially through engagement and relationship building with the college experience. These variables are key factors in the persistence and student learning that are conducive to retention.

Methodology

A survey was administered through the university email system to all current student-athletes. At the time of the survey, all the student-athletes that were emailed the survey had been, by nature of still being enrolled, retained by the university. By administering the survey through the university email system the examination was limited to retained students. The student-athletes were first be asked questions that are related to their perception of the current academic advising system, their relationship and engagement to the university, and their feeling of support from the university. A second section asked questions about the course selection process, their program of study, and how their graduation plan was created and maintained. Third, student-athletes were asked to provide information on their academic advisor's availability, academic resources and its' availability, and conflicts, if any, with their athletic schedules. Finally, the survey asked student-athletes to gauge their relationship and engagement with the university outside of athletic commitments using questions with responses on a Likert Scale, and if the university has created a sense of trustworthiness and feeling of home. Students were given the option to be volunteer for interviews at the end of the survey. The full text of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

After the surveys were completed and returned, a selection of students who volunteered to provide detailed feedback on their experiences were invited to schedule

interviews. The university is located in a large, upper Midwest city with campus locations downtown and in the suburbs. There are twenty-two athletic teams associated with the university, 13 men's teams, nine women's (not including e-sports). To ensure a range of perspectives, a cross-section of student-athletes will be used. The student-athletes who were interviewed came from a variety of sports and different academic years in school. The goal is to interview at least ten student-athletes. An interview location will be chosen in partnership with the student-athlete in order to allow for confidentiality and autonomy based on their personal needs and availability.

The interview questions focus on the topics of academic advising, engagement of the student-athlete, relationships built between advisor and student-athlete, and retention. The interview also includes questions related to the process of scheduling classes and the student's graduation plan, sense of trust of academic advisors and university personnel, and if they have a sense of home while attending the university. The full text of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Assumptions of this work include all student-athletes surveyed and interviewed are current student-athletes eligible to participate in their given sport. This work also assumes that participants are currently retained academically and athletically by the university and participating in their given sport.

One delimitation of this research is that it captured the views and feelings of the student-athlete at the time the survey was administered and at the time of the interview. The student-athlete's views and feelings may change during the course of their college academic and athletic career. Other delimitations include that this work is only surveyed and interviewed student-athletes, and only asked about specific aspects of their experiences, while

other aspects may have impacted their retention. One limitation of this research is that it focuses on student-athletes' perception of all topics related to academic advising, engagement and relationships, and retention to the university. The research did not survey or interview everyone from the academic advising department and university personnel. The academic advising department and university personnel might have a different perception of the topics in the survey and interview.

Each chapter contributes to understanding the rationale for the need for researching student-athletes, academic advising, and the relationship that can result in the engagement to the university and academic success. Chapter 1 provides an overview of academically advising student-athletes as well as the importance to continuing previously researched conducted at Division I institutions. By continuing previous research done at Division I institutions at Division II and III schools, a deeper understanding of the nuances that are present in advising student-athletes can be revealed. The research questions are rooted in theory that will guide the study to answer specific questions regarding academic advising, engagement and relationships, and retention. Chapter 1 demonstrates the importance and potential impact the research can have on the field of study.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature that is associated with academic advising, advising student-athletes, and the potential impact the engagement and relationship building has on academic success. Included in the literature review are analysis of the characteristics associated with intrusive academic advising and different academic advising programs. The relationship between advisor and advisee is also investigated, along with the impact of the academic advisor and student-athlete relationship. The literature review looks at internal and external factors of the relationship and the effect of engagement on retention. Chapter 2

reviews previous literature that focused on academic advising, advising student-athletes, and relationship and engagement impacts on retention.

Chapter 3 discusses the conceptual framework and methodology of the research. The conceptual framework discusses the factors that affect retention. The factors that the conceptual framework discusses are the student characteristics, academic advising, and relationship and engagement play a part in the student-athletes retention. Qualitative research methods were used to gather information to answer the research questions. A survey was distributed to all current and retained student-athletes at an upper Midwest institution. The survey will provide information on student-athletes' interactions and perceptions of academic advising, their relationships and engagement to the university, and their feeling of support from the university. After the survey as analyzed, interviews were conducted among a cross-section of all the sports, gender, academic year in school, and program of study/major. The interview provides self-reporting on the topics of academic advising, the engagement of the student and relationships built between advisor and student, and retention. Results were analyzed using triangulation. Triangulation leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

Chapter 4 discusses the results of the survey and interviews. The results of the survey show student-athlete participants based on team affiliation, student-athlete characteristics, experiences with their academic advisors, perceptions of their academic advisors, and their engagement and relationship with their academic advisor and the university outside of athletics. The results show the academic resources that are available to the student-athlete, used by the student-athlete, and the availability of academic resources. The results of the survey also show if student-athletes trust the opinion of their academic advisor and if they feel a sense of home while attending the university. The interviews show self-reported content on the topics of academic

advising, the engagement of the student and relationships built between advisor and student, and retention.

Chapter 5 discusses the conclusion and implications of the research. This research suggests that the relationship between the student-athlete and the academic advisor grows through the communication of academic resources, engagement to the university outside of athletic commitments, and is a part of the foundation that creates a sense of home for the student-athlete while at the university.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Academic Advising

Research on the academic advising system can improve outcomes of a university through engagement with the student population. Examining the different ways academic advising systems can engage with the student population starts with looking at the advising delivery method. By acknowledging that different groups of students use the academic advising system differently, the delivery method is an important component to the success of each group of the student population. The group that examined in this paper is student-athletes. Student athletes present their own set of needs, goals, and accomplishments differ in many ways from other groups. Not only are student-athletes expected to win athletic competitions, they are also expected to succeed academically and graduate in four to five years (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

Student-athletes at Division III institutions follow the NCAA Division III Legislation for playing and practice seasons bylaws, article 16. The bylaw 17.01.1 Institutional Limitations. A member institution shall limit its organized practice activities, the length of its playing seasons and the number of its regular-season contests and/or dates of competition in all sports, as well as the extent of its participation in noncollegiate-sponsored athletics activities, to minimize interference with the academic programs of its student-athletes. Within the bylaw, it provides definitions for athletically related activities (practice, competition, weight-training, physical-fitness class, participation in camps, clinics, or workshops, etc.), exceptions (administrative and academic activities, one team meeting and one individual meeting), fundraising, strength and conditioning, athletic leadership programming, contests, practice, length of competition (NCAA, Playing and Practice Season Rules, 2021). Division I student-athletes can practice and compete

for 20 hours per week in season and 8 hours out of season (University of Notre Dame Department of Athletics, 2021)

This literature review will research the academic advising system, advising student-athletes, ways in which contact is made with the student-athlete, and monitoring student-athletes from acceptance through graduation. It will examine literature related to scheduling of contact with the student-athlete, the relationship between advisor and student-athlete, and internal and external factors associated with the student-athlete. Acknowledging that student-athletes are accepted under special admission requirements at some universities, this literature review will also examine these special-admit students, retention of student-athletes, and the impact of advising student-athletes.

Intrusive Academic Advising

Academic advising has been a profession in higher education for the past 40+ years (Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). These authors state that academic advisors take coursework to prepare them to meet the needs of the students psychological, physical, and mental attributes. Many academic advisors currently use the intrusive model to assist students with their academic needs, course selection during registration and promoting institutional engagement opportunities during their career at the university (Vander Schee, 2007). Intrusive academic advising is a method that “addresses the needs of students regardless of their help-seeking tendencies because through it advisors focus on identifying the nonacademic factors” (Vander Schee, 2007). Vander Schee defined nonacademic factors as every thought pattern, action, behavior, or circumstance that can influence academic performance. An example of nonacademic factors that affect students are personal problems that interfered with their studies. During an intrusive scheduled academic advising session, the advisor can gather information,

formulate problem-solving strategies, and implement thought and behavior change techniques. Students who are advised using the intrusive method are encouraged to create long-term degree-planning goals during the first semester, receive personalized attention that builds relationships with a single person at the college, and plan for career exploration (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). Using these focused activities with students allows advisors to work with them to maximize their academic success at the university.

Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino (2016) conducted in-depth interviews of first-time college students in Fall 2013. The participants were students that completed the required pre-semester and midpoint of the semester academic advising sessions, had less than 12 college-level credits prior to the start of the semester, and successfully completed the student success course in the fall semester. Their research questions pertained to the perceived benefits of intrusive advising, participating in degree-planning activities, opportunity for individual support, limitations of the intrusive advising model, and contributions to student success. They found that the needs of the individual are unique and that through intrusive advising techniques, the advisor can determine if more assistance is needed during the orientation process or degree planning. The participants reported that because of the scheduled advising appointments, they were able to ask specific questions on a variety of topics and receive answers from their advisors. They also reported that the specific questions allowed for personalized experience and the participants could control the topics that were discussed. The intrusive academic advising method helps advisors to be proactive in encouraging advisees to interact academically and socially. Academic advisors using the intrusive academic advising method often incorporate social and academic activities, such as study groups, class-based activities, and class assignments that extend beyond the classroom. This study also found that using intrusive academic advising facilitated advisors

being proactive to enhance social and academic integration. This study suggested that program administrators “should explain to students the benefits of the program instead of solely focusing on the consequences of not participating” (p. 37).

The intrusive model is being replicated at universities across the United States. This is due to the success that it has shown in building trust with students, and the fact that it leads students to have a more positive perception of advising; this is due to successful engagement, which positively correlates with academic success. (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). These authors expanded this research and found that if students are properly scheduled, they are more likely to persist toward graduation. The relationship between advisor and student is built through trust and by creating an academic goal that is specific to each individual student (McClellan, 2014). The relationship starts at the beginning of the student’s academic career at the school and culminates with graduation (McClellan, 2014). McClellan discovered that this trust that is developed by scheduled and regular meetings, relationship-building, and a genuine caring interaction improves student academic performance. Advising behaviors that tend to lead to improved student performance include being prepared and welcoming to the student, building rapport, communicating with the student to explore and clarify any academic questions, and guiding the student to continue to communicate and return as scheduled (McClellan, 2014). Building trust and rapport allows the advisor to communicate academic information directly to the student (McClellan, 2014). The relational integrity to understand and respect the values of their advisees allows the academic advisor to demonstrate and communicate competently their knowledge to directly answer questions. A student’s needs progress in their classes and extracurricular school activities throughout their college career. The advisor assesses needs during the rapport building phase of the first scheduled meeting. (McClellan, 2014). The

academic advisor can follow up through direct communication about topics that were discussed in the meeting that the advisee expressed interest in, such as extracurricular activities and internships. McClellan furthered the research of Fielstein (1994) and Beck (1999) on building trust through academic advising “as a crucial initial condition affecting undecided students, established trust levels with advisors will have profound implications on future relationship” (Beck, 1999, p. 46). Some goals that an academic advisor can suggest are hours of study, meetings with professors during office hours, and advanced completion of assignments that can be reviewed during scheduled meetings. The advisee’s responsibility is to follow through on suggested courses of action, communicate new relevant information, and commit to scheduled meetings (McClellan, 2014). The building of trust through regularly scheduled meeting encourages both the advisor and the student to respond to each other. This open dialogue broadens and deepens the level of communication (McClellan, 2014).

At-Risk Students

Intrusive advising can be used when working with at-risk students (Mier, 2018). Intrusive advising allows the advisor to pay close attention to the student as a whole through deliberate initiated contact to guide them toward the right path. At-risk students can be classified as those students that are from an ethnic minority group, academic disadvantaged, disabled, low socioeconomic status, and/or probationary (Heisserer & Parette, 2002).

At-risk students are less likely to seek out advising help from university staff and faculty (Mier, 2018). Meeting the needs of at-risk students can be challenging because of their personal situations. Difficult personal situation at-risk students often face include lack of support systems, academic planning, life circumstances, financial ability. However, when using the intrusive academic advising model, advisors work proactively with the student. This allows advisors to

guide at-risk students to the correct courses and give them parameters they need to succeed.

Research on Advising Student-Athletes

Gruber's (2003) research on "What Every Academic Advisor Should Know About Advising Student Athletes", suggested that academic advisors start each one-on-one with a series of questions. These questions pertain to the student's perception of athletic expectations of practice, game, and training time, known policies regarding eligibility, class schedule, and homework time management. Gruber states that the academic advisor for student-athletes must communicate to the student-athlete that their role is to assist them in all fields of academic support and advancement. Academic advisors can accomplish this task by regularly scheduling meetings with the student, athletic director and coaches. Scheduling meetings with all persons that are associated with the student-athlete creates a "supportive, productive, and successful educational and athletic environment for the student" (Gruber, 2003, p. 48).

Once students arrive on campus, social and academic services are available to them and are designed to assist the student to feel welcome (Person & LeNoir, 1997). Student-athletes can arrive on campus "only to find their professors, administrators, and peers view them as no more than a 'dumb jock' which can further lead to their feelings of deflated self-esteem, abandonment, and isolation" (Person & LeNoir, 1997, p. 81). African-American men also arrive on predominately white institutions to incidents of racism and discrimination. This unwelcomeness can cause a lack of sense of belonging (Person & LeNoir, 1997). Person & LeNoir state that they believe that one of the factors that can contribute to the successful retention of student-athletes are the interactions between the student and the educational environment. They go on to suggest that programs like The University of Texas at Austin Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS) be modeled at other NCAA universities. Challenging Athletes' Mind for

Personal Success is designed to address the needs of the African-American student-athlete academically, personally, and socially. Consistent academic advising and assessment throughout all four undergraduate years can contribute to the retention of student-athletes. Academic advising includes group discussions, career counseling, independent study, public speaking, and community service (Person & LeNoir, 1997). Person & LeNoir found that when these extracurriculars were part of the focus during advising, students took advantage of more mentoring activities, summer programs, and peer counseling (Person & LeNoir, 1997). This study used surveys, interviews, and focus groups at 17 different universities, all east of the Mississippi, with a random sample of students, faculty, and administrators. The study suggests that students who participated in academic advising services, such as summer programs, tutoring for first-year and second-year classes, and research and internship experiences reported “high levels of satisfaction with program services across the institution” (Person & LeNoir, 1997, p. 86).

Advising Programs

Academic advisors can use community-based resources and engagement opportunities to assist the student to feel a sense of home, such as touring different colleges and work together to plan and run a campus talent show (Henningsen, 2005). One community outreach program that universities replicate is called Brother to Brother (Henningsen, 2005). Brother to Brother is a program that started at St. Petersburg College to address the recruitment and support structure for African American males (Henningsen, 2005). The strategies that Henningsen (2005) suggest are time and financial management, conflict resolution, relationship building, and police interactions. The Brother-to-Brother program encourages tutoring services, allows for textbook and

equipment lending from the library, and early registration and academic advising services (Henningsen, 2005).

Brother to Brother administrators understand that to assist university retention efforts, they must create a community where the student feels at home. Through the community, the student feels safe to trust newly forming relationships with both academic advisors and Brother to Brother program advisors (Heisserer & Parette, 2002).

Relationship between Advisor and Advisee

The relationship between advisor and advisee is the foundation on which intrusive advising is built upon. Advisors' meaningful and purposeful contact with student-athletes can prompt academic engagement to the university. Academic engagement within the university can assist with strategic academic management, long-range scheduling, building of trust to assist with life circumstances. Through the relationship between the academic advisor and advisee, internal and external factors can be openly discussed, strategic plans can be formulated, and the advisee can successfully progress to a career after graduation.

Advisor

The academic advisor's role is to listen and attempt to understand what the student is communicating based on their motivation (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019). The motivation of the student to engage with the academic advisor is rooted in the student's need for academic satisfaction and success (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019). These authors researched the psychological factors that explain the role of school-based interactions as determinants of students' goal-driven behaviors and academic success. The intrinsic motivation of the student can drive one's personal goals and values (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019). Motivation is broadly defined as "the energy and direction of behavior" (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019, p.

355). The motivational style and interaction capabilities of the university staff who have direct communication and contact with students have an impact on the satisfaction of the students' basic psychological needs (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019). Motivation has been found to be associated with a variety of learning outcomes, such as autonomy, competence, relatedness (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019). Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale's research found that nurturing students through supportive teaching styles may be an effective approach for increasing motivation and increasing students' levels of satisfaction. In addition, they found that supportive instructors who endorse and incorporate student perspective into the classroom have a positive effect on students' motivation (Garn, Morin, & Lonsdale, 2019).

The first impression a student has of an academic advisor is in-part based on the professionalism displayed by the advisor. This impression is important to the future of the relationship with the student (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). The student must feel welcome and upon completing the session, be willing to return for more scheduling management and programming of academic services (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). Surveys of students have shown ways that academic advisors can help students feel welcome are by creating inducements such as prizes, food, and gift certificates. By showing flexibility, the academic advisor can schedule follow-up meetings outside of the office, for example, at university dining facilities or other university meeting rooms that are more convenient for students (Cooper & Saunders, 2000).

Cooper & Saunders (2000) state that "considering both individual needs and environmental pressures will greatly increase the likelihood of a successful programming endeavor" (Cooper & Saunders, 2000, p. 6). The authors introduce a program plan that is a three-dimensional model. The program targets the student, the purpose for the intervention, and a method of delivery that the advisor can use (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). Using this three-

dimensional model, the academic advisor targets an individual or group of students that are in need, define the goal of the intervention, and how might the intervention be enacted. The goal of the intervention can be preventative or developmental, and the delivery method can be direct training, or consistent academic advising.

Breaking down walls and barriers that students put up based on their “worldviews, beliefs, or self-perception” (Colgan, 2017, p. 2) is part of role of academic advisors. Academic advisors focus on academics, scheduling, programming of academic services, and social advancement (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). Academic advising encourages students to be intrinsically motivated to accomplish their goals through academic advising meetings that are designed to generate ideas on future goals, class intervention strategies, and evaluating the student’s current environment, both academically and socially (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). By developing intrinsic motivation in their academic success, academic advisors listen, counsel, and education student’s through properly diagnosing issues that could potentially “negatively impact student success” (Colgan, 2017, p. 3).

Scheduling

Higher education institutions that incorporate career exploration, counseling services, and academic assistance mechanisms for student-athletes in their freshman year engage them outside of their athletic commitments (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino also found that “underprepared students appear to benefit more from advising than do their college-ready counterparts” (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). Buzzetta, Lenz, and Kennelly (2017) looked at two groups of Division I athletes to determine the role of academic advising on academic decision making and engagement opportunities. They found that student-athletes who were encouraged by their academic advisor to engage with the

university outside of athletic events and did so developed a positive attitude toward their academics (Buzzetta, Lenz, & Kennelly, 2017).

Ting's (2009) research supports the need for programming for student athletes that engages them outside of athletic commitments. Ting stated that one limitation of this study is the sample size, which was comparatively small for a multiple regression analysis. Ting suggested future research on the topic of retention and persistence of student athletes focus on the differences within student athlete populations.

Impact of Relationship

Building trust is a frequently asserted goal of the academic advising profession. McClellan has researched trust and how to build relationships with students (McClellan, 2014). McClellan states that the areas that affect trust in an academic advisor's relationship with their students are "repetitive interaction, and the quality and quantity of information communicated between individuals" (McClellan, 2014, p. 2). McClellan states that the advisor's personal integrity, or his or her own espoused values influences the student (McClellan, 2014). Academic advisors need to have influence over students to guide them toward the best course of action. Students can judge the academic advisor's character through the trust-building process and allow the academic advisor to influence them so long as their own values and the values of the academic advisor are congruent (McClellan, 2014).

At a typical opening academic advising session, the student discusses their academic goals, timeline for completion, and career aspirations (Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). The advisor discusses new student orientation materials, credit evaluation, degree-audit monitoring, and that they will act as a liaison between academic departments (Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). The advisor also assists the student in acclimating themselves to the

institution, provides academic assistance resources, and educates the student on time management, budgeting topics, and social engagement opportunities (Vander Schee, 2007). Vander Schee's research aligns with McClellan work in finding that the goal of the academic advisor is to begin the process of building trust with the student (Vander Schee, 2007). This author researched the quality and quantity aspect of intrusive academic advising. The quality of intrusive academic advising was shown to be more effective with a greater number of scheduled meetings. The intrusive academic advising method encourages communication, goal setting, and rapport building. This research concluded that intrusive advising appears to be an effective way to increase academic achievement of students when there were more than three scheduled meetings. Academic achievement is constituted as increase in overall GPA from one semester grading period to the next. The research stipulated that at least three meetings need to occur before an appreciable gain in GPA can happen. The results showed a significant difference in the change in GPA from meeting with the academic advisor 1-2 times in comparison to meeting with the academic advisor 3-8 times in the semester. The research suggests that having at least three meetings gives the academic advisor time for information gathering, problem-solving strategies formation, and implementation of thought and behavior change techniques (Vander Schee, 2007).

Internal and External Factors

Academic advising that improves retention focuses on both external and internal factors (Wilson, 2016). This author discussed seventeen external and internal factors that can affect student retention. Some external factors include the precollege experiences, degree aspirations, academic expectations, social and emotional support from family, parents and campus staff, social engagement, and academic and social integration experiences (Wilson, 2016). The

students' complementary school to college curriculum is a factor because of the academic rigor during high school to college. The support system for the student from high school to college changes. In high school, the students' support system is comprised of multiple communities. These communities are the students' family, friends, and in some cases, work. The communities form the base for the students' sense of comfort, belonging, influence on decisions. In college, the support system can be comprised of academic advisors, social engagement, instructors and peers on campus.

Internal factors include budgeting, self-esteem, time management, writing ability, and background factors and life experiences (Wilson, 2016). Students learn to adequately budget their money and can find employment to supplement financial aid. Students also development self-esteem, and social support through life experiences. These life experiences help the student's development and match the social and emotional support from parents, family, and precollege friends to on-campus support. This adjustment period of comfort, self-efficacy, and belonging is a times when academic advisors can welcome students to the university. Academic advisors who focus on adjustment skills, time management, budget management, social and cultural caporal, and self-regulating learning can influence the student at the early stages of their college career (Wilson, 2016).

Wilson (2016) found that the early stages of a student's higher education career can also be affected by external factors, such as isolation, lack of on-campus support, and lack of social and emotional support. To combat these external factors, the academic advisor must identify the factors that contribute to retaining the student and aggressively pursue the student to engage in opportunities (Wilson, 2016). The factors that Wilson found influence students' decisions are realistic academic expectations, support, sense of community and engagement, financial support,

and psychosocial development. While other resources say finances are a major impediment (Bergerson, 2007), Wilson concluded that finances may not serve as a major impediment, “but that academic and social integration is a prevailing factor” (Wilson, 2016, p. 49). Wilson concluded that the main reason is psychosocial development indicators and suggests further inquiry into the relationship on high achieving-low-income students and their needs.

Admissions

University student services are using different methods to increase the persistence and retention rate of all students (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). As we look at student-athletes, we see similar hurdles that need to be addressed and answered. To increase the academic and athletic success of the student athlete, all departments on a university campus has the responsibility to welcome all the student body. Researching admissions, we find that student-athletes can be special admitted and in need of programs designed to assist with their academics. Programs that assist with academics target students that would benefit from increased contact with academic services, tutoring, and faculty. Proactive strategies can increase the likelihood of the student-athletes academic success.

Special Admissions

Research has also been done on special-admit students (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). Special-admitted groups are typically defined based on gender, high school GPA, and race (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). Universities that admit groups with low academic achievements based on high school GPA in math and science courses should start with retention strategies during their first semester (Atuahene & Russell, 2016). Student-athletes are admitted for athletic excellence and special admission purposes. Higher education institutions can proactively provide academic services that assist student athletes who need retention and

persistence help. Tools used by academic advisors include early academic support, such as, “tutoring, academic advising, and counseling enhance their success” (Atuahene & Russell, 2016).

African Americans, Asian Americans, and other groups of the student population can be given special admissions due to their race (Hawkins, 2017). Student-athletes can be classified as a special-admit population. Special admissions decisions are also based on high school GPA and other standardized test scores associated with entry criteria in a higher education institution (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). Special-admit students’ standards for admission into the institution are less stringent than for regularly admitted students (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). This research suggests that special-admit students that were deemed unprepared for the rigor academic of the institution. Because of special-admit students, the amount of student contact and tutoring time for faculty and staff may need to increase as an institutional mandate (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). The reason for the increase of faculty and staff time is due to intrusive academic advising methods used for special-admit students, such as grade reports during first and second semester mid-way points, calls to students to encourage on-campus services, and individualized educational plans (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). In this study of the special-admit student population that were athletes (30=n), 20% were successful, 26% were academically suspended, and 53.3% left voluntarily. The author also suggests that institutions track special-admit students and intervene early in a student’s career. Interventions can occur with an increase in faculty and staff time “and take more aggressive steps to ensure eventual success” (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999, p. 81). Institutions can encourage student participation in on-campus student services and tutoring. Academic advisors should be encouraged to write or call advisees in an attempt to determine problems areas and to offer

support (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). All of these strategies are designed to assist the student-athlete succeed academically.

Retention of Student Athletes

Academic student services and executive administrators can incorporate strategies that will increase the persistence and retention of student-athletes. Academic student services can proactively incorporate successful programs, introduce models that have been shown to increase the retention of student-athletes, and create a safe space for student-athletes to meet and discuss issues that are important to them. Universities can support these programs, be granting space, time, and staff support. All of these factors contribute to the success of the student-athlete, both on and off the field.

Factors in Retention

Student-athletes qualify for support services based on academic risk assessments, and therefore academic support personnel develop programming to mitigate such risk (Johnson J. , 2013). The National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA) places student-athletes on a risk continuum that is determined by two primary categories: risk at entry and post entry, further broken down into five individual divisions: academic, role of academics, transfer, personal history, and sport (Johnson, 2013). Within those two categories, the NCAA looks at the student athlete's academics in the classroom, role of academics to their future career goals, transfer, personal history, and sport (Johnson, 2013).

Johnson suggests that the best indicator for college success is pre-college achievement based on GPA scores and core courses taken in high school for freshman students. This demonstrates past academic stability in conjunction with athletic scheduling. Indicators for transfer students are college GPA, both cumulative and current, and eligibility. The role of

academics in the mind of the student-athlete is their motivation to excel in the classroom as well as in athletics. This author suggests that a strong athletic identity often distracts student athletes from other areas of interest, such as academic success and social engagement. This distraction can lead to a student athlete having a lack of confidence when choosing a major and lower motivation to pursuing their degree.

The role of transfer students and their lower graduation rate was addressed in the research (Johnson, 2013). The author suggested that this is due to loss of credits, lack of engagement with the campus, or the type of institution. The student-athlete's personal history is a factor that influences the student's likelihood of success. The student-athlete's personal finances, academic preparation, and being away from home influence the attrition rate. There are factors that are unique to sport that arise during the student athlete's career. Coaching changes, loss of eligibility, and dissatisfaction with limited playing time may lead to the student-athlete leaving the institution before graduating (Johnson, 2013).

Johnson explored the questions of which individual division is associated with the highest risk, what relationship GPA has, and what are significant predictors at the end of each semester. This study used descriptive and inferential statistics to predict risk measured by semester GPA of the sample (n=134) (Johnson, 2013). Grade point average had the most serious ramifications because of the impact it has on the student athletes' eligibility, financial support decisions, and academic support services (Johnson, 2013). The author results suggest that the advisors' and coaches' "knowledge about personal and sport-related issues is the most important and predictive indicator of semester GPA" (Johnson, 2013, p. 83). The author suggests that by using predictive academic indicators to identify risk, advisors and coaches can help students and assist at-risk

student-athletes. Advisors could institute structured academic meetings, increase tutoring sessions and objective based study hall requirements based on risk scores (Johnson J. , 2013).

Intrusive academic advising allows the student to participate in intervention strategies that will assist academic performance (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). Intervention strategies are focused on student motivation, self-awareness, self-determination, and self-reliance (Noble, Vermillion, & Kewa, 2016). These intervention strategies are aligned to the development of the student (Noble, Vermillion, & Kewa, 2016). The development of the student includes motivational factors such as supportive structures, social interactions, and satisfaction with academic and athletic success (Noble, Vermillion, & Kewa, 2016). Their research concluded that student-athletes' perception of athletic coaches is that they do create an autonomy-supportive motivational climate.

Time management, financial awareness, and study skills can be taught to the student through their academic advising support system (Mier, 2018). Intrusive academic advising is found to be the most effective method of helping at-risk students (Varney, 2007). Intrusive academic advising has been shown to be an effective way to teach students how to communicate with faculty members and administration personnel about academic issues (Schneider, Sasso, & Puchner, 2017). Students have learned how to self-advocate, ask for academic assistance, and request meetings with faculty and support staff (Schneider, Sasso, & Puchner, 2017). Surveys given to faculty on their perception of intrusive academic advising stated there is a perceived positive benefit to the student (Schneider, Sasso, & Puchner, 2017). The beneficial activities noted were consistent student meetings with the academic advisor and increasing the number of meetings for at-risk students (Schneider, Sasso, & Puchner, 2017). The report concluded that when the advisor is using the intrusive advising method, the more the student meets with their

advisor, the more likely they are to remain in good academic standing and retain at the institution (Schneider, Sasso, & Puchner, 2017).

Previous Research

Applying knowledge and changing practices based on research on persistence and retention of specific student populations have been shown to assist academic services in increasing retention rates. Using the noncognitive questionnaire (NCQ) and SAT tests, Fiertes (1994) researched the predictability of grades and retention of Asian Americans. The NCQ test was designed to assess noncognitive variables and contains 23 items (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). The eight noncognitive variables are (a) self-concept; (b) realistic self-appraisal, (c) ability to identity and cope with racism: (d) preference for long-term goals; (e) availability of a strong support person; (f) demonstrated leadership experience; (g) demonstrate community service; and (h) acquired knowledge in a nontraditional area. The NCQ was designed to assess eight aspects of experiential and contextual intelligence (Sedlacek, 1996). The results of the NCQ are used by academic advisors to assist students with developing intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies to create programming for self-appraisal, long range goals, developing support systems, leadership, and community (Sedlacek, 1996). The researcher continued the research to include variables that could predict academic performance and student retention (Sedlacek, 1996). They are positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, understanding and knows how to handle racism, long-range goals, strong support person, leadership, community, and nontraditional knowledge acquired.

The standardized test score that was used is the student academic skills test (SAT). The SAT is an entrance exam that is used by colleges and universities to make admissions decisions (The Princeton Review, 2019). Students typically take the SAT during their junior or senior year

of high school. The SAT score is one indicator of the student's knowledge in math and evidence-based reading and writing.

African American students tend to need student remediation strategies for retention (Davis & Palmer, 2010). Remediation programs can assist students to success academically and introduce persistence strategies (Davis & Palmer, 2010). Intervention starts with looking at student's entrance information, such as high school GPA and SAT scores. Advisors of students with low academic and standardized test scores can start interventions for success at the beginning of their university career (Davis & Palmer, 2010).

Factors improving the retention rate of African-American students at predominantly white institutions (PWI) are inclusion of students of color, curriculum that includes historical experiences of individuals of color, support of students of color, and cultural spaces (McCain & Perry, 2017). Focusing on noncognitive factors that affect African American students' retention, McCain & Perry researched institutional legacy, diversity of the institution, psychological climate, behavior climate, and structural diversity (McCain & Perry, 2017). Davis & Palmer (2010) discussed the perception that African American students are not prepared for college. This perception stems from low standardized test scores, lower high school GPA, and the perception of being a historically oppressed group (Davis & Palmer, 2010). This perception is also magnified negatively by the cognitive impacts exacerbated by the thought of attending an elite higher education institution (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). For example, for "those from working class backgrounds, particular ethnic minority groups (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002, p. 312)" students and if they are ready academically to compete with students that attended traditional pipeline school to elite higher education institutions. Because of the flexibility of diverse groups' entrance into the university, Schuetze (2002) argues that there must be certain

retention strategies available beginning in the first year of attendance (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). The author suggests that universities build more programs for undergraduates, including module-based learning and diversified learning opportunities. Incorporating new strategies in university settings, can help students will feel welcome and have flexibility needed to pursue their personal educational path.

McCain & Perry (2017) suggested ways an institution can influence the retention of African American students, such as, inclusion, curriculum expansion, programming, and creating cultural spaces. Some of the suggested ways advisors can support African-American students are scheduling academic advising sessions, engagement opportunities that are not athletics-driven, and facilitating mentoring relationships with faculty and staff (McCain & Perry, 2017).

Predicting student-athletes' needs can be done by analyzing noncognitive factors (Ting, 2009). Noncognitive factors that are associated with the student athletes are pressures to succeed academically and athletically (Ting, 2009). The researcher suggests other noncognitive factors are motivation to success academically and that the reason for the pressure that student athlete experiences is compounded by time management and absences from campus due to athletic travel. Ting (2009) used the Sedlacek noncognitive questionnaire (NCQ) to assess student athletes' noncognitive attitude toward academic success.

Ting (2009) used standardized test scores to examine the cognitive level of student athletes and a stepwise multiple regression analysis to predict student athlete's GPA. Ting furthered the research done by Sedlacek (2004) and Adams-Gaston (1994). Their research on noncognitive factors that predict retention and persistence focused on the noncognitive and cognitive challenges that are faced by student athlete (Ting, 2009). Using the noncognitive assessment model, Ting's research examined factors that can be used as predictors in retention

and persistence of student athletes. Ting also researched the predictability of standardized test scores and noncognitive variables on persistence of first-year student athletes (Ting, 2009).

The participants in Ting's research were first-year student-athletes. Using a multiple regression, the researcher was able to statistically predict fall and spring semester grades based on noncognitive and cognitive factors. Ting (2009) used the NCQ to look at students' psychosocial characteristics, such as motivation and perceptions that potentially might affect their success. The cognitive measures used were the SAT, the students' GPA from their first-year fall and spring semesters, and their registration status (continuing or dropped out). Of all the participants, 18.3% did not continue to enroll at the end of first year (Ting, 2009). Ting concluded that cognitive factors were weak in comparison to noncognitive factors in predicting retention and persistence of student athletes (Ting, 2009). The current research, which included cognitive factors, supported previous research that found that "noncognitive factors predicted academic success for freshman athletes" (Ting, 2009, p. 222). Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1997) researched noncognitive factors that affect freshman athletes. They found that noncognitive variables, such as the athletes' attitudes and experiences, can be useful information for the academic advisors when discussing student support services options (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1997). Gayles & Hu (2009) researched the cognitive and affective outcomes of student-athletes. They found that because of the student-athletes' athletic schedule, their engagement on campus is limited. This research concluded that a positive engagement with the university correlates to a positive impact on their academic outcomes. Woods, Price, & Crosby (2019) reviewed retention strategies that impact student athletes. Engagement at the university added to the success of the student athlete (Woods, Price, & Crosby, 2019). The engagement opportunities Woods, Price, & Crosby suggested would result in positive academic outcomes

include joining university organizations, academically challenging courses that result in study groups and collaborative learning opportunities, and meetings with faculty (Woods, Price, & Crosby, 2019).

Impact of Advising Student Athletes

Student-athlete academic advising, along with other special populations in higher education, presents variations on the intrusive academic advising model (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). The intrusive academic model dictates regularly scheduled meetings between the student and advisor. This becomes problematic when the student-athlete has limited time because of their athletic commitments (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). Student-athletes have busy schedules dictated by their team, must maintain academic eligibility, and be engaged in the institution outside of athletic responsibilities (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). Academic advisors can use the intrusive model to encourage the student athlete to engage in university activities outside of athletics (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). Student-athletes struggle to take advantage of engagement opportunities because of their athletic time commitments, and as a result, “the disconnection to campus that this creates can result in a negative experience for the student” (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001, p. 20). Relationship-building is at the core of intrusive academic advising and has to be modified to suit the student-athlete (Storch & Ohlson, 2009). Storch & Ohlson (2009) suggest that academic advisors work with student-athletes on their time management, study skills, and organizational skills to develop a mentoring relationship of trust.

Academic advisors should be aware of three major challenges faced by student-athletes. They are to stay academically eligible, maintain excellent performance on the athletic field, and enjoy college social opportunities (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Focusing on the stages of student development that are associated with traditional college-age students, we can look at

Erikson's stage four and five, which are industry and identity (Kyllonen, Lipnevich, Burrus, & Roberts, 2014). The first three stages of student development include a sense of trust versus mistrust, sense of autonomy versus shame and doubt, and sense of initiative versus guilt. Industry for the student athlete is to excel on the athletic field, be recognized, and receive awards. Erikson (1980;1994) finds that an increase in intellectual growth and self-awareness during this stage. Self-awareness comes from knowing the impediments and working to find a solution (Jeannine, 2007). The student development of the athlete's identity can form around the coach, friends on their team, and how they are viewed by the student and public population (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Although the emergence from this stage means the person shows professionalism (Erikson, 1982), for the student athlete, it can be experiencing professional tasks and behaviors, and self-evaluation (Jeannine, 2007).

Research has been done on GPA and social support, cognitive impact of athletic participation, and respect for ethnic and culture differences that can result in greater levels of critical thinking. Howard-Hamilton & Sima (2001) found a negative impact on a variety of cognitive outcomes for football and basketball participants. Cognitive outcomes that were found to have an association are analysis, synthesis, and comprehension skill development. This is perpetuated by the thought by nonathletes, faculty, and administrators that though student athlete's possess athletic abilities, they lack academic competencies or abilities. The negative impact on cognitive outcomes that Astin (1993) and Pascarella (1996) found were that student athletes were not receiving the same benefits from their undergraduate education as non-student athletes. Other groups that were studied were female athletes and female nonathletes, which found no significant difference during their undergraduate education. (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). The research did find that "male intercollegiate football and basketball players are not

receiving the same cognitive benefits from an undergraduate education as are other men” (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001, p. 39) These benefits include interactions with diverse peer groups, respect for differences, greater levels of critical thinking, and student may experience improved self-esteem.

It is important for the academic advisor to have the ability to communicate the goals and mission statement of the institution and the athletic department to the student, build trust with the student-athlete to assist in their academic success, and to be a guide in their pursuit of social development by setting realistic goals, putting their academic interest before their athlete, and helping the student-athlete graduate. “This can be accomplished through establishing a one-on-one relationship with a student, a mentoring relationship” (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001, p. 42). These authors suggest that one possible cause for a negative cognitive impact for student athletes is the perception they have of themselves. The perception of student-athletes by students and others on campus influences their cognitive growth. Prejudicial perceptions and biases toward student-athletes “do exist among faculty” (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001, p. 40)”. This suggests that there are some external factors that are outside the control of the student-athlete and their ability to persist and graduate. The perception that some student-athletes have of themselves is that they gained entrance into the university for strictly athletic means and that they do not have the academic ability to do well (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). For this reason, the researchers state that academic advisors for student-athletes should use the intrusive academic advising method to mentor, build trust, and develop the students’ academic skills. Without a well-equipped academic advisor who understands the need to educate the student-athlete on academic programming, retention and graduation goal setting, time management, and post college career planning of the student-athlete, at-risk or not, they can be in jeopardy of becoming

academically ineligible. (Satterfield, Croft, & Godfrey, 2010). Academic eligibility for Division I athletes means that they have completed “forty percent of the required coursework for a degree before the end of the second year, 60 percent by the end of the third year and 80 percent by the end of their fourth year” (NCAA, NCAA, 2019). In addition to graduation requirements, the student must maintain university standards for GPA. The authors state that it is important that student-athletes receive the necessary assistance from universities and athletic departments in order to be successful. Student-athletes can perceive a negative or positive relationship with the university based on the extent of their academic success and athletic achievements (Satterfield, Croft, & Godfrey, 2010).

To create an environment that is welcoming to the student-athlete, the academic advising department, the athletic department and the academic services department must work together to align their goals to demonstrate that the mission statement of the university and the goals of the athletic department are aligned (Satterfield, Croft, & Godfrey, 2010). Some institutions have placed the academic advising department under the responsibility of either the athletic director or the vice president of academic services (Holsendolph, 2006). In some cases, this means that the student-athletes’ academic performance may be impacted by their athletic supervisor, rather than their academic supervisor. Athletic programs in the past have shown “only a passing interest in the academic progress of their athletes” (Holsendolph, 2006, p. 3). In the past, there was no one department that reviewed transcripts and eligibility, and as a result, student athletes became ineligible in their final year of competition. Now, athletic departments, along with academic advisors, listen to the student-athlete and family members to devise a plan to stay eligible and ensure employment upon graduation. Academic supervisors are tasked with developing long-

range plans for both academic and athletic schedule impact that starts during the recruitment stage.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Conceptual Framework

After review of the literature on academic advising of the student-athlete, a more in-depth understanding can be obtained through continued study and analysis. The research focused on the different factors that affect the student-athletes academic success that results in graduation. These include the academic advisor, the engagement of the student and relationships built between advisor and student, and retention.

Academic Advising

The advising delivery method is an important component to the success of each group of the student population. Student-athletes are a student population group on which research on academic advisors has been conducted and around which further analysis is warranted. Student-athletes are expected to compete on the athletic field and in the academic classroom. This presents a situation that the academic advisor attempts to balance. Academic advising is an independent variable in this study and is shown at the left of the conceptual framework (Figure 1). This section will define academic advising and related concepts and measures.

The primary national organization for advisors, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) states that academic advising is at the core of student success and enhances the educational development of students. Academic advisors are responsive to students needs through decision-making, planning, and implementation to effect positive results in the student-athlete (National Academic Advising Association, 2019). Student characteristic information was recorded. Student characteristics are the year of the student-athlete, sport of participation, campus, major, how many credits has been earned, and the expected graduation date.

Effectiveness of the academic advising as an independent variable were measured by examining the different responsibilities that advisors assume. Advising was measured through student self-

report of advising practices and experiences. These include the availability of the academic advisor to meet with student-athletes, the depth of the open lines of communication to discuss topics that go beyond athletics and scheduling of classes, and the understanding and guidance of the student-athlete on academic, career and post-athletic goals. The student self-report data was used to supplement in-depth interviews that explore the experiences of students related to academic advising including conversations surrounding the course selection process, academic and graduation planning, and the trust of the advisor to impact their academic and non-athletic university career.

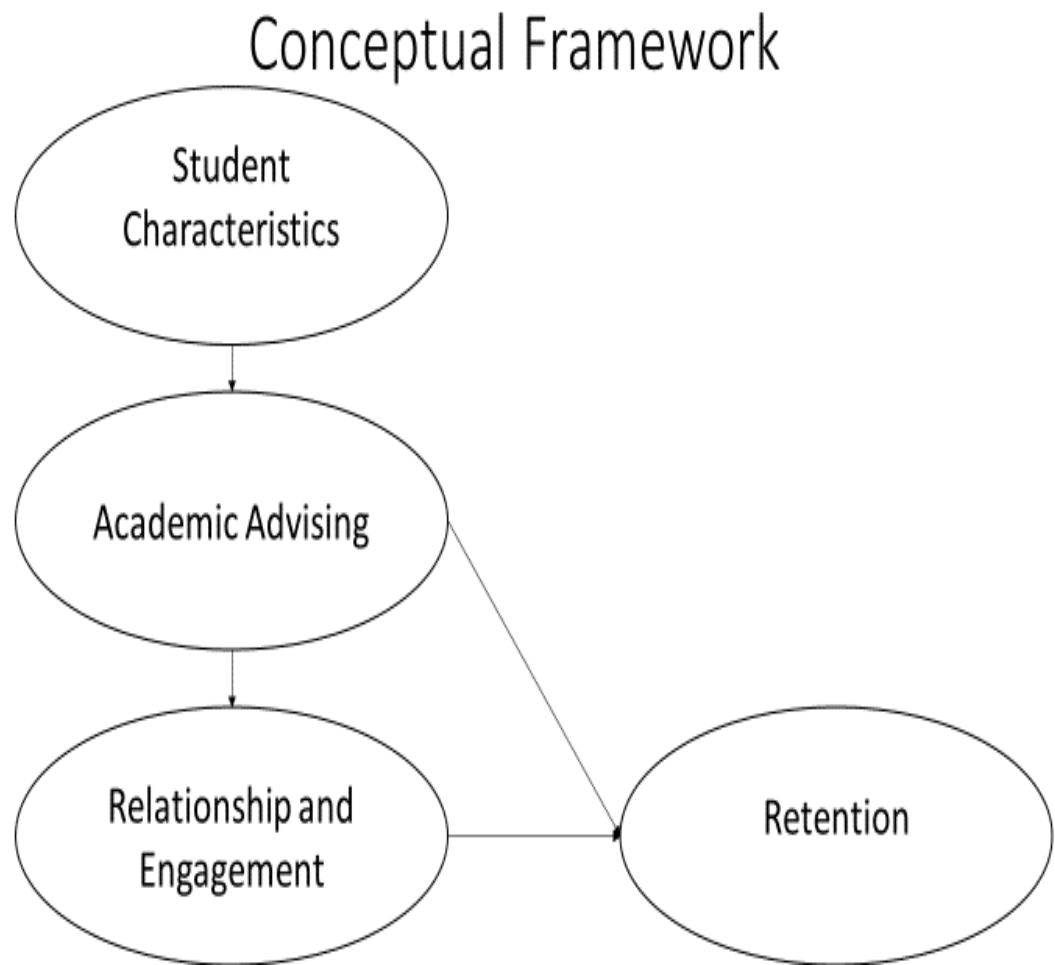
Relationships and Engagement

Advisors for student-athletes are aware of athletic and academic expectations placed on the student, but also work to engage the student outside of those realms. Successful engagement includes relationships-building and involvement outside of athletics. The relationship that the advisor and advisee build is a cornerstone of the intrusive advising. This is done through meaningful and purposeful contact. The outcomes from the conversations are important because the advisor suggests engagement opportunities. The amount of engagement events that student-athletes are aware of outside of athletics and participate in leads to a sense of home.

Relationships outside of athletics engage the student-athlete with the university and built academic support groups. These student-athlete experiences provide insight to the question of, “Am I supported academically and by whom?”.

Relationship and engagement of the student-athlete are being examined to determine their impact on the retention of the student-athlete (Figure 1, lower left corner). One role of an advisor is to listen and attempt to understand what the student is communicating based on their motivation and needs. This is the relationship that the academic advisor is attempting to forge by

Figure 1



building trust with the student-athlete. Relationship was conceptualized in this study through the following measures for building trust and feeling supported. Through self-reporting, student-athletes explained their trust of their advisors' judgement on access, availability and need of academic resources and how they fostered relationships outside of athletics, and the feeling of academic and athletic support of non-athletic intentions that were facilitated through community relationships.

The impact of the relationship between the advisor and the advisee are the relationships that are cultivated outside of athletics. These relationships are with university staff, community leaders, and career exploration managers. Advisors suggest meeting with university staff and community leaders to focus on academic stability, areas of interest outside of athletics, and to increase support systems. By increasing the support system, the student-athlete has multiple avenues to pursue when turbulent times arise on campus. Career exploration managers can introduce the student-athlete to engagement events that will support life after athletics. Student self-report on advising logistics and experiences including engagement in this study is measured by the ability and frequency of meetings with their advisor, professors, and university staff to enable academic growth, career exploration, and engagement with the university outside of athletics with little to no athletic conflicts that produces a sense of home. The students self-report data from the survey was supplemented by in-depth interviews that explored experiences of students related to engagement and relationship-building, including equitable treatment, accommodations based on academic needs due to availability based on athletic scheduling, and the usefulness of suggestions given surrounding life skills, engaging in the university community to further relationships.

Activities that may also benefit student-athlete retention are associations with university faculty and support staff. Through these interactions, student-athletes can develop relationships that teach them the positive benefits of their education, faculty and staff mentoring opportunities, self-advocate for the expansion of the curriculum. These inclusive activities support the student-athlete outside of athletics and demonstrates the universities desire to educate and promote for the academic and university mission purposes. These reasons are not athletically driven, but rather to show that student-athletes are a valuable contribution to the character of the university. In doing so, the university creates a safe space for the student-athlete to persist in college.

Retention

Using academic advising, and relationships and engagements as independent variables, we can explore the effect on retention. Retention is the dependent variable for this study and is shown on the far righthand side of the conceptual framework. Retention is evaluated each semester through NCAA regulations and university guidelines. In this study, retention is defined as continuing enrollment from term to term and through to graduation.

In this study, students were considered retained if they are continuing in their given sport and progressing toward their desired degree in a manner that is consistent with guidelines of the NCAA and university policy. NCAA guidelines for maintaining eligibility while playing a sport stipulate that all student-athletes must make measurable progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree. University guidelines for satisfactory academic progress are maintaining an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher and alignment to federal financial aid guidelines for scholarships, grants, and loans. This study was primarily a qualitative work that sought to understand the experiences of retained student-athletes and does not examine a comparison group. So, while retention was viewed as a dependent variable, it was measured and

assessed through student responses from both the survey and interview that lend themselves to a qualitative understanding of why students have persisted at this institution.

Methodology

This research utilized a survey that was sent to student-athletes at an upper Midwest college and follow-up interviews with those who volunteer for this additional step. By nature of still being enrolled, student-athletes who participated in the survey are currently retained by the institution. The survey consisted of questions regarding academic advising, relationships and engagement, and retention of student-athletes. The survey provided information on their interactions and perception of academic advising, their relationships and engagement to the university, and their feeling of support from the university. The full text of the survey and protocols are listed below. The sections of the survey were:

1. Course selection
2. Program of study/major
3. Graduation planning
4. Academic Advisor availability
5. Academic resources and their availability
6. Athletic conflicts
7. Relationship and engagement with university outside of athletic commitments
8. Sense of trustworthiness and feeling of home.

After review of the survey, students who answered yes to question #32 on the survey, “Are you willing and able to participate in an interview to provide self-reporting to the topics of academic advising, the engagement of the student and relationships built between advisor and student, and retention?”, were contacted. Student-athletes that volunteered to be interviewed

were contacted and scheduled for a zoom conference call. Five student-athletes agreed to the interview and were scheduled for 45-minute sessions. The full text of the interview and protocols are listed in Appendix B. The sections of the interview include:

1. The relationship between advisor and advisee
2. The relationship and engagement of the student-athlete to the university
3. The knowledge and accessibility of academic resources
4. The process of scheduling classes and graduation planning
5. Their sense of trust of academic advisors and university personnel
6. Sense of home.

Data Collection

The recruitment of student-athletes was done via email. An email was sent to the athletic director outlining the purpose and scope of the research. Permission was given by the athletic director to survey and interview the current student-athletes. The survey link was sent to the athletic director for email distribution to all student-athletes. The survey instrument that was emailed to student-athletes contained an introduction to purpose of the research, compliance with Higher Education Institution Institutional Review Board, a link to the survey, and the opportunity for follow-up in the form of an interview. Student-athletes who agreed to take the survey clicked on the link that directed them to the survey. The full survey and interview protocols are Appendix A and B respectively. Upon completing the survey, a thank you note appeared on the screen.

During the interview, information was provided explaining the survey and the need for self-reporting through interviews. Notes were taken during the interview along with a recording of the interview through the video conference website. The recording was transcribed at a later

date and saved to a secured hard drive. The interviewer read the questions and follow-up questions in order. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer thanked the interviewee and stated that the information gathered is considered confidential and that all identifiable indicators will be removed if/when the research is published.

Participants

Permission was granted to send a survey link to the athletic director to email all student-athletes. The goal was to have student-athletes from a broad range of teams and experiences answer the survey. The student-athletes who participated were retained at the time of the survey and interview. The student-athletes range from freshman to fifth-year seniors in college. The student-athletes are associated with the upper Midwest college and can live on or off campus. The student-athletes must be associated with at least one upper Midwest college athletic team; all sports are eligible for this research.

Context

The upper Midwest college participates in athletics as a Division III institution. Division III institutions cannot provide athletic scholarships. Division III student-athletes can “focus on their academic programs and the achievement of a degree (NCAA, 2020).” Division III student-athletes are subject to the same admissions standards, academic standards and support services as the general student body which enables student-athletes to experience all aspects of campus life. The upper Midwest college has 13 male sports and nine female sports. The upper Midwest college has a full-time freshman 6-year graduation rate of 44.3% and 59.2% for full-time transfer students. The upper Midwest college compete at different venues that are located in the area.

This institution has a Carnegie classification as a 4-year or above, private not-for-profit university with a student population of 4,457. It has balanced arts & sciences and professions

programs, and some graduate coexistence programs. The doctoral program is classified as basic. It has research doctoral programs and is professional-dominant. The majority of the student population is undergraduate. The undergraduate profile is four-year, full-time, selective, higher transfer-in students. The size and setting of the institution is medium and primarily residential (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher, 2017).

Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data for this research included a survey and interview questions (Appendix A and B). The survey asked questions regarding the student-athletes' perception of the role of the academic advisor, the engagement of the student, relationships built between advisor and student, and trustworthiness of university personnel.

The survey included questions on the student-athletes' characteristics, academic advising system, their relationship and engagement to the university, and efforts put forth by the university for retention purposes. The interview included questions of the student-athletes' perception of the academic advising system, their ability to develop relationships and engage with the university, and if the efforts put forth by the university are helpful to their persistence. The student-athletes that volunteered for the interview by answering yes to question #32 of the survey were contacted. The student-athletes must be associated with at least one athletic team; all sports are eligible for this research. The interview questions allowed for self-reporting on academic advising and relationship and engagement. The interviews were conducted through zoom.

Variables and Measures

The independent variables in the study were student characteristics, academic advising, and retention and engagement. The dependent variables were relationships with their academic

advisor, engagement to the university, and the effectiveness of the retention programs at the university. The variables and the questions used to measure each are listed in Figure 2. Student characteristics were measured by asking year in school, sport, arrival to campus, program of study, and credits (past, present), graduation date, and GPA. The characteristics showed the number of sports represented in the study, the number of students in the research categorized by their year in school, if they arrived on campus as a freshman or transferred to the school. The characteristics displayed the participants residency, their program of study/major, how many credits there are taking and if they are on track to graduate. The participants self-reported their current GPA range.

Analysis

The qualitative element of this research relies on multiple perspectives. Results were analyzed using triangulation. Triangulation leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the data collected. The participants answer to the questions will allowed for the establishment of corroborative evidence and provide for “multiple lines of sight and multiple contexts to enrich the understanding (SAGE, 2010)”.

The survey data describing respondents were analyzed using frequencies to give an overview of the experiences of student-athletes. Thematic coding was used to identify trends and data of interest in the interviews. Some themes related to academic advising are the accessibility of academic advisors and advising of student-athletes during different stages of academic support, the academic advisors understanding of student-athletes athletic schedule and how to ensure graduation plans are created and adapted when necessary, and if student-athletes trust and feel that their academic advisor is successful in their role. Some themes related to relationship assert the relationship between the advisor and the student-athlete, and the student-athlete and the

Figure 2. Variables and Measures Table

Characteristics
S1. What sport do you participate in at the university?
S2. What is your year in school?
S3. Did you arrive on campus as a freshman or are you a transfer student?
S4. Which campus do consider to be your home campus?
S5. What is your current program of study/major?
S17. How many credits did you take last term?
S18. How many credits are you taking this term?
S19. What is your anticipated graduation date?
S27. What is your current GPA?
Academic Advising
S6. At any point at this current university, did you change your study/major?
S7. When you meet with your academic advisor to schedule classes, is it drop in or by appointment?
S8. Do you have the ability to drop in and talk with your academic advisor?
S9. Do you drop in and talk with your advisor?
S10. Does your academic advisor schedule meeting with you to discuss topics other than scheduling of classes?
S11. It is easy to schedule a meeting with my academic advisor?
S12. How often do you meet with your academic advisor?
S15. When it is time to schedule your courses, is your advisor aware of your athletic schedule?
S16. Have you ever taken a class that is not a part of your major and/or does not advance you toward your degree?
S20. Has your academic advisor discussed the academic resources that are available through the university?
S29. To what extent do you agree with the statement. "I trust the opinion of my academic advisor."
S31. To what extent do you agree with this statement. "My academic advisor is successful in their role as a support person for me."
I2. What process do you go through each term to choose your classes?

I4. As a student-athlete, each term you have to take enough credits to classify you as a full-time student. Has there ever been a time when you had to take a class that was outside of your major/program to stay classified as a full-time student? If so tell me about the conversation you had about this with your academic advisor?

I5. Are you aware of any academic credit spreadsheets or documents that are used by advisors to track your academic progress?

I11. What has your academic advisor done to gain your trust?

I16. What do you think the overall goal of your academic advisor is?

I17. What impact has your academic advisor had on your academic and non-athletic university career?

Relationship and Engagement

S13. Do you have a good relationship/open line of communication with your academic advisor?

S14. Do you choose your classes or do you rely on your advisor to make suggestions?

S21. Do you have the opportunity to meet with professors during their scheduled office hours while you are in-season?

S22. How often do you engage with the university community outside of your athletic commitment?

S23. What university engagement opportunities, outside of athletic related events, have you participated in?

S24. Are there any engagement opportunities that you feel you would participate in if not for conflicts with athletic obligations? If yes, what are they?

S30. What topics other than academics do you discuss with your academic advisor?

I1. How would you describe the relationship that you have with your academic advisor and how do you think it was developed?

I7. The university has academic resources available for all students. What resources are you aware of and what do you think is lacking? How are they used?

I8. Do you feel your academic advisor treats student-athlete advisees equally, and if not, what are the differences?

I9. Does your schedule allow you to take advantage of your professor's office hours and meet with them? Is this something you have done, and if so, how often?

I10. As a student-athlete for the university, where do you feel the most academic support?

I12. Has your academic advisor given you suggestions to participate and engage in the university community outside of athletics? If so, what kind of suggestions were you given, and how did you act on those suggestions?

I14. Do you feel that if there were university social events that highlight your academic achievements, that it would act as motivation to excel in the classroom?

I15. When you talk with your advisor about life, what are some of the things you discuss (time management, budget, relationships, healthy behaviors, study skills, interactions with professors and other professional conversations)?

Retention

S25. To what extent do you agree with this statement. "I have a sense of home while attending this university."?

S26. To what extent do you agree with this statement. "I am supported academically by the university."

S28. How much do you agree that you are supported by the following groups?

I3. When it is time to schedule your classes, your academic advisor knows that you are an athlete and have obligations. Tell me what support you are given to accommodate for your shifting academic availability due to your athletic schedule.

I6. Do you believe that there are enough courses available to accommodate student-athletes that fit both their academic and athletic schedules?

I13. What things, places, people, etc., make college life feel more like home?

university. Some themes related to engagement illustrate the number of opportunities that are known, participated in, or unable to participate that are non-athletic events. Other themes in these categories and others are likely to emerge during coding of interviews.

The interview questions allowed for self-reporting on academic advising and relationship and engagement. The themes related to academic advising allow the student-athlete to recount and describe their understanding of the scheduling process for student-athletes, their knowledge of graduation planning, and if they trust their advisor. The themes related to relationship and engagement are the treatment between advisor and student-athletes, suggestion for engagement, and which suggestions are acted upon.

Survey and interview data were matched to determine if the student-athlete agreed that the university has created a sense of home, if they feel supported, and where do they feel the most support. Through analysis of the themes and triangulation of the answers provided, analysis was done to answer the research question of how the different variables affect the student-athletes academic success that results in graduation. Chapter 4 presents the analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Survey Analysis

The survey was distributed to 700 student-athletes, 82 of whom responded. There were 64 complete survey responses used for analysis. There were 30 freshman, 15 sophomores, six juniors, 13 seniors and 5th-year student-athletes that completed the survey. The highest percentage for freshman were volleyball (23%), track and field (13%), wrestling (13%), cross county (13%), and lacrosse (13%). The highest percentage for sophomores were tennis (26%), wrestling (20%), and lacrosse (13%). The highest percentage for juniors were split between six sports, all having (16%); these included baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, and triathlon. The highest percentage for seniors were track and field (33%), tennis, cross county, and triathlon (16%). Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of sport participation by year in school.

The majority of student-athletes reported never having changed their major. Eighty percent of the freshman and 53% of the sophomore respondents reported that they have not changed their major. Fifty percent of the junior and senior respondents reported that they have changed their major. The N-value and overall percent represented by students who have changed their major are 23 and 35% respectively.

Freshman student-athletes self-reported that they are majoring in biology (20%), business, computer science, exercise science, actuarial science, finance, health science, and elementary education (6%). There were 13% of freshman that said they were undecided. The highest concentration of sophomore majors was health science, sport management, biology, engineering, and elementary education (13%). Junior majors were sport management and biology (33%), and political science and business (16%). The highest percentage for senior

Table 1: *Percentage Distribution of Sport Participation by Year in School*

	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Baseball					1	16.7%	1	8.3%
Basketball	1	3.3			1	16.7		
Bowling			1	6.7				
Cross Country	4	13.3	1	6.7			2	16.7
Football			1	6.7				
Lacrosse	4	13.3	2	13.3	1	16.7		
Soccer	3	10			1	16.7		
Softball					1	16.7		
Tennis	3	10	4	26.7			2	16.7
Track and Field	4	13.3	1	6.7			4	33.3
Triathlon			1	6.7	1	16.7	2	16.7
Volleyball	7	23.3	1	6.7				
Wrestling	4	13.3	3	20				

majors was health science (16%). The other majors that student-athletes are pursuing are anthropology, athletic training, media studies, psychology, theatre, and sociology. Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of major by year in school.

Participants responded to a series of questions related to their experiences with their academic advisor. The first question asked was if the student-athlete met with their academic advisor to schedule classes. One hundred percent of the freshman, junior, and seniors said yes, they meet with their academic advisor to schedule classes. Eighty percent of sophomores said they met with their academic advisor. Overall, sixty students do meet with their academic advisor to schedule classes, representing 92 percent of the respondents.

Student-athletes were asked if they drop-in to see their academic advisor. Fifty-three percent of freshman respondents reported no, they do not. The sophomore drop-in rate was 73%. The drop-in rate for juniors was only 66%, but for seniors it was 83%. Overall, forty students reported dropping in to see their academic advisor, representing 62 percent of respondents.

To further analyze the relationship between the student-athlete and the academic advisor, student-athletes were asked if they discussed topics other than academics when meeting with their academic advisor. Eighty-three percent of freshman respondents reported that their conversations with their academic advisor focused on academic topics. This was similar for sophomores (73%), juniors (83%), and seniors (91%).

Students were asked about the ease with which they can schedule an advising meeting. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). When asked if they would agree with the statement that is easy to schedule a meeting with their academic advisor, all

Table 2: *Percentage Distribution of Major by Year in School.*

	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Undecided	4	13.3%						
Actuarial Science	2	6.7	1	6.7			1	8.3
Anthropology	1	3.3						
Athletic Training							1	8.3
Biology	6	20			1	16.7		
Business	2	6.7			2	33.3	1	8.3
Computer Science	2	6.7						
Elementary								
Education	2	6.7	2	13.3			1	8.3
Engineering	1	3.3	2	13.3				
Exercise Science	2	6.7	1	6.7			1	8.3
Finance	2	6.7	1	6.7			1	8.3
Health Science	2	6.7	2	13.3			2	16.7
Media Studies							1	8.3
Political Science					1	16.7		
Psychology	1	3.3	1	6.7			1	8.3
Sociology	1	3.3	1	6.7				
Sport Management	1	3.3	2	13.3	2	33.3	1	8.3
Theatre	1	3.3						

the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Forty-three percent of freshman stated that they strongly agreed, which is much higher than sophomores, juniors and seniors. Sophomores strongly agreed on 33% of the responses. Juniors agreed strongly 16% and seniors strongly agreed 25% on the responses. Freshman were most in agreement with the statement ($M = 2.43$; $SD = 0.50$). The mean of 2.43 shows that freshman agreed with this statement. Sophomores ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.49$) and seniors ($M = 2.25$; $SD = 0.45$) also agreed with this statement, while juniors ($M = 2.17$; $SD = 0.41$) agreed had the lowest mean. Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation reported ease to meet with their academic advisor by year in school.

To better understand the frequency with which student-athletes and academic advisors interact, student-athletes were asked how often during a semester do they meet with their academic advisor. Each semester, student-athletes from each academic year meet with their academic advisor at least one time. Fifty-three percent of the freshman reported that they meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester, which is the highest percentage among the academic classes. Forty percent of the sophomore respondents stated that they meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester. Sixteen percent of junior and 41% of senior respondents stated that they meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester. There was a small percentage of student athletes that meet with their academic advisor 4-5 times per semester (6% sophomore), and 6 or more times per semester (3% freshman, 16% junior). Table 4 shows the percentage distribution for how often student athletes meet with their academic advisor each semester by year in school.

Student-athletes must take a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Course selection is one topic that is discussed with the academic advisor. Freshman student-athletes (80%) choose most of their classes that they are scheduled for each semester. A majority of student-athletes

Table 3: *Reported ease to meet with academic advisor by Year in School.*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Mean	2.43	2.33	2.17	2.25
Std. Deviation	0.50	0.49	0.41	0.45

Table 4: *Percentage Distribution of how often student-athletes meet with their academic advisor each semester.*

	N	Freshman %	N	Sophomore %	N	Junior %	N	Senior %
0-1 times per semester	13	43.3%	8	53.3%	4	66.7%	7	58.3%
2-3 times per semester	16	53.3	6	40	1	16.7	5	41.2
4-5 times per semester			1	6.7				
6 or more times per semester	1	3.3			1	16.7		

across all levels chose most or all of their own courses. Forty-three percent of sophomore respondents reported that they choose most of their classes. Fifty percent of the juniors and senior respondents choose most of their classes. Three percent of the freshman respondents do not choose any of their classes. No other academic class reported that they rely solely on their academic advisor to pick their classes. The percentage of student-athletes that choose all of their classes were 16% of freshman, 20% of sophomores, 33% of juniors, and 33% of seniors.

Continuing the analysis of the relationship between the academic advisor and the student-athlete, student-athletes were asked if their academic advisor is aware of their participation with a university athletic team. Thirteen percent of the freshman respondents stated that their academic advisor did not know they were student-athletes. Each academic year, student-athletes reported that their academic advisor did not know they were student-athletes. Thirty-three percent of the sophomore respondents stated that their academic advisor did not know they were student-athletes. Sixteen percent of the junior respondents and 50% of the senior respondents reported that their academic advisor did not know they were student-athletes.

As we analyze the relationship between the student-athlete and the academic advisor, student-athletes were asked if they thought they had a good relationship with their academic advisor. Freshman student-athletes perceived their relationship with their academic advisor to be good (76%). Seventy-five percent of senior respondents perceived their relationship to be good. Of the sophomores who responded, 86% had a good relationship with their academic advisor and 50% of the juniors who responded stated that they had a good relationship with their academic advisor.

Academic resource availability to student-athletes, such as study halls and tutoring differ between academic year. Academic advisors can inform student-athletes of academic resources that are available to them. Eighty percent of the junior respondents were made aware of academic resources by their academic advisor. Eighty percent of the freshman and 76% of the sophomores reported being made aware of academic resources that are available to them.

The survey asked student-athletes if they can miss an athletic responsibility, such as practice, weightlifting, or athletic meetings, to meet with a professor. The majority of the student-athletes reported that they can miss an athletic responsibility to meet with a professor. Freshman (83%) and seniors (75%) student-athletes reported they can miss an athletic responsibility and 66% of respondents in both the sophomore and junior classes reported they could miss an athletic responsibility.

Following up with the ability for student-athletes to miss athletic responsibilities and meeting with professors, student-athletes were asked if their professors adjust their office hours to accommodate athletic schedules to meet with them. Responses indicated 66% of the freshman and sophomores believe that their professor would adjust their office hours to accommodate their athletic schedule. Fifty percent of the juniors and seniors believe that they professors would adjust their office hours.

The survey then asked student-athletes how they engaged with the university community outside of athletics and how often they had the opportunity given their athletic commitments. Respondents were also asked how often they have the opportunity to engage with the university outside of athletes; the majority of responses were 1-3 events per semester. Juniors (83%) reported attending 1-3 events of engagement opportunities. Freshman (56%) student-athletes responded that they had the opportunity to engage with the university community outside of

athletics and 40% of sophomores said they had engagement opportunities. Eighty-three percent of the seniors reported engagement opportunities, which the highest of any academic class.

The engagement opportunities that student-athletes most frequented were clubs and activities. Twenty-one freshman participated in clubs and activities. The highest number of participants for sophomores, juniors and seniors were clubs and activities as well with 8, 6, and 9 respectively. Table 5 shows the number of student-athletes and the engagement opportunities that they participate in by year in school. Students were asked about the ease with which they can schedule an advising meeting.

The survey asked to what extent do you agree with the statement, I have a sense of home while attending this university. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). Juniors reported that they do feel a sense of home while attending the university with 16% strongly agreeing and 83% agreeing with the statement. Freshman student-athletes (3%) strongly disagreed with the statement and 60% agreed. Sixty percent of the sophomores agreed they felt a sense of home while attending the university with 20% strongly agreeing. Senior (91%) respondents had the highest percentage reporting that they felt a sense of home. Eighty-five percent of all student-athletes that responded stated that they do feel a sense of home while at the university. Overall, responses to this question indicated students agree that they felt they had a sense of home at this institution ($M = 2.08$; $SD = 0.67$). Seniors were most in agreement with this statement ($M = 2.42$; $SD = 0.67$). Sophomores ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 0.66$) and juniors ($M = 2.17$; $SD = 0.41$) also agree with the statement, while freshman do not agree ($M = 1.97$; $SD = 0.72$). The mean (2.08) and standard deviation (0.67) for student-athlete responses to

Table 5: *Number of student-athletes and the engagement opportunities that they participate in by year in school.*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
	N	N	N	N
Alumni Events	3	2		2
Exhibits, Lectures, and Conference Performances	7	1	1	6
Professional Development (Tutorials)	3	2		4
Corporate Presentations		1		
Clubs and Activities	21	8	6	9
Academic Clubs	6	3	1	4
Community Service Clubs	2	1	1	1
Social Action Clubs	3	1		1
Faith and Spiritual Clubs	3	2	3	2
Honor Society Clubs	3		2	4
International Club	2	1		
Leadership Clubs		1		4
Media and Publications Club				
Music, Arts, and Activity Club	5	1	1	1
Sports and Recreations Clubs	4	6	3	3
Multicultural Affairs Clubs	2	1		
Other - Cardinal First		1		

the statement, “I have a sense of home while attending this university.” Senior respondents had the highest sense of home average ($M = 2.42$; $SD = 0.67$), while freshman had the lowest ($M = 1.97$; $SD = 0.72$). Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes response to the statement, “I have a sense of home while attending this university.”

Student-athletes were asked to what extent do you agree with this statement, I am supported academically by the university. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). During the student-athletes sophomore year is when they feel the most supported. Sixty-six percent of the student-athletes agreed with the statement, “do you feel supported by your academic advisor?”. Sixteen percent of senior student-athletes reported they strongly disagree to the statement of academic advisor support and 33% strongly agreed. Most seniors perceive support and 50% agreed with the statement of academic advisor support. Fifty-six percent of freshman reported that they agreed with the statement of academic advisor support and 36% strongly agreed. All of the juniors agreed with the statement of academic advisor support with 50% strongly agreeing that they feel supported by their academic advisor. Overall, responses to this question indicated students agree that they felt supported academically by the university ($M = 2.25$ $SD = 0.67$). Junior ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.55$) respondents on average felt the most support academically by the university, while seniors ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 1.04$) felt the least support. Juniors were most in agreement with the statement ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.55$). Freshman ($M = 2.35$; $SD = 0.55$) and sophomores ($M = 2.20$; $SD = 0.56$) also agreed with the statements. Seniors ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 1.04$) mean was the lowest, but still agreed with the statement. Table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes response to the statement, I am supported academically by the university.

Table 6: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes response to the statement, “I have a sense of home while attending this university.”*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	1.97	2.00	2.17	2.42	2.08
Std. Deviation	0.72	0.66	0.41	0.67	0.67

Table 7: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes response to the statement, “I am supported academically by the university.”*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.35	2.20	2.50	2.00	2.25
Std. Deviation	0.55	0.56	0.55	1.04	0.67

Student-athletes can receive academic support from professors, university staff and personnel, athletic staff and personnel, and their coaches. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). The overall results from the survey asking student-athletes how they perceived support from the following groups were; academic advisors (M = 2.17, SD = 0.63), professors (past and present) (M = 2.45, SD = 0.59), university staff and personnel (M = 2.14, SD = 0.62), athletic staff and personnel (M = 2.45, SD = 0.62), and the coach staff (M = 2.73, SD = 0.51).

Freshman (M = 2.20; SD = 0.61) and sophomores (M = 2.20; SD = 0.56) agreed they are supported by their academic advisors. Seniors had the lowest mean (M = 2.08; SD = 0.79) but agreed that they were supported by their academic advisors. Freshman (M = 2.50; SD = 0.57) and seniors (M = 2.50; SD = 0.52) were most in agreement that they felt supported by their professors and was above the overall mean (M = 2.45; SD = 0.59). Sophomores (M = 2.40; SD = 0.63) and juniors (M = 2.17; SD = 0.75) agreed, but below the overall mean. Freshman (M = 2.17; SD = 0.66), juniors (M = 2.17; SD = 0.75), and seniors (M = 2.17; SD = 0.62) were most in agreement that they felt supported by the university staff and personnel. They were also above the overall mean (M = 2.14; SD = 0.62). Sophomores (M = 2.07; SD = 0.46) agreed that they felt supported by the university staff and personnel but was below the overall mean. Freshman (M = 2.57; SD = 0.57), juniors (M = 2.50; SD = 0.84), and seniors (M = 2.50; SD = 0.67) agreed that they felt support from the athletic staff and personnel and was above the overall mean (M = 2.45; SD = 0.62). Sophomores (M = 2.20; SD = 0.56) agreed that they felt support from the athletic staff and personnel but below the overall mean. Freshman were most in agreement that they felt academic support from their coaches (M = 2.83; SD = 0.38). Sophomores (M = 2.67; SD = 0.49)

and juniors ($M = 2.67$; $SD = 0.65$) also agreed that they felt academic support from their coaches. Juniors agreed that they felt support from their coaches at the lowest mean ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.84$).

The respondents reported that they agree or strongly agree that they feel supported by their academic advisor. Sophomores and seniors reported feeling most supported at 83% and 91% respectively. Overall, responses to this question indicated student-athletes felt the most support the coaching staff ($M = 2.73$; $SD = 0.51$) and the least from the university staff and personnel ($M = 2.14$; $SD = 0.62$). Overall, responses to this question indicated the highest support was freshman student-athletes and support from coaches ($M = 2.83$; $SD = 0.83$). Tables 8-12 show the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from professors, university staff and personnel, athletic staff and personnel, and their coaches.

Most of the student-athletes reported feeling supported by their professors. Some freshman and sophomore respondents reported they do not feel supported. Three percent of freshman and 6% of sophomores either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, “how much do you agree that you are supported”. Freshman and senior respondents reported they perceive support from their past and present professors with 53% and 50% respectively. Freshman student-athletes felt supported by their athletic staff and personnel. Ninety-six percent of freshman feel supported by their athletic staff and personnel. Junior (66%) and senior (58%) respondents strongly agree with the statement, “you feel supported by the athletic staff and personnel”. Sophomores agree with the statement as well, with 66% agreeing with the statement. Most of the respondents also agreed that university staff and personnel are supportive. Freshman and sophomores agree with the statement, “do you agree that you are supported by the athletic staff and personnel” at 63% and 80% respectively.

Table 8: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from academic advisor.*

	Support by Academic Advisor				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.20	2.20	2.17	2.08	2.17
Std. Deviation	0.61	0.56	0.75	0.79	0.63

Table 9: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from professors.*

	Support by Professors				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.50	2.40	2.17	2.50	2.45
Std. Deviation	0.57	0.63	0.75	0.52	0.59

Table 10: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from university staff and personnel.*

	Support by University Staff and Personnel				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.17	2.07	2.17	2.17	2.14
Std. Deviation	0.66	0.46	0.75	0.72	0.62

Table 11: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from athletic staff and personnel.*

	Support by Athletic Staff and Personnel				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.57	2.20	2.50	2.50	2.45
Std. Deviation	0.57	0.56	0.84	0.67	0.62

Table 12: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes perceived academic support from their coaches.*

	Support by Coach Staff				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.83	2.67	2.50	2.67	2.73
Std. Deviation	0.38	0.49	0.84	0.65	0.51

When asked if they feel supported by their coaching staff, 16% of juniors disagree with the statement, “do you agree that you are supported by the coaching staff. There are 66% of juniors that responded that they strongly agree that they feel supported by their coaching staff. Eighty-three percent of freshmen reported that they strongly agree they feel supported by their coaching staff. Seventy-five percent of seniors strongly agree that they feel supported by their coaching staff. All the sophomores that responded feel that their coaching staff support them. Sixty-six percent of the sophomores strongly agree that coaches support them.

The survey asked student-athletes if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). Each academic year, the majority of student-athlete’s responses were either agree or strongly agree. Thirteen percent of sophomores reported that they disagree with the statement, “I trust the opinion of my academic advisor”, while 46% strongly agree. Juniors (66%) and seniors (58%) reported the two highest percentages of student-athletes agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statement. Ninety-six percent of freshman strongly agreed and agreed with the statement and trust the opinion of their academic advisor. The overall mean of 2.30 shows that student-athletes agree with this statement. Seniors ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 0.85$) agreed with the statement but below the overall mean. Freshman ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.71$), sophomores ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.72$), and juniors ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.52$) were most in agreement with the statement. Student-athletes based on academic year stayed consistent with a mean of 2.33 between freshman and junior year. Table 13 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor by academic year and overall.

Table 13: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor by academic year and overall.*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.00	2.30
Std. Deviation	0.71	0.72	0.52	0.85	0.70

Student-athletes were asked what topics other than academics they discuss with their academic advisor. Response options included were time management, personal finance, community engagement, non-athletic engagement, career exploration, and life check-in. Student-athletes were asked to answer yes or no to determine if they had these conversations with their academic advisor. Fifty percent of freshman respondents reported they discussed time management. Eighty-three percent of junior respondents reported they did have conversations about time management. Fifty-eight percent of senior student-athletes reported that they did not talk about time management during their conversations with their academic advisor.

Academic advisors did speak to student-athletes about community engagement, but most student-athletes did not have these conversations. Ninety percent of the freshman and 93% of the sophomores did not have conversations with their academic advisors about community engagement. No senior respondents reported having conversations about community engagement. A minority of student-athletes reported being advised about non-athletic engagement. Seventy-six percent of freshman and 80% of sophomores did not have conversations with their academic advisor about topics related to non-athletic engagement opportunities. Ninety-one percent of senior respondents did not have conversations with their academic advisor about topics to non-athletic engagement opportunities.

Most student-athletes did not speak with their academic advisor about personal finances, including 91% of seniors, 90% of freshman, and 93% of sophomores. The percentage of student-athletes whose academic advisors advised them about career exploration was highest in the sophomore group (60%). Eighty-three percent of senior respondents reported that they did not speak to their academic advisor about career exploration. Fifty percent of the freshman

respondents reported that their academic advisor did not speak to them about career exploration. No student-athletes stated that their academic advisor spoke to them about life check-in.

Community engagement (36%) and personal finance (33%) were the two most discussed topics between student-athletes and academic advisors. Personal finance (60%) was the topic that was most reported by sophomore respondents. Of the junior student-athletes, personal finance (33%) and community engagement (33%) were the two most discussed topics. Senior respondents reported that academic advisors discussed time management the most with student-athletes given the topics to choose from. Academic advisors discussed time management with 50% of the student-athletes. Table 14 shows the number of student-athletes and the topics that are discussed with their academic advisor by year in school.

The last question on the survey was if the student-athlete believes that the academic advisor is successful in their role. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). Most of the student-athletes believe that their academic advisor is successful in their role. Seventy-six percent of the freshman agree or strongly agree that their academic advisor is successful in their role. No freshman reported believing that their academic advisor was unsuccessful in their role. Ninety-three percent of the sophomores believe that their academic advisor is successful in their role (53% agree and 40% strongly agree). Twenty-four percent of the seniors think that their academic advisor is not successful in their role as an academic advisor. Thirty-three percent of the juniors also responded that they do not believe their academic advisor is successful in their role. Overall, responses to this question indicated students agree that they believe that their academic advisor is successful in their role ($M = 2.09$; $SD = 0.77$). Sophomores were most in agreement with this statement ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.62$) and

Table 14: *Number of student-athletes and the topics that are discussed with their academic advisor by year in school.*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
	N	N	N	N
Time Management	15	6	5	5
Personal Finances	3	1	1	1
Community Engagement	3	1	1	
Non-Athletic Engagement	7	3	1	1
Career Exploration	14	9	3	2

were above the overall mean of 2.09. Freshman ($M = 2.03$; $SD = 0.72$) and seniors ($M = 2.08$; $SD = 1.00$) also agree with the statement. Juniors agree with the statement, but at the lowest mean of 2.00. Table 15 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses if they believe that their academic advisor is successful in their role.

Perceptions and Engagement by Sport

An analysis of student-athlete's perceptions of their academic advisor and engagement opportunities based on sport and season of competition were done. This was done to identify differences by team which might be indicative of messaging within the team either from coaches or among student-athletes. For reference, the fall season sports are cross county, football, golf, triathlon, and volleyball. The winter season sports are basketball, bowling, swimming, and wrestling. The spring season sports are baseball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, and track and field.

Student-athletes can drop-in or set an appointment to visit with their academic advisor. Student-athletes were asked when they meet with your academic advisor to schedule classes, is it drop in or by appointment? Baseball, cross county, and track and field respondents stated that the majority of athletes set an appointment with their academic advisor to schedule classes. All the other sport respondents stated that their entire team schedules their appointments to meet with their academic advisor to schedule classes. Wrestling and volleyball teams had the highest percentage that stated they do not have the ability to drop-in and meet with their academic advisor to schedule classes with 71% and 75% respectively. One hundred percent of the basketball team stated they do not have the ability to drop-in to meet with their academic advisor. Other sports, such as baseball, bowling, and softball have the ability to drop-in and meet with their academic advisor.

Table 15: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses if they believe that their academic advisor is successful in their role.*

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Overall
Mean	2.03	2.33	2.00	2.08	2.09
Std. Deviation	0.72	0.62	0.89	1.00	0.77

Student-athletes were asked if they do you drop in and talk with your advisor. The highest percentage of student-athletes based on teams that drop-in to meet with their academic advisor is softball (100%). Other sports that utilize their ability to drop-in at a positive percentage are bowling and softball.

The survey asked student-athletes if they think it is easy to schedule a meeting with their academic advisor. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). All the student-athletes responded that they think it is easy to schedule a meeting with their advisor ($M = 2.34$; $SD = 0.47$). Bowling (100%), soccer (50%), track and field (44%), wrestling, lacrosse, and cross country (42%), volleyball (37%), were the teams with the highest percentage of student-athletes that strongly agree with the statement that is easy to schedule a meeting with their academic advisor.

Student-athletes were asked how many times they meet with their academic advisor per semester. The responses that student-athletes could choose were: 0 = 1 time per semester, 1 = 2-3 times per semester, 2 = 4-5 times per semester, and 3 = 6 or more times per semester. Analyzing the number of times student-athletes meet with their academic advisor by team, baseball, basketball, and football meet one time. One hundred percent of the softball and bowling respondents stated that they meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester. Track and field (55%), triathlon and soccer (50%), volleyball (63%), wrestling and cross country (57%), lacrosse (28%) responded that they meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester. Wrestling (14%) responded that they meet with their academic advisor 4-5 times per semester and lacrosse (14%) responded that they meet with their academic advisor 6 or more times per semester. The mean of 0.56 shows that student-athletes meet with their academic advisor at least

1 time per semester. The mean of basketball, bowling, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball, and triathlon were 1.00, which shows these sports meet with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester.

Track and field, bowling, and softball respondents stated they have a good relationship with their academic advisor. Football student-athletes that responded to the survey stated that they do not have a good relationship with their academic advisor. Tennis (66%), triathlon and volleyball (75%), wrestling (85%), basketball (50%), cross country and lacrosse (85%), and soccer (75%) student-athletes that responded to the survey stated that they have a good relationship with their academic advisor.

Student-athletes were asked if their academic advisor discussed with them the academic resources that are available to them. Analyzing the data by team, softball, bowling, and basketball student-athletes that responded to the survey did have discussions with their academic advisor regarding academic resources that are available to them. Volleyball (87%) and cross country (85%) had the highest percentage of student-athletes reporting discussions with their academic advisor regarding academic resources. The lowest percentage reporting discussions about academic resources were the triathlon (50%) and wrestling (57%) teams.

Baseball, basketball, bowling, and softball all can miss an athletic event to meet with a professor. Seventy-seven percent of the tennis team stated that they can miss an athletic event to meet with a professor. Volleyball (87%) and wrestling (85%) responded that they could miss an athletic event to meet with a professor. Football respondents said that they could not miss an athletic event to meet with a professor. The teams with the lowest percentage of participants reporting a sense that they can miss an athletic event to meet with a professor are the cross country (57%) and triathlon (50%) teams.

The teams with the greatest percentage of student-athletes who reported believing a professor would adjust their office hours to accommodate them include track and field (77%), tennis (66%), and wrestling (88%) teams. Baseball (66%), basketball (50%), and soccer teams stated that they think their professors would not adjust their office hours to meet with them. The lowest percentage based on team that think their professor would adjust their office hours to meet with them are triathlon (25%) and soccer (25%).

Tennis, track and field, triathlon and volleyball all had at least one respondent report they do not engage with the university community outside of athletics. Baseball (33%), triathlon, (25%), wrestling (28%), and lacrosse (14%) reported that they engage with the university outside of athletics 7 or more times per semester. Tennis (55%), baseball (33%), track and field (22%), triathlon (25%), volleyball (12%), cross-country (42), and lacrosse (57%) reported that they engage with the university outside of athletics 4-6 times per semester.

The survey asked student-athletes “To what extent do you agree with the statement, ‘I have a sense of home while attending this university.’” There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). Baseball, triathlon, basketball, bowling, football, lacrosse, and soccer all agreed or strongly agreed with the statement with no one disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Cross-country (28%) tennis (22%), volleyball (25%), wrestling (28%), soccer, (25%) teams stated that they disagree with the statement and do not feel a sense of home while at the university. Basketball and football were most in agreement with the statement ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$). Table 16 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes by team responses if they have a sense of home while attending this university.

Table 16: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete by team responses if they have a sense of home while attending this university.*

	Sense of Home	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	2.00	0.00
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	2.00	----
Cross County	1.86	1.07
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.00	0.00
Soccer	2.25	0.96
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	2.00	0.71
Track and Field	2.44	0.73
Triathlon	2.25	0.50
Volleyball	2.00	0.76
Wrestling	1.71	0.49

The survey asked student-athletes how much they agree that they are supported by the academic advisors, professors (past and present), university staff and personnel, athletic staff and personnel, and coaching staff. There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). The basketball, bowling, football, lacrosse, soccer, and softball teams all agree or strongly agree that they are supported by their academic advisors, professors, university staff and personnel, athletic staff and personnel and their coaching staff. All of the sports have agreed that they are supported by at least 66% (baseball-professors). All the teams agree or strongly agree that they are supported by the university staff and personnel except track and field (89%), volleyball (88%), and cross-country (86%). The triathlon team agrees or strongly agrees that they are supported by their athletic staff (75%) and coaching staff and personnel (75%). Baseball, tennis, volleyball, wrestling, cross-country, football, lacrosse, soccer, and softball agree or strongly agree supported by their coaching staff and personnel. Baseball, track and field, triathlon, wrestling, basketball, bowling, football, lacrosse, softball, and soccer agree or strongly agree supported by their academic advisor. Tennis (88%), volleyball (87%), cross-country (85%) agree or strongly agree supported by their academic advisor.

Bowling student-athletes strongly agreed that they felt supported by their academic advisor ($M = 3.00$). Basketball ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$), football ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$), and soccer ($M = 2.50$) were most in agreement with the statement. Cross country ($M = 2.71$; $SD = 0.49$) and wrestling ($M = 2.71$; $SD = 0.76$) were most in agreement that they felt supported by their professors.

Baseball ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 1.00$), bowling ($M = 2.00$), and softball ($M = 2.00$) agree with the statement and felt supported by their professors but had the lowest mean. Basketball ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$), and football ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$) were most in agreement with support felt by the

university staff and personnel. Baseball ($M = 1.33$; $SD = 0.58$) and tennis ($M = 1.89$; $SD = 0.33$) were not in agreement that university staff and personnel supported them academically. The mean of 3.00 shows that softball strongly agree that the athletic staff and personnel support them academically. Soccer ($M = 2.75$; $SD = 0.50$) agreed that the athletic staff and personnel support them academically, while bowling ($M = 2.00$) agreed with the lowest mean. Baseball ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.00$), basketball ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.00$), bowling ($M = 3.00$), and soccer ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.00$) were most in strongly agreeing that their coaching staff supported them academically. The mean of 2.00 shows that soccer agrees that their coaching staff supports them academically but is the lowest mean. Tables 17-21 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes by team how much they agree that they are supported by the academic advisors, professors (past and present), university staff and personnel, athletic staff and personnel, and coaching staff.

The survey asked the student-athletes, “To what extent do you agree with the statement. I trust the opinion of my academic advisor if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor.” Analyzing the data based on team, the triathlon, basketball, bowling, football, soccer, and softball teams agree or strongly agree that they trust the opinion of their academic advisor. The baseball team (66%) had the lowest percentage of student-athletes that agreed or strongly agree with the statement of trusting their academic advisors’ opinion. The other teams had a positive percentage of student-athletes that trusted the opinion of their academic advisor. The mean of 3.00 shows that bowling strongly agree with this statement. Soccer ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.50$) and football ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.71$) also agree with the statement, while baseball ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 1.00$), basketball ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 0.00$), and triathlon ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 0.00$) agree at the lowest mean. Table 22 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes by team response to

Table 17: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses how much they agree that they are supported by the academic advisors.*

	Support by Academic Advisor	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	2.00	0.00
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	3.00	----
Cross County	2.00	1.00
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.14	0.38
Soccer	2.50	0.58
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	1.89	0.78
Track and Field	2.33	0.50
Triathlon	1.75	0.50
Volleyball	2.25	0.71
Wrestling	2.29	0.49

Table 18: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses how much they agree that they are supported by the professors (past and present).*

	Support by Professors	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	2.00	1.00
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	2.00	----
Cross County	2.71	0.49
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.43	0.54
Soccer	2.50	0.58
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	2.33	0.50
Track and Field	2.22	0.67
Triathlon	2.50	0.58
Volleyball	2.63	0.52
Wrestling	2.71	0.76

Table 19: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses how much they agree that they are supported by the university staff and personnel.*

	Support by University Staff and Personnel	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	1.33	0.58
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	2.00	----
Cross County	2.00	1.00
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.43	0.54
Soccer	2.25	0.50
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	1.89	0.33
Track and Field	2.33	0.71
Triathlon	2.25	0.50
Volleyball	2.13	0.64
Wrestling	2.17	0.41

Table 20: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses how much they agree that they are supported by the athletic staff and personnel.*

Support by Athletic Staff and Personnel		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	2.33	0.58
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	2.00	----
Cross Country	2.43	0.79
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.43	0.54
Soccer	2.75	0.50
Softball	3.00	----
Tennis	2.44	0.73
Track and Field	2.44	0.53
Triathlon	2.25	0.96
Volleyball	2.50	0.76
Wrestling	2.43	0.54

Table 21: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete responses how much they agree that they are supported by the coaching staff.*

	Support by Coaching Staff	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	3.00	0.00
Basketball	3.00	0.00
Bowling	3.00	----
Cross County	2.86	0.38
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.71	0.49
Soccer	3.00	0.00
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	2.89	0.33
Track and Field	2.56	0.73
Triathlon	2.50	1.00
Volleyball	2.63	0.52
Wrestling	2.71	0.49

Table 22: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athlete by team response to the question of, “To what extent do you agree with the statement. I trust the opinion of my academic advisor if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor.”*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	2.00	1.00
Basketball	2.00	0.00
Bowling	3.00	----
Cross County	2.29	1.11
Football	2.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.14	0.69
Soccer	2.75	0.50
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	2.11	0.93
Track and Field	2.22	0.67
Triathlon	2.00	0.00
Volleyball	2.25	0.71
Wrestling	2.43	0.79

the question of, “To what extent do you agree with the statement. I trust the opinion of my academic advisor if they trust the opinion of their academic advisor.”

The survey asked the student-athletes to what extent do you agree with the statement, “My academic advisor is successful in their role as a support person for me.” There were four responses possible on the Likert scale; the parentheses after each contains its value: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and strongly agree (3). Softball, basketball, and bowling teams were the only teams that everyone agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The lowest percentage of student-athletes on a team that agreed or strongly agreed was baseball (33%), volleyball (62%), and football (50%). Tennis (89%), track and field (81%), wrestling (86%), cross country (86%) teams agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of 3.00 shows that bowling strongly agree with the statement. Basketball ($M=2.50$; $SD = 0.71$) also agree with the statement, while baseball ($M = 1.67$; $SD = 1.16$), football ($M = 1.50$; $SD = 0.71$), and volleyball ($M = 1.88$; $SD = 0.84$) do not agree. Table 23 shows the mean and standard deviation for student-athletes by team response to the statement, “My academic advisor is successful in their role as a support person for me.”

Interview with Student-Athletes

The second phase of this study is a series of interviews focused on student-athletes and their perception of the role of the academic advisor, the engagement of student-athletes, relationships built between advisor and student, and the trustworthiness of university personnel. At the end of the survey volunteers were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The interviews included questions about the student-athlete’s perception of the academic advising system, their ability to develop relationships and engage with the university, and if the efforts put forth by the university have been helpful to their persistence

Table 23: *Mean and standard deviation for student-athletes by team response to the statement, “My academic advisor is successful in their role as a support person for me.”*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baseball	1.67	1.16
Basketball	2.50	0.71
Bowling	3.00	----
Cross County	2.14	0.69
Football	1.50	0.71
Lacrosse	2.00	0.82
Soccer	2.00	0.82
Softball	2.00	----
Tennis	2.11	0.93
Track and Field	2.33	0.71
Triathlon	2.00	0.82
Volleyball	1.88	0.84
Wrestling	2.29	0.76

(Appendix B). Student-athletes were interviewed from a variety of sports, academic classes, and programs of study. Prior to the interview, student-athletes reaffirmed consent for this research by acknowledging consent verbally. The interviews were conducted by video-telecommunication (Zoom) and recorded for accuracy. Student-athletes who participated in the interviews ranged in academic class from freshman to senior. The sports represented by these interviews track, cross-country, tennis, and soccer. There were both male and female athletes interviewed.

Interview 1: Jane

The interview started with Jane describing her relationship with her academic advisor. Jane said, “I would consider my relationship with my academic advisor to be relatively strong.” Jane is a senior who transferred to the university as a sophomore. When Jane arrived on campus, her academic advisor was involved with her and connected to her in terms of, “just making sure I have the right classes to graduate in time.” This was reflected in the survey by 75% of student-athletes stated that they have a good relationship with their academic advisor. Like Jane, ninety-two percent of student-athletes meet with their academic advisor and ninety-seven percent agreed that it is easy to schedule a meeting. Jane and her academic advisor would talk about “prerequisite classes that otherwise would not have been part of my regular scheduled major classes” and upper Midwest classes that need to be taken to graduate. They also discuss program evaluations that center around classes that need to be taken, suggestions for future classes, and “some classes that might be nice to take as a support system for my further academic goals after graduating, too,” Jane said.

When scheduling classes, Jane meets with her academic advisor to review the past semester. Their meetings are either face-to-face or on zoom. Jane usually does not take classes

that are not part of her major. Since Jane is a senior, she “picked up a sociology class, just to maintain that full time student.” Jane said that there are enough classes to take within her major to stay full time and there are “a lot of classes are offered at multiple times throughout the week” to choose from. Jane keeps up with her academic progress by looking “this one document called a program evaluation” tool called Merlin within the university academic system. Jane can visually see “classes you have already taken and other required classes that you might need to take, as well as the grade that you received in those classes.” Jane’s academic advisor reviews the program evaluation document with her every time they meet.

Jane uses the campus academic resources that are available to student-athletes and all students and “knows there's different places on campus, like the writing center, the speaking center, on tutoring services, and throughout each department academic support resources.” Jane said that other student-athletes that use the academic resources “I believe that everybody really believes that it is satisfactory.”

Jane’s academic advisor and professors know that she is a soccer player that switched to track and “typically, I am not able to go into the professor's specific office hours, because I either have practice, or I just have another class. Jane’s professors understand that because of athletic commitments, she cannot meet during their office hours. Jane will “communicate with the professor ahead of time” to schedule a different time to meet. Jane’s track and field coaches have been “very understanding if there's a day when I need to meet with a professor, the coach will say its ok for me to be 10 or 15 minutes late to practice because I needed to talk to a professor. I mean, especially being at a D3 school where you don't have an athletic scholarship.” This was reflected in the survey by 75% of student-athletes believe they can miss an athletic commitment

and 60% of student-athletes believe that professors will adjust their office hours to meet with them.

Through the regular scheduled meetings, reviewing of academic progress and discussing academic resources, Jane trusts her academic advisor. Jane trust in her academic advisor is built through “just sending out resources throughout the semester, not specifically to me, but to all the students that the advisor sees.” This was reflected in the survey by 90% of student-athletes trust their academic advisor. Jane also said that she trusts and values her academic advisor because of the suggestions for engagement outside of athletics that she gives. “I think the one suggestion that my advisor did give me was for our campus Health and Exercise Association. She gave me that suggestion when I was a sophomore in college,” Jane said.

Jane’s academic advisor is one part of the support system that helps Jane feel at home while attending college. Jane feels this sense of home through “the people honestly, just like the sense of community that a smaller school has really made me feel more comfortable.” Jane likes “the ability for me to walk into a class and the professor knows my name and is able to have a conversation with me about either my interests or the professor's interests,” Jane said. Jane said that everyone creates a warm and welcoming environment. Being part of the Honor Society helps Jane engage outside of athletics.

Jane and her academic advisor talk about topics other than academics and engagement opportunities. They talk about life. They talk about time management, Jane’s personal life as an athlete, homework, and “just kind of making sure like, hey, how are your classes going?” Jane understands that the goal of a good academic advisor is to “provide additional support for whatever a student may need and connecting the student to additional resources that they might not know of or have the confidence to do on their own.” This is impactful because Jane is

grateful to her academic advisor for the small conversations. Jane knows that she will graduate on time and with the help of her academic advisor, she is ready for graduate school and her career in the coming months.

Interview 2: Susan

“At the very beginning, it was just sort of a working relationship on the schedule, here's the time for the projected time for practice, so we should probably schedule classes around that”, was how Susan described the first interaction with her academic advisor. Starting with the first interaction with her academic advisor, Susan felt “comfortable with those kinds of conversations.” Susan and her academic advisor continued the open line of communication through “email and sometimes I'd get a phone call, and he'll just say, ‘Hey, we're gonna meet next week, here are my opens appointments’, and then afterwards, “I'll get another email that's just about anything we didn't cover during the meeting. For example, my education class required a T test and a background check. And so that's kind of thing he would email me and let me know.”

From the first meeting, “he already knew that I was a cross country athlete.” Susan said that it helped with scheduling classes “because of the way that he knew the times that we were practicing.” Susan said that her academic advisor even knew how long it would take to go from the “dorm to class and where I was practicing to class.” This is consistent with the survey data that indicates 85% of cross-country student-athletes I choose most of their classes and rely some on my advisor. When conflicts arrive, Susan says that she resolves them. “If I need to miss a practice, I can miss one that is a less structured practices.” “I could miss that if I needed to go see a professor or if I needed to do a lab.”

Susan also talks with her academic advisor about time management and “how we're going to budget classes next semester, because last semester, I had three courses on the same day. But more how do I approach a professor if I'm having trouble with their material.”

Academic advisors discussed time management with 47% of student-athletes. Student-athletes agreed (45%) and strongly agreed (49%) support by professors (past and present).

Susan started discussing course offerings, the building of her schedule, and graduation planning. Susan said that she “wasn't 100% sure what my major was going to be, so I just I took my required courses.” Susan gave an example of accommodating the upper Midwest college is regarding scheduling of classes and the amount of course offerings. “Next semester, I am taking an education course. There was only one slot available, and it was during practice. But then there were other options available because there was only one originally, but then there became more and more classes became available slowly over the next couple of weeks. There were 30 kids in that one class, because nobody could make it to the other class. So, they, they were able to accommodate students by moving around the courses.”

Susan said that when she needs academic assistance, she uses “the writing center which reviews papers and everything for you.” Susan said that she also meets with professors, which she can because “our practices are early enough in the morning, that if a professor has office hours in the morning, I'd be able to make them.” Susan feels supported by her coach as well. Susan can her coach “I won't be there today at practice and I'll be able to go see the professor.” Susan feels comfortable missing practice, but 57% of cross-country athletes and 75% of all surveyed student-athletes feel the same way.

Susan says that she trusts her academic advisor because, “he speaks very openly about what I need to do in terms of classes, my options, and where I could look for things if I were

interested in one thing or another.” Fifty-seven percent of cross-country student-athletes strongly agree with the statement, I trust the opinion of my academic advisor. Susan’s trust of her academic advisor is because “he's very honest with me about my pursuits, tells me if this is a good course to take and he's knowledgeable.”

Susan engages with the university outside of athletics through suggestions made by her professors, which are based on her major. Susan says, “it’s a great way to meet other people doing your major.” Engagement and a sense of feeling at home while at upper Midwest college comes in calling your dorm your home. “When you say, I'm going home as in I'm going back to my dorm home. I think part of that is because my dorm had a really great group of guys.” The feeling of home comes from “funny inside jokes”, “community, not just among campus students, not just among runners, but among the people I spend time and lived with. That’s what’s nice.” Susan does not feel any misconceptions or biases for being a student-athlete. This is consistent with the data from the survey that indicates 43% and 29% agree or and strongly agree respectively that they feel a sense of home while attending upper Midwest college.

Susan said that she thinks that goal of her academic advisor is to “get every student through college with the most amount of benefit and the least amount of suffering.”

Interview 3: Becky

“I would say I have a very good relationship, but it's maybe not as consistent as it like, could be,” is how Becky describes her relationship with her academic advisor. Becky feels this way because, “It’s kind of those annual meetings that you have to go over what classes you need to complete.” Becky is a double major with a minor student and likes to plan ahead. Even though she meets with her academic advisor regularly, she “relies on her to be like, Okay, what if I added this? Is this too much? Or is this a class that I must.” Becky does think that she is “very

good at responding to emails and things like that.” This is constituent with the survey data results that all student-athletes meet with their academic advisor at least once per semester and 12% of student-athletes choose some of their classes and rely more on my advisor. Becky said that she “met with her a lot during my sophomore year.” Data from the survey indicated that 40% of sophomore student-athletes met with their academic advisor 2-3 times per semester.

During Becky and her academic advisor meetings, they discuss life goals. They “started looking into internships and found one that fits me.” Becky said that, “she always asked where my interest will lead to and then she'll discuss what on campus things who I could talk to pursue or find more information about those things.” These conversations happen not only during their regularly scheduled meetings, but also while Becky was on campus for business classes, which is constituent with the survey data. Sixty-one percent of student-athletes drop in to see their academic advisor. Becky and her academic advisor talk about internships and career advice. “I knew exactly where she was, I was always in there before classes, so it was easy to just walk in and talk to her too.”

When Becky must schedule classes, her academic advisor knows that she is an athlete, “so that is very nice that she has that information.” When there are conflicts in scheduling of classes, Becky relies on the academic advisor. Becky “brings in what my coaches give me (athletic schedule) and then she can help me make sure I'm finding those classes that don't interfere.” Therefore, Becky can say, “I have not had to take one class” outside his major. Becky uses Merlin, a campus computer software system that tracks her “grades, transcripts, tuition, all of academic information.” Becky said that she uses the system to monitor her “program evaluation, which is what you can click on, and then you can see what classes you've completed in which ones you need to complete.”

When Becky is struggling academically, she can go to her academic advisor because “advisors know a lot.” Becky also says that its “dependent on the academic advisor you have. I’m lucky I’ve had a very good academic advisor.” Becky knows that not everyone has a good academic advisor. Becky said that “other academic advisors have a hard time asking and answering questions, student-athletes are not receiving emails back, or have a hard time going in and meeting with their academic advisor.” Becky is aware of the tutoring center and “another big one that we always talk about is like our writing center.” Becky can miss her athletic commitments if she needs to. Becky said for events like a “career fair or even like a study session, you can do it even if interferes with practice, as long as you give them a day in advance notice.” Becky can also miss her athletic events to meet with professors. “They (coaches) are totally okay with you going to a professor’s office hours, and saying I’ll be 30 minutes late to practice.” Becky says it’s all about communication with her coaches, academic advisor, and professors. This is consistent with the survey data that indicates 96% of student-athletes feel supported by their professors. Becky feels the most academic support from “definitely my professor that I had in the past and my academic advisor.” “I was looking at adding a communications minor because I was like, how many more classes would I have to take for it? My academic advisor wrote a whole email about it all.”

One of the reasons Becky feels at home while at upper Midwest college is because she has “had the same roommate, which I got through soccer” which they meet during summer orientation. Becky, now a junior, is independent and does not live far from campus. She “loves to be on my own and do those things myself and have my own weekly plans and things that like.” Becky also has friends that are not on the soccer team. This helps Becky “have different conversations outside of soccer that I can with.” It also helps that for her “coming to the school

you start with 30-35 friends already on soccer. That felt so natural and having orientation with our academic advisors.” This helps Becky engage through “social events with people in her classes.”

Becky feels that the overall goal of the academic advisor is to “lead every student toward graduation, whether they graduate, they transfer, whatever it is, like finding that happiness and those things they like, want to achieve.” Becky’s academic advisor talks with her about happiness, “asking about my family, like, I have a brother who's just graduating college. We talk about like, my life completely outside of campus, where I like go when I’m home, and things like that.” These conversations between Becky and her academic advisor build trust in the relationship. The survey data indicated that 90% of the student-athletes trust their academic advisor.

Interview 4: Dison

Dison is a freshman and his relationship with his academic advisor is just starting and “definitely still growing.” Dison feels that their relationship is “pretty open where I could reach out to him if I needed to ask any questions.” Freshman results from the survey indicate that all freshmen feel that it is easy to meet with their academic advisor. Seventy-three percent of freshman feel they have a good relationship with their academic advisor. Dison’s academic advisor helps him by “pushing me out of my comfort zone by suggesting certain classes that I may not have thought of before, or pushing to ask questions to think more about, like, what I want to do with my future and towards my degree.” Dison’s major is an international business major.

Dison’s academic advisor talks to him about his life goals and “pushed me to say when I had my first meeting with him to even discuss what classes I want to sign up for, what's your

major that you want to do.” Dison knows the school uses Merlin, which he “can pull it up anytime”. Merlin is the software system to track students’ educational progress. Dison’s academic advisor “walked me through each process of where to go and locate where to register for my courses, to look at the catalog of all the courses, and then he worked through declaring my majors.” Dison’s academic advisor also went through “what I needed for both general education and what the university requires.” Eighty percent of freshman choose most of their classes and rely some on my advisor.

When there are conflicts that arise because of class scheduling or athletic commitments, Dison knows that his “coaches have prioritized academics first.” Knowing this, Dison’s academic advisor is alerted to “any type of academic obligation” and informs the soccer coaches “which I greatly appreciate.” Dison understands this system of communication and has used it before. “It’s been helpful because I actually had a midterm that was really close to when I had to do weightlifting, and my academic advisor just let the coaches know.” Dison said that his coaches “said that’s totally okay.” The survey results indicate that 86% of freshman student-athletes think that their academic advisor knows they are athletes and 83% think that they can miss an athletic event for academic purposes.

After choosing classes with his academic advisor, which there are “many different sections, multiple options for days and times,” they discuss the academic resources that are available to him. Dison uses the “writing Center and the financial aid office.” Among freshman, 80% of the student-athletes are aware of the academic resources that are available to them. Ninety-six percent of the freshman student-athletes feel supported by the university staff and personnel. When asked about how Dison’s teammates feel about the academic resources, he says “it’s kind of in between. I have had some teammates who are very happy with their experience.

I've also had some teammates that have not been as happy.” Dison thinks the relationship between the student-athletes and the academic advisor differences is based on time. Dison thinks that seniors “have had a longer relationship with an academic advisor, and just know more about the school.”

Dison feels that he can meet with his professors during their office hours. Dison also said that they will accommodate his athletic schedule to meet with him. “All my professors were very open and accommodating with their office hours, they had it in the syllabus, they reminded us in class, and if they change their office hours, they'd always email us.” Dison did have conflicts, he “emailed the professor and tell them, I'm sorry, I had a conflict, could I set up an individual meeting with you. And then 100% of the time, my professors were willing and open, and they worked outside of the class and went above and beyond to meet with me.”

Dison feels that through an open line of communication, he can trust the suggestions that his academic advisor gives. Dison’s academic advisor suggested to him “a group on campus called EIBO, which is entrepreneurship, international business opportunities. There are also a couple service opportunities that have been suggested, which have been good.” Dison “loves everything about the school and it's a small community, and you always feel like there's always someone that's on campus that like cares about you.” Therefore, Dison and 80% of freshman feel a sense of home while at upper Midwest college. “When I got to campus, I've met so many friends, I love the culture and the environment on campus. You never feel like you're alone.” Dison thinks its “pretty amazing in a short amount of time to make so many connections.”

Dison thinks that the goal of his academic advisor is to “ultimately help me be successful. I think part of it is him helping to guide you, direct you in the direction of where you want to go

and maybe help suggest other opportunities that you may not have thought of, it's like you have a second brain to help you.”

Interview 5: Angelique

Angelique describes her relationship with her academic advisor as “not much of a relationship other than setting up my schedule and stuff.” Angelique’s conversations with her academic advisor are “not the friendliest.” For example, Angelique said that one time when she was thinking of changing her major, her academic advisor “wasn't the most encouraging, which was kind of frustrating, because I guess I was just expecting more.” Angelique said they do not discuss long term goals and career exploration during their meetings. She said “we only really talked about picking classes for my major. There wasn't really any discussion about any real like exploration or, like internship opportunities or anything like.” Thirty-three percent of the student-athletes changed their major at one point in time at upper Midwest college and 23% said that they did not have a good relationship with their academic advisor. Three percent of student-athletes strongly disagreed with the statement that they feel supported by their academic advisor.

Angelique’s academic advisor knows that she is an athlete and has earned an academic scholarship. To maintain the academic scholarship, there are certain classes that she must take. “All the classes that I've taken have been major focused.” When Angelique meets with her academic advisor to schedule classes, her scholarship college “picks out the classes that would fulfill the requirements and my advisor asks me what my schedule will be.” Angelique’s academic advisor reviews the course schedule to make sure it “fits with her athletic commitments.” This is consistent with the survey data that indicates 23% of student-athletes choose all their classes and do not rely on their academic advisor.

Angelique's coaches help her with conflicts and accommodates because of her tennis schedule. Angelique said that there is typically a 2-hour gap of classes during the day. Athletic teams try to practice during this gap, but "I do have a class that conflicts next semester." "My coach is very accommodating, which is good," Angelique said. "A few athletes in the last semester, they were missing one practice a week, just because they had a class that conflicted." Angelique said she "talks to my coach first and tells him that there is a conflict. If it is a practice, he would probably say just to skip and go to class." Eleven percent of tennis student-athletes strongly disagree that they feel supported by their academic advisor and eighty-nine percent strongly agree that they feel supported by their coaches.

Angelique knows that upper Midwest college uses Merlin to manage academic records. For Angelique, "it's kind of confusing and tricky. It's a lot to look at. I don't feel like it's as concise and clear as it could be." Angelique does navigate through it though. Angelique uses her professors for academic assistance. She "knows my professors office hours and we can always talk to them or meet with them if we have any concerns or questions." When Angelique needs to meet with a professor, she "emails and ask for a meeting. They are aware that I'm an athlete. They are very accommodating." Angelique said that she has "met with professor's at 8:30 at night, and they are at their house, and I'm in my dorm, and we are talking through my paper." Angelique also uses the "tutoring and writing center." Angelique believes that she isn't treated differently because she is a student-athlete. Angelique says this knowing that she "doesn't really have friends that are not athletes and I have limitations of my own experiences."

Angelique feels the most academic support from her coaches. She says they are "very supportive and always checks in with us just to see how we're doing. They also send out progress reports to our professors." Angelique's trust of her academic advisor is based on course

management and evaluation. Angelique said that there isn't "a connection between us as student and advisor." Angelique's advisor "knows what she is doing as an advisor", but "I wouldn't go to her first if I had a problem. I don't know, if I necessarily would go to her for anything more than scheduling concerns or picking up classes." Angelique gets information about engaging with the university community outside of athletics from "first-year seminar class." Other engagement opportunities were suggested to her "from the different academic departments. Not really for my advisor." Angelique believes that the goal of her academic advisor is to "to make sure we take enough classes, enough of the right type of classes to get our degree."

Angelique's team makes her feel a sense of home while at upper Midwest college. When asked what makes her feel a sense of home Angelique said, "probably my team, because they're really friendly, and it's not clicky at all, which I experienced in high school, which I was worried about and it's not a problem in college." Angelique also said her "coaching staff is very friendly, and it's easier to feel at ease somewhere when, you know the people around you are good people." Another aspect that helps Angelique feel a sense of home while residing in the Honors dorm is having "a few friends outside of tennis that are involved with other things that I knew from high school that also came here." Angelique said the major reason that upper Midwest college has a sense of home is "just knowing people helps make it seem more like a home."

"The most I've talked to her about is with my major and changing my major. But that, in my opinion, wasn't a very productive conversation. She has facilitated some, interactions with other people who work on campus, like the financial aid supervisor," said Angelique.

Chapter 5

After review of research of the literature on academic advising of the student-athlete and analysis of student-athlete respondents and interviews, results of findings are presented. The results of the findings include student-athlete respondents survey and interview responses, positive interactions between student-athletes and academic advisors, and connections between academic advisor relationships with student-athlete respondents and engagement with the university in and outside of athletics. As a result of an intrusive academic advising system that focuses on relationships and engagement, student-athlete respondents feel they have a sense of home at the university, trust the opinion of their academic advisor, and believe they are supported academically from different university groups.

Results

Student-athletes encounter factors influencing their persistence and graduation throughout their college career. As a student-athlete, one must balance class, study sessions, academic services, and the culture of the university. Student-athletes must also balance their athletic obligations; these include practice, strength and conditioning, competitive competitions, travel, and sport-specific engagement commitments (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

The academic advisor for the student-athlete can play a significant role in their academic advancement and maturation (Ting, 2009). The academic advisor assists the student-athlete is scheduling classes, recording academic results and provides suggestions for future endeavors, and provides support for positive academic, athletic, and personal goals (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). At a Division III institution, the academic advisor offers insights into engagement opportunities, academic and career initiatives, campus climate, and collaboration between the student-athletes and other departments on campus (Gruber, 2003).

There was representation from each academic year and all the sports (15) included in the survey results. The student-athletes self-reported eighteen different majors including undecided in the survey. There were male and female student-athletes that completed the survey. Five student-athletes agreed to be interviewed after volunteering at the end of the survey. The interviews were done through Zoom on December 17, 2020 and December 18, 2020. All the interviews lasted around 45 minutes in length.

This research provides insight into the student-athletes experiences with the academic advising department, student services, and other engagements, as well as their reflection on those experiences. The academic advising system is one part of building the relationship between the student-athlete and the university. Intrusive academic advising for student-athletes involves constant communication, knowledgeable information, and supporting personal endeavors for academic advancement. Susan stated during her interview that she appreciates “open line of communication”, and that her advisor is “very honest with me about my pursuits, tells me if this is a good course to take and he's knowledgeable.” The building of the relationship between the academic advisor and student-athlete and sustaining an open line of communication are directly related to the number of times student-athlete respondent meeting with their academic advisor per semester to discuss academic and personal issues. Becky met with her academic advisor “a lot during my sophomore year.” The data showed that 61% percent of student-athletes dropped in to see their advisor, 92% percent meet with their academic advisor at least once per semester, and 97% percent said that it was easy schedule a meeting. Dison thinks that the relationship has been built through time with his academic advisor and that the “longer relationship with an academic advisor” the stronger relationship.

The impact of conversations between academic advisors and student-athletes came through in the survey and in responses to interview questions. Jane said during meetings with her advisor, they talk about “additional support for whatever a student may need and connecting the student to additional resources that they might not know of or have the confidence to do on their own.” Sixteen percent of the student-athletes reported that they discuss topics outside of academics with their advisors. Jane said, “I think the one suggestion that my advisor did give me was for our campus Health and Exercise Association.” A substantial relationship can yield student development, career pathways, mentoring opportunities, and a high retention and persistence rate which can translate into a high graduation rate (Altungul & Nacar, 2017).

More than half of the student-athletes surveyed reported that they feel they can drop in to see their academic advisor. Angelique said that her academic advisor is “very supportive and always checks in with us just to see how we're doing.” Jane said that the open lines of communication and the regularly scheduled meetings helped build her trust in her academic advisor. Jane said that “just sending out resources throughout the semester, not specifically to me, but to all the students that the advisor sees” also helped with communication and trust. Drop-ins are another avenue to develop the student-athlete and academic advisor relationship. “So, it's very nice where her office used to be in the business building. I knew exactly where she was, I was always in there for classes, so it was easy to just walk in and talk to her too,” Becky said.

The ability to schedule meetings to discuss academic concerns is vital to the advising relationship. Student-athletes responded to the survey said that they agree or strongly agreed that it is easy to schedule meetings with their academic advisor. Jane said that they could schedule meetings in-person or through zoom. In the interviews, students stated that they scheduled meetings each semester to discuss class schedule. Students also reported advisors engaging with

them on the following topics: internships, career goals, and engagement opportunities. Freshmen and all student-athletes (100% and 92% respectively) reported that they met with their academic advisor to schedule classes, by dropping in or by appointment. Freshmen student-athletes reported that they met with their academic advisor at least 2-3 times a semester. Overall, student-athletes met with their academic advisor at least 1 time per semester. Upperclassman student-athletes expressed more confidence about course planning and reported discussing career planning with their professors and other university personnel. “Starting internship looking which is luckily I found one that I like. She always asked where my interest will lead to and then she'll discuss what on campus things who I could talk to pursue or find more information about those things,” Becky said.

The positive relationship that student-athletes and academic advisors have at the university could be because of the number of meetings students and advisors have to discuss academics and other career topics. Student-athletes reported that 92% of them meet with their academic advisor to discuss academics and other career topics, seventy-two percent reported their academic advisor is aware of them being an athlete 61% reported they have the ability drop in. Ninety-eight percent reported it is easy to schedule an appointment. Dison said, “pushing me out of my comfort zone by suggesting certain classes that I may not have thought of before, or pushing to ask questions to think more about, like, what I want to do with my future and towards my degree.” As a freshmen, seventy-six percent of the student-athletes perceived a good relationship with their academic advisor. That number was consistently high across academic classes with a seventy-five percent favorability as a senior.

The high favorability throughout the academic classes may also be a product of the academic advisors' ability to encourage the use of academic resources that are available.

Academic resources, such as study hall, tutors, writing centers, and more “from the different academic departments” suggested to student-athletes (Angelique). “Career fairs. Tutoring and things like that...and then another big one that we always talk about is like our writing center,” Becky said. Student-athletes also can see professors (60% of student-athletes reported professors would adjust their office hours to accommodate your athletic schedule to meet with them), and if need be, can miss an athletic obligation to do so (75% of student-athletes reported being able to miss athletic responsibilities to meet with a professor). Student-athletes reported being able to miss or adjust their athletic schedule to meet their academic needs. Student-athletes state the reason for this is because they are at a division III school and academics are prioritized both by the university and their coaches. “If you have any type of academic obligation, that comes first before soccer, which I greatly appreciate,” Dison said.

Perhaps due to the emphasis on academics, engagement outside of athletics was discussed with 18% of the student-athletes. Freshmen student-athletes reported engaging outside of athletics more than the other classes, with 28% of freshmen respondents reporting engagement. Fifty-six percent of freshmen that engage outside of athletes attend 1-3 events per semester. Eighty-three percent of junior student-athletes engaged with the university outside of athletics by attending 1-3 events per semester. Ninety-five percent of respondents engage in at least 1 event per semester. This is consistent in the senior respondents, 95% of whom participate in at least one event. The engagement opportunities that student-athletes reported frequenting the most were exhibits, lectures, and conference performances, professional development, and corporate presentations (29%, 23% and 15% of respondents respectively). Susan said, “it’s a great way to meet other people doing your major”.

Student-athletes meet with their academic advisor at least once a semester, and engage with the university outside of athletics, which can lead to their feeling a sense of home at the university. Student-athletes also interact with their roommates and other students in their major. "I think that's part of what made it a home you know, just feeling a sense of community, not just among campus, not just among runners, but among the people I spend time and lived with. That's what's nice." Susan said. All these factors may contribute to the student-athlete feeling that the university does feel like home (82% agreed and strong agreed that they felt a sense of home at the university). "Having orientation with our academic advisors and things like that," said Becky. Freshmen (80%) agreed or strongly agreed they felt a sense of home at the university ($M = 1.96$; $SD = 0.71$). One hundred percent of the juniors and 92% of the seniors agree or strongly agreed they felt a sense of home ($M = 2.16$; $SD = 0.40$ and $M = 2.41$; $SD = 0.66$ respectively). Overall (84%) agreed or strong agreed, student-athletes did feel that the university provided a sense of home ($M = 2.07$; $SD = 0.68$).

Support of student-athletes comes from a variety of different university personnel groups. The groups focused on in this research were academic advisors, professors (past and present), university personnel, athletic staff and personnel, and coaching staff. Student-athletes agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by the different university personnel groups by 90% or higher ($M = 2.14$; $SD = 0.61$). Student-athletes felt the most support by professors (past and present) with 95% and coaching staff (97%) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, how much do you agree that you are supported ($M = 2.45$; $SD = 0.58$ and $M = 2.73$; $SD 0.51$ respectively). "The ability for me to walk into a class and the professor knows my name and can have a conversation with me about either my interests or the professor's interests. The same with

the coaches. They are incredibly friendly and warm and create a welcoming environment,” said Jane.

Academic advisors discuss topics other than academics with students; the ones examined in this research include time management, personal finances, community engagement, non-athletic engagement, and career exploration. Eighty-three percent of junior respondents reported discussing time management during their meetings with their academic advisors. Academic advisors discuss personal finance (9%) and community engagement (7%) with student-athlete respondents. Student-athletes reported discussing career exploration with their academic advisor during their sophomore year (60%) and junior year (50%). This is supported by response during the interviews. “I think the one suggestion that my advisor did give me was for our campus Health and Exercise Association. She gave me that suggestion when I was a sophomore in college,” said Jane. “Career and internship possibilities, yes. I would tell her my interest she'd look for things,” said Becky.

Academic advisors that meet with student-athletes regularly have discussions on topics in addition to academics, create a positive environment, encourage the use of academic resources and engagement opportunities, and can help to create a sense of home at the university. Student-athletes can begin to trust the opinion of their academic advisor. Ninety percent of student-athletes agree or strongly agree that they trust the opinion of their academic advisor ($M = 2.25$; $SD = 0.73$). Sixty-six percent of juniors and 58% of seniors agree that they trust the opinion of their academic advisor ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.51$ and $M = 2.00$; $SD = 0.85$ respectively). “I think just sending out resources throughout the semester, not specifically to me, but to all the students that the advisor sees. I think just kind of having that kind of constant flow of information,” said Jane. “Overall, I would just say the communication,” said Dison.

Conclusion

The research questions for this work address the three categories of the conceptual framework: student characteristics, academic advising, and the relationship and engagement of the student-athletes. The student characteristics of student-athletes are which team they participate on, their year in school, and their major that they are pursuing. The academic advising system currently used at this institution is intrusive academic advising. It consists of regularly scheduled meetings to discuss academic progress, conversations related to academic resources, support systems, and recommendations for academic success. Relationship and engagement are topics that are discussed with the academic advisor to promote a sense of home, suggest academic and personal engagement opportunities, and engagement to the university outside of athletics. Best practice of academic advising is the combination of engagement, academic advising, and opportunities that have an overarching effect on the students' academic and personal well-being during their college and post-college career (National Academic Advising Association, 2019). The conceptual framework discusses the factors that affect retention. The factors that the conceptual framework discusses are the student characteristics, academic advising, and relationship and engagement. These factors contribute to the retention of the student-athlete.

The results of this study align with the conceptual framework. The data show student-athletes and academic advisors are practicing a form of intrusive academic advising. The academic advisor is conducting regular meetings with the student-athlete, discussing a variety of topics (academic and non-academic), and assisting with post-college career endeavors. Addressing the research question of how the relationship between the advisor and the student-athlete contributes to academic and social success, and ultimately retention of the student-

athlete, Susan reported, “I’d like to think that it was to sort of get every student through college with the most amount of benefit and the least amount of suffering. I feel like the overall goal is to lead every student toward graduation, whether they graduate, they transfer, whatever it is, like finding that happiness and those things they like, want to achieve.”

Defining and answering the first research question of “what is the relationship between intrusive academic advising and retention of student-athletes” can be done through the numerous opportunities that are suggested and encouraged by the academic advisor to the student-athlete. Intrusive academic advising, in part, is the ability of the academic advisor to inspire the student-athlete. “I think the goal of my academic advisor is to ultimately help me be successful. I think part of it is him just, or the academic advisor, whoever they are to help guide you, direct you in the direction of where you want to go and maybe help suggest other opportunities that you may not have thought of, it’s like you have a second brain to help you,” said Dison. The guidance can be found in the scheduled meeting that academic advisors have, and the list of topics that are talked about during those meetings. It can also be found in the conversations that promote academics to student-athletes.

Respondents reported being engaged with the university outside of athletics, including participation in social clubs, professional development, and other university sponsored engagement opportunities. Student interviews also gave insight into the part student engagement and relationship-building play in the retention of student-athletes. When asked if their academic advisor have given them any suggestions to engage in the university community outside of athletics, Jane said “I think just sending out resources throughout the semester, not specifically to me, but to all the students that the advisor sees. I think just kind of having that kind of constant flow of information” is great. Dison said that his academic advisor “suggested a group on

campus called IDEO, which is entrepreneurship, international business opportunities. There's also a couple service opportunities that have been suggested, which have been good.”

Respondents reported strongly agree and agree trusting the opinion of their academic advisor (90%) to motivate them to get involved outside of athletics and success in their own realm of existence. Respondents agree with the statement, “I trust the opinion of my academic advisor” ($M = 2.25$; $SD = 0.73$).

The data seem to align to create a portrait of success for the student-athlete through the intrusive academic advising structure. Respondents seem to understand the goal of the academic advisor and feel their impact on their lives. “I am very grateful for those small conversations that we have had, because those have made me a lot more confident in my knowledge that I'm actually going to graduate on time or just knowing that I'm going to get all these classes out of the way,” Jane said.

Implications

The implications of this research focus heavily on the practice of academic advising as it relates to student-athletes at Division III institutions. Division III institutions tend to focus on academics over athletics, which establishes a framework for student-athletes to succeed through focusing on academic achievements, engagement outside of athletics, and success on the athletic field of play. Student-athletes report satisfaction when academic advisors are available to meet regularly and create a rapport and a sense of home. In practice, academic advisors build trust with the student-athlete that can manifest into attainable goals, such as course selection toward graduation, engagement opportunities to solidify post-graduation employment, and relationship building with academic personnel.

Division III institutions that do not use intrusive academic advising may limit themselves from potential student-athlete success as it relates to retention. Academic advisors that meet regularly with their student-athletes build a rapport and gain trust. Through these conversations, student-athlete academic advisors provide a substantial service. They monitor student-athletes progress towards their degree and suggest academic resources that benefit not only the student-athlete academically, but also emotionally. This emotional support system for the student-athlete that starts during orientation and continues throughout their academic and athletic career at the university can help a university that is academically driven.

It is important to note that student-athletes that meet with their academic advisor regularly develop an open line of communication. Regularly scheduled meetings, at least 1 per semester that starts at orientation, is the building block for student-athletes to trust and believe in the suggestions that are given to them. Intrusive academic advising and the relationships that comes with regularly scheduled meets allow for suggestions to be given to student-athletes to engage outside of athletes. These engagement opportunities connect the student-athlete to the university outside of athletes and continues to bolster the academic first aspect of Division III universities. Without regularly scheduled meetings, the relationship between the academic advisor and the student-athlete is limited to discussions surrounding classes taken and classes that need to be taken. There is no in-depth discussion concerning personal goals and aspirations.

Academic advisors that work with student-athletes can assist this population of students at the university by developing a task list to use during scheduled meetings that grows out of items reported in this research as helpful to student success. The topics that student-athletes respondents stated that are most important topics to discuss are engagement opportunities outside of athletes that will assist with their advancement and employment after graduation, management

and use of university academic resources that can be leveraged to support academic readiness throughout their college career, and the availability to meet with their academic advisor.

Student-athletes' ability to meet with their academic advisor has shown to be an important aspect to building the necessary relationship and trust that is needed to adhere to the suggestions that are given. The academic advisor's readiness and availability, be it the location of their office to the classrooms or areas that student-athletes frequent or the access to the resources is important.

Sense of home comes from support systems that the university institutes. These support systems work in collaboration to aid the student-athlete. To create the sense of home, academic advisors start at orientation to make the foundation. Becky said it helps "having orientation with our academic advisors." Upon the foundation, academic advisors, coaches, professors, and university staff and personal must have the student-athletes best interest in mind. This can be done through dorm room assignments, coordinated pamphlets that stress academics, maximum exposure to opportunities outside of athletics, robust academic resources and advertisement of them, and common themes so that student-athletes understand that academics comes first.

Study Limitations

The limitations of this study include the results of unavailable resources, sample size, and availability. Transparency is needed in discussing the results, future study, and implications to provide a complete understanding of the topic. There are unanswered questions from this study that limit its implications, but also contribute to future opportunities, discussed more below.

One limitation is that the survey and interview did not ask where a student resides, either on campus or off campus. This limitation that presented themselves through this research was the ability to determine if there is a difference in student-athletes' relationship with their academic

advisor based on off-campus or on-campus residential status. The student-athlete's residential status can limit the ability to engage with the university outside of athletics. This also can affect the student-athlete's ability to drop in and meet with their academic advisor to discuss academic resources and engagement opportunities. This limitation can directly affect the number of engagement events, professor interactions, and their ability to use on campus academic resources.

The number of respondents from the survey and interview may have affected the outcome of the data. The survey was distributed to approximately 700 retained student-athletes. The survey was completed by 82 respondents. There were eleven respondents that volunteered to be interviewed. There were 5 interviews conducted. The low-response rate limits the number of student-athletes' perspectives to be analyzed. This can affect some of the outcome factors, such as sense of home, trust of academic advisors, engagement opportunities, team mean and standard deviation, and perspectives of support systems at the university. The limited volunteers and the similarity in the responses you received let you to believe you reached saturation.

Academic advisors were not part of this study. Academic advisors are the other side of the relationship being examined. Academic advisors can have protocols they must follow when interacting with student-athletes. Since academic advisors were not part of this examination of student-athletes, it is unknown the strategic planning that is done to develop their relationship with student-athletes, suggestions that are given to engage outside of athletics, academic support systems that are in place that are known or unknown to student-athletes, and their availability to meet.

Furthermore, the student-athlete respondents' ability to engage with the university outside of athletics can differ based on sport and time of competition season. Depending on the

student-athletes' competition season, the completion of the survey, the ability to engage and participate outside of athletics, and the ability to meet and utilize academic support could affect the results of the survey. The time that student-athletes spend within their sport is managed by the NCAA. Student-athletes may participate within their sport for 20 hours per week. This allotment does not include travel and participation in competitions during their season. Student-athletes that otherwise would have athletic responsibilities could be freed of them during the time of the research.

This research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of the survey and interview, student-athletes were not able to participate in athletic practice or competitions. As a result, not all student-athletes resided on campus or near the campus. Additionally, student-athlete participation in engagement opportunities, ability to meet with their academic advisor, and develop a relationship with their academic advisor through regularly scheduled meetings can be affected. Student-athletes may have limited access to academic support systems due to the limited on-campus presence on university staff and personnel. Student-athletes also would have limited time on campus to make use of relationship building events, such as orientation, that academic advisors schedule to promote a sense of home while attending the university.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the intersection of student-athletes, academic advising, and relationships and engagement can focus on student-athlete characteristics. The different student-athlete characteristics that can be researched are specific majors, year in school, sport, and engagement opportunities that were utilized. Examining the different sports and how they interact with their academic advisor could show a new dynamic specific to the season, practice schedule, and other athletic commitments. Researching the student-athletes year in school and

their engagement opportunities could show the changing motivation of both the student-athlete to engage and the academic advisor's ability to find and suggest engagement opportunities.

Conducting a longitudinal study that focuses on the changing motivation and relationship of the student-athlete and the academic advisor can also focus on the understanding on the university systems that are in place for success. A longitudinal study could focus on student-athlete understanding of support systems, changes that occur with varying support group availability and accommodations to athletic schedules, demands of student-athletes dictated by athletic success, academic desires to achieve success during and after college, and the motivation of student-athlete to engage outside of athletes.

Other longitudinal studies could include reasons why student-athletes are not retained, and support by the coaching staff and institution, both through longevity with the institution and through employment transitions of key athletic personnel. Including the academic advisor in these and other studies could provide an important perspective and data on processes and engagement in the advising relationship. These studies can examine the length of employment and understanding of resources for student-athletes, location and availability, and academic advising professional development focused on student-athlete academic success and achievement.

Student-athletes that are focused on academics must balance their athletic and academic aspirations. Focusing on a major of study, for example, engineering, and examining the student-athletes commitment to academic excellence and athletic superiority would result in the advancement of the holistic understanding of the student-athlete.

Athletic teams are unique and pose an interesting avenue for research. Future research could be done to determine if there is a difference in the development of relationship between the

academic advisor and the student-athlete based on gender. Gender can play a part in the relationship and trust building between the academic advisor and the student-athlete. The gender of the athlete and the gender of the academic advisor can be researched.

There is no mention to the student-athletes' pre-academic status prior to their enrollment and retention at the university. Future research to determine if pre-academic preparation can contribute to the student-athletes success at the university. Future research can determine the student-athletes academic readiness for the rigors of university academics, relationships with pre-college academic advisors, and non-athletic engagements that were done that have continued during their college career.

The goal of academic advising is to assist the student in all forms of academic and life advancement. These recommendations can be done with the goal of advancing the research and knowledge of student-athletes, academic advising, and relationship and engagement. The continued research on this topic can result in the retention of student-athletes, a positive sense of home with the university campus, and successful advancement toward graduation.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. What sport do you participate in at the university?

Baseball	Basketball	Bowling	Cross Country	Football
Golf	Hockey	Soccer	Softball	Tennis
Track	Volleyball			

2. What is your year in school?

Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	5 th Year Senior
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3. Did you arrive on campus as a freshman or were you a transfer student?

Freshman	Transfer
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4. Which campus do consider to be your home campus?

Chicago Campus	Lake Campus	Schaumburg Campus
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5. What is your current program of study/major?

Type in your answer

6. At any point at this current university, did you change your program of study/major?

Yes	No
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7. When you meet with your academic advisor to schedule classes, is it drop in or by appointment?

Drop In	Appointment
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8. Do you have the ability to drop in and talk with your academic advisor?

Yes	No
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9. Do you drop in and talk with your advisor?

Yes

No

10. Does your academic advisor schedule meeting with you to discuss topics other than scheduling of classes?

Yes

No

11. It is easy to schedule a meeting with my academic advisor?

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

12. How often do you meet with your academic advisor?

1 time per semester

2-3 times per semester

4-5 times per

6 or more times per

semester

semester

13. Do you have a good relationship/open line of communication with your academic advisor?

Yes

No

14. Do you choose your classes or do you rely on your advisor to make suggestions?

I choose all my
classes and I do not
rely on my advisor

I choose most of my
classes and rely some
on my advisor

I choose some of my
classes and rely more
on my advisor

I choose none of my
classes and rely
solely on my advisor

15. When it is time to schedule your courses, is your advisor aware of your athletic schedule?

Yes, my academic advisor is aware of my
athletic schedule at the time of course
selection.

No, my academic advisor is not aware of my
athletic schedule at the time of course
selection.

16. Have you ever taken a class that is not a part of your major and/or does not advance you toward your degree?

Yes

No

17. How many credits did you take last term?

Less than Part-Time (less than 12 credits)	Full time (12-15 credits)	Overload (More than 15)
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18. How many credits are you taking this term?

Less than Part-Time (less than 12 credits)	Full time (12-15 credits)	Overload (More than 15)
--	---------------------------	-------------------------

19. What is your anticipated graduation date?

Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021
Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2022
Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025

20. Has your academic advisor discussed the academic resources that are available through the university?

Yes	No
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21. Do you have the opportunity to meet with professors during their scheduled office hours while you are in-season?

Yes	No
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22. How often do you engage with the university community outside of your athletic commitment?

0 events per semester	1-3 events per semester	4-6 events per semester	7 or more events per semester
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23. What university engagement opportunities, outside of athletic related events, have you participated in?

Alumni Events	Exhibits	Lectures and Conferences	Performances
Professional Development (Tutorials)	Corporate Presentations	Other (please describe)	

24. Are there any engagement opportunities that you feel you would participate in if not for conflicts with athletic obligations? If yes, what are they?

Yes No

If yes, what are they?

25. To what extent do you agree with this statement. "I have a sense of home while attending this university."

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

26. To what extent do you agree with this statement. "I am supported academically by the university."

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

27. What is your current GPA?

Below 2.0 Between 2.0 – 2.5 Between 2.5 – 3.0 Between 3.0 -3.5 Above 3.5

28. How much do you agree that you are supported by the following groups?

Academic Advisors	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Professors (past and present)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Interview with Student-Athletes

As part of the second of two phases of my research on student-athletes and their perception of the role of the academic advisor, the engagement of student-athletes', relationships built between advisor and student, and the trustworthiness of university personnel, interviews of student-athletes were conducted. The first was the survey that was conducted online. At the end of the survey, volunteers were asked to participate in interviews by answering yes to the follow-up interview question. The interviews were conducted by me. The interview included questions of the student-athlete's perception of the academic advising system, their ability to develop relationships and engage with the university, and if the efforts put forth by the university have been helpful to their persistence. Student-athletes interviewed were from a variety of sports, different academic years in school, and different program of studies. Prior to the interview, the student-athlete re-affirmed consent for this research by acknowledging consent verbally. The interviews were conducted by video-telecommunication (Zoom) and recorded for accuracy.

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the relationship that you have with your academic advisor and how do you think it was developed?
 - a. Do you discuss your life goals with your advisor? How comfortable are you with those conversations?
 - b. Through conversations with your advisor you might have discussed long-range plans, career exploration, and relationship-building, among other issues. Talk to me about the topics you explore with your advisor and how they encourage you to develop ideas and plans outside of athletics.

- c. (Prompt for better understand) An open line of communication is important to a good relationship between you and your academic advisor.
2. What process do you go through each term to choose your classes?
3. When it is time to schedule your classes, your academic advisor knows that you are an athlete and have obligations. Tell me what support you are given to accommodate for your shifting academic availability due to your athletic schedule.
 - a. What options do you have if a class that you are interested in is not being offered at a time/campus that fits into both your academic and athlete schedule?
 - b. If you had a situation that needed to be resolved regarding a scheduling conflict (added practice, game conflict, game time change), who do you contact and what is the conversation that you would have with them?
4. As a student-athlete, each term you have to take enough credits to classify you as a full-time student. Has there ever been a time when you had to take a class that was outside of your major/program to stay classified as a full-time student? If so tell me about the conversation you had about this with your academic advisor?
 - a. How did your academic advisor present the class to you and how did you respond?
5. Are you aware of any academic credit spreadsheets or documents that are used by advisors to track your academic progress?
 - a. Tell me about these documents. How are they used to keep you on track to graduate in four years?
 - b. How often do you review the spreadsheets/documents and are you given an updated copy?

6. Do you believe that there are enough courses available to accommodate student-athletes that fit both their academic and athletic schedules?

a. How did this play out in your personal experience or the experiences of your peers?"

7. The university has academic resources available for all students. What resources are you aware of and what do you think is lacking? How are they used?

a. Revert to the list and ask if they are aware of the academic resources available on campus.

Complaint or Concern	Advising	Career Closet	Career Development
Counseling Center	Emergency Housing & Shower Services	Food & Hygiene Pantry	Grad Student Resources
St. Claire Drake Center for African and African-American Studies	Gage Gallery	Joseph Loundy Human Rights Project	Mansfield Institute for Social Justice and Transformation
Center for Cyber Security	Center for New Deal Studies	Policy Research Collaborative	The Montesquieu Forum
Marshall Bennett Institute of Real Estate	Institute for Politics	Institute for Tourism	The Learning Commons

Multicultural	Professional	Study Abroad	Graduation Plan for
Student Support	Mentoring		Success (GPS)
Services			
Experiential	Student Research	Honors Programs	McNair Scholars
Learning			
Student	Financial Aid		
Employment	Services		

- b. When you communicate with other student-athletes on your team and you talk about academic advisors, academic resources, scheduling, do you feel that what you are receiving is satisfactory or lacking? Can you explain your answer?
 - c. Can you tell me any academic resources that you cannot use because of your athletic schedule and why/how you would use them?
8. Do you feel your academic advisor treats student-athlete advisees equally, and if not, what are the differences?
9. Does your schedule allow you to take advantage of your professor's office hours and meet with them? Is this something you have done, and if so, how often?
10. As a student-athlete for the university, where do you feel the most academic support? Tell me what makes you feel supported by this person, group, or office (academic advising, professors (past or present, staff personnel)?
11. What has your academic advisor done to gain your trust?

12. Has your academic advisor given you suggestions to participate and engage in the university community outside of athletics? If so, what kind of suggestions were you given, and how did you act on those suggestions?
13. What things, places, people, etc., make college life feel more like home?
 - a. Apart from your athletic team, what other things, places, people, etc., make college life feel more like home?
 - b. How do you engage socially on-campus?
 - c. How do you engage with the community that you live in (dorm or off campus)?
 - d. Have you encountered any misperceptions or biases of student-athletes? How have you handled these situations?
14. Do you feel that if there were university social events that highlight your academic achievements, that it would act as motivation to excel in the classroom?
 - a. Do you feel that your GPA is a reflection not only on your academic ability, but also your academic advisors' ability to put you in the best situation to succeed and provide you with the all the necessary resources?
15. When you talk with your advisor about life, what are some of the things you discuss (time management, budget, relationships, healthy behaviors, study skills, interactions with professors and other professional conversations)?
 - a. In these conversations about life, how do you feel about your advisor's guidance and advise?
 - b. Does your advisor follow up with you about previous conversations when you meet again?
16. What do you think the overall goal of your academic advisor is?

17. What impact has your academic advisor had on your academic and non-athletic university career?

18. Last Question: IS there anything else you think I should know or you would like to share?