Future Issues in the Economic, Legal, and Sociocultural Sectors of the NCAA Division I FBS Intercollegiate Athletics Environment

Dissertation

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Abstract

This study forecasts future issues in NCAA Division I FBS intercollegiate athletics. The research design takes a mixed method approach, employing the Delphi technique as both the design and data collection method. Using this technique, an expert panel, consisting of 12 athletic directors and associate athletic directors from FBS institutions, was surveyed over three rounds to ascertain what issues are likely to occur over the next five to seven years and whether or not these issues will have a significant impact on the way intercollegiate athletics operates.

The purpose of this study was to assess the environment in which intercollegiate athletics is operating. Specifically, the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors of the environment were examined. This assessment was then used to forecast how the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences and the recent and current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions will affect these areas of the environment over the next five to seven years. Grounded in stakeholder theory, the aim of the study is to provide a tool to assist with strategic planning of stakeholder relationship management for athletic administrators at institutions that sponsor athletic programs in the National Collegiate Athletic Association, Division I, Football Bowl Subdivision.

Results of the study revealed eight issues that were likely to occur over the next five to seven years. Four of these issues related to the economic sector of the environment, one related to the legal sector, and three related to the sociocultural.
Further, 14 of the issues were rated by the expert panel as having a significant level of impact if they were to occur. Additionally, support for the convergent approach to stakeholder theory was found.

Recommendations are made based on the forecasts by the expert panel. The impact on stakeholder salience within intercollegiate athletics is also examined. Finally, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Intercollegiate athletics in North America began in 1852 with a rowing exhibition between Harvard and Yale that was sponsored by a railroad company (Smith, 2011). It is important to note the railroad sponsorship of the first event because it demonstrates the recognition of the interest of the general public in collegiate sporting competitions. It is this interest that creates the opportunity for commercialization and in turn, causes a struggle for institutions of higher education that house the athletic departments that generate the interest. The juxtaposition of academics and athletics is exemplified by Clotfelter (2011) when he contrasted the nanoscience center and the football stadium at the University of Texas. Clotfelter points out that the nanoscience building operates under the traditional academic model, while the football stadium represents an “unashamedly commercial” (p. 5) enterprise. The coexistence of these buildings on the same campus represents the struggle that faces some of the institutions of higher education in the United States. The evidence of this struggle includes, but is not limited to, the continual debate on what, if any, special considerations should be made for admitting athletes to colleges (Winters & Gurney, 2012), how much money should be devoted to athletics on campuses (Desrochers, 2013), and how much control of athletics should fall to the faculty and administration of institutions (Ridpath, 2008).
Attempts at finding the balance between public entertainment and the missions of the institutions has produced countless number of reports aimed at reform over the past century and a half (i.e., Carnegie Report, 1929; Hanford Report, 1974; Knight Commission, 1989; Sanity Code, 1948). Understanding the cyclical nature of collegiate athletics helps to frame the current state of affairs for the enterprise and beyond that, what issues and concerns will face collegiate athletic administrators as they prepare for the future. Since its beginning, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has been the agent through which many of the issues and concerns faced by collegiate athletics have been dealt with (Smith, 2011).

The NCAA “is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life” (NCAA, 2015a, Who We Are para. 1). The membership this quote refers to is comprised of a group of colleges and universities, with athletics programs, throughout the United States and Canada. The NCAA consists of three divisions, designated as Division I, Division II, and Division III. Division I members that sponsor football are broken into two subdivisions: Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS). Members of the FBS are differentiated by the amount of money they invest in athletics, along with sponsoring the most sports (NCAA, 2015b). As a collective, the institutions comprising the FBS group are undergoing unprecedented change during the second decade of the 21st century. The majority of these changes center on the improvement of student-athlete well-being.
The NCAA and its member institutions are adjusting their approach to the treatment of student-athletes with the idea of allocating more resources to student-athlete well-being (Berkowitz, 2015). One example of this is a change in policy related to athletic scholarships. Institutions are now allowed to provide additional money to the athletic scholarship based on what each institution determines is the full cost of attendance. This full cost of attendance measure allows institutions to give student-athletes money, as part of their scholarship, that covers expenses beyond tuition, room and board, and books (Berkowitz, 2015). Another change that has taken place is the allowance of unlimited meals to be provided by the institution for student-athletes. Prior to this change, institutions were only allowed to provide three meals a day or an equivalent stipend (Hosick, 2014). Also aimed at improving student athlete well-being, multi-year scholarships are now being allowed. This adjustment was brought about by the idea that student-athletes should be protected from losing their scholarship for poor play or injury (Solomon, 2014). These policy shifts toward an improved student-athlete experience can be traced to two major areas: NCAA governance structure modifications and legal actions being pursued by current and former student athletes.

NCAA Governance

In 2013, the NCAA formed a steering committee to recommend changes to the Division I governance structure (NCAA, 2014). The committee recommended two major changes, both aimed at student-athlete well-being. The first was granting autonomy to institutions in the Power 5 conferences (i.e., Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pacific 12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference) to
create policies related to the use of resources on student-athlete well-being. The second major change was the addition of current student-athletes to the voting structure of the NCAA. This new voting structure allows student-athletes to vote on legislation related to the use of resources on, and issues related to, student-athlete well-being (Wolverton, 2014). This emphasis placed on student-athlete well-being signaled a shift in philosophy for the NCAA and its member institutions.

Prior to this shift, policies in the NCAA focused more on competitive equity among its member institutions. As an example, in 2011 the NCAA board of directors approved a plan to allow Division I institutions to give student-athletes a $2,000 stipend in addition to their athletic scholarship, however the measure was voted down by the membership because the majority of the membership felt they could not afford the added expense and they did not want those who could, to gain an advantage in recruiting (Fowler, 2013). From this point forward, the NCAA has shown unprecedented interest in student-athlete well-being.

Legal Actions

As evidenced by the NCAA granting the members of the Power 5 conferences autonomy to adopt rules and policies related to resources being devoted to student-athlete well-being, the NCAA membership was also reacting to the legal actions being pursued by current and former student-athletes who felt more of the revenues generated by college athletics should be devoted to the student-athletes. In 2009, Ed O’Bannon a former men’s basketball player at the University of California, Los Angeles, filed suit against the NCAA and a video game company for using his likeness in a video game
without compensation (New, 2014). This lawsuit made the case that the NCAA and its membership were profiting off of the names, likenesses, and images of student-athletes, and not compensating them for it. In 2014, a judge ruled in favor of O’Bannon and ordered NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) member institutions to put money in a trust for football and men’s basketball players to receive upon leaving the institution; capping the number at $5000 per year per athlete (Dahlberg, 2014). Although under appeal, this lawsuit brought national level attention to the idea of compensating student-athletes and inspired similar lawsuits brought by student-athletes against the NCAA, in an effort to have more of the resources generated by the NCAA and its member institutions allocated to student-athlete well-being (i.e., Keller vs. NCAA, Alston vs. NCAA, Jenkins vs. NCAA) (Litan & Keith, 2014).

Another legal action was pursued by football players at Northwestern University. The players petitioned the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for the right to unionize. The players felt they did not have a voice in how they were being treated, and wanted to form a union to be able to negotiate with the university on items such as having resources allocated to them for better health care, degree completion beyond exhaustion of athletic eligibility, and less time required of them by coaches for participation in their sport (Vint, 2014). Even though the NLRB dismissed the petition for representation brought by the Northwestern University football players, citing lack of jurisdiction, it was still a very public challenge to the way the NCAA and its member institutions operated (Farrey, 2015). This case along with the O’Bannon case are two prime examples of the legal issues the NCAA and its membership are dealing with and aids in putting the
student-athlete well-being initiatives into perspective. While student-athletes should be the focus (Chelladurai, 1987), they are just one of many stakeholders involved in and affected by intercollegiate athletics.

Stakeholder Theory

A stakeholder is considered to be any group or individual that can impact or is impacted by an organization achieving its goals (Freeman, 1984). Students, prospective students, alumni, donors, faculty, and community members have all been identified as stakeholders in the intercollegiate athletics enterprise (Wolfe & Putler, 2002). Prior to the advent of stakeholder theory, the general perception was that an organization only needed to be concerned with shareholders or those that were going to benefit financially from the operation. Stakeholder theory advanced this thinking by positing that all stakeholders, as opposed to just those with an economic stake in the organization, should have their needs addressed by the organization (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholder theory has developed three approaches in the more than 30 years since Freeman (1984) first developed the concept. Those approaches include descriptive, instrumental, and normative (Donaldson & Preston 1995). This study will make use of two of these approaches by combining instrumental and normative. The instrumental approach to stakeholder theory focuses on the effectiveness of an organization as it relates to its stakeholders. The basic tenet is that if an organization manages the needs of its stakeholders, then that organization will have a better chance of accomplishing its goals (Friedman & Miles, 2006; Jones, 1995). On the other hand, the normative
approach to stakeholder theory is based on the idea that taking care of stakeholders’ needs is the right and ethical thing to do (Donaldson, 1999). The combination of the normative and instrumental approaches has been labeled in the past as a convergent approach. This is because both approaches rely on the manager’s recognition of the intrinsic value of stakeholders’ needs (Jones & Wicks, 1999).

With the understanding that an organization should respond to stakeholders’ needs because it is the right thing to do and because it leads to a higher level of effectiveness, it then becomes necessary to identify the level of salience stakeholders possess. To that end, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) developed a framework (Figure 1) for assessing stakeholder salience based on the possession of power, legitimacy, and or urgency. The use of this framework can aid an organization in prioritizing their approach to satisfying stakeholder needs. This prioritization is a key component to stakeholder management (Walters & Tacon, 2010). The use of salience assessment in stakeholder management has been used to increase effectiveness in the areas of corporate social performance (Chang, Kim, & Li, 2014; Neill & Stovall, 2005), corporate financial performance (Peloza & Papania, 2008), and crisis management (Alpaslan, Green, & Mitroff, 2009).

Stakeholder theory and the importance of stakeholder salience have also been regularly used in the study of intercollegiate athletics. Due to the diversity, and large number, of stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics, stakeholder theory allows for the study of a wide range of issues and areas in the industry. Stakeholder theory has been applied to intercollegiate athletics through the study of goal prioritization
(Chelladurai, Inglis, & Danylchuk, 1984; Putler & Wolfe, 1999; Trail & Chelladurai, 2000), organizational effectiveness (Covell, 2005; Wolfe, Hoeber, & Babiak, 2002; Wolfe & Putler, 2002), and change management (Dwyer, Eddy, Havard, & Braa, 2010; Kihl & Schull, 2010; Morrow & Idle, 2008; Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011). The common thread through this research is the necessity of stakeholder management to either take advantage of opportunities or mitigate threats.

One of the biggest factors that impacts an organization’s ability to manage its relationships with stakeholders is the environment in which it is operating. As has been mentioned and will be expanded upon in chapter two, intercollegiate athletics is currently undergoing significant change to its operating environment. As such, it is important to assess what those changes are and how they will impact stakeholder management. The goal of this current study is to serve as an environmental assessment which can aid in strategic planning in FBS athletic departments.

Environmental Assessment

When assessing an organization’s environment it is important to identify which factors comprise the environment. The external environment of an organization consists of factors that can create opportunities or impose threats (Daft, 2004; Slack & Parent, 2006). A common approach to examining these factors is to use the PESTEL framework of political, economic, sociocultural, technological, ecological, and legal factors (Rothaermel, 2017). The PESTEL framework is a “mnemonic used in strategic management to group macro-environment factors to help strategists look for sources of general opportunity and risks” (Witcher & Chau, 2010, p. 91).
This current study is focused on the economic, legal, and sociocultural factors in the intercollegiate athletics environment. The widening revenue gap among FBS institutions is the focus for the economic factor. The current litigation involving the NCAA and its member institutions, including the O’Bannon lawsuit and others, will represent the legal factor. The sociocultural factor is comprised of three elements: student-athlete exploitation, the academic-athletic balance, and diversity.

The sociocultural elements were chosen after conducting a literature review on current issues in intercollegiate athletics. Specifically, these three elements present a view of how a number of stakeholders are situated in intercollegiate athletics and how the current values and norms are affecting them. The assessment of these sociocultural elements of the current environment allows for the forecasting of how changes in this environment will impact these stakeholders. Additionally, the forecast will give us an idea of if and how the values and norms in intercollegiate athletics will shift. Prime among these sociocultural elements is the treatment of student-athletes in the face of the increasing commercialization of intercollegiate athletics.

Student-athlete exploitation, especially football and men’s basketball players, is a perception that some hold, based on the large amount of revenue being generated and the limit that is placed on the athletic scholarship (Branch, 2011). Student-athletes are the only stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics that have a limit placed on their compensation. NCAA member institutions are only allowed to give athletic scholarships that cover tuition, fees, books, room, board, and cost of attendance (Berkowitz, 2015). This issue is involved in some of the current litigation taking place, as well as some of the
NCAA governance changes. Examining this sociocultural element is important to understanding the role of one of the feature stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics.

The balance of athletics on academic campuses is the second element of the sociocultural factor. As mentioned at the outset, the juxtaposition of a highly commercialized entity, such as intercollegiate athletics, coexisting with the traditional mission of higher education, affects the operation of many of the stakeholders involved in both entities. Whether coaches should be regarded as faculty members; how student-athletes are admitted to, and their experience while at, universities; and what the role of the NCAA should be in higher education, are all issues that should be examined in order to assess what role athletics should play in higher education.

In addition to student-athlete exploitation and the academic-athletic balance, diversity is another important element of the sociocultural factor. With the abundance of women and people of color involved in intercollegiate athletics as student-athletes, it is important to assess what their experience is on campus. Additionally, it is key to assess the representation of women and people of color in the coaching and administration ranks, as they can play a pivotal role in the experience of student-athletes. Understanding the current state of diversity in intercollegiate athletics will assist in forecasting the future of the enterprise.

The examination of the sociocultural elements of student-athlete exploitation, academic-athletic balance, and diversity, along with the economic structure and ongoing litigation will serve as an environmental assessment for intercollegiate athletics. One of the approaches used to take advantage of an environmental assessment is strategic
planning. A key to strategic planning is using an assessment of the environment in which an organization operates. This assessment should be an exploration of the outside environment of an organization in order to identify opportunities and threats. These opportunities and threats can be found by examining political, economic, technological, and social trends, along with the various stakeholder groups of an organization (Bryson, 2011). This assessment of the environment allows for an organization to develop a plan that enables it to recognize and take advantage of opportunities presented by change (Yow, Migliore, Bowden, Stevens, & Loudon, 2000).

**Problem Statement**

Research has been done on forecasting future issues in intercollegiate athletics to assess the environment (Branch & Crow, 1994; Drain & Ashley, 2000; Pastore & Schneider, 2004). However, with the rapidity and breadth of current changes taking place in the NCAA, this study aimed to add to the literature by assessing the current state of the environment and by forecasting how current changes will affect the environment in which the NCAA and its membership operate over the next five to seven years. This will aid institutions in producing a strategic plan, which in general is made for a five to seven year period (Bryson, 2011; Glaister & Falshaw, 1999; Yow et al., 2000).

As eluded to earlier, the current climate in intercollegiate athletics is one of both rapid and broad changes. One of the major changes taking place is the recently granted autonomy for the top 65 revenue producing schools within the Division I FBS level. The rationale for this autonomy was to allow these schools to have more discretion in using their resources for student-athlete well-being (NCAA, 2014b). Based on this change,
more money will be spent on student-athletes at these institutions. This study aimed to find out what the consequences of this change will be over the next five to seven years in the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors of the environment.

Along with the well-being of student-athletes being taken into account through the allocation of additional resources being devoted to them, student-athletes are also attempting to gain more control over their experience through litigation. There are currently several lawsuits making their way through the legal system that pertain to student-athlete rights and compensation. The most well-known of these cases, the O’Bannon case, has already been decided in favor of current and former student-athletes. It allows for up to $5,000 to be paid to student-athletes for their name and likeness, however it is currently under appeal (Solomon, 2015). This and the other cases, which will be discussed further in chapter two, are being pursued to gain more rights and privileges for student-athletes and have had and will have a major impact on the NCAA and its member institutions. Understanding what those impacts could be is of vital importance to collegiate athletic administrators.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the environment in which intercollegiate athletics is operating in order to forecast how the changes that are currently taking place will affect the NCAA and its member institutions over the next five to seven years. Specifically, the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors of the environment will be examined. Forecasting is required to predict needs of an organization and decide what actions must be taken ahead of time to fulfill those needs (Makridakis, 1990). In
conducting a study that also focused on forecasting what issues collegiate athletics would be dealing with in the future, Branch and Crow (1994) noted that “the ability to forecast and predict the course of significant events may well distinguish the future success of athletic organizations” (p. 14). Being prepared with a strategy to deal with changes to the environment ensures the best chances at success for the NCAA and its member institutions.

As mentioned earlier, the most prevalent way to develop this strategy is through strategic planning. The consensus in strategic planning literature is that one of the steps necessary in developing a strategic plan involves assessing the environment in which the organization operates (Bryson, 2011). Strategic planning is necessary to effectively manage relationships with stakeholders (Walters & Tacon, 2010). The many stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics further enhances the importance of understanding how changes in the operational environment will affect stakeholders and their involvement in intercollegiate athletics. With the amount of tumult in the current collegiate athletics environment this assessment is of even more importance.

Research Questions

1. What issues will arise, over the next five to seven years, as a result of the autonomy granted to the Power 5 conferences in the:
   a. Economic sector of the FBS athletics environment?
   b. Legal sector of the FBS athletics environment?
   c. Sociocultural sector of the FBS athletics environment?
2. What issues will arise, over the next five to seven years, as a result of the legal actions targeting the NCAA and its member institutions in the:

   a. Economic sector of the FBS athletics environment?
   b. Legal sector of the FBS athletics environment?
   c. Sociocultural sector of the FBS athletics environment?

Methodology Overview

The design of this study takes a mixed method approach employing the Delphi technique as both the research design and data collection method. The purpose of using a Delphi technique is “to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p. 458). The Delphi technique stems from a research project conducted by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s (Davidson, 2013). Since then, the Delphi technique has been used to forecast trends in many industries (Costa, 2005; Laick, 2012; Donohoe, Stellefson, & Tennant, 2012).

There are four main characteristics involved in a Delphi technique: (a) anonymity in the process, (b) controlled feedback, (c) statistical aggregation of group response, and (d) iteration (Gnatzy, Warth, von der Gracht, & Darkow, 2011). Anonymity is an essential characteristic as it allows for a debate among the group of experts, while removing the possibility of animosity between members of the group. This is critical in two ways. First, it allows the experts to share their opinions, even extreme ones, without concern for being ostracized. Second, it enables researchers to obtain truer answers.

As eluded to earlier, there are many stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics. However, the stakeholders of focus chosen as participants for this study were
identified as directors of athletics, associate athletic directors, conference commissioners, or associate commissioners involved with universities that are members of the NCAA. Further, the participants of this study had held their current position for at least five years and had worked at multiple FBS institutions. As experts are required for a study using the Delphi technique, these participants were deemed experts based on the necessary experience working in intercollegiate athletics needed in order to obtain the positions they were in. Additionally, people who hold these positions are in a position to make decisions for their organizations (Cunningham & Rivera, 2001) and therefore would be more motivated to help produce the results of this study.

Definition of Terms

The following section contains definitions of the primary terms to be used in this study. They are provided to familiarize the reader with the terminology that is used and referred to throughout this work.

Associate Athletic Director – for this study the following titles are considered as associate athletic director – deputy athletic director, executive associate athletic director, executive senior associate athletic director, senior associate athletics director, and senior woman administrator

FBS – The Football Bowl Subdivision of Division I of the NCAA. This group of institutions has to meet minimum attendance requirements for football (average 15,000 people in actual or paid attendance per home game), which must be met once in a rolling two-year period (NCAA, 2015a). These institutions generally have larger athletic programs and in turn, have the largest budgets among NCAA member institutions.
Group of 5 Conferences – The Group of 5 conferences are a subset of FBS. This term is used to collectively refer to the members of the FBS who are not in the Power 5 conferences. They are comprised of the members of the American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, and Sun Belt Conference.

NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association. This is an association of colleges and universities who sponsor intercollegiate athletic programs. It consists of three divisions (Division I, Division II, and Division III) with Division I having two football playing subsets.

Power 5 Conferences – The Power 5 conferences are a subset of FBS. They are comprised of 65 athletic departments around the nation and are the highest resourced conferences in the country. The five conferences represented are Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pacific 12 Conference, and the Southeastern Conference. Additionally, the University of Notre Dame is included in this list of institutions with their football team operating as an independent and its other sports in the Atlantic Coast Conference. These conferences were granted autonomy, by the rest of the NCAA membership, to enact policies and initiatives to allocate more resources towards student-athlete well-being.

Student-Athlete – This is the group upon which intercollegiate athletics is based. This term, coined by Walter Byers (1995), the former president of the NCAA, is used to distinguish between the general student population and those who participate in intercollegiate athletics.
Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter two consists of a literature review. This chapter presents a history of the NCAA and an overview of its recent policy initiatives and governance changes. It also presents the relevant literature as it relates to the current issues in intercollegiate athletics, stakeholder theory, and strategic planning.

Chapter three entails a description of the study design and methodology. An explanation of the Delphi technique is given along with a comprehensive justification as to why it was chosen for this study to answer the questions presented in chapter one. Additionally offered is a description of the participants and population, instrument, data collection, research variables, procedures with statistical analysis, bias and error, validity, and reliability.

Next, chapter four will present the results of the data analysis. It will detail the responses from the participants and give the forecasted trends for college athletics. The quantitative findings will be revealed and a methodology summary will be provided.

Finally, in chapter five, a discussion of the results presented in chapter four will be offered. The practical implications of the results will be explained and related back to the theories described in chapter two. Also, suggestions and recommendations for future research will be given. The chapter will close with a summary and conclusion.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins with the history and evolution of intercollegiate athletics and the NCAA. Next, a current intercollegiate athletics environmental assessment is provided. Specifically, the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors are examined. Finally, a background on stakeholder theory is provided, along with the theory’s use in this current study.

History of Intercollegiate Athletics

Yale University and Harvard University began intercollegiate athletic competition in the United States when they agreed to compete against each other in an exhibition rowing match in 1852. The exhibition was sponsored by a railroad company and took place at a resort on a lake in New Hampshire to promote a new route to resort customers (Smith, 2011). This marked the beginning of what would become a continual struggle of balance between the commercial nature of intercollegiate athletic programs and the academic missions of the universities that sponsor them. Once college and university presidents recognized the exposure that could be attained through athletics, they were faced with the dilemma of how to incorporate a seemingly unnecessary activity into the mission of their institutions.

High level athletics as part of higher education is unique to the United States. Most nations have a system of sports clubs that are under the authority of a single
national sports authority (Freeman, 1978). The idea of athletics at the university was imported from England, specifically Oxford and Cambridge. However, a difference existed between English universities and American universities that caused athletics to take on a more pronounced position in America. This difference was primarily the availability of higher education in America. In England higher education was limited to the upper class and a small number of institutions. On the other hand, America had more institutions giving access to higher education to more of its population (Freeman, 1978). This availability of higher education to more of the general population is what spurred the growth of intercollegiate athletics in America.

Much of this availability can be attributed to the Morrill Act of 1862. The Morrill Act granted each state 30,000 acres of public land to be used for the establishment of colleges that emphasized agriculture and mechanical arts (Morrill, 1862). With this increase in availability came the necessity for colleges to attract students to their newly created institutions. One way to do this was through athletics. There was a general lack of understanding as to how higher education worked for the general public, so institutions began using athletics as a way to make themselves more visible to potential students. For example, in 1875 the president of Cornell University wrote off a $1,100 debt owed to the institution by the rowing team because it had won a regatta and he felt the victory was worth that much in advertising (Freeman, 1978). This example illustrates another point that helps explain the evolution of athletics in American higher education. It is the idea that athletics on campus were initially a student run enterprise. That is, the students
participating in the sports were handling the scheduling, rules making, and financing of athletics (Flowers, 2009).

With the students in charge of athletics, the faculty generally took a laissez-faire attitude toward athletics unless they had a negative impact on academic interests or the reputation of the institution (Smith, 2011). It was the formation of a faculty athletics committee at Princeton in 1881, to curb the missing of classes due to extracurricular activities, which signaled the end of student control of athletics. The faculty committees soon thereafter transformed into athletics committees comprised of equal numbers of students, alumni, and faculty. The alumni involvement stemmed from the students no longer being able to fund athletics and asking for alumni, many of them former athletes themselves, to donate the funds to sustain their programs (Flowers, 2009; Smith, 2011).

Now that alumni were involved in the administering of athletics and the faculties’ role reduced, there was a proliferation of athletic programs across the country. Specifically, football programs were started in order to gain recognition for institutions with many universities in the Midwest and west joining their eastern counterparts by the 1890s. It was football, and the brutality that often accompanied the contests, that led to the formation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

History of the NCAA

The NCAA was born out of concern for the welfare of students participating in intercollegiate football. In 1905, a football player at Union College died while playing football against New York University, causing the chancellor of New York University, Henry M. McCracken, to call a conference in December of that year. He invited other
football playing institutions to decide on whether to abolish football or reform it (Smith, 2011). This group of institutions ultimately decided to reform football and established a special football rules committee to clean up the game of brutal and dangerous play. This group of institutions, 62 in total, formed a permanent governance body called the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States. This group would change the name in 1910 to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (Bass, Schaepkoetter, & Bunds, 2015; Oriard, 2012).

At the time of its formation, the NCAA was concerned with football playing rules and little else. Initially, there were no rules pertaining to financing or any policies related to how athletics should fit into higher education. Institutions operated under the principle of “home rule” in that each institution was an autonomous unit that would decide for itself how to enact legislation that came from the NCAA (Thelin, 1994). The principle of home rule is the main reason that, for the first half century of the NCAA’s existence, it was a relatively feckless organization that was essentially offering suggestions to member institutions about eligibility and recruiting (Smith, 2011).

While the NCAA, as a governing body, had little authority over its member institutions, it did begin expanding its sport rule making authority almost immediately. Within the first 15 years of its existence the organizing body was legislating rules for basketball, boxing, swimming, track and field, and volleyball (Mott, 1996). In 1922, the first NCAA national championship was held in Chicago for track and field and then 17 years later, the membership granted the NCAA authority to conduct national championships and the first men’s basketball tournament was held at Northwestern
University (Keefe, 1975; Maxcy, 2004). So, while the NCAA’s role was expanding in regards to sport rules and championships, it was not until some scandals in the 1950s, along with the advent of television, that the NCAA was able to establish its power outside of the competition venue.

In 1951, the University of Kentucky basketball team had players implicated in a point shaving scandal and in conjunction with the Southeastern Conference, the NCAA called for the rest of the membership to boycott playing Kentucky in basketball for a year. The Kentucky administration did not protest this ruling and for one season did not play basketball against other institutions, only practicing and scrimmaging themselves (Byers, 1995; Smith, 2011). This boycott was the first time that the membership of the NCAA, as a collective group sanctioned another member. This act established the NCAA as not just a legislative body, but one that could enforce the rules as well. Prior to the Kentucky boycott, several reform efforts were met with secession threats from members who disagreed with new rules (Smith, 1993). The unwillingness of fellow members to allow institutions to secede and or force them out when they broke rules, left the governing body largely ineffectual (Clotfelter, 2011).

Around this same time, television and the televising of sports began to take shape. Over the next half century television would play a pivotal role in the evolution of the NCAA and its member institutions. In an effort to protect gate receipts, the NCAA gained control of the television rights of member institutions and limited the amount of games that could be televised (Dunnavant, 1997; Lawrence, 1987). Beginning in 1952, in reaction to television deals procured by the University of Notre Dame and the
University of Pennsylvania, the NCAA began controlling the television rights for football. The philosophy was to limit the amount of games the strongest programs had televised and at the same time allow for programs from around the country to benefit from being on television. This controlling of the television rights afforded the NCAA much power and allowed the organization to fully establish itself as the main arbiter of intercollegiate athletics in the United States (Fleisher, Goff, & Tollison, 1992).

The next major step in the evolution of the NCAA took place in 1957. This is the first year a separate division was established for a small college men’s basketball championship (Mott, 1996). To this point, all members of the association competed together with no separations made between institutions. However, by 1957 members began to recognize that some institutions were investing more heavily in athletics and began the movement to create divisions, within the NCAA, that grouped like-minded institutions together.

In the early 1970s, two major developments took place that would lead to the further evolution of the NCAA and its member institutions. Following the recognition of the different investment levels in athletics, the NCAA separated into three divisions (Mott, 1996). This separation would eventually lead to a heavy influence from television, which will be explained in a later section of the paper. A year before the creation of separate divisions in the NCAA, a law was passed pertaining to the discrimination of women in higher education. This law, Title IX, would also have a major impact on intercollegiate athletics.

*Title IX*
The omnibus Education Amendments were signed into law by President Richard Nixon on June 23, 1972. Within these amendments was a provision patterned after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 labeled Title IX (Sigelman & Wahlbeck, 1999). Title IX states that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (United States Department of Education, n.d., para. 1). While Title IX would come to have an extraordinary impact on women in intercollegiate athletics, it started with opposition on many fronts.

In the first few years after the passing of Title IX, organizations like the NCAA and the College Football Association (CFA) lobbied against the application of Title IX to athletics. Even the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the governing body for women’s intercollegiate athletics at the time, was threatened by Title IX’s application to athletics. Their fear was that Title IX would challenge their “sex separate” policies, which would diminish their capacity to maintain an educational model for women’s intercollegiate athletics, as opposed to the more commercialized men’s model (Wushanley, 2004). For the NCAA and its member institutions, the application of Title IX to athletics would mean the end of their male only policies and would significantly impact the two most popular sports of football and men’s basketball. The prevailing thought was, that if institutions were required to allocate money to women’s athletics, then they would inevitably have to spend less on men’s athletics, which would hurt the progress of intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 2011; Wushanley, 2004).
Despite the lobbying against the application of Title IX to intercollegiate athletics, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) issued an interpretation in 1975 that did call for intercollegiate athletics to fall under Title IX (Anderson, Cheslock, & Ehrenberg, 2006). With this interpretation came the requirement that intercollegiate athletic programs be in compliance with Title IX by 1978. This interpretation was the beginning of the end for the AIAW and their control over women’s intercollegiate athletics.

Once the NCAA and its member institutions realized compliance with Title IX was going to be mandatory, they began their pursuit of women’s athletics. With NCAA legal counsel advising that a “separate but equal” policy, to comply with Title IX, would most likely be a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the NCAA began to offer championships in women’s sports (Smith, 2011). In reaction to these offerings, institutions began to move their women’s athletic departments to the NCAA, which had more financial wherewithal to fund championships. This also allowed athletic departments to save money by merging their women’s and men’s athletic departments (Wushanley, 2004).

In 1979, HEW issued another policy interpretation which implemented a three-pronged test for athletic departments’ compliance with Title IX. To be in compliance with Title IX, an institution would need to accomplish one of the three prongs which consisted of 1) the providing of athletic opportunity proportionate to the overall student body population, 2) the demonstration of continual expansion of athletic opportunities for the underrepresented sex, or 3) the full accommodation of the interests and abilities of the
underrepresented sex (Mak, 2006). With the test in place, there was now a mechanism to help women in athletics begin to attain equity in intercollegiate athletics. However, it would take multiple court cases to ensure the validity of the three-pronged test.

One of these cases was the 1992 case of Cohen vs. Brown. In 1992, Brown University, in response to financial troubles, decided to eliminate women’s volleyball and gymnastics, and men’s golf and water polo. However, a women’s gymnast by the name of Amy Cohen, brought a Title IX lawsuit claiming that Brown was discriminating against women by offering 36% of its athletic opportunities to females when the student body was comprised of 48% females, thus failing the first prong of the three-pronged test (Mak, 2006). In response, Brown claimed to have demonstrated continual expansion of athletic opportunities for women citing the growth of the women’s program in the 1970s, thus passing the second prong of the three-pronged test. The courts ruled that too much time had passed since Brown had shown expansion of their women’s programs and ordered the reinstatement of the women’s teams (Anderson et al., 2006). This ruling and the Supreme Court’s refusal to hear the appeal forced athletics departments to take Title IX compliance and the three-pronged test seriously and paved the way for exponential growth in women’s intercollegiate athletics.

In 1968, four years prior to the passing of Title IX, there were 16,000 women participating in intercollegiate athletics. In 2012, 40 years after the passing of Title IX, there were over 200,000 women participating in intercollegiate athletics (Bower & Hums, 2013). This growth in women’s participation can be directly attributed to the passing of Title IX and the resources devoted to women’s athletics in order for athletic departments
to comply with the law. However, despite the growth of women’s participation opportunities in intercollegiate athletics, there is still ground to be made up in order for intercollegiate athletics to be truly equitable for men and women.

When examining gender equity in intercollegiate athletics, the most used statistics are the percentage of male and female participants in intercollegiate athletics compared to the percentage of male and female undergraduates at NCAA institutions, the first prong of the three pronged test (Anderson & Cheslock, 2004; Cheslock & Eckes, 2008; Weistart, 1998). As of 2010, NCAA Division I institutions had a seven percent gap between the percentage of females participating in athletics and percentage of overall female undergraduates (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2012b). Additionally, the allocation of resources to male and female athletes continues to lag behind overall student population. In 2010, NCAA institutions had 46.4% male undergraduates and 53.6% female undergraduates, but median expenses for men’s teams in the NCAA was just over $6.8 million and median expenses for women’s teams was just under $4.5 million (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2012a). So, while substantial gains have been made for females participating in intercollegiate athletics, continued vigilance is necessary in order for intercollegiate athletics to be a truly equitable enterprise for men and women.

Establishments of NCAA Divisions

A year after the passing of Title IX, with a goal of a different type of equity, NCAA membership voted to establish three separate competitive divisions based on level of investment in athletics (Maxcy, 2004). Division III was established for institutions
making the smallest investments in athletics and not offering athletic scholarships. Division II was formed of institutions that offered athletic scholarships, but on a limited basis. The group of institutions that were investing the most in athletics were designated to Division I. Additionally, to be classified as Division I, an institution must sponsor at least 14 sports while institutions in Divisions II and III must sponsor at least 10 sports (NCAA, 2015a). The group of institutions in Division I were most noted for their housing of traditional football powers. Programs such as University of Notre Dame, University of Alabama, The Ohio State University, and the University of Southern California, were representative of the institutions that had long-sustained success on the football field. Five years after the initial divisions were established, Division I split into three subdivisions. This split was based on football, with the most heavily invested institutions comprising IA (now Football Bowl Subdivision-FBS), the other intuitions sponsoring football in IAA (now Football Championship Subdivision-FCS), and the non-football playing colleges and universities classified as IAAA (Mott, 1996).

To this point, even with the newly formed divisions, the NCAA still controlled all the television revenue and continued to limit the television appearances of programs to two per season. Additionally, the NCAA also distributed some of the television revenue to institutions who did not appear on television (Davies, 2007). The coupling of these two factors led to the formation of the College Football Association (CFA) in 1977 by members of the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big 8 Conference, Southeastern Conference, Southwestern Conference, Western Athletic Conference, along with the University of Notre Dame and Penn State University (Smith, 2011). The institutions who formed the
CFA did so in response to concerns that smaller institutions, who did not sponsor football, were going to be allocated an even larger portion of the television revenue that members of the CFA felt they were responsible for generating. This group’s aim was to gain more autonomy as it related to football and eventually led to one of the most important moments in the history of the NCAA.

Television Revenue

With the NCAA still in control of television revenue and the smaller institutions threatening to take an even larger share, two members of the CFA, the Universities of Georgia and Oklahoma, filed a federal suit in 1982 alleging the NCAA was operating as a monopoly by controlling the television contract for institutions and not allowing institutions to negotiate their own deals (Davies, 2007). The federal court ruled that the NCAA was violating antitrust laws and the ruling was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1984. This seminal ruling allowed individual institutions and conferences to negotiate their own television deals, which put the traditional football powers in control of what had become a major source of revenue for college athletics (Zimbalist, 2013).

For the first ten years after the Supreme Court ruling, the CFA negotiated football television contracts for its members. In these contracts, conferences were generally guaranteed a certain number of appearances and it was up to the television networks to decide what teams they wanted to have participate each week (Siegfried & Burba, 2004). This arrangement favored the higher profile programs, but allowed all the members of the CFA to enjoy more appearances on television and increased revenues. However, in 1995, the Southeastern Conference signed its own television deal worth $85 million and the Big
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8 Conference added four institutions from the Southwestern Conference to form the Big 12 Conference and signed a $100 million television contract (Maxcy, 2004). These two independent conference deals, along with the University of Notre Dame signing its own television contract signaled, the end of the CFA and started a trend of conference realignment in pursuit of ever-increasing television revenue.

Once the Big 12 Conference, Southeastern Conference, and Notre Dame left the CFA to negotiate their own television rights deals, the fragility of the CFA was exposed and conferences began to realize the power of negotiating their own television contracts. Additionally, they realized that the larger the share of the television market the conference institutions were located in, the larger its rights fees would be worth (Zimbalist, 2009). This idea of market share is what inspired the Big 8 conference to expand with institutions in the high value market of Texas. Also in pursuit of a large television market, and in turn a more lucrative television contract in 2004, the Atlantic Coast Conference added three institutions, Boston College, the University of Miami, and Virginia Tech University, and subsequently signed a seven year, $258 million contract with ESPN and ABC, which doubled the amount of money from their previous television contract (Groza, 2010). Between the 2003 and 2007 seasons, 19 football programs or 18.5% of the Football Bowl Subdivision changed conference affiliation (Groza, 2010). In 2011, the Big Ten started another round of conference realignment when they added the University of Nebraska, formerly of the Big 12 Conference. This sparked more, widespread changing of conference affiliations that ended up with 40% of the 128 FBS institutions making a move between 2004 and 2014 and resulted in one conference, the
Western Athletic Conference, no longer sponsoring football. Additionally, the Big East Conference, had its non-Football Bowl Subdivision football playing institutions split off, leaving the football playing institutions to form a new conference, the American Athletic Conference (Campbell, 2014; Dennie, 2012a; Hinnen, 2012; Lavigne, 2014).

As stated earlier, the expansion and realignment of these conferences was based largely on the idea of commanding larger television rights fees by increasing their geographic footprint. This has proven to be a successful strategy for the Power 5 conferences and their member schools. The Big Ten, in conjunction with FOX, created the Big Ten Network in 2007, which will account for $2.8 billion over a 25 year period. The University of Texas partnered with ESPN to form the Longhorn Network bringing the university $300 million over 15 years beginning in 2012. The Pac-12 and Southeastern Conferences also launched their own networks in 2012 and 2014 respectively (Walsten, 2014). These conference specific networks, in conjunction with contracts signed with traditional broadcast networks such as ESPN, ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX, have, since 2007, been worth over $13 billion to the Power 5 conferences (Walsten, 2014).

In addition to the increased revenue produced by the large television contracts, FBS institutions also benefited from the advent of the Bowl Championship Series, its successor, the College Football Playoff, and the popularity of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament. The Bowl Championship Series, which was formed in 1996 to produce the match up for a national championship football game, generated $100-$150 million per year for FBS institutions through 2013 (Smith, 2013; Zimbalist 2009). The
Bowl Championship Series was replaced in 2014 by the College Football Playoff, the managers of which, signed a 12-year, $7.3 billion contract with ESPN to have the playoffs televised (Hobson & Rich, 2015a). Additionally, in 2010, the NCAA signed a 14-year, $10.8 billion contract with CBS and Turner Broadcasting to televise the men’s basketball tournament (Wolverton, 2010). This influx of revenue has had a direct impact on widening economic gap that is being observed at the FBS level of intercollegiate athletics. This gap is one of several issues that are currently affecting the NCAA and its member institutions. The next section will consist of an assessment of five of those issues.

Environmental Assessment

In order to forecast future issues in intercollegiate athletics, it is prudent to examine the current issues. This study employed the PESTEL environmental assessment framework to examine the intercollegiate athletics operating environment. The PESTEL framework uses six environmental sectors to assess an organization’s external environment: political, economic, sociocultural, technological, ecological, and legal (Rothaermel, 2017). Specifically, this study focused on the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors, with the sociocultural sector divided into the three areas of student-athlete exploitation, the academic-athletic balance, and diversity.

Economic Factors

The current economic structure of the NCAA Division I FBS level of intercollegiate athletics may be the biggest challenge the enterprise is having to address. There is a growing divide between Power 5 conference institutions and Group of 5
conference institutions in the level of investment they can make in athletics (Dodd, 2016). This exemplified by the athletic departments from the Power 5 conferences taking in 81% of college sports revenue in 2014 (Shifflett & Hallman, 2015).

The widening of the revenue gap began with the 1984 Supreme Court decision regarding television rights. This decision, coupled with the growth of cable television fueled a revenue boom for college athletics (Zimbalist, 2013). Specifically, the bigger programs, creating the most demand to be seen by the general public, received the higher contract amounts from television partners. This gap has led to a unique financial dynamic for FBS institutions.

Cheslock and Knight (2015) presented a conceptual framework to describe the dynamics of the widening economic gap among NCAA Division I FBS institutions. They pointed out that the nature of the financial challenges are complicated due to the diversity among the programs. There are institutions with enrollments as high as 60,000 students operating athletic departments with budgets over $100 million competing alongside institutions with enrollments as low as 4,000 students and operating athletic departments with budgets under $30 million. Despite this diversity, these institutions are bound together by competing on the playing fields and courts; for coaches; and for student-athletes.

The competition that binds these athletic programs together is also what creates the dynamics underlying the widening economic gap among them. Cheslock and Knight (2015) detailed a three-part framework that explains these dynamics. Their framework consisted of diverging revenues, cascading expenditures, and ensuing subsidies.
Cheslock and Knight (2015) explained that a large portion of revenue for athletic departments comes from television, noting that in 2011 the total amount of television revenue for FBS institutions was $1 billion. In the winner-take-all market in which these athletic departments operate, the highest rewards are concentrated among a small group. This is perpetuated in a positive feedback loop that sees success for a program lead to increased revenue which allows for the investment in better coaches and facilities, which then leads to attracting better players, followed by further success, which completes the loop. Breaking into this type of loop for smaller programs is made difficult by the larger programs as they are instrumental in creating rules to help maintain their grasp on the limited resources, which furthers the divergence in revenues.

Cascading expenditures is the second part of Cheslock and Knight’s (2015) framework. As the external revenue for these departments increases so does their expenditures. Cascading expenditures is the idea that as the high level programs collect and spend more money, the lower level programs will also spend more money in an effort to try and keep up. This continues to happen for two reasons. First, governing boards and donors have come to play a large part in financial decisions concerning athletics. The authors point to resource dependence theory to explain that the dependence on donor contributions causes the donors to have an increased role in decision making. These donors and governing boards generally push their institutions to support athletics in a hope to elevate their programs to elite status. The second reason cascading expenditures takes place is the hope that coaches and student-athletes will choose a lower tier program
if the gap between the high level and lower level program is not too big. To try and keep that gap as small as possible most institutions subsidize their athletic programs.

This subsidization is the third part of the Cheslock and Knight (2015) framework. These subsidizations often come from student fees and are relied upon because lower level programs are not generating the necessary revenue to offset the additional expenditures. The authors noted that the sustainability of these subsidies is unclear due to the increased financial pressures being placed on institutions of higher education, which could lead to resistance in allocating additional subsidies to athletics. How these lower level institutions respond to this scenario could have a significant impact on the current economic structure of FBS athletics.

Cheslock and Knight (2015) offered four potential policy approaches to address the widening gap in revenue generation for higher and lower level programs. They suggested equally distributing revenues and acknowledged that it was unlikely to happen, basing their acknowledgement on the history of the NCAA and its members. Their second suggestion was to limit the expenditures of the high level programs, which would be difficult unless the NCAA pursued and was granted an antitrust exemption. A more plausible solution would be the creation of a new division for the high level programs, but due to the small number, it would be a challenge to maintain the current competition structure. Finally, the authors suggest doing nothing and that market convergence may happen naturally.

Matheson, O’Connor, and Herberger (2012) examined the revenues and expenses of major universities’ athletic programs to determine the extent to which athletic
programs either generate revenues or impose costs upon the host institution. They used the financial information of 166 NCAA Division I athletic programs to calculate the direct benefits for their host institutions.

The authors calculated different measures of profit, with each measure producing a different number of profitable programs. There were two notable measures reported. The first measure used was total reported revenue minus total reported expenses. Using this measure all the programs examined either broke even or were profitable. The issue with this measure was that most of the reports included subsidies from the university in the reported revenue. When the authors calculated the second measure, total reported revenue minus subsidies plus expenses, only 15 of the programs were shown to be profitable, with an average shortfall of $6 million.

Matheson et al. (2012) pointed out that the lack of standardization in financial reporting for intercollegiate athletic programs makes it difficult to make comparisons between programs. However, their findings reinforce the notion that the current economic structure in place for NCAA Division I athletic programs is heavily reliant on university subsidies. Additionally, this reliance stems from the majority of programs spending an increasing amount of money in order to keep up with a small number of high level programs as highlighted in the second part of the Cheslock and Knight (2015) framework.

Dunn (2013) further highlighted the widening gap between a small number of high level Division I FBS programs and the rest of the division. He pointed out that the budget of the University of Texas athletic department equaled the total of nine Sun Belt
Conference programs. He went on to explain that the widening gap stems from the level of investment each institution wants to make in athletics coupled with the available resources to do so. To further illustrate the point that a small number of high level programs have separated themselves, he looked at the disparity within conferences. In the Big 12 Conference the highest budget was $100 million more than the lowest. Similarly, in the Big Ten Conference that spread was $80 million.

To combat this growing divide Dunn (2013) offered some suggestions that may point to future changes in intercollegiate athletics. Similar to Cheslock and Knight (2015) and Zimbalist (2013), Dunn suggested a revenue sharing model, but again, based on the history of the NCAA and its member institutions, this is an unlikely scenario. However, another suggestion put forth by Dunn is more plausible. He suggested reorganizing the conferences to group like-minded institutions together. The result could be a downturn in what Cheslock and Knight termed cascading expenditures. While this dynamic is not isolated to conferences, as Dunn points out, the disparity even among conference members makes it more likely that programs would have to spend less to keep up if they were organized by budget rather than history, geography, and television market.

The preceding section highlights the growing economic gap among and impact on FBS athletic departments. Additionally, the dynamics of the system which perpetuates this divide was explained. The current economic structure also plays a part in the legal environment in which intercollegiate athletics is operating. Over the past decade, the
NCAA and its member institutions have been or currently are involved in lawsuits, some of which revolve around compensation of student-athletes.

**Legal Factors**

In response to the NCAA’s philosophy of competitive equity at the expense of a free market for student-athletes’ compensation, lawsuits have been brought by student-athletes for damages stemming from the limiting of scholarship value; failure to pay all educational costs; using their names, images, and likenesses without compensation; better medical care including damages for concussion injuries; and limiting multiyear scholarships (LeRoy, 2015). This section will cover some of the key cases in these areas. Additionally, the outcomes and impact will be discussed.

Dennie (2012b) highlighted and summarized five high profile cases involving the NCAA, which have had or could possibly have a significant impact on the socio-cultural environment and economic structure of intercollegiate athletics. These cases go back 10 years and demonstrate the multiple fronts the NCAA has had to defend, and is currently defending, in court. They also present an opportunity to view these issues from the student-athlete perspective.

Of the five court cases reviewed, Dennie (2012b) began with White vs. NCAA in 2006. In this case a class action suit was brought against the NCAA pursuant to Section 1 of the Sherman Act. Essentially, Section 1 of the Sherman act prohibits restraint of trade which must include the following four elements to be considered unlawful: 1) an agreement has to be 2) entered into by two or more distinct parties, which 3) restricts competition and 4) affects interstate commerce (Henry, 1993). In the White vs. NCAA
case student-athletes argued the members of the NCAA had unlawfully agreed to deny student-athletes a share of the revenue they helped generate. Further, they claimed that without an unlawful agreement, members of the NCAA would compete against each other for talent, which in turn would increase the value of a scholarship.

The White vs. NCAA case was settled on the conditions that the NCAA would make available $218 million to member institutions for use in a student-athlete opportunity fund to be used by student-athletes who demonstrated academic or financial needs. Also, the NCAA was to make available $10 million, over a three year period, to be distributed to the class members who could then apply for the money for use in career development services and continued education expenses (Dennie, 2012b).

The second case Dennie (2012b) discussed was Oliver vs. Baratta. Oliver was drafted to play baseball professionally out of high school. He retained an advisor to assist with a decision to accept a $390,000 offer to play professionally or go to Oklahoma State University, he eventually chose to go to college. Once arriving at Oklahoma State University he fired his advisor and that advisor told the NCAA about his former arrangement with Oliver, sparking an investigation by the NCAA. The investigation was aimed at finding out if Oliver had violated NCAA Bylaws Section 12.3.1 and 12.3.2.1. Bylaw 12.3.1 states that an individual is ineligible for participation in an intercollegiate sport if they have hired an agent for the purposes of representing their athletic interests and Bylaw 12.3.2.1 states that a lawyer could not be present during contract discussions with a professional sports organization (NCAA, 2015b). The investigation concluded that Oliver had violated these bylaws and he was suspended indefinitely (Dennie, 2012b).
In 2008, Oliver filed suit against the NCAA seeking a declaratory judgement finding that NCAA Bylaws Section 12.3.2.1 was unenforceable, arbitrary, and capricious (Dennie, 2012b). Additionally, he sought an injunction on his suspension. The judge in the case granted Oliver relief, stating that the student-athlete was a third party beneficiary of the NCAA’s agreement with Oklahoma State University. Further, the judge chastised the NCAA for the bylaw saying it was unenforceable and allowed for the exploitation of student-athletes and struck down the bylaw. However, Oliver and the NCAA settled the case with Oliver receiving $750,000 and agreeing to vacate the judgement, which allowed the bylaw to stand and is still in the NCAA manual today (Dennie, 2012b; NCAA, 2015b).

Agnew vs. NCAA was a case that had the opposite outcome of the Oliver case. In 2010, Agnew, a former football player at Rice University, filed suit against the NCAA claiming scholarship practices violated antitrust laws by prohibiting multi-year scholarships and placing a cap on how many athletic scholarships an institution could offer (Dennie, 2012b). Agnew, after having played as true freshman, was injured and subsequently lost his scholarship and felt that student-athletes should be afforded better protection. Agnew lost the initial case and the appeal, however, in 2011 the NCAA changed its policy to allow for the offering of multi-year scholarships (DiForte, 2014). So, despite the loss in court, the Agnew case caused significant change in how the NCAA operates. Also, posing the possibility to cause change were two lawsuits filed in 2009 against the NCAA and some of its partners.
In 2009, Sam Keller, a former football student athlete at Arizona State University and the University of Nebraska, filed suit against the NCAA, Electronic Arts (EA), and the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) alleging these defendants blatantly and unlawfully misappropriated his and other student-athlete’s likenesses in video games produced by EA. Keller demonstrated the similarities between the players in the game (avatars) and their real life counterparts by showing that each avatar and the real life counterpart shared the same uniform number, height, weight, skin color, and other physical characteristics (Dennie, 2012b).

The Keller case was certified as a class-action and combined with another case, O’Bannon vs. NCAA, and proceeded on the basis that EA, CLC, and the NCAA violated both rights of publicity and antitrust laws. The case was settled regarding the rights of publicity with EA and CLC for $40 million and with the NCAA for $20 million (Cristobal, 2016). However, that left the issue of antitrust violations to be contended with in the O’Bannon vs. NCAA case.

Similar to the Keller case, O’Bannon vs. NCAA is a class action lawsuit seeking damages for the NCAA’s use and license of former student-athlete’s images, names, and likenesses. Filed in 2009, the suit claimed the NCAA used former athletes to sell DVDs commemorating championship seasons, classic competitions on television, action figurines, memorabilia, and video games (Dennie, 2012b). The plaintiff further argued the NCAA did not allow former athletes to be compensated because they were made to sign away their rights, in perpetuity, without advice from counsel. The suit claimed these were violations of the rights of publicity and the Sherman Act (Dennie, 2012b).
In 2014, after the rights of publicity portion of the suit was settled with the Keller case, a judge ruled in favor of O’Bannon affirming that the NCAA had violated antitrust laws and a permanent injunction was ordered (Cristobal, 2016). As part of the injunction the judge also ordered institutions to set up trusts, capped at $5000 per year, for football and men’s basketball players for use of their names, images and likenesses (Dahlberg, 2014). However, the NCAA appealed the ruling and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the plan to institute the trusts, but did find that the NCAA rules are not exempt from antitrust laws (Mullen, 2015).

The initial ruling in the O’Bannon case, that NCAA rules violate antitrust laws and the subsequent affirmation by the appeals court, increase the potential that an ongoing lawsuit will have an impact on the current economic structure of the NCAA. This lawsuit was filed against the NCAA by Martin Jenkins, a former football player at Clemson University. The suit was filed on behalf of current and future student-athletes in 2014 and essentially argues that the NCAA is illegally setting limits on scholarships and that the market should dictate how much a scholarship is worth (Litan & Keith, 2014; Tulis & Clifton, 2015). The case is currently in the process of being tried, but if successful will necessitate the NCAA and its member institutions to drastically change how they currently operate in regard to how they compensate student-athletes.

**Sociocultural Factors**

*Student-Athlete Exploitation*

With the surge in revenue being produced by the collective body of FBS institutions, some observers have called the intercollegiate athletic system exploitative of
student-athletes, especially football and men’s basketball players (Berri, 2014; Branch, 2011). They say this because the value a full scholarship that is allowed to be given to a student-athlete is capped at the amount of money it takes to pay tuition, books, fees, room, board, and cost of attendance (Berkowitz, 2015). The student-athletes are the only people in this system that have their compensation limited. Coaches and administrators are allowed to operate under standard free market rules allowing them to bring in millions of dollars (Hobson & Rich, 2015b).

Van Rheenen (2013) examined the issue of student-athlete exploitation through the economic concepts of surplus value and marginal revenue product. He began by explaining the moral construct of exploitation as instances where one party receives unfair and undeserved benefits from its relationships with others. He went on to say that it could be argued that, at least at the FBS level, the NCAA and its member institutions receive unfair benefits from student-athletes; thus setting the stage to present the issue using surplus value and marginal revenue product.

Surplus value is created when compensation is less than a worker’s total worth (Van Rheenen, 2013). In the NCAA context, a surplus value is created for FBS football and men’s basketball players, when their labor is commodified by receiving compensation in the form of a scholarship in exchange for the value created by their labor. While the NCAA still defines student-athletes as amateurs, that has no bearing on commodification as long as the consumer still receives the material object; in this case the performance of the student-athlete.
The issue of student-athlete exploitation can also be looked at in the context of marginal revenue product. To do this, it is necessary to calculate the change in total revenue resulting from a unit change in a variable input, keeping all other inputs the same (Van Rheenen, 2013). In the case of intercollegiate athletics the variable input is student-athlete labor. Economically speaking, if a student-athlete’s compensation is valued less than their marginal revenue product, then they would be exploited.

Empirical studies have been conducted that have estimated that the marginal revenue product for FBS football and men’s basketball players can be as high as $1 million (Brown, 1994; Brown, 2011). Values at those levels indicate that some football and men’s basketball players are indeed economically exploited as scholarship values are limited to tuition, books fees, room, board, and cost of attendance. In intercollegiate athletics this exploitation is used for the benefit of other athletes in non-revenue producing sports as well as salaries for coaches and administrators, and facility construction (Van Rheenen, 2013).

With empirical studies showing that student-athletes are exploited in the current NCAA system, Van Rheenen (2011) examined student-athlete perceptions of feeling exploited by their university. He began his examination with an explanation of the incongruence between the highly commercialized operations of intercollegiate athletics and academic mission of universities. He articulated this incongruence by highlighting the low graduation rates of the participants in the highest profile intercollegiate athletics events, football bowl games and the NCAA men’s basketball tournament.
To see if this incongruence affected student-athletes’ perceptions of exploitation, Van Rheenen (2011) surveyed 581 NCAA FBS student-athletes in 17 sports. He administered an annual survey over a four year period to student-athletes at the same university. The survey was administered online and contained the same items each year. He obtained demographic information consisting of sport, gender, race/ethnicity, year in school, and scholarship status. To measure feelings of exploitation the author used three items from Simons and Van Rheenen’s (2000) scale. To explore whether or not there were differences among the different demographics, chi square analysis and odds ratios were used.

Van Rheenen (2011) found that one-third of all participants felt exploited. The feelings of exploitation were felt most by football and men’s basketball players, however, student-athletes in non-revenue sports also responded that they felt exploited. The author posited that these athletes may have felt that way due to the university benefiting from their participation in ways other than financially. Additionally, he thought it possible that feelings of exploitation come from the amount of time required to participate in a sport, which sometimes limits the options of athletes when choosing their majors. When males and females were compared, it was found that males felt more exploited than females, but that difference was attributed to the fact that football and men’s basketball only consisted of male participants. The other major finding was that Blacks felt significantly more exploited than their counterparts across every category.

In reaction to the notion that student-athletes are economically exploited, Sanderson and Siegfried (2015) laid out the operational tenets of the NCAA that allow
for this exploitation to take place. They began by addressing the economic issue of why universities continue to operate large-scale commercial athletic programs, highlighting the idea of exposure to alumni, donors, potential students, and other constituents through television contracts. As detailed earlier, these television contracts provide a great deal of revenue to universities (Cheslock & Knight, 2015).

Despite the increasing amount of revenues being generated through these television contracts, members of the NCAA do not allow for a free labor market for student-athletes (Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). Essentially, “colleges and universities deal with the prospect of hiring players in a competitive market by engineering monopsony power as a group and then collectively agreeing to a ceiling on remuneration” (Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015, p. 124). This ceiling is what allows the conditions to exist that can create the feelings of exploitation among student-athletes, especially football and men’s basketball players.

Because there is a limit on how much institutions can spend on student-athletes’ scholarships, they are afforded the opportunity to spend the excess revenue generated by those student-athletes on coaches’ and administrators’ salaries, facilities, and student-athletes in non-revenue sports. Additionally, the current system could be seen as taxing African American student athletes as they make up a high percentage of football and men’s basketball players (Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). The authors concluded that a change to a competitive market for the student-athletes in the NCAA would only come from pressure from the government or litigation in court.
Academic Balance

The continued increase in revenues being generated in college athletics and the resulting issues (e.g. exploitation, litigation) can make it difficult to identify how athletics fits into higher education. This has led some researchers to investigate the different aspects of how a balance between athletics and higher education can be obtained. This section offers a look at the issue from the perspective of coaches, the NCAA, and student-athletes.

Weight, Cooper, and Popp (2015) investigated an alternative to the current structure of NCAA Division I athletics that would see athletics integrated into the educational structure by more closely aligning coaches’ roles with those of the faculty. Their study examined the perceptions of NCAA Division I coaches about their role within the university structure and how the industry could be altered through an integrated view of athletics. To facilitate this study, the authors asked three questions: 1) How do the coaches feel about implementing an integrated structure? 2) What organizational structures do coaches believe should be uniform between athletics and academics? 3) Do significant differences exist between coaches’ beliefs regarding the integrated view across different demographics?

To develop their instrument for this study, Weight et al. (2015) used a literature review and had it reviewed by a panel of experts including sport management professors, NCAA Division I coaches and administrators, and a survey design consultant. When completed, the instrument consisted of items to collect the demographic information for NCAA Division I football classification, coaching position, gender, years as a college
coach, and sport coached. Additionally, the instrument contained open-ended questions related to organizational structure preferences for intercollegiate athletics, Likert scale questions related to integration of athletics and academics, and a yes/no question gauging support for an educational curriculum to be used in athletics.

They sent their survey to 3,500 coaches and had a response rate of 19%, creating a sample of 661 coaches. The respondents were primarily White (89%) and male (62%) and were split evenly among head and assistant coaches. To analyze the data the authors produced frequencies and descriptive statistics as well as conducted analyses of variance and Chi squared tests to detect differences among the demographics. The qualitative data were independently organized into emergent categories based on the responses to the open-ended questions.

Weight et al. (2015) found that half of the respondents felt athletics should be structured similarly to academics, thus were in favor of the integrated view. Those that supported the integration felt it would help achieve the academic mission of the institution, would provide greater job security to coaches, and would decrease the pressure to win. The half of respondents who were opposed, felt integration would inhibit the pursuit of athletic excellence and would diminish the ability of coaches to be compensated for the extra responsibility that comes with being a coach. Additionally, those not in favor of integration felt athletics generated publicity for the institution and that would decrease with an integration of athletics and academics.

These findings illustrate the current divide that exists between athletics and academics at NCAA Division I institutions. As Wright et al. explained, an “us versus
“them” mentality permeated the responses to the open-ended questions, meaning that many of the coaches felt at odds with the faculty. The coaches often felt that despite feeling like an educator, they lacked the job security of a professor. However, when the element of compensation was examined the coaches did not feel they should be compensated similarly to professors. These two elements help to highlight the challenge that the highly commercialized enterprise of intercollegiate athletics presents for institutions of higher education.

In response to the perceived incongruence between high-level NCAA Division I athletics and the missions of institutions of higher education, Southall (2014) argued that the NCAA has been attempting to rebrand itself. Using a rebranding framework, Southall showed how the NCAA has gone about rebranding itself as another element in the successful education of student-athletes. Specifically, he discussed the introduction of the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) by the NCAA as a prime element of this rebranding.

Southall (2014) began by explaining that rebranding is often in response to crisis and pointed to high profile academic issues in the mid-1980s as the crisis the NCAA is responding to. He went on to lay out the three phases of rebranding as 1) triggers and brand vision, 2) rebranding strategy and implementation, and 3) stakeholder buy in and outcomes. He applied these stages to the NCAA by saying phase one was the NCAA’s reaction to low graduation rates by football and men’s basketball players. The NCAA commissioned a study to examine the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR), which is calculated by the federal government. The NCAA recalculated the FGR by removing
eligible drop-outs, those student-athletes who leave the institution in good academic standing, from the sample used to calculate the FGR. This removal resulted in a 20% improvement in graduation rates and resulted in the GSR. Phase two of the rebranding effort consists of the new measure being promoted as better, when compared to the FGR, consistently by the NCAA and its member institutions. Finally, Southall offered the legal testimony of the president of the NCAA as phase three of the rebranding. The testimony consists of promoting the fact that the NCAA and its member institutions provide scholarships for many first generation students and that GSRs have been improving, as evidence that education is the main focus of the enterprise.

Southall (2015) presented a counter argument to the rebranding effort by pointing out that because the GSR and FGR use different samples, one is not better than the other, just that they are different. Specifically, he pointed out that there is no comparable measure to the GSR for non-athlete students. Finally, Southall framed the continued rebranding effort as a way for the NCAA and its member institutions to blunt the criticism that Division I athletics is too commercial and does not fit in with the mission of higher education by showing that despite the large amount of money involved with the enterprise, the GSR is proof that athletics is an integral part of the education process.

In an effort to empirically investigate the effects of participating in intercollegiate athletics, Routon and Walker (2014) compared non-athletes and athletes on a number of different measures using propensity score matching. To obtain their data, they used responses to surveys administered by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) to freshmen and seniors. They tested to see if participation in intercollegiate
athletics had an effect on academic outcomes and also if there were differences between student types. The measures they used were college grade point average, on-time graduation, satisfaction with the college experience, and scores on graduate school entrance exams. Additionally, they used pre-college academic ability as a covariate measured by SAT score, high school grade point average, and self-rated academic ability.

The sample used by Routon and Walker (2014) consisted of 103,542 students, 26.5% of which were student-athletes. They examined effects among student-athletes by sport (football/men’s basketball vs. other), gender, race, and impact on top students. Overall, they found that sport participation had a negative impact on college grade point average, and graduate entrance exam scores. Further, they identified that sport participation had a larger impact on football and men’s basketball players when compared to participants in other sports. Additional findings included male student-athletes having lower grade point averages than females, changing majors more and having lower GRE scores.

Routon and Walker (2014) did not operationally define minority in their study. However, based on how they reported their findings, someone who identified as belonging to any race other than White was classified in the minority group. When Routon and Walker (2014) examined the differences in the impact of participation in intercollegiate athletics on minority student-athletes, they discovered that they were more likely to graduate on-time than their non-athlete counterparts. They also, found that minority student-athletes were more likely to change majors and have to take remedial classes. The results of this study suggest that contrary to the claims made by the NCAA
(Southall, 2015), some academic outcomes, such as grade point averages and GRE scores, for student-athletes are negatively impacted by participating in intercollegiate athletics. Further, they support the notion that student-athletes, especially football and men’s basketball players, may be focusing more on their respective sport when compared to their academic work. While this study did not examine what factors led to the difference in academic outcomes, it does highlight the reality that student-athletes experience higher education differently than their non-athlete counterparts.

When combined, the preceding articles paint a comprehensive picture of the challenge faced by the institutions in higher education that choose to sponsor intercollegiate athletics. Based on the perception of coaches, there is a disconnect that exists between NCAA Division I athletic programs and the academic units on their campuses. Further evidence of this divide is provided by Routon and Walker (2014) as they presented empirical evidence that student-athletes have less favorable academic outcomes when compared to non-athletes on campus. To combat this issue, the NCAA has mounted a rebranding campaign that is aimed at lessening the criticism that stems from the apparent incompatibility of highly commercialized intercollegiate athletics and the mission of higher education. As athletic departments prepare for the future this is an issue that will certainly need to be addressed.

Diversity

Research has shown that a diverse workforce has a positive effect on performance outcomes for intercollegiate athletic departments (Burton & Leberman, 2015; Cunningham, 2009). Despite these findings, intercollegiate athletics continues to lack
diversity in the administration and coaching ranks. In their report on gender and race in college sport, Lapchick, Fox, Guiao, and Simpson (2015) found that while NCAA FBS football participants were 52.9% African Americans, only 14 of the 126 football coaches were of color. Similar numbers held true for men’s basketball. Additionally, over 85% of athletic directors and associate athletic directors at NCAA Division I institutions were White and women held less than 10% of athletic director positions and less than 30% of associate athletic director positions (Lapchick et al., 2015). With these numbers in mind, the following articles empirically investigated the different aspects of this issue.

Clopton and Bourke (2011) investigated the perceptions of intercollegiate athletics among non-athletes and athletes by race. Their purpose was to examine the impact of athletics on the campus climate of FBS institutions as well as their students. Additionally, they aimed to find out what, if any, role race played in the perceptions.

Clopton and Bourke (2011) used critical race theory as their conceptual framework, summarizing the theory thusly: “race is manifested in the United States through both physical and social markers of difference” (p. 35). They related the theory to their study through the idea that the marker of whiteness becomes tied to a sense of normalcy and the marker of Black is not normal and those with that marker are often kept at the margins. This dynamic can exist on FBS campuses because all the institutions that compete at the FBS level are predominately White institutions. Therefore, students of color on these campuses can be perceived by their fellow students as being different and student-athletes of color have an additional marker that can further differentiate them from their peers.
With this in mind, Clopton and Bourke (2011) surveyed students and faculty at a predominately White, mid-Atlantic, regional university with 15,000 students that competed at the FBS level in athletics. The authors targeted traditional aged students (18-24 years old) and selected them randomly from an online directory. They used a stratified random sample to ensure they had enough athletes and had a total sample of 1,250 students. The instruments used were the Athletics and Campus Community Scale (ACCS) to measure the perceptions of athletics’ impact on campus, the Sport Spectatorship Identification Scale (SSIS) to measure the extent to which individuals identify as fans of the institution’s athletic teams, and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) to measure the extent to which students identified with the university. Additionally, they collected the following demographic information: gender, race, athlete status, ACT/SAT scores, and grade point average. To analyze the data, the authors conducted a multiple analysis of covariance using race and athlete status as the independent variables, the ACCS as the dependent variable, and the SSIS and CSES as covariates.

Clopton and Bourke (2011) found that Black student-athletes perceived the role of athletics in their relationship with the institution differently than White student-athletes and both Black and White non-athletes. This led the researchers to suggest that it is possible that Black athletes “see a commoditization of their talents and contributions” (p. 39). These findings lend themselves to the idea that Black student-athletes have a unique campus experience when compared to their peers causing them to be marginalized even more than their non-athlete counterparts.
The practical implication of this research for institutions that sponsor FBS athletic programs is that a concerted effort has to be made to integrate student-athletes, especially Black student-athletes, with the rest of the student body. In this sense, integration would mean that student-athletes would be able to identify not just as athletes, but also as members of the campus community in general. This calls upon leaders within student affairs, intercollegiate athletics, the student-body and the student-athletes themselves to work together to foster a greater sense of community. This can be done through a combination of decreasing athletic time demands and increased and focused education for student-athletes on the different engagement opportunities available on campus. Without a sustained effort, institutions run the risk of further marginalizing an already marginalized group.

In looking at diversity from another angle, Bower and Hums (2013) set out to determine the perception of the impact of Title IX on career opportunities for both women and men in intercollegiate athletic administration. They described both the increase in female participant opportunities after the passing of Title IX and the decrease in administration opportunities for females during that same time. Female participation in intercollegiate athletics went from 16,000 in 1968, four years prior to the passing of Title IX, to over 200,000 in 2012. Conversely, in 1972, the year Title IX was passed, 90% of those overseeing women’s athletics were women, whereas in 2012 only 20% of athletic directors were women and just over a third of all NCAA Division I administrators were women.
To investigate the perceptions of male and female intercollegiate athletic administrators the authors surveyed 1,275 men and women administrators at NCAA Divisions I, II, and III, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and junior colleges. They used the Female Sport Manager Career Survey as their instrument. Additionally, they collected demographic information regarding age, education, income and race.

The most common theme identified by Bowers and Hums (2013) was that Title IX played a part in increasing opportunities for women in administration. The participants often cited the creation of the senior woman administrator (SWA) position as evidence of the increased opportunities, however the authors pointed out that this perception was not supported by the empirical studies on the subject. The second most common theme that emerged was that Title IX had no impact on careers in athletic administration. The authors attributed this perception to the fact that the passing of Title IX predated many of the respondents. The third theme to emerge from the study was the idea that Title IX increased the number of instances of discriminatory hiring. This theme was most often put forth by male respondents who felt that the need to hire women for positions lessened the number of opportunities for men.

The implication of this study is two-fold. First, despite a lack of empirical support, female intercollegiate athletic administrators seem to think their opportunities have increased. This lack of awareness could lead to a form of apathy toward the necessity to build diverse staffs due to the thought they are already are. Second, if male administrators, many of whom are in a position to influence personnel decisions, feel
women are taking away opportunities from men, they will be less inclined to hire women in an effort to diversify their staffs. Both of these points lead to the conclusion that continued education is needed on the actual current status of women in the field of intercollegiate athletic administration and the benefit of diversifying an organization’s staff.

Wright, Eagleman, and Pedersen (2011) delved into the backgrounds of NCAA Division I athletic directors in an attempt to identify why more women and minorities were not in those roles. The authors did not define what they meant by minority, but based on how they structured their study, it can be inferred that they defined minority as anyone belonging to a non-White group. They grounded their study in the human capital theory with the intention of finding the differences between women and minority athletic directors and their White male counterparts. Human capital theory is based on the idea that individuals who accrue job related personal investments should see more job related successes when compared with those who have less investments. These investments include items such as education, training, and experience.

The authors’ stated purpose for this study was to examine the backgrounds of NCAA Division I athletic directors and compare and contrast human capital investment variables to see if women and minorities were missing some of those variables as an explanation for their lack of representation in the athletic director ranks. To conduct this investigation, Wright et al. (2011) studied 348 websites and performed a content analysis to collect variables from the biographies of each athletic director. The human capital variables they used consisted of the institution attended for undergraduate degree,
undergraduate major, athletic playing experience, graduate degree, highest degree achieved, tenure, marital status, children and the athletic departments’ NCAA academic progress report score.

In conducting their analysis, the authors found 316 male athletic directors and 27 female athletic directors. Among the males there were 230 that were White, 30 that were black and 3 that were Hispanic. The female athletic directors were made up of 14 Whites, 6 Blacks, and 1 Hispanic. Using analysis of variance tests to detect any differences between males and females and between Whites and minorities, the authors found no statistical differences between the athletic directors on the basis of gender or race when comparing human capital variables operationalized by education, experience, training, competencies, and playing experience.

These findings suggest that it is not the lack of human capital investments possessed by women and minorities that prevent them from filling athletic director roles, but rather some other impediment. Identifying those impediments should be a high priority for presidents as they look to hire future athletic directors that better represent the culture at large. Additionally, providing role models for women and minorities on campus would be of benefit to both the students and the university.

The preceding articles highlight the issue of diversity as it relates to both participants and administrators in intercollegiate athletics. It is important for leaders in the enterprise to understand the effect the lack of diversity can have on student-athletes’ experiences on campus. Along with that, recognizing that a concerted effort is needed to
find more women and minorities for leadership roles will aid in strategic planning as departments move forward.

This environmental assessment focused on three factors: economic, legal, and sociocultural. Within the sociocultural factor there three elements discussed, including the possible exploitation of student-athletes, the academic-athletic balance, and diversity within intercollegiate athletics. It is important to understand the current state of these environmental factors and how they impact the stakeholders of intercollegiate athletics. Many of these stakeholders have been eluded to throughout this section and the managing of relationships with stakeholders through the changing environment will help determine the level of success of the NCAA and its member institutions as they navigate the next five to seven years. The proceeding section will discuss stakeholder theory and how it relates to intercollegiate athletics.

Stakeholder Theory

A stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Stakeholder theory was developed in an attempt to better understand organizations that were, and are, operating in a turbulent and ever-changing environment (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010). The basis of stakeholder theory is the idea that it is necessary for an organization to identify its stakeholder groups and manage its relationships with those groups (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004).

The term stakeholder first appeared in a memo at the Stanford Research Institute that challenged the notion that a company was only responsible to its shareholders
Prior to the advent of stakeholder theory, it was thought that an organization was only responsible to those that had a financial stake in the organization. Freeman developed the concept that there were more individuals and groups, beyond those with a financial interest, which could have an impact on or be impacted by the organization. Taken a step further, the concept essentially posited that unless an organization understood the needs of its stakeholders, it could not formulate a plan that would garner the support needed for survival (Freeman, 2010).

The theory that developed around this idea was meant to help address three interconnected issues: a) the creation of value and how it is traded, b) identifying connections between capitalism and ethics, and c) the role managers play in addressing the first two issues (Freeman, 1984). In the intervening years, the central theme to evolve in addressing these issues has been that organizations should take into consideration the interests and needs of their stakeholders (Mainardes et al., 2011). That is, it is necessary for organizations to recognize the relationships that exist with stakeholders and how they work and change over time (Freeman et al., 2010).

Stakeholder theory holds that the organization is at the center of a network of relationships involving a diverse group of participants who will either help, or be helped by, the organization in accomplishing its goals (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Rowley, 1997). Therefore, it becomes paramount for organizations to develop stakeholder management strategies. In order to do so Mainardes et al. (2011) recommend three steps:
a) identify the stakeholders, b) develop processes identifying stakeholder needs and interests, and c) construct relationships structured around the organization’s objectives.

**Approaches to Stakeholder Theory**

As the study of stakeholder theory has evolved, three approaches have developed. These approaches were categorized by Donaldson and Preston (1995) in order to clarify the use and implications of stakeholder theory. The three approaches they identified were descriptive, instrumental, and normative. Descriptive approaches to the theory are generally exploratory in nature and describe the organization-stakeholder relationship. The instrumental approach establishes a framework for examining the relationship between stakeholder management and goal achievement by the organization. The theory behind the instrumental approach is that the better an organization manages its stakeholder relationships, the more effective the organization will be. The normative approach to stakeholder theory is based on the idea that all stakeholder interests have intrinsic value and that regardless of their impact on the economic interests of an organization, stakeholders should be treated fairly because it is the ethical or moral thing to do (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Mainardes et al., 2011; Parmar, Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Purnell, & de Colle, 2010).

It has been argued that, at its core, stakeholder theory is normative in nature and that the other approaches are based on the premise that all stakeholders’ interests are treated by managers as if they have value (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Parmar et al., 2010). To that end, this dissertation will focus on a convergent
approach to stakeholder theory. The convergent approach combines the tenets of the normative and instrumental approaches to decide how stakeholder management can be both effective and morally sound at the same time (Jones & Wicks, 1999).

**Convergent Approach**

The convergent approach to stakeholder theory contends that the instrumental approach and the normative approach are linked together and are incomplete without the other (Jones & Wicks, 1999). Jones (1995) described convergent stakeholder theory as a combination of ethics and economics. He held that organizations that relate to stakeholders on the basis of mutual trust and cooperativeness will be more successful than organizations that do not engage with stakeholders in this way (Friedman & Miles, 2006; Henisz, Dorobantu, & Nartey, 2014; Jones, 1995). That is, organizations that view stakeholder interests as having intrinsic value, and because of that intrinsic value, pursue those interests, those organizations will be more effective (Donaldson, 1999). The key word that links instrumental stakeholder theory to normative stakeholder theory is intrinsic.

Normative stakeholder theory holds that stakeholders are individuals or groups with interests in the organizations and that interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In other words, all stakeholders should be treated as ends and not just means (Jones & Wicks, 1999). So, while the instrumental approach to stakeholder theory calls for the ethical treatment of stakeholders because it is more effective, the normative approach to stakeholder theory calls for the ethical treatment of stakeholders because it is the right or moral thing to do.
The linking of these two approaches into a convergent approach is based on two tenets: the intrinsic value of the stakeholder interests and the role of the manager in pursuing those interests (Donaldson, 1999; Jones & Wicks, 1999). If the manager fails to recognize the value in all stakeholder interests or fails to pursue those interests, that manager will fail the organization. A failing organization, then, is less effective at satisfying stakeholder needs. However, if a manager believes that stakeholder interests have intrinsic value and pursuing those interests leads to greater effectiveness, that manager should also believe that they should treat stakeholder interests as having intrinsic value (Donaldson, 1999). Put another way, an organization cannot reach its potential effectiveness without recognizing the intrinsic value of its stakeholders.

One way the link between the instrumental and normative approaches has been conceptualized and empirically proven is through the lens of organizational justice. Organizational justice can be defined as the perceived sense of fairness by employees (Colquitt, 2001; Patrick, Mahony, & Petrosko, 2008). There have been numerous empirical studies linking the relationship between perceived justice and increased effectiveness, as well as perceived injustice and decreased effectiveness (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Hosmer & Kiewitz, 2005). Generally, organizational justice research focuses on the employer-employee relationship, but as Husted (1998) suggested, if expanded to organization-stakeholder relationship, the efficacy of stakeholder theory could be tested. In doing just that, Bosse, Phillips, and Harrison (2009) argued that an organization that is willing to incur the cost of demonstrating justice will enjoy a positively reciprocating relationship with its
stakeholders. This reciprocating relationship would then lead to a better performance for the organization (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). While the link between the instrumental and normative approaches to stakeholder theory are well founded, in order to manage stakeholder relationships it is also important for an organization to determine the salience of its stakeholders.

Stakeholder Salience

As a way to determine stakeholder salience, et al. (1997) developed a framework for describing stakeholder salience within an organization based on the manager’s perception of the stakeholder’s possession of one or more of the following attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency. They defined power as the ability of a stakeholder to bring about their desired outcomes or impose their will upon the relationship with the organization. Legitimacy was defined using Suchman’s (1995) definition: “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574). Finally, Mitchell et al. defined urgency “as the degree to which stakeholder claims require immediate attention” (p. 867). With the three attributes defined, Mitchell et al. identified seven types of stakeholders using this framework, grouping them into three categories. The latent category consists of stakeholders types that only possess one attribute: dormant (power), discretionary (legitimacy), and demanding (urgency). The expectant category consists of stakeholder types that possess two attributes: dominant (power and legitimacy), dangerous (power and urgency), and dependent (legitimacy and urgency). The last category consists of just
one type of stakeholder, definitive, that holds all three attributes at the same time. If someone does not possess any of these attributes, they would not be considered a stakeholder of that organization.

This framework has been supported and expanded upon in the intervening years by stakeholder theory scholars. As a testament to the importance of salience to stakeholder theory, the Mitchell et al. (1997) article has been cited over 8,000 times. Myllykangas, Kujala, and Lehtimaki (2011) empirically examined the framework and found that it provides a good foundation for analyzing stakeholder salience from a value creation standpoint. They then offered additional factors, including objectives of the stakeholder and trust between the stakeholder and the organization, as characteristics that would further clarify the salience of stakeholders for an organization. Agle, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld (1999) used the framework in assessing how chief executive officers evaluated salience and also found support for the three attributes of salience. Further, it has been suggested that by using a stakeholder salience approach, an organization can better handle crisis management (Alpaslan, Green, & Mitroff, 2009).

Tashman and Raelin (2013) advanced the research on stakeholder salience when they reexamined whose perceptions salience should be based on. While they agreed with Mitchell et al. (1997) that the manager’s perception of power, urgency, and legitimacy was important, they proposed that the stakeholder’s perception along with the institutional expectations and other stakeholders’ perceptions should also be included in the determination of salience. They argued that it was possible for a manager to overlook or ignore a stakeholder’s salience due to market frictions. Tashman and Raelin suggested
a two-way dialogue between the organization and its stakeholders in order to mitigate the
market frictions. The result of this dialogue would have implications both to the
instrumental approach as well as the normative approach to stakeholder theory.
Instrumentally, with the salience of stakeholders being determined by more than just the
manager, the organization will be better able to predict performance. Normatively, this
process of determination of stakeholder salience increases the chances of powerless
stakeholders being identified, allowing for fairer treatment of all stakeholders. A
prominent area in which organizations use stakeholder salience, and stakeholder theory in
general, to help determine strategy, is intercollegiate athletics.

_**Stakeholder Theory in Intercollegiate Athletics Research**_

Stakeholder theory has been advanced through its application in sport
management research. The application of stakeholder theory in the sport management
literature has taken place in many domains; however, it has been employed in abundance
in intercollegiate athletics research. It has been used to examine organizational
effectiveness, change management, goal prioritization, and strategic decision making.

Early research examined the prioritization of goals in intercollegiate athletic
departments and it was suggested that administrators assess the importance placed on
certain goals, by stakeholders, to help with the prioritization (Chelladurai, et al., 1984).
This line of research was advanced by Trail and Chelladurai (2000) when they identified
faculty and students as stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics and examined their
perceptions of athletic department goals. Further research found that stakeholders of an
athletic department prioritized areas such as finances, graduation rates, wins, and ethics
and that different stakeholder groups were heterogeneous in how they prioritized these areas (Putler & Wolfe, 1999). Research into how stakeholders prioritized and perceived goals in intercollegiate athletics aids administrators in understanding how to manage stakeholder relationships in order to maximize effectiveness.

Stakeholder management has also been a focus in intercollegiate athletics research. Stakeholder management consists of communication between the organization and stakeholders, recognizing the different salience levels of stakeholders, and adjusting to the dynamic nature of stakeholders and the environment (Walters & Tacon, 2010). Friedman, Parent, and Mason (2004) developed a framework for issue analysis based on the tenets of stakeholder theory. They contended that, through the continual monitoring of the environment to identify stakeholders and their needs, an organization could better respond to those stakeholders and take advantage of opportunities and mitigate threats. The key to the Friedman et al. framework was stakeholder relationship management. Other research has also suggested that organizational effectiveness can be improved through stakeholder management (Covell, 2005; Wolfe, et al., 2002; Wolfe & Putler, 2002). One of the areas where the benefit of stakeholder management can be seen is change management.

Research has shown that the effectiveness of organizational change management can be impacted by stakeholder management (Morrow & Idle, 2008). The recognition of, and communication with, stakeholders during a period of change can mitigate resistance. This is exemplified in the intercollegiate athletics setting when examining NCAA division reclassification. It has been found that the identification of salient stakeholders
and their needs can assist managers in formulating change strategy to facilitate a
smoother reclassification (Dwyer, et al., 2010; Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011).
Additionally, Kihl, Leberman, and Schull (2010) found that to gauge whether or not
leadership is effective during change in intercollegiate athletics, it is necessary to assess
stakeholder perceptions.

Stakeholder theory holds a prominent place in the study of intercollegiate
athletics. Scholars have used the theory to advance research in the area of organizational
effectiveness for athletic departments; employing it to better understand goal
prioritization. Once a department recognizes the value of involving stakeholders in
identifying and prioritizing goals, it is possible to engage in stakeholder management.
Managing the relationships with stakeholders allows for increased effectiveness. The
increase in effectiveness, as it relates to intercollegiate athletics, is epitomized when
examining change management and the mitigation of resistance.

Stakeholder Theory and Forecasting Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics

Stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics include student-athletes, students,
prospective students, coaches, athletic department administrators, donors, faculty, alumni,
fans, and community members (Dwyer et al., 2010; Wolfe & Putler, 2002). Additional
stakeholders involved with intercollegiate athletics have been identified as media
conglomerates, sporting goods companies, advertising and sponsorship entities, and
professional leagues (Sagas & Wigely, 2014). Once the NCAA and its member
institutions have identified its stakeholders, it is important to assess how those
relationships are impacted by an ever-evolving environment (Friedman et al., 2004; Rowley, 1997; Xue & Mason, 2011).

The purpose of this current study is to assess the changes taking place in the environment in which intercollegiate athletics operates and predict what the consequences of those changes will be. Having this information will allow the NCAA and its member institutions to evaluate the salience of the different stakeholder groups and whether or not those levels of salience align with the mission of the organizations. Further, the assessment of the salience of stakeholders will aid in prioritizing goals allowing for a better understanding of how to manage stakeholder relationships (Chelladurai et al., 1984; Putler & Wolfe, 1999; Trail & Chelladurai, 2000). Through effective management of stakeholder relationships, intercollegiate athletic departments can increase their levels of success (Covell, 2005; Wolfe, Hoeber, & Babiak, 2002; Wolfe & Putler, 2002).

Stakeholder Theory Conclusion

Stakeholder theory was developed based on the idea that organizations are responsible for providing value to others beyond just those benefitting financially (Freeman, 1984). As the study and use of the theory has evolved, three approaches have emerged. Of the three, the instrumental and normative approaches are the most relevant to this study. The combination of the two into a convergent approach allows for the pursuit of effectiveness by an organization; with some of that effectiveness being judged by how well that organization manages relationships with its stakeholders based on the recognition of their intrinsic value.
An important aspect to managing relationships with stakeholders is the determination of salience. In developing a framework for evaluating stakeholder salience, Mitchell et al. (1997) proposed that salience be based on the possession of power, legitimacy, and/or urgency. Subsequent studies have supported this line of thinking, which has aided organizations in prioritizing stakeholders and their needs. A prominent area in which the evaluation of stakeholder salience can be observed is in intercollegiate athletics.

Intercollegiate athletics serves as a relevant setting to study stakeholder theory. There is a large and diverse set of stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics (Dwyer et al., 2010; Sagas & Wigley, 2014; Wolfe & Putler, 2002) and this provides ample opportunity to see how stakeholder management impacts organizational effectiveness. Additionally, because there is a number of stakeholder groups that do not benefit financially, the normative aspects of stakeholder theory can be also studied.

Stakeholder theory provides a substantial foundation on which to base this current study. The future issues this study is attempting to identify will inevitably involve many different stakeholder groups. Understanding how the relationships with stakeholder groups are affected by the changing environment in which intercollegiate athletics is currently operating will help inform the leaders in the intercollegiate athletics enterprise how to proceed in a way that is most effective for all involved.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the procedures used to answer the research questions outlined in chapter 1. In order to forecast the consequences of the changes in the current operating environment for intercollegiate athletics, this study used the Delphi technique. Included in this chapter are the (a) history of the Delphi technique, (b) characteristics of the Delphi technique, (c) the sample and participants, (d) data collection and analysis procedures, and (e) limitations of the Delphi technique.

History of the Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique is a mixed method approach that serves as both the research design and the data collection strategy. The name of the technique is derived from the Oracle at Delphi in ancient Greece, who was asked by rulers of the time to look into the future, in order to provide guidance on matters such as colonizing ventures, wars, and government composition (de Boer, Hale, & Chanton, 2001). The purpose of using the Delphi technique is “to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p. 458). The Delphi technique stems from a research project conducted by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s in which the researchers were trying to forecast, from the viewpoint of the Soviet Union, what targets in the United States would be high priority for bombing (Davidson, 2013).
The Delphi technique is a useful tool when there is a lack of knowledge on a subject or when a researcher wants to obtain the opinions of experts on a complex problem (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). The technique essentially facilitates the structured discussion of a group of experts in order to solve a problem or forecast trends in an industry (Adler & Ziglio, 1996). Because of its flexible nature, the Delphi technique has been used to solve problems in many industries, including health care, marketing research, national defense, and management, among others (McKenna, 1994; Powell, 2003; Wilhelm, 2001). Additionally, the technique has been used to forecast trends in communication, sport management, and tourism, to name a few (Branch & Crow, 1994; Costa, 2005; Lee, Cho, Hong, & Yoon, 2016; Liu, 1988).

It is for the purposes of forecasting, that the Delphi technique was used in this current study. With the help of experts, consequences of current changes in the environment for intercollegiate athletics over the next five to seven years, were identified. The information obtained from this study can be used by athletic administrators to help facilitate their next strategic plan and aid in how they manage relationships with stakeholders. In order to conduct a study using the Delphi technique there are certain characteristics that must be in place. The next sections outlines those characteristics and how they were accomplished.

Characteristics of the Delphi Technique

There are four essential characteristics involved in the Delphi technique: anonymity in the process, controlled feedback, statistical aggregation of group response, and iteration (Dalkey, 1967; Gnatzy, Warth, von der Gracht, & Darkow, 2011). The
absence of any of these elements undermines the results obtained from the study. Conversely, the proper execution of each element can help to ensure the credibility of the findings of the study (Yousuf, 2007).

Anonymity is an essential characteristic of the Delphi technique as it allows for a debate among the group of experts, while reducing the possible effect of a socially dominant member of the group (Dalkey, 1967). This is critical in two ways. First, it allows the experts to share their opinions, even extreme ones, without concern for being ostracized. Second, it usually leads to higher response rates (von der Gracht, 2012). Anonymity is accomplished through the use of questionnaires, allowing panel members to express their opinions privately and based on merit alone (Rowe & Wright, 1999). Further, anonymity allows people with conflicting personalities to work productively together (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975).

Anonymity for this study was accomplished through the use of the secure, online survey tool Qualtrics. With the use of Qualtrics, the panel of experts were able to complete each round of surveys without having to interact with other members of the panel. Additionally, the only identifying characteristics that were asked for from respondents was conference affiliation, gender, and race.

The second characteristic involved with the Delphi technique is controlled feedback. This feedback, provided by the researcher, informs the panel members of the opinions of their anonymous colleagues (Rowe & Wright, 1999). The control of the feedback by the researcher allows for the elimination of non-relevant conversation that
can take place during a face to face group meeting. Additionally, it allows the researcher to ensure that the focus remains on the subject of interest.

The controlled feedback takes place between the multiple iterations or rounds, which is the third requirement of the Delphi technique. The purpose of multiple iterations is to determine consensus of opinion among the panel of experts on each topic (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Iteration, combined with anonymity, also allows the experts a chance to change their opinion without losing face with the other experts (Rowe & Wright, 2001). Most literature says that three iterations is enough and that more than that provides diminishing returns (Davidson, 2013; Ludwig, 1997; Yousuf, 2007). For purposes of this current study, three rounds were used. The first round consisted of open ended questions formulated from the literature review and research questions, as suggested by Davidson (2013). Additionally, the first round questionnaire were reviewed for conciseness and coherence by four experts not serving on the Delphi panel. After the first round, the second and third rounds consisted of a questionnaire rating the likelihood and impact of consequences gleaned from the first round. The responses from the group of experts were statistically aggregated to form one group opinion.

This statistical aggregation is the fourth characteristic of the Delphi technique. Central tendency measures are the main statistics used in aggregating responses (Rowe & Wright, 2001). When using Likert scales, medians are generally preferred to the mean, as medians are not skewed by extreme values (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). These medians are reported back to the group between each iteration of the study as the controlled feedback. This feedback is what facilitates the convergence of opinion to consensus. Consensus is
defined by the researcher prior to the study and generally are seen as a certain percentage of votes from the experts falling within a prescribed range (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Sample and Participants

As noted in chapter 1, there are many stakeholders involved in intercollegiate athletics. For the purposes of this study, the focus was on upper level administrators of intercollegiate athletic departments. This group was chosen as the focus because of their day to day involvement with enterprise from a decision making standpoint. While the author acknowledges the involvement of many other stakeholders in the day to day business of intercollegiate athletics, the Delphi technique requires experts and this group will have the most expertise based on their positions and experience.

For this current study, experts were identified as NCAA Division I FBS directors of athletics and associate athletic directors with at least five years of experience in those positions. People in these positions were chosen for the depth of knowledge regarding intercollegiate athletics necessary to attain their positions (Wright, Eagleman, & Pedersen, 2011). Further, people holding these positions are considered top management decision makers who are involved with organizational strategic planning (Hsu & Sandford; 2007; Wolf & Floyd, 2013) and would be more invested in the results of the study. Additionally, to give a greater breadth of experience to the group, panel members had to have worked at a minimum of two FBS institutions to be selected as a participant. Finally, to ensure as many groups are represented as possible, the panel had both male and female administrators, both Power 5 and Group of 5 representation, and both people of color and White administrators participating.
There is no consensus on the number of people that should comprise an expert panel for a study using the Delphi technique and is generally dependent on the study itself (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Yousuf; 2007). However, several studies put the number between 5 and 30 (Adler & Ziglio, 1996; Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Rowe & Wright, 2001; Delbecq et al., 1975). For this current study a purposive sample of 31 experts was identified based on the aforementioned criteria, 12 of which participated in the study. A purposive sample is necessary due to the necessity of expert opinion (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). Further, this study employs both the maximum variation and criterion sampling approaches (Suri, 2011). The selected sample participants’ demographics are located in Table 1.

This group of people was chosen for the expert panel due to possessing the most expertise to answer the research questions. Moreover, their day to day job duties require interaction with a wide range of stakeholders including student-athletes, faculty, donors, community members, television partners, sponsors, and members of the media. This interaction gives the panel the type of insight needed to forecast future issues based on their effect on stakeholder relationship management. Finally, as participant dropout is a potential limitation of the Delphi technique, the backgrounds of these participants made them more likely to participate through all three rounds of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to data collection, this study was submitted to the Office of Responsible Research Practices at The Ohio State University for exemption from the Institutional Review Board. Once exempted, the expert panel was contacted with a request to
participate in the study via email (Appendices A & B) with a link to the first round questionnaire (Appendix C) included. There were two weeks allowed for responses from invited participants, after which a follow up email was sent to non-respondents with another week allowed for response (Table 3).

In order to analyze the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire in the first round, a content analysis was performed. Content analysis is a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The text data was in the form of responses to the first round questionnaire. One of the advantages of content analysis, as a qualitative methodology, is the ability to gain information directly from the study participants without the influence of already established themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The first step in a content analysis is to carefully read through all the responses. Then the responses should be read again in order to start developing key concepts and themes (Cerritos College, 2016; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As the themes and key concepts are developed they should be labeled or coded.

Coding is a way of organizing the data into categories, allowing for interpretation (Gibbs, 2007; Saldana, 2016). For this study, three steps were taken in order to code the responses as suggested by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). First, the relevant text was identified during the initial phase of the content analysis. Following the identification of the relevant text, repeating ideas were highlighted. The repeating ideas were then organized into categories supported by individual issues. Once categorized, the identified
issues were used to form the items for the creation of an instrument that allowed for the rating of these items in terms of likelihood and impact.

Once the instrument was created, the expert panel was contacted requesting their review of the questionnaire for the second round of the study. They were asked to evaluate each item on the likelihood of occurring in the next five to seven years and what the perceived impact would be. As has been suggested in other studies (Franklin & Hart, 2007; Rådestad et al., 2013), both evaluations were done on a scale of one to five with one being low and five being high. As shown in Table 3, the experts were given a week to respond to the second round questionnaire. Another week was allowed for follow up with experts who had not responded in the first week. Once all the responses had been collected, the results were aggregated and shared with the panel. For the third round the panelists were asked if they wanted to revise their judgement on any of the items they were outside of the consensus on and if not, to specify why they remained so. The time frame for the third round was two weeks, with a week allowed for follow up, because the experts were asked to defend extreme responses.

As stated earlier, central tendency measures (i.e., mean, median, and mode) are the main statistics used in the analysis of responses in a Delphi study. Additionally, standard deviation and interquartile range are often used to measure level of dispersion (Rowe & Wright, 1999). It is suggested that medians are the best of the central tendency measures to use with Likert scale data, as they are not skewed by outliers (von der Gracht, 2012). Consensus for this current study was defined as a median score above three for an item (Hsu & Sanford, 2007).
Limitations of the Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique is being employed to forecast future issues and therefore content validity is the only type of validity that applies (Hasson & Keeney, 2011). Content validity is the extent to which a measure represents the subject it is being used to study (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995). In the case of a Delphi study, content validity is based on the use of experts, however there is no consensus as to who constitutes an expert (Goodman, 1987; Hasson & Keeney, 2011). This lack of consensus as to who comprises an expert, makes it incumbent upon the researcher who is employing the Delphi technique to adequately explain what characteristics they required of individuals who served on the panel of experts (Davidson, 2013; Landeta, 2006). If the expertise of panel members is in doubt, then the results of the study can and should be called into question.

One of the cornerstones of a Delphi study is the anonymity of the panel of experts (Adler & Ziglio, 1996; Delbecq et al., 1975). However, while this anonymity allows for the expressing of unpopular opinions without the fear of being ostracized (Rowe & Wright, 1999), it can also lead to a lack of accountability (McKenna, 1994). Without this accountability, there is a possibility that irresponsible answers could be provided by members of the panel (Landeta, 2006.) This potential irresponsibility can be mitigated by finding experts who are invested in the outcome of the study (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

An additional benefit of having an expert panel invested in the outcome of the study is the lessening of the impact of the time requirement of a Delphi study. Because one of the tenets of the Delphi technique is iteration, there is a significant time
requirement (Dalkey, 1967). The time requirement involved can lead to a high dropout rate among expert panel members (Rowe & Wright, 2001). Once a panel member drops out of the study, their input up to that point must be excluded from the study (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Therefore, it is very important to keep the expert panel engaged throughout the entire process (Davidson, 2013).

Another limitation of a Delphi study is the lack of generalizability of the results. As stated earlier, the sample for this study was purposive and therefore not a random sample. Additionally, it was a relatively small sample. The combination of a small, purposive sample leads to a lack of representation of the population (Schmidt, Lyytinen, Keil, & Cule, 2001; Skulmoski, et al., 2007). While the results of a Delphi study are not intended to be representative of the population, it is important to keep that in mind when interpreting the findings.

Along with the controlled feedback necessary in a Delphi study comes the need for the researcher to keep their biases out of the process (Goodman, 1987). Because the researcher chooses the expert panel, controls the feedback, and structures the questions, it is important the researcher to be mindful of both intentionally and unintentionally influencing the proceedings (Wilhelm, 2001). If these biases and or influences are not kept in check, the results of the study will be compromised.

Despite the limitations, use of the Delphi technique, if properly executed, can provide excellent data which can aid decision makers in a myriad of areas. Understanding what the limitations are helps researchers to mitigate those limitations through establishing justifiable expert selection criteria, ensuring that the experts are
invested throughout the study, and being mindful to avoid introducing bias into the process. If these actions are taken, the results from a Delphi study can be relied upon to be both trustworthy and useful.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected using the Delphi technique. The study’s findings are described based on the procedures outlined in chapter 3. Addressed in this chapter are the (a) research questions, (b) issues that were identified by the expert panel, and (c) statistical analysis of the experts’ ratings to identify consensus.

Research Questions

The research questions, as stated in chapter 1, were aimed at forecasting issues in the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors of the intercollegiate athletics environment at the NCAA FBS level. Specifically, the study focused on changes in the aforementioned sectors, over the next five to seven years, stemming from the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences and the legal challenges targeting the NCAA and its member institutions. In order to accomplish this, the study employed the Delphi technique in which three rounds were used to identify and rate future issues.

First Round

The initial questionnaire (Appendix C) was sent to 30 athletic directors and associate athletic directors representing all 10 NCAA FBS conferences. Of the initial requests, 12 participants (Table 1) responded with answers to the first round questionnaire. Among the 12 participants were four directors of athletics, eight associate athletic directors, seven Whites, three African Americans, two Hispanics, nine males,
three females, and two representatives from the Group of 5 conferences. All of the respondents had 11 or more years of experience working in intercollegiate athletics.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 16 questions, with the first five questions pertaining to demographic information and the following 11 open-ended questions related to the research questions. The first of these 11 questions was meant to obtain respondents’ general thoughts on what futures issues NCAA Division I FBS athletic department administrators would need to prepare their departments for. The following five questions were aimed at deriving future issues related to the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences. The final five questions were asked in order to obtain the expert panel’s prediction of issues related to the current legal disputes involving the NCAA and its member institutions.

A content analysis was performed, as put forth in chapter 3, on the respondents’ answers to the 11 open-ended questions and 20 issues were revealed (Appendix D). These issues are broken down into the three sectors of the environment that the research questions covered: economic, legal, and sociocultural. There were seven economic issues, three legal issues, and 10 sociocultural issues. These 20 issues were then used as the basis of the instrument that was sent to the expert panel for the second round of the study.

Second Round

For the second round of the study, the participants were asked to rate each of the 20 issues on the likelihood of occurring and level of impact if the issue were to occur (Appendix E). A scale of one to five was used with one being low and five being high.
Following the protocol put forth in chapter 3, participants were sent the second round instrument and were asked to respond within a week. After the initial week, eight of the participants had responded and a reminder was sent to the remaining four. Two more responses were received and the researcher moved forward with 10 participants for the final two rounds of the study (Table 2).

After the participants rated the issues for the second round, eight of the issues reached the consensus criteria of a median score above three on likelihood of occurring. There were 14 issues that reached the consensus criteria of a median score above three on level of impact. There were a total of seven issues that reached consensus on both likelihood of occurring and level of impact (Table 4).

Of the eight issues that reached consensus on likelihood of occurring, four were in the economic category, one was in the legal category, and three were in the sociocultural category. Of the 14 issues that reached consensus on level of impact, all seven economic issues reached consensus, two of the legal issues reached consensus, and five of the sociocultural issues reached consensus. For the issues that reached consensus on both likelihood of occurring and level of impact, four of the issues were economic, one was legal, and two were sociocultural.

Third Round

The third round of the study involved sending the expert panel the aggregated results from the second round. Each panel member was alerted to the issues for which their rating fell outside of the consensus of the group on either likelihood to occur or level of impact. They were then asked if they wanted to change their score and if not, to
explain why they continue to disagree with the group in order to articulate the minority opinion. As mentioned in chapter 3, the panel was given two weeks to respond with their responses for the third round. Non-respondents were contacted after two weeks and within the following week, all 10 panel members had responded.

On average each participant was in disagreement with the group on three items. The majority of those were concerning the level of impact of an issue. After score revisions and minority opinions were provided, two item scores changed (Table 5). Both of these items already had median scores above three, thus consensus was unchanged from the second to the third round. After the three rounds were completed there was consensus on the likelihood of eight issues occurring, consensus on 14 issues having a high level of impact if they were to occur, and consensus was reached on both likelihood to occur and level of impact for seven issues.

Results

The expert panel identified 20 total future issues based on their responses to the open-ended questionnaire used in the first round of the study. The issues were categorized as relating to either the economic, legal, or sociocultural sector of the intercollegiate athletics environment. While some issues could be categorized into multiple categories, each one had a dominant feature related to its final categorization for the purposes of this study. Descriptive statistics were run using SPSS 24 to obtain the median score for each issue on likelihood to occur and level of impact. The following sections will present these issues and how they were rated by the group on likelihood to occur and level of impact.
Economic Issues

The expert panel identified seven issues related to economics. Four of the issues related to economics reached consensus on likelihood to occur. All seven of the issues reached consensus for level of impact. There were four economic issues that reached consensus on both likelihood to occur and level of impact.

Of the four economic issues to reach consensus on likelihood to occur, two of them received a median score of 5 on likelihood to occur. The first issue was “Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.” The second issue to receive a median score of 5 on likelihood to occur was “The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years.” The panel also forecasted that “Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years”, with that issue having a median score of 4. Also reaching consensus was the issue “Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years”, with a median rating of 3.5.

Out of the seven economic issues identified by the panel, three did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur. “The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years” received a median rating of 3 on likelihood to occur. Also receiving a median rating of 3 on likelihood to occur was the issue “Further FBS conference realignment will take place over the next five to seven
years.” The final economic issue the panel identified was “Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.” It received a median rating of 2.

The expert panel also rated each issue on the level of impact if it were to occur. All seven economic issues reached consensus on having a high level of impact. One issue, “Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years” received a median score of 5. The other six issues, “Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the five to seven years”, “The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years”, “Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years”, “The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years”, “Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years”, and “Further FBS conference realignment will take place over the next five to seven years” all received a median score of 4 on level of impact.

**Legal Issues**

The expert panel identified three issues involving the legal sector. One of the issues reached consensus on likelihood to occur. Two of the issues reached consensus on level of impact. There was one legal issue that reached consensus on both likelihood to occur and level of impact.

The only legal issue to reach consensus on likelihood to occur was “There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA.
FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.” This issue had a median rating of 4 for likelihood to occur. The second legal issue, “There will be an increase in lawsuits from current FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years”, received a median rating of 2 for likelihood to occur. The final legal issue, “There will be an increase in favorable rulings for plaintiffs in lawsuits brought by current and former FBS student-athletes against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years”, received a median rating of 3 from the expert panel on likelihood to occur.

Regarding level of impact, two of the three legal issues reached consensus. “There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years” and “There will be an increase in favorable rulings for plaintiffs in lawsuits brought by current and former FBS student-athletes against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years” both received a median rating of 4 from the expert panel on level of impact. The third legal issue, “There will be an increase in lawsuits from current FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years”, received a median rating of 3 on level of impact from the expert panel.

*Sociocultural Issues*

There were a total of 10 issues identified that related to the sociocultural sector of the intercollegiate athletic environment. The panel reached consensus on the likelihood to occur for three of these issues. Consensus was reached for five of the items on level of
impact. A total of two sociocultural issues reached consensus on both likelihood to occur and level of impact.

There was one issue, “There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years”, that received a median rating of 5 from the expert panel on likelihood to occur. Also reaching consensus was the issue “FBS student-athletes will be required to spend less time on athletics over the next five to seven years” as it received a median rating of 4.5. The final issue that reached consensus on likelihood to occur was “FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years.” This issue received a median rating of 4 from the panel.

The expert panel did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur for seven of the sociocultural issues. “Academic eligibility requirements will increase for FBS student-athletes over the next five to years”, “The NCAA will receive an antitrust exemption in the next five to seven years”, and “FBS athletic programs will increase the amount of a full athletic scholarship beyond cost of attendance over the next five to seven years” all received a median score of 3 for likelihood to occur from the panel of experts. A median score of 2.5 for likelihood to occur was reached by the panel for the issue of “FBS athletic programs will remove the limit on the value of an athletic scholarship over the next five to seven years.” The issue of “FBS student-athletes will begin to be allowed to receive compensation for use of their name, image, and likeness from external entities (e.g. sponsors, booster clubs) over the next five to seven years” received a median score of 2 from the panel of experts on likelihood to occur. The final two sociocultural issues,
“FBS student-athletes will not be required to be full-time students to participate in athletics in the next five to seven years” and “FBS student-athletes will be given the choice to receive a scholarship and attend classes or be hired as an employee strictly for athletics in the next five to seven years” each had a median score of 1 on likelihood to occur.

Of the five sociocultural issues to reach consensus on level of impact, “There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years” was scored the highest with a median score of 4.5. Three of the issues, “FBS student-athletes will begin to be allowed to receive compensation for use of their name, image, and likeness from external entities (e.g. sponsors, booster clubs) over the next five to seven years”, “FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years”, and “FBS athletic programs will increase the amount of a full athletic scholarship beyond cost of attendance over the next five to seven years” reached a median score of 4 on level of impact. Finally, “The NCAA will receive an antitrust exemption in the next five to seven years” received a median score of 3.5 for level of impact.

The other half of the sociocultural issues failed to reach consensus on level of impact. Three of the issues, “Academic eligibility requirements will increase for FBS student-athletes over the next five to years”, “FBS athletic programs will remove the limit on the value of an athletic scholarship over the next five to seven years”, and “FBS student-athletes will be given the choice to receive a scholarship and attend classes or be hired as an employee strictly for athletics in the next five to seven years” reached a
median score of 3 from the expert panel. “FBS student-athletes will be required to spend less time on athletics over the next five to seven years” had a median score of 2 on level of impact. “FBS student-athletes will not be required to be full-time students to participate in athletics in the next five to seven years” had a median score of 1 on level of impact from the expert panel.

To summarize, there were a total of 20 issues identified in the economic, legal, and social sectors of the NCAA Division I FBS intercollegiate athletics environment. Among those 20 issues, the expert panel reached consensus on likelihood to occur for eight of the issues. The panel reached consensus on level of impact for 14 of the issues. Finally, there were a total of seven issues that reached consensus on both likelihood to occur and level of impact. The implications of these results and how they related to the research questions will be discussed in chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

A discussion of the data analysis and results as they relate to the research questions and theoretical framework is presented in this chapter. Specifically, conclusions are drawn from the findings in the economic, legal, and sociocultural sectors of the intercollegiate athletics environment. Additionally, the implications of the findings on stakeholder theory as it applies to intercollegiate athletics is discussed. This is followed by recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

The purpose of this study was to assess the environment in which intercollegiate athletics is operating in order to forecast how the changes that are currently taking place will affect the NCAA and its member institutions over the next five to seven years. The focus of the study was on institutions that sponsor NCAA Division I FBS athletic programs. The study employed the Delphi technique to gather the opinions of an expert panel of intercollegiate athletic administrators. The goal was to discover the consequences stemming from recently granted autonomy to the Power 5 conferences and the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions.

Twenty issues were identified by the expert panel as possibly affecting intercollegiate athletics over the next five to seven years. The panel then rated each issue, on a scale of 1 to 5, on likelihood to occur and level of impact if it were to occur. Through two rounds of ratings, with consensus consisting of a median rating for an issue
higher than three, the panel reached a consensus that eight issues were likelihood to occur and reached a consensus that 14 issues would have a significant impact. The following sections discuss these issues and their potential implications.

Economic Issues

As outlined in chapter 2, economic issues provide a significant challenge to NCAA Division I FBS athletics. The expert panel identified seven economic issues and came to a consensus that four of the seven are likely to occur. Even more telling is that the panel came to a consensus that all seven items would have a high level of impact if they are to occur. Based on the responses to the first round questionnaire, the economic issues identified came mostly from the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences.

There were two economic issues that had a median score of 5 on likelihood to occur. The first of these issues was “Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.” This forecast is consistent with the conceptual framework put forth by Cheslock and Knight (2015). As explained in chapter 2, their framework presented ideas of diverging revenues and cascading expenditures. When these two concepts are combined, the result will be expenses increasing at a faster rate than revenues for most programs. This issue also had consensus on level of impact if it were to occur with a median score of 4. It is logical that this expert panel would find that this issue would have a significant impact, as they are generally the personnel tasked with finding sources of revenue to cover the increasing expenses.
The second economic issue to receive a median rating of 5 on likelihood to occur was “The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years.” This forecast falls in line with the thinking of Dunn (2013) and Matheson et al. (2012). The largest reason for the current gap is the discrepancy between the television revenue brought in by the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences (Hobson & Rich, 2015a; Zimbalist, 2013). Based on their responses and ratings, the expert panel is telling us that Power 5 conference television revenue will continue to far outpace Group of 5 television revenue.

This issue also reached consensus on level of impact if it were to occur with a median rating of 4. The impact will mostly be felt by the Group of 5 programs as they continue to try and keep up spending with the Power 5 programs despite the lack of revenues (Dodd, 2016). However, this could also affect Power 5 programs in the future because Group of 5 programs could decide to stop competing in the same subdivision of the NCAA. This would eliminate half of the subdivision making it difficult for Power 5 programs to find enough games to fill out the schedules of the various sports they sponsor and lessening their chances of winning championships in those sports.

Another issue reaching consensus on likelihood to occur was “Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.” It received a median score of 4 from the panel. This issue coincides with the widening revenue gap as they are both related to television and the revenue derived from television contracts. The increased exposure of college athletics on television has had the consequence of a decline in stadium and arena attendance for college athletic programs (Rishe, 2016). The
ubiquity of college sports on television, the increased quality of televisions being produced, and the increase in costs associated with attending events in person, has made it easier for fans to watch their favorite teams from home. The expert panel is forecasting this trend to continue.

While television contracts provide a large amount of revenue to FBS programs, ticket revenue is still a significant source of revenue for most programs and as such, this issue also reached consensus on level of impact if it were to occur. The panel rated this issue with a median of 4. The impact of less people attending events in person is not only felt by athletic departments through loss of ticket revenue; it is also felt in the potential loss of donors. Athletic departments often tie donations to ticket purchases (Wolverton & Kambhampati, 2015) and if less people are attending events, then it is possible that less people will be donating to the program.

The final economic issue to receive consensus from the panel on likelihood to occur, with a median score of 3.5, was “Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years.” This issue relates directly to the issue of the widening revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences. As the Power 5 programs increase their revenue and along with it their expenditures on facilities, coaches, and support staff, Group of 5 programs will struggle to keep up. The result, as forecasted by the expert panel will lead to an increase in transfers from Group of 5 programs to Power 5 programs.
This issue also reached consensus on level of impact with a median score of 4. The general thought is that even more of the better student-athletes will end up at Power 5 programs helping them to continue to win and draw more interest from fans. This increased interest will result in more revenue from television, ticket sales, and sponsorships. Additionally, it causes the Group of 5 programs to increase recruiting expenses in order to replace the transferring athletes. It also relates back to the Cheslock and Knight (2015) concept of cascading expenditures. As Group of 5 programs try to retain their talented student-athletes, they will spend more money on facilities, coaches, and support staff to do so.

There were three economic issues that did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur. The first of those, “The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years”, received a median score of 3. While the expert panel reached consensus that expenses would outpace revenues, based on their rating of this issue, they did not feel that a collective agreement to sponsor less sports would be a solution to prevent or slow that trend. However, with a median score of 4 on level of impact, the panel did reach consensus on the idea that a lowering of the number of required sport sponsorship would have a significant impact.

The panel also did not reach consensus on whether “Further FBS conference realignment will take place over the next five to seven years.” The median score was 3 for likelihood to occur. With most of the recent conference realignment being attributed to conferences’ desire to increase their television footprint in order to garner more television revenue (Dennie, 2012a; Groza, 2010), this lack of consensus is likely tied to
the fact that the current Power 5 television contracts are locked in through at least 2023 (Facher, 2016). Without the need to negotiate new television contracts in the near future, conferences have less of reason to rearrange themselves. However, similar to the other economic issues, the panel did feel that if this issue were to occur it would have a significant impact with a median score of 4 on level of impact. All of these experts have been involved in conference realignment during their careers and recognize the impact it has on conferences in areas of television revenue, ticket revenue, travel costs, branding, and more.

The final economic issue that surfaced was “Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.” This issue only received a median score of 2 from the expert panel on likelihood to occur. This lack of consensus is likely caused by two factors. The first, as stated earlier, is the length of the current television contracts for the Power 5 conferences. The second factor is that only two of the participants worked at Group of 5 institutions. Unlike the Power 5 conferences, some of the Group of 5 conferences have shorter television contracts and recent deals have decreased for some Group of 5 members (Scott, 2016). With that said, the panel did recognize the importance of television revenue with a median score of 5 for level of impact if this were to occur. As has been outlined in chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, television revenue is a significant source of revenue for FBS athletic programs. If television revenues start to decline it will be paramount for those involved in the enterprise to find alternative sources of income in order to continue operating at current levels.
The expert panel clearly felt that economic issues will be critical to the operation of intercollegiate athletics at the NCAA Division I FBS level. They reached consensus on four of the seven issues on likelihood to occur and on all seven issues on level of impact. These results tell us that as intercollegiate athletic administrators prepare for the next five to seven years, they should focus on how their program will generate revenue, reduce expenses, and understand possible alternatives for both if their expectations differ from actual results.

Legal Issues

As detailed in chapter 2, the NCAA and its member institutions are facing a multitude of lawsuits pertaining to the limiting of scholarship value; failure to pay all educational costs; using student-athletes’ names, images, and likenesses without compensating them; better medical care including damages for concussion injuries; and limiting multiyear scholarships (LeRoy, 2015). Through the course of this study, the expert panel identified three issues specifically related to the legal sector of the intercollegiate athletics environment. Consensus on likelihood to occur was reached on one of these issues and on level of impact for two of the issues.

The most significant forecast made by the expert panel in the legal sector was that “There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.” This issue received a median rating of 4 from the panel. In the past, significant change in intercollegiate athletics has generally come from either the courts or the government (Smith, 2011). This is important to note as this group of experts is forecasting more legal
action to be taken by former student-athletes. If more lawsuits are brought against the NCAA and its member institutions it stands to reason that the current structure of operation for FBS athletics could undergo consequential change. One can point to Title IX as an example of how both the government and courts can fundamentally alter the way intercollegiate athletics operates. With that knowledge as a backdrop, it should come as no surprise that the expert panel also came reached consensus, with a median rating of 4, on level of impact if this issue were to occur.

The other legal issue to reach consensus on level of impact was “There will be an increase in favorable rulings for plaintiffs in lawsuits brought by current and former FBS student-athletes against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.” The rationale behind this issue having a high level of impact is the same as the previous paragraph. In addition to the idea that the current way the NCAA operates could be drastically altered, another potential consequence of successful lawsuits is that more people will file lawsuits seeing the increase in successful outcomes for plaintiffs. While this issue did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur with a median score of 3, it was close and bears watching by those in charge of intercollegiate athletics at the FBS level.

The final legal issue to surface was that “There will be an increase in lawsuits from current FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.” It had a median rating of 2 on likelihood to occur. The low rating, relative to the same issue involving former student-athletes, could be attributed to the possible repercussions for a current student-athlete. There is a
finite amount of time that a student is eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics. A student-athlete’s opportunities to compete are directly controlled by the institution, through the coaches, that would presumably be named in a lawsuit. A student-athlete would then have to decide whether the potential effect on their opportunity to compete would be worth taking legal action.

To this point, there have been only a few active student-athletes who have engaged the NCAA, a conference, and/or an institution in a legal contest (Dennie, 2012a). Unlike professional sports, collegiate athletes do not have a union that can collectively bargain for their rights and protections (Farrey, 2015). They are reliant upon the institutions they compete for to have their best interests in mind when crafting policies, rules, and regulations that pertain to student-athletes. Without this type of protection, it does seem unlikely that an increase of lawsuits from current student-athletes will take place over the next five to seven years.

This issue also failed to reach consensus on level of impact if it were to occur, with a median rating of 3 from the expert panel. The panel did reach consensus on this issue involving former student-athletes, but could have been influenced to rate the level of impact lower on this issue due to their lack of belief that lawsuits from current student-athletes would increase.

The expert panel is forecasting continued legal challenges to the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years. By reaching consensus on level of impact for two of the three legal issues, they expect the outcomes of these legal challenges to have a consequential bearing on the operation of
intercollegiate athletics. Potential consequences include an increased voice for student athletes related to legislation, a change in the scholarship limit, and the increased allocation of resources toward student-athletes.

Sociocultural Issues

The final environmental sector examined for this study was the sociocultural sector. The first round of the study revealed 10 sociocultural issues, all of which were related to the well-being of student-athletes. The expert panel reached consensus on three of the issues on likelihood to occur and five of the issues on level of impact.

There was one sociocultural issue that reached consensus on likelihood to occur with a median rating of 5 and that was “There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years.” As detailed in chapter 2, an argument can be made that certain student-athletes are exploited by their institutions (Brown, 2011; Van Rheenen, 2013) and some student-athletes feel they are exploited (Van Rheenen, 2011). This particular forecast is significant in that this group of experts is suggesting that there will be an attempt by FBS conferences and institutions to lessen the perceived exploitation. This would be an extension of current efforts that are exemplified by the cost of attendance stipend (Berkowitz, 2015), multi-year scholarships (Solomon, 2014), and increased meal allowances (Hosick, 2014). Not surprisingly this issue received a median score of 4.5 from the expert panel on level of impact. In order to facilitate this increased focus on student-athlete well-being, institutions will have to shift the way they operate in order to allocate resources to achieve this goal. This shift relates directly to the next issue forecasted by the panel.
The panel forecasted that “FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years” with a median rating of 4 on likelihood to occur. With this prediction the panel is advancing the first reported sociocultural issue by telling us that one of the ways institutions will increase their focus on student-athletes is to allocate more revenue to student-athletes’ benefit. This forecast is a logical one when considered against the backdrop of Power 5 autonomy. Part of the impetus behind the Power 5 conferences asking for autonomy was to be able to spend more money on student-athlete well-being (Wolverton, 2014). It then follows, based on the Cheslock and Knight (2015) framework, that as the Power 5 programs spend more on student-athletes, the Group of 5 programs will attempt to do the same in order to try and keep up with their FBS peers. Because of the financial repercussions of this shift in philosophy, the expert panel reached consensus on this issue for level of impact with a median rating of 4. This is consistent with how they rated the economic issues on level of impact, reaffirming the importance of revenue generation and allocation for athletic administrators in FBS athletic programs.

The final sociocultural issue the panel reached consensus on likelihood to occur, with a median score of 4.5, was “FBS student-athletes will be required to spend less time on athletics over the next five to seven years.” This is a logical conclusion reached by the panel as there has already been legislation adopted by the NCAA to require more days off for Division I student-athletes (Hosick, 2017). The new legislation requires at least one day off per week during the competition season, two days off during the off-season, and two weeks off at the end of the competition season (New, 2017). This legislation can be
seen as an attempt to mitigate the perception that student-athletes are being exploited by the institutions they represent on the playing field. Additionally, it aids the NCAA and its member institutions in distancing student-athletes from being seen as employees.

This legislation is certainly a benefit to current and future student-athletes, as it allows them more time to spend on their studies, recreational activities, and other interests. What remains to be seen is whether more time requirement reductions will take place in reaction to a continued perception of exploitation and or litigation brought on behalf of current and/or former student-athletes. Regardless of how much more reduction in required time is legislated, the panel did not foresee this issue as having a significant level of impact, as it received a median score of 2 for that aspect of the forecast.

However, one way in which this issue could have a significant impact is if there were a reduction of either lengths of playing seasons or number of contests played. This is particularly true in the sports of football and men’s basketball. These two sports drive most of the revenue generated by athletic departments (Zimbalist, 2013) and a reduction in the number of contests that could be televised could drive down the rights fees offered by television partners. Additionally, fewer contest would result in a loss of ticket revenue as well. This panel has demonstrated, with their ratings of the level of impact for the economic issues, that issues affecting revenue generation are critical areas of concern for future planning.

Also having a potential economic effect to go along with the sociocultural impact was whether or not “The NCAA will receive an antitrust exemption in the next five to seven years.” The expert panel did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur for this
issue, giving a median rating of 3. This lack of consensus could be tied to the fact that in order for an antitrust exemption to be gained by the NCAA, it must first ask for the exemption from Congress and then Congress has to grant the exemption. The reason this is primarily a sociocultural issue is because it could have an effect on how student-athletes are compensated by their institutions.

One judge has already ruled that by not allowing for the compensating of student-athletes for use of their names, images, and likenesses, the NCAA is in violation of antitrust laws (Cristobal, 2016; Mullen, 2015). Additionally, there is current litigation claiming the NCAA is in violation of antitrust laws by limiting the value of an athletic scholarship (Litan & Keith, 2014; Tulis & Clifton, 2015). If the NCAA were to be granted an antitrust exemption, it would be easier to maintain the status quo and not have to allow the increase in compensation to student-athletes. Because of these implications, the panel did agree that there would a significant level of impact if an antitrust exemption were granted to the NCAA; with a median rating of 3.5 for this issue.

Also tied to the issue of a possible antitrust exemption were the issues of whether or not “FBS athletic programs will increase the amount of a full athletic scholarship beyond cost of attendance over the next five to seven years” and whether or not “FBS athletic programs will remove the limit on the value of an athletic scholarship over the next five to seven years.” The expert panel failed to reach consensus on these issues as well, with a median rating of 3 and 2.5 respectively on likelihood to occur. The assumption here is that the FBS programs would raise or eliminate the limit willingly. This panel does not forecast that happening, but in the case of raising the limit they did
reach consensus on level of impact with a median rating of 4. This is a logical conclusion for the panel to make, as this change could drastically alter how intercollegiate athletics distributes revenue based on the amount of the increase. Interestingly, the panel did not reach consensus on level of impact when rating the elimination of the limit, reaching a median rating of 3. This disparity is most likely tied to the fact that because the panel had a hard time foreseeing an elimination of the limit, it was equally difficult to gauge the impact of said elimination.

Despite the panel not forecasting these two issues coming to fruition, it is safe to say that if either or both did, it would have a significant impact on student-athletes. This impact could be both positive and negative. On one hand, student-athletes who received more compensation would be able to more easily handle the economic challenges that can come with attending college. Additionally, it would allow them to possibly enjoy having extra income. On the other hand, the increase in scholarship value could result in less athletic scholarships being made available, which in turn could force some student-athletes to have to find a way to pay for college out of their own pocket.

Continuing the theme of increased compensation for student-athletes was the issue of whether or not “FBS student athletes will begin to be allowed to receive compensation for their name, image, and likeness from external entities (e.g. sponsors, booster clubs) over the next five to seven years.” The panel did not reach consensus on likelihood to occur as this issue had a median of 2 for its rating. Essentially, this group of experts does not foresee a reversal of the appeals court which ruled that by providing a cost of attendance addition to an athletic scholarship, institutions are properly
compensating student-athletes for using their names, images, and likenesses (Mullen, 2015). The panel is also indicating that they do not envision the NCAA and its member institutions willingly changing their current rules which prohibit student-athletes from making money from outside sources (Burkes, 2015). The most common reason given for not allowing student-athletes to make money from endorsements, similar to Olympic athletes, is that it violates the amateurism ideal upon which the NCAA has based its operating principles (Hruby, 2012).

With this rationale in mind, it is easy to understand how the panel came to a consensus on level of impact for this issue. With a median rating of 4, they are indicating that if this were allowed it would significantly alter how college athletics operates. With a move to an Olympic model approach, student-athletes would be allowed to be compensated by local or national sponsors for endorsing their products. A concern for many people involved in college athletics at the FBS level is that companies that are interested in seeing their local college team succeed will offer endorsement deals to high school athletes to induce them to attend the college the company supports. This goes against the competitive equity model the NCAA has tried to work under over the past century by favoring institutions in bigger cities and with more sponsors willing to provide inducements.

*Academic Balance*

The final three sociocultural issues were related to how student-athletes fit into institutions academically. As detailed in chapter 2, there exists a question as to what role FBS athletics has, and those participating in them have, in higher education. These three
issues touched on how the role of student-athletes could change in the future. Despite the evidence of an imbalance between athletics and academics, the panel did not reach consensus on either likelihood to occur or level of impact for any of these three issues.

With a median rating of 3 on likelihood to occur, “Academic eligibility requirements will increase for FBS student-athletes over the next five to seven years” was the least drastic of these issues. The academic requirements for eligibility have evolved over time (Smith, 2011) and this issue spoke to the possibility of continued evolution. However, the panel is indicating, with this rating, that if there is going to be a change in the academic role of student-athletes, it will not come from an increase in eligibility requirements. The panel also felt that even if there were an increase in these requirements it would not be significant, as they gave a median rating of 3 for level of impact for this issue.

Another possible change in the role of the student-athlete on campus was suggested by the issue of whether “FBS student-athletes will not be required to be full-time students to participate in athletics in the next five to seven years.” This would be quite a departure from the current operating model and could be seen as weakening the argument that athletics plays a vital role in a student-athlete’s education (Southall, 2014). Accordingly, the panel rated this issue with a median score of just 1 on likelihood to occur. Despite this being a drastic departure from how the NCAA currently operates, the panel also rated this issue with a median score of 1 on level of impact. The researcher would attribute this score to the participants’ inability to foresee this happening and therefore not allowing for any impact.

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The final issue related to the student-athletes’ role on campus was “FBS student-athletes will be given the choice to receive a scholarship and attend classes or be hired as an employee strictly for athletics in the next five to seven years.” This would be a drastic departure from the stated core principles of the NCAA (NCAA, 2015a). This would essentially create professional athletes on college campuses while at the same time allowing for the perception that academics is secondary to athletic endeavors. Not surprisingly, the panel rated this issue with a median score of 1 on likelihood to occur. They also did not reach consensus on level of impact with a median rating of 3. Again, this would have a significant impact if it were to occur, but the panel’s disbelief in its occurrence most likely depressed the level of impact score.

Based on the responses from the experts, the balance between academics and athletics and the issue of diversity will be little impacted by Power 5 autonomy or current litigation. The only issue that surfaced that will impact the balance between academics and athletics was related to a lessening of the amount of time required of student-athletes related to athletics. There was no mention of changing eligibility requirements, increasing academic resources, or increasing the role of faculty in athletics. Similarly, change in the diversity among coaches and administrators did not receive support from this panel. Multiple responses to the first round questionnaire revealed that these experts felt that if there were a change in diversity, it would not come from the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences or the litigation currently facing the NCAA and its member institutions.
All of the sociocultural issues stemming from these two major changes were focused on the exploitation of student-athletes. They took the form of well-being, compensation, and legal issues. Despite the panel reaching consensus on likelihood to occur for just three issues and on level of impact for five issues, this abundance of focus on student-athletes demonstrates a continued shift in NCAA operating practices. For its first hundred or so years the general rationale for most NCAA rules and policies was competitive equity (Smith, 2011). It was not until the granting of autonomy to the Power 5 conferences that student-athlete well-being started to become a priority for the creation of and change to NCAA legislation, as opposed to trying to keep athletic programs on equal footing (Gurney, Lopiano, & Zimbalist, 2017). This recognition of the importance of student-athletes’ needs provides context for how the convergent approach to stakeholder management is applied in the intercollegiate athletics setting. Additionally, it informs the assessment of student-athletes’ salience as a stakeholder group.

**Stakeholder Relationships in Intercollegiate Athletics**

This study was grounded in stakeholder theory and specifically the convergent approach to stakeholder theory. As detailed in chapter 2, the convergent approach to stakeholder theory holds that the instrumental approach and the normative approach to stakeholder theory are linked together and are incomplete without the other (Jones & Wicks, 1999). Put another way, the convergent approach takes into account economic effectiveness along with moral values when it comes to managing stakeholder relationships.
The results of this study support the convergent approach, based on the ratings the generated issues received on level of impact. All of the economic issues and half of the sociocultural issues were deemed to have a significant impact if they were to occur. By rating these issues in this manner, the panel is suggesting that in order to be effective, athletic departments will need to manage stakeholder relationships both for their economic value and their intrinsic value.

In order for athletic departments to handle the economic issues forecasted in this study, it will be important to engage with two stakeholder groups specifically: donors and media companies such as ESPN and FOX. Relationships between these groups and athletic departments will have to be managed in a way that helps to generate increased revenue necessary to be effective. This is especially true as federal and state funding for higher education decreases (Mitchell, Leachman, & Masterson, 2016), requiring alternative sources of revenue for colleges and universities.

Athletic fundraising accounted for $1.26 billion in 2014 (Wolverton & Kambhampati, 2015). That was the highest total in 10 years and the only way athletic departments were able to raise that amount of money was by properly managing their relationships with the donor stakeholder group. This relationship management will only increase in importance based on the economic issues forecasted by the expert panel.

Television contracts are also responsible for contributing large amounts of revenue to FBS athletic programs. As detailed in chapter 2, the combination of individual conference deals, the College Football playoff television contract, and the NCAA men’s basketball tournament television contract, has led to billions of dollars in
media rights revenue (Smith, 2013; Walden, 2014; Zimbalist, 2009). For intercollegiate athletics administrators it will continue to be of utmost importance to properly manage the relationships with these existing media companies as well as establish new relationships with emerging broadcast entities.

These two stakeholder groups represent the instrumental approach to stakeholder management. The result of attending to the needs of donors and media companies is the production of revenue. This in turn increases the effectiveness of intercollegiate athletic departments. However, as the expert panel also forecasted issues pertaining to student-athletes, evidence is provided of the normative approach to stakeholder management in intercollegiate athletics.

All of the sociocultural issues generated by the expert panel revolved around student-athletes and their well-being. While it can be argued that better treatment of student-athletes leads to a positive economic impact, it is not always the case and can mostly be applied to football and men’s basketball student-athletes. Therefore, the increased concern for student-athletes’ well-being demonstrated by the expert panel provides support for the normative approach to stakeholder management. In this case, the majority of the stakeholder group will not have an impact on revenue generation and thus the needs of this group are attended to by intercollegiate athletics organizations because it is the right or moral thing to do.

The combination of the need to manage relationships with donors, media companies, and student-athletes supports the convergent approach to stakeholder theory. Managers in intercollegiate athletics have to recognize both the effectiveness benefit to
recognizing stakeholder needs and the intrinsic value of doing so. The attention paid to student-athletes’ needs is a prime example of these managers recognizing intrinsic value. This recognition of student-athletes’ needs also aids in assessing the salience of student-athletes as a stakeholder group in intercollegiate athletics.

It is important for managers to assess the salience of their stakeholder groups in order to determine how to prioritize stakeholder relationship management (Parmar et al., 2010). One way in which managers can make this assessment is by using the framework proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) (Figure 1). This framework, detailed in chapter 2, takes into account stakeholders’ possession of power, legitimacy, and/or urgency. Stakeholders possessing all three of these attributes are labeled definitive stakeholders and their needs should be prioritized over stakeholders possessing two or fewer of these attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997).

When applying this framework to student-athletes as stakeholders in NCAA Division I FBS athletics, it is easily established that student-athletes possess legitimacy. The NCAA describes itself as an organization that is dedicated to the success of student-athletes (NCAA, 2015). This description alone serves as a justifiable basis upon which student-athletes can claim legitimacy. However, when discussing the salience of student-athletes through the lens of this framework, legitimacy has never been questioned. It is the other two attributes that have been lacking.

Prior to the NCAA governance change in 2014, student-athletes had no votes on any legislation within the NCAA governance structure. They have since been given two votes on the management council. However, they are still very much outnumbered by
conference representatives, faculty athletic representatives, senior women administrators, and others in NCAA voting matters (Gurney et al., 2017). This continued lack of voting presence can be equated with a lack of possession of the power attribute in the salience framework. While student-athletes have not yet gained the power necessary to increase their salience as a stakeholder group within the NCAA, it can be argued that they have made significant gains in the area of urgency.

The research questions that provided the basis for this study are based on two recent and on-going changes currently affecting NCAA Division I FBS athletics. These two changes, Power 5 autonomy and current legal challenges, are both centered on student-athlete well-being. The autonomy granted to the Power 5 conferences was so granted in order to allow the athletic programs with the most resources to use more resources on student-athletes (Wolverton, 2014). Similarly, the legal challenges being brought against the NCAA are generally being brought with the goal of increasing allocation of resources to student-athletes and increasing their say in matters pertaining to their health, education, and athletic careers.

Mitchell et al. (1997) defined urgency as “the degree to which stakeholder claims require immediate attention” (p. 867). The expert panel in this study has confirmed that student-athlete claims are increasing in urgency. They have forecasted that there will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being. They also forecasted that a larger percentage of revenues will be allocated to student-athletes. Additionally, the expert panel forecasted an increase in lawsuits being filed by former student-athletes, which would add to the possession of urgency by student-athletes.
The examination of student-athletes, as a stakeholder group, through the lens of the Mitchell et al. (1997) framework showed that there is an increase in student-athlete salience. The legitimacy of this group has been and remains evident. Prior to 2014, they had no votes on legislation, but even with the governance structure change their votes have little to no impact; thus no increase in student-athlete power. However, the results of this study suggest that this group has made and will make significant gains in regards to urgency. This increase in salience has to be accounted for by athletic departments as they prepare their strategic plans over the next five to seven years.

Recommendations

This expert panel has provided a forecast that athletic directors and their staffs can use to aid in their strategic planning. This study focused on three areas of the NCAA Division I FBS environment and the panel generated issues for consideration in all three. Based on the experts’ ratings, it is clear that economic issues are a high priority for this group of administrators and should be for others as well.

By forecasting a faster pace of increase for expenses compared to revenues, this panel has suggested that the search for new revenue sources will continue to be important. This is especially true for the programs in the Group of 5 conferences. This is because the group of experts also forecasted a widening revenue gap between the Power 5 and Group of 5 conferences. When combined, these two forecasts and the forecasted decrease in ticket revenue should prompt the athletic directors of these programs to search for ways to take advantage of new technologies and potential changes to the marketplace. For instance, as more and more people have moved away from subscribing
to cable television and are obtaining their programming from alternate sources (Baccarne, Evens, & Schuurman, 2013), it may be possible for a conference to create its own content delivery network that does not rely on traditional television networks. This network could take advantage of emerging technologies and shifting attitudes towards content consumption to tap into a new revenue source. It will require innovative thinking, along with a recognition of current trends, in order for programs to generate the revenue necessary to remain competitive over the next five to seven years.

Another requirement for those leading athletic departments over the next five to seven years will be to stay abreast of the legal challenges involving the NCAA and its member institutions. Most administrators are not trained in the law, so it is important for them to obtain regular updates from their own legal counsel as well as counsel from their conference office and the NCAA. While most of the lawsuits currently in progress involve the NCAA and/or conferences and not individual institutions, the impact of the results will certainly affect individual institutions and their athletic programs. It will be key for administrators to understand the timelines and potential outcomes of these legal challenges. Additionally, it will be important for NCAA, conference, institution, and athletic leadership to evaluate areas in which they are vulnerable for future legal challenges. This will allow for the development of strategies to mitigate the challenges before they happen and better defend themselves when they do.

Student-athlete well-being is one area on which athletic department leaders should concentrate in anticipation of these legal challenges. The expert panel forecasted an increase in focus on this area, including forecasting a larger percentage of revenue being
devoted to student-athlete well-being. In order for athletic departments to be competitive, a student-athlete centric approach is recommended. One in which resources are devoted to aiding them in their academic pursuits as well their athletic ones. This would entail items such as helping to set up internship and study abroad opportunities, providing better health care, both physical and mental, and involving student-athletes in more of the decision making processes. The highest resourced programs are already working on initiatives of this type and if other programs want to compete for the best student-athletes they will have to take a similar approach.

Limitations

The use of the Delphi technique in this study brought with it some inherent limitations. The results of any study using the Delphi technique are not generalizable. The opinions expressed in this study can only be attributed to this group of experts because a purposive sampling method was used. In order to generalize the conclusions that have been drawn in this study, more opinions would need to be gathered. A strategy for this gathering will be discussed in the next section.

Another limitation that stems from the use of the Delphi technique is that the researcher is limited to the information that the experts provide. That is, the level of detail desired may not be reached and to ask for more can potentially compromise the integrity of the results by introducing bias. For instance, in this study the experts forecasted an increase in lawsuits from former student-athletes, but did not specify what kinds of lawsuits. Another area that was in need of more detail was the increase in focus on and resources devoted to student-athlete well-being. Understanding what form this
increased focus would take would help to inform preparations on that front, as well as
know how the ripple effects would impact other areas of the environment. Additionally,
The 20 issues that were rated by the expert panel did not present the totality of items
generated. If an item was only brought up by one expert, it was not included in the
second round.

In addition to the limitations caused by use of the Delphi technique, an
underrepresentation from the Group of 5 conferences also limits what can be inferred
from these results. There were only two Group of 5 representatives among the 12
participants. It is possible that more issues would have surfaced or that the issues that did
come about would have been rated differently if there was more of a balance of Power 5
and Group of 5 representation. For instance, this panel of experts did not forecast a
decrease in television revenue over the next five to seven years. This is logical for most
of the Power 5 conferences because their current television contracts will not expire in
that time period. However, this is not the case for all of the Group of 5 conferences and
therefore may have changed that forecast.

Finally, as mentioned previously it is possible that the level of impact ratings were
influenced by the likelihood to occur ratings. This problem is exemplified when looking
at the ratings of the legal issues. The panel forecasted that there would be an increase in
lawsuits from former student-athletes and that if this were to occur it would have a
significant impact. However, they did not feel there would be an increase in lawsuits
from current student-athletes and also did not feel there would be a significant impact if
this were to occur. It is logical that if an increase in lawsuits from former student-athletes
was significant, then an increase in lawsuits from current student-athletes would also be significant.

This possible influence on the level of impact ratings by the likelihood to occur ratings could have been mitigated with a different delivery of the second round of the study. Instead of having the panel simultaneously rate each issue on likelihood and impact, the study may have been better served to have them rate all the issues on likelihood and then rate all the issues on impact. This separation could mitigate the influence of likelihood on the ratings of impact thus providing more trustworthy results.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are many directions in which this research can be expanded. Provided here are a few suggestions. These suggestions can be used to obtain results that will further enhance the findings of this current study.

As mentioned in the limitations section, the results of this study are not generalizable. However, one way in which to obtain results that are applicable to a wider population would be to conduct a survey using the second round instrument from this study (Skulmoski et al., 2007). If one were to use the same criteria for participation and include all NCAA Division I FBS programs, the number of participants could easily eclipse the 200 mark. With participation numbers of that magnitude it would be possible to further verify the forecasts made by the expert panel.

Another way to enhance the results of this current study would be to delve into specific areas in order to obtain greater details on the issues presented here. For instance, the Delphi technique could be employed again with business managers forming the
expert panel. This would allow for a deeper exploration of the economic issues.

Similarly, a group of legal experts could be used to help determine what areas future lawsuits will come from.

A replication of this study with a different group of stakeholders as the expert panel could also prove enlightening. With the multitude of stakeholders that are connected to intercollegiate athletics, it would be beneficial to obtain at least a few of those perspectives to help prepare for the future. The differing priorities would become evident and this would certainly add to the study of stakeholder theory.

Finally, an examination of different sectors of the environment would add to the results obtained with this current study. The political sector could be one area of interest. This sector would relate directly to an antitrust exemption, as it would have to be granted by Congress. Further, as state and federal funding for higher education declines, the future impact on intercollegiate athletics could be investigated. Another area worth examining is the technological sector. As mentioned earlier, the intersection between content delivery and emerging technology may greatly impact a significant revenue source for intercollegiate athletics.

The results of this current study combined with these future research suggestions could prove to be a useful tool for leaders in intercollegiate athletics. They can use these results to better position their organizations to be effective in the face of an ever changing environment. Similarly, scholars can build upon these results to further the study intercollegiate athletics and stakeholder theory.
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Appendix A: Figures

Figure 1. Mitchell et al. (1997) stakeholder salience framework
Table 1. Invited sample demographics - *participated in first round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Conference Affiliation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Former Student-Athlete</th>
<th>Terminal Degree</th>
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Table 2. Participant demographic information for second and third rounds
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<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Third</td>
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Table 3. Participant response time allowances for the Delphi rounds
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<th>Medians</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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<td>Economic</td>
<td>5-L, 4-I</td>
<td>Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>4-L, 4-I</td>
<td>Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>5-L, 4-I</td>
<td>The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>3.5-L, 4-I</td>
<td>Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
<td>4-L, 4-I</td>
<td>There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>5-L, 4.5-I</td>
<td>There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>4-L, 4-I</td>
<td>FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years.</td>
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L= panels’ rating of the likelihood of the issue occurring
I=panel’s rating of the level of impact of the issue if it were to occur

Table 4. Issues reaching consensus on both likelihood to occur and level of impact
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Second Round Median</th>
<th>Third Round Median</th>
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<td>The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.</td>
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</table>

Table 5. Issues with score change between second and third rounds
Appendix C: Email Request to Participants

Dear FIRST,

I am respectfully asking for your assistance in the development of a forecast regarding the critical issues facing intercollegiate athletic programs in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision over the next five to seven years. The forecast will aid in the fulfillment of my dissertation requirements for a Ph.D. in Sport Management at Ohio State University.

The study requires expert opinion in the area of intercollegiate athletics. I am requesting participants at the associate athletic director/commissioner level or higher, with at least five years in their position, and with experience at a minimum of two institutions. Your background and experience match those qualifications and are critical factors in the completion and accuracy of this study.

The study will utilize a Delphi technique consisting of three web-based rounds. The first round will consist of an open-ended questionnaire that will be used to generate issues for the second and third round questionnaires. Full instructions will be provided on the first page of the questionnaire that is linked in the email.

This forecast is a worthwhile and practical exercise that will enable administrators to more effectively plan for the next five to seven years. The estimated time to complete the first survey is 30-45 minutes. The second and third rounds should take around 10 minutes each. I assure you that complete confidentiality and anonymity will be utilized in the conduction of this study. At no time during this study will your name or institution be mentioned, nor will you know others serving on the panel. All expert panelists and their respective institutions will never be specifically mentioned in the text of this study. Attached you will find institutional review board information pertaining to confidentiality and a contact for any questions.

Please respond by September 19th to let me know if you would be willing to participate. Feel free to contact me at 217-649-2799 or Morton.240@osu.edu or Dr. Donna Pastore at 614-247-8400 or pastore.3@osu.edu if you have any questions. Thank you and I look forward to working with you on this project.

Respectfully,

James T. Morton
Appendix D: IRB Information Attached to Participant Email Request

There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with completing the survey. Participation is voluntary and participants may refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw from completing the survey at any time without penalty of loss of benefits. By completing this survey, you consent to participate. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses in any published and reported results of this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of internet survey security can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251 or hsconsersns@osu.edu.
Appendix E: First Round Questionnaire

1. What conference are you or your institution affiliated with?
   - American Athletic Conference
   - Atlantic Coast Conference
   - Big Ten Conference
   - Big 12 Conference
   - Conference USA
   - Mid-American Conference
   - Mountain West Conference
   - Pac-12 Conference
   - Southeastern Conference
   - Sun Belt Conference

2. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

3. Race
   - White
   - Black or African American
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Asian
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - Other

4. Years of experience in intercollegiate athletics
   - 1-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - Over 15
5. Years holding current title
   o 1-5
   o 6-10
   o 11-15
   o Over 15

6. What are the most important issues FBS athletic departments will need to prepare for over the next five to seven years?

7. In what ways will the autonomy of the Power 5 conferences impact how FBS athletic departments generate revenue and allocate resources over the next five to seven years?

8. How will the autonomy of the Power 5 conferences impact the number and type of lawsuits FBS athletic departments will be involved with over the next five to seven years?

9. In what ways will the autonomy of the Power 5 conferences impact how FBS student-athletes are compensated over the next five to seven years?

10. In what ways will the autonomy of the Power 5 conferences impact the balance between academics and athletics for FBS athletic departments over the next five to seven years?

11. In what ways will the autonomy of the Power 5 conferences impact the diversity of administration and coaching personnel in FBS athletic departments over the next five to seven years?

12. In what ways will the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions impact how FBS athletic departments generate revenue and allocate resources over the next five to seven years?

13. In what ways will the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions impact legal strategies of FBS athletic departments over the next five to seven years?

14. In what ways will the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions impact how FBS student-athletes are compensated over the next five to seven years?
15. In what ways will the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions impact the balance between academics and athletics for FBS athletic departments over the next five to seven years?

16. In what ways will the current litigation facing the NCAA and its member institutions impact the diversity of administration and coaching personnel in FBS athletic departments over the next five to seven years?
### Appendix F: Future Issues and Supporting Quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7 - &quot;rising cost of expenses&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 12 - &quot;stagnant revenue streams&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 10 - &quot;cutting of sports&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 4 - &quot;TV rights bubble bursting&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 12 - &quot;decrease in television revenue&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 3 - &quot;demand for season tickets will decrease&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7 - &quot;challenge to &quot;maintain attendance levels at events&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 1 - &quot;broaden the gap&quot; between Group of 5 and Power 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 11 - concerned about &quot;the widening financial gap between the Autonomous 5 (Power 5) and the Group of 5&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 4 - &quot;increasing divide between Power 5 and Group of 5&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 11 - &quot;more of the talent&quot; will gravitate toward Power 5 institutions&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Further FBS conference realignment will take place over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 2 - &quot;conference alignment&quot; is an important issue facing FBS athletic departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 12 - &quot;ever-changing landscape of conference realignment&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 5 - &quot;conferences will have to deal with more lawsuits&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7 - &quot;the number and type of lawsuits will certainly significantly increase&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>There will be an increase in lawsuits from current FBS student-athletes brought against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 8 - &quot;I believe [lawsuits] will continue to increase&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 9 - &quot;there most certainly will be more lawsuits&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>There will be an increase in favorable rulings for plaintiffs in lawsuits brought by current and former FBS student-athletes against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 1 - &quot;risk of litigation and likelihood of success by plaintiffs&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7 - &quot;institutions should be prepared to cover more of the expenses&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>FBS student-athletes will begin to be allowed to receive compensation for use of their name, image, and likeness from external entities (e.g. sponsors, booster clubs) over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 1 - &quot;compensation changes will occur&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 9 - compensation will &quot;undoubtedly increase…in ways we have not yet even discussed seriously&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>FBS student-athletes will be required to spend less time on athletics over the next five to seven years.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 2 - student-athlete time &quot;demands as it relates to practice and workouts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 5 - &quot;time balance issues with student-athletes will remain at the forefront&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 6 - &quot;define time demands…and limit countable hours&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 5 - &quot;enhance support services and experiences of student-athletes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 8 - &quot;student-athlete well-being decisions are being made differently than in the past&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Academic eligibility requirements will increase for FBS student-athletes over the next five to years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 11 - &quot;academic performance&quot; tied to &quot;NCAA monies&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 12 - &quot;redefining…the requirement of student-athletes enrolling in school&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>The NCAA will receive an antitrust exemption in the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 1 - &quot;we are particularly sensitive to antitrust issues&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 5 - student-athletes &quot;will reap increased benefits as they pertain to their athletic participation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 6 - &quot;provide more resources to student-athletes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>FBS athletic programs will increase the amount of a full athletic scholarship beyond cost of attendance over the next five to seven years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 3 - &quot;increasing expenses directly related to the student-athlete scholarship&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Participant 4 - "more will be done for cost of attendance"
| Sociocultural | FBS athletic programs will remove the limit on the value of an athletic scholarship over the next five to seven years.
| Participant 3 - "increasing expenses directly related to the student-athlete scholarship"
| Sociocultural | FBS student-athletes will not be required to be full-time students to participate in athletics in the next five to seven years.
| Participant 1 - "Pressure around revenue/money will cause compromise in academic principles"
| Sociocultural | FBS student-athletes will be given the choice to receive a scholarship and attend classes or be hired as an employee strictly for athletics in the next five to seven years.
| Participant 12 - "student-athlete has choice of coming to campus and just focusing on athletics" |
Appendix G: Second Round Instrument

In this survey please rate each item on the likelihood that it will occur in the next five to seven years with "1" being not likely and "5" being very likely and on the level of impact if it were to occur, with "1" being no impact and "5" being high impact. For the sake of this study, high impact is defined as significantly altering the way athletic departments have to approach how they operate.

Expenses will increase at a faster rate than revenues for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
<th>1 (low) (1)</th>
<th>2 (2)</th>
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149
The number of sports required for FBS membership will be lowered over the next five to seven years.

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<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
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Television revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.

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<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
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Ticket revenue will decrease for FBS athletic programs over the next five to seven years.

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The revenue gap between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 conferences will widen over the next five to seven years.

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Student-athletes transferring from Group of 5 conferences to Power 5 conferences will increase over the next five to seven years.

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Further FBS conference realignment will take place over the next five to seven years.

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There will be an increase in lawsuits from former FBS student-athletes brought against
the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.

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There will be an increase in lawsuits from current FBS student-athletes brought against
the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS institutions over the next five to seven years.

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There will be an increase in favorable rulings for plaintiffs in lawsuits brought by current
and former FBS student-athletes against the NCAA, FBS conferences, and FBS
institutions over the next five to seven years.

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FBS student-athletes will begin to be allowed to receive compensation for use of their name, image, and likeness from external entities (e.g. sponsors, booster clubs) over the next five to seven years.

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FBS student-athletes will be required to spend less time on athletics over the next five to seven years.

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There will be an increase in focus on student-athlete well-being over the next five to seven years.

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Academic eligibility requirements will increase for FBS student-athletes over the next five to years.

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<th>1 (low) (1)</th>
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</table>

The NCAA will receive an antitrust exemption in the next five to seven years.

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</table>
FBS athletic programs will devote a larger percentage of revenue to student-athlete well-being initiatives over the next five to seven years.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

FBS athletic programs will increase the amount of a full athletic scholarship beyond cost of attendance over the next five to seven years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
<th>1 (low)</th>
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FBS athletic programs will remove the limit on the value of an athletic scholarship over the next five to seven years.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
<th>1 (low)</th>
<th>2 (2)</th>
<th>3 (3)</th>
<th>4 (4)</th>
<th>5 (high) (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Impact (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FBS student-athletes will not be required to be full-time students to participate in athletics in the next five to seven years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Occurring (1)</th>
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<td>Level of Impact (2)</td>
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</table>

FBS student-athletes will be given the choice to receive a scholarship and attend classes or be hired as an employee strictly for athletics in the next five to seven years.

<table>
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