Bridging the chasm: Emerging model of leadership in intercollegiate athletics governance

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BRIDGING THE CHASM: EXAMINING THE EMERGING MODEL OF LEADERSHIP IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined how the executive leadership model influenced the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics. The focus centered on understanding the role of Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivist framework. Qualitative analysis was utilized to achieve the kind of examination necessary to uncover the rich and in-depth perspectives of the participants. At the time of the study, there were 119 institutions housing NCAA Division IA athletic departments. Of the 119 distinct athletic departments, there were 17 athletic departments that employed an athletic director that had been appointed to the post of university vice president. The participants were selected based upon the following conditions: (A) they all held the post of athletic director and university vice president, (B) their affiliation with an NCAA designated BCS or FBS Conference, (C) their membership to a diverse demographic (e.g. ethnicity, educational attainment, and/or gender), (D) the size of their respective athletic departments. Using the social constructivist lens as the theoretical framework, this study sought to understand how these particular athletic directors developed their professional identity within this emerging model of leadership as well as how this model influenced the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university. The interview questions focused on five main areas: (1) experience and skill as an athletic administrator; (2) policy making processes; (3) presidential involvement (4) the main issues surrounding intercollegiate athletics including, commercialization, academic reform, fiscal integrity, institutional control; and (5) the executive leadership model. In response to research question on, the study found that implementation of the executive model of leadership
resulted in a dissolution of myopia for the athletic directors who concurrently served as vice president. It also resulted in the integration of the athletic director into the leadership and governance structure of the university and it promoted structural engagement into the institutional governance conversation. In connection with the second research question, the results demonstrated that this model was an education-based model, with evidence showing this model promoted the integration of the athletic department into the university governance structure. Lastly, the executive leadership model promoted transparency at the leadership level, thus accomplishing several of the reform goals advocated among groups such as the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Beginning

Intercollegiate athletics began in the early 1900’s as informal gatherings of students engaged in athletic contests against their colleagues. In what is known commonly as intramurals, the organization of athletics was originally a student led and student organized activity. Without formal governance structure, the students were competing without a purpose other than alignment with the “Muscular Christian movement” of the mid-nineteenth century (Noverr & Ziewacz, 1984). These contests were most often student representatives from fraternities and classes, which then led to competitions between institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. While disinterested during its infancy, the university faculty began to take note when reports emerged of horrific injuries, significant fines, suspension of students and even dismissal from the institution. These misdeeds led to the need for leadership.

There were several attempts to identify a singular governing body for intercollegiate athletics, which included the Brown Conference, the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association, the Committee on the Regulation of Athletic Sports and the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America (IC4A). The IC4A emerged as the governing body, which represented the common interests of the majority of the institutions (Rasmussen, 1997). The failure of the aforementioned initiatives was a result of poorly conceived rules and an inability to garner a majority following. Additionally, non-compliance by a majority of competing institutions and differences in philosophy about the role of intercollegiate athletics in the institution contributed to the
failure of these leadership initiatives. By the end of 1905, sixty-two schools agreed to be governed by the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, which in 1910, became known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Lewis, 1969). This organization was brought about to “codify, promulgate, and enforce rules on and off the field of play” (Rasmussen, 1997, p. 12). The NCAA came about amidst the clamor for reform of college athletics and a call for leadership by the Athletic Directors and University Presidents.

Collegiate Athletic Department

Spivey (1998) notes, “Athletics departments are traditionally run as auxiliary units on the campus and are given, under the direction of the athletics director, considerable independence to manage their own budget and finances” (p. 8). The athletic budget began to swell while the institutional support did not. One of the difficulties faced by institutions seeking control over athletics was the conflicting commitment to fund and operate an exponentially increasing athletic budget. With athletic departments facing the distinction of becoming vulnerable and critically under-funded, the dependence upon outside revenues became amplified. It was the lack of commensurate institutional support for athletics that rendered athletics vulnerable to outside influence and dependence. The outside influence emerged as external constituents committed the necessary revenues and in turn, desired control (Atwell, 1980). Corporations, private donors, alumni, non-profit foundations, political entities and the local community represented external constituents. Riley and Baldrige (1977) felt athletic departments were hard to control because of the powerful network of constituents that identified with the athletic department. External constituencies such as the “Booster Coalition” (Easley, 1998, p. 37) situated themselves
as formidable allies for athletics, which allowed athletics to command an independence of operation and wield an influence unlike any academic sub-unit on campus. The athletic department became synonymous with operating with values quite disparate from the institution’s values (Engel, 2007).

Much like the academic departments on campus, their operation and governance was rooted in a highly decentralized structure, with each particular function reporting to the athletic director and the athletic director reporting to the university president. Riley and Baldrige (1977) contend that decision-making is often shared and disorderly, but is reflective of the autonomy of departments and professionals. According to Frey (1984), Lapchick (1987), and Thelin (1989) “a number of problems in college athletics can be traced to the fact that many programs have operated separately from their institutions, with little to no accountability to the president or chancellor” (Easley, 1998, p. 38). Some note that the values of the academic units and the interests of the athletic department were creating a widening chasm (Hanford, 2003; Sack, 2001; Suggs, 2001). It is this chasm, which must be addressed by the governance structure and presidential involvement.

In 2003, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee cited “the segregation of intercollegiate athletics from the lifeblood of the university as the wrong direction to move” (Neel, 2004, p.46). In 2003, Chancellor Gee set out to “reign in college athletics” (Engel, 2007, p. 13), which included dismantling the traditional athletic department and replacing it with a body of leadership more aligned with the academic mission of the institution. By removing the athletic director from the leadership post of athletics, and situating athletics under the Division of Student Life and University Affairs, Chancellor Gee set out to make athletics more accountable to university leadership. The emerging
model upon which this examination is based, is not as detached from the traditional model as the Vanderbilt example. While this model has not been replicated, there are seventeen Division IA athletic directors who now hold the title of Vice President. Yet, the appointment of the athletic director to university vice president is an emerging trend in intercollegiate athletic leadership. This new model of leadership may emerge as the next beneficial step toward meaningful reform of NCAA DI intercollegiate athletics. The Executive Model of Leadership, as it will be referred to in this study, is delimited strictly to Division I therefore it will not represent Division II or III.

Athletic Director

The modern day athletic director can be likened to the chief executive officer of any corporation who has similar obligations to generate revenue, operate in a fiscally sound manner, and answer to external constituencies. Athletic directors as compared to the head coach, “often work behind the scenes, with their participation and influence in decision-making” (Shavers, 2004, p. 104) going unnoticed. Their participation and influence are two integral components of athletic leadership, particularly in the business-minded model of athletic leadership. As Shavers (2004) describes, athletic directors are set apart within the university structure by two things, expertise and office. Their expertise is developed over years of experience in sport management, leadership and governance. While their competencies vary, most are adept in some necessary function such as being a strong financial officer. Others may be strong fundraisers, while some display an adept sense to negotiate television contracts and others, a keen instinct for organizational governance. These specialized skills benefit the AD in his/her ability to lead an athletic department. It is this expertise that affords the athletic director access to
valuable alliances, such as members of the board of regents or trustees, major donors to the university and valuable members of the university community.

The second concept that sets the athletic director apart is the office, which s/he has been granted. This office does not imply the space, but the level of access and influence conferred upon athletic department leadership. Occupying the position of athletic director warrants a significant level of autonomy and decision-making, that members of the executive level of university administration may not comprehend. Because of the complexity of the office, “athletic directors must develop and maintain extensive networks within and outside the organizational hierarchy” (Shavers, 2004, pp. 109-110). In addition to these extensive networks, they must be adept in understanding that the university is a system of “interdependent activity, which administrators must rely upon the cooperation of others, both insiders and outsiders, to accomplish goals” (Shavers, 2004, p.109). A critical statement that epitomizes and characterizes the importance and influence the office of athletic director holds can be noted in the following passage:

“The involvement of the president sometimes restricted the power of athletic directors in decision-making. Although there were times when the athletic directors were merely informing the presidents about decisions, in other cases they were seeking approval or advice. When consultation and approval of a decision was required, the directors’ power to move ahead with plans was diminished. Despite such restrictions, athletic directors were influential because they had the attention and interest of the president. They didn’t have to create urgency or negotiate meetings through secretaries and assistants. Access was guaranteed” (Shavers, 2004, p.111).

With the growth of the athletic department, the athletic director’s range of priorities has become more complex. These priorities range from adhering to the academic mission and values of the institution, to the acquisition of revenues and
resources necessary to supplement institutional funding. In addition to those core functions, Ad’s must ensure that the department maintains compliance with institutional and NCAA bylaws. This task remains a critical area of leadership that requires constant vigilance. Finding balance between these priorities poses a difficult challenge to any athletic director. The pressure from the president to adhere to institutional policies, both academically and fiscally, coupled with the pressure from external constituents like boosters and corporations to drive attendance and garner more national attention, in addition to remaining in compliance with the NCAA rules and regulations, can lead to ethical dilemmas in this often high profile environment of intercollegiate athletics.

Intercollegiate Reform

McMillen (2002) believes big-time college sport erodes the integrity of our institutions of higher learning where athletes breaking the rules have been the norm and the term “student-athlete” is an oxymoron. Mahony, Fink, and Pastore (1999) suggested that scholars have continuously pointed to the incidences of corruption in sport and called for significant changes to the current structure of intercollegiate athletics. The sacrifice of integrity by university administrators and the corruption by over-zealous influences within the athletics culture has prompted several significant reform efforts.

In 1997 the restructuring of the NCAA proved a critical turning point in the governance of each separate division. The goal of this initiative was to streamline and simplify the legislative process. By removing the issues and concerns of the other two levels, Division I could proceed with legislation that pertained specifically to the issues that plagued its membership. In addition to simplification, it also placed the university presidents in a more authoritative position relative to athletics.
The Knight Commission proved more influential in enumerating solutions to realign athletic values with institutional values than any prior reform-oriented organization. The Knight Commission’s “one plus three” model was the impetus for significant reform. The “one” was represented by the university president, who was charged to lead the university towards the “three” goals, which were, academic integrity, financial integrity and external independent certification (The Knight Commission, 1991; Christy, 2007). In this model the president would assume greater oversight over the operation of athletics on campus, which meant monitoring and tempering the efforts of boosters, alumni, and trustees who often favored the success of the athletic programs at all costs. In essence, Presidents were charged with ensuring athletics did not operate toward the detriment of the academic mission of the institution. The “three” represented the most common contraventions found in athletics. Academic integrity is a priority to the institution and athletics, but there are moments of ethical dilemma when the academic mission of the institution can be compromised by the competitive nature of Division I-A intercollegiate sport.

The restructuring of the NCAA became a catalyst for identifying division specific areas of concern and reaffirming the need for presidential control over all matters of the athletic department at the Division I level. Provisions submitted by the Knight Commission reaffirmed that control by the university presidents needed to be a priority and an emphasis within athletic department leadership.

Emerging Model of Leadership

Traditionally the athletic director has operated atop his/her department with consistent contact with the President. Recently a new trend in athletic leadership has
evolved in which the athletic director has been appointed to the executive level of institutional governance as a Vice President. This appointment incorporates the voice of athletics into the highest level of institutional governance. In addition to having a voice, the athletic director now has direct insight regarding the need for a fit and direct alignment with higher education. Yet, with this appointment, the athletic director must also acquiesce into a new role professionally. This study will investigate how athletic directors who have been appointed to vice president construct their own professional identity within this emerging model of athletic leadership and governance. Social Constructivism has been identified as the theory that lends itself best to the analysis of this topic.

Theoretical Framework

The framework within which this study will be conducted is the social constructivism framework. According to Oldfather, West, White and Wilmarth (1999) “a social constructivist perspective focuses on learning as sense making rather than on acquisition of rote knowledge that “exists” somewhere outside the learning” (p. 9). This study will seek to understand the transition experience and knowledge acquisition process for athletic directors who have been appointed to the position of vice president.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism has been described as an epistemological process in which the learner acquires necessary knowledge to behave or perform to a standard within a function. Smith (1993) notes “the aim of constructive epistemology is to use some logical system as a template so that the construction of its fundamental notions can be investigated empirically” (p. 36). Athletic directors that have been appointed to vice
president are exposed to a world of governance that may be completely foreign to their pre-existing schemata. They may have very little exposure to the executive level of governance of the university and must be allowed to construct their own interpretations of how higher education is governed and how athletics fits into that governance model. It is this construction of necessary relationships that will lead to competencies of function in their dual authority. Perhaps, the construction of the alternate role of VP, can serve as a bridge between the semi-autonomous leader of the athletic department and the institutional governance role. Utilizing this bridge between athletic and academic governance could instill a new perception of both entities.

Research Objectives

The researcher will seek to understand how the athletic directors go about constructing their professional identities through the social constructivist epistemology. One objective is to investigate if their construction of knowledge hinges upon the new functions and policies that will aid them in their transition into higher education governance. Another objective is to examine how the construction of a new leadership role affects their primary responsibility, athletics. The final objective is to ascertain the likelihood that this emerging model of leadership will continue to be replicated at similar institutions.

Statement of the Problem

The historic model of intercollegiate leadership permits a significant amount of autonomy to the athletic director, inviting the reliance upon external influences to operate their athletic departments. The current landscape of intercollegiate athletics is being fashioned by external influences, impressing upon the leadership and governance of
intercollegiate athletics the need for larger, more exclusive television revenues. Over the
decades, the traditional model of leadership and governance has endured the use of
professional players for college games, academic fraud and the reformation of academic
standards for initial and continuing eligibility. Athletics is currently suffering through the
commercialization of its most recognizable resources, football and basketball, by
members of the athletic community operating outside of the values and mission of the
institutions. In this era where financial reform has emerged as the concern for these
institutions, this model may prove significant in negating the proliferation of financial
excess and the collapse of amateurism. Because of the recent emergence of this model of
leadership, there is little existing literature to support the intentions or anticipated
outcomes. There is little research to clarify if this is indeed an emerging model of
leadership. Similarly, very few if any, studies exist denoting if this model has any impact
on the leadership or governance of intercollegiate athletics. The University Presidents
that have assumed this model may have distinctly different motives for the respective
appointments. There is currently very little literature to compare the traditional model of
governance with the emerging model. To begin to develop an understanding of this
emerging model, one could examine this phenomenon from several different
perspectives. The athletic director’s perspective is critical to understanding how s/he
articulates his/her role(s) as both athletic director and vice president of the university. It
will also be critical to ascertain how these athletic executives feel the appointment
impacts the leadership of their athletic department. How do the units within the athletic
department continue to function with a leader seemingly removed from their original
office? In addition to this question, it will be integral to discover how the appointment to
vice president influences the leadership and governance of intercollegiate sport within the university.

Research Questions

How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?

How does this emerging model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how this emerging model is influencing the leadership of intercollegiate athletics. The primary focus centers on understanding the role of the Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism framework. Through developing an understanding of the Executive Leadership model, recommendations for further reform efforts in athletic leadership and governance may surface.

Key Definitions

AD/VP: The Director of Athletics of a NCAA Division I program that also serves concurrently as a Full Vice President of the University

Arms Race: Current trend among NCAA Division I FBS members in which institutions invest multi-million dollar sums in athletics enhancement initiatives, including seven-figure coaching salaries, facility construction/renovation, commercialization of properties and other fundraising/resource-building endeavors in an effort to remain competitive (Duderstadt, 2000; Strode, 2006)

Athletic Director: The individual responsible for the financial, physical, human, and ethical oversight of an intercollegiate athletics program (Spivey, 2008).
Bowl Championship Series B.C.S.: A national champion in the Bowl Subdivision is determined by the Bowl Championship Series, which is administered by the 11 Bowl Subdivision Conferences and the University of Notre Dame. The first year of the BCS was 1998. The NCAA plays no role in this decision. It includes the 66 institutions from the power conferences.

Commercialization: Refers to the sensationalized status intercollegiate athletics has received due to the influx of media coverage, revenue generation, and business modeling that has saturated intercollegiate athletics. (Duderstadt, 2000)

Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS): Subcategory of NCAA Division I member institutions, which include 119 NCAA schools, whose football programs are bowl eligible if they win six games per season versus other Division I FBS teams.

Governance: It is a multi-level phenomenon including various bodies and processes with different decision-making functions. Certain entities tend to have authority over specific kinds of decisions, such as faculty senates for curriculum or boards of trustees for budgetary issues. (Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 375)

Executive Model of Leadership: The emerging model of intercollegiate athletic leadership, which incorporates the athletic director as a university vice president and integrates athletics into the governance structure of the university

NCAA: The NCAA is made up of three membership classifications that are known as Divisions I, II and III. Each division creates its own rules governing personnel, amateurism, recruiting, eligibility, benefits, financial aid, and playing and practice seasons – consistent with the overall governing principles of the Association.

(www.NCAA.org)
Social Constructivism: Constructivism is the term used to describe how one learns and creates the reality within the world that they live. It is called constructivism because it is believed that we construct meanings from the world happening around us. From a Social perspective, we construct meaning from what happens in our lives every day. (Vygotsky, 1978)

Delimitations

There are currently 17 individuals that meet the criteria of being the Athletic Director as well as University Vice President at the NCAA Division I level. The study focus does not include representatives of NCAA Division II or III institutions. Similarly, only NCAA affiliated colleges and universities will be considered for the study. There will be participants that represent intercollegiate athletic programs from Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conference schools. There will also be participants that represent intercollegiate athletic programs from Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Conference schools. This model of intercollegiate athletic governance is only present in 17 of the 119 Division I A schools and cannot be generalized to represent all Division I-A colleges accurately.

Limitations

The following were considered the limitations of this study:

The information gathered through interviews and document analysis will be examined and influenced by subjective analysis measures and will only speak to each individual institution and individual experience upon which the responses are based.

Securing access to these busy individuals remains one of the most significant limitations, as they are engaged in the operation of their athletic department year-round
and have very little discretionary time. This is an issue because securing enough of their time to gather adequate insight through interview as well as interpretation of responses, could prove difficult due to the rigorous schedules.

The sample population represents universities from all regions of the country. Thus, travel to each location would prove difficult to observe and engage the participants in their natural environment.

This study is being conducted via the perspective of the Athletic Director, which may exclude the Presidents’ rationale for engaging in this model of athletic governance.

At the time this trend was discovered in 2007 there were only seven Athletic Directors who served as Vice President. The number has increased to 17, yet the qualitative nature of this inquiry allows for only a small sample to serve as participants.

Thus generalizability to the larger population is not anticipated.

Some participants chosen, may elect not to engage in the study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Intercollegiate Sport

The origin of intercollegiate athletics can be traced back to 1852, when students at Harvard and Yale were interested in organizing games and rowing competitions (Andre & James, 1991). These activities were entirely separate from the formal structures of the colleges and universities. These early athletic competitions were organized by students with little interference from college or university faculty or administrators. By the end of the 1800s, college sports were rapidly growing (Gerdy, 1997). College administrators became interested in incorporating athletics into the mission of higher education. These leaders realized the potential for providing fiscal benefits to the institution, increasing prestige and recognition, in addition to satisfying the public’s growing interest in college sports (Gerdy, 1997). According to Fleisher, Goff, and Tollison (1992) significant expansion took place during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s as intercollegiate athletics grew from a small industry into a nationwide preoccupation. This tremendous growth and commercialization has resulted in some of the problematic issues and common abuses surrounding college sports today. Following the years of abuse and distortion of the educational mission of the institution, came the many concerted efforts to reform intercollegiate athletics. Yet, throughout the history of American higher education, athletic programs have played an important part in the campus life of most institutions (Duderstadt, 2000).

Undisciplined Beginnings

Intercollegiate athletics was accepted into the fabric of higher education
because of the financial gains and the benefit of increased institutional prestige and visibility it provided (Lawrence, 1987). Institutional administrators justified the existence of athletics as providing developmental benefits to students (Duderstadt, 2000) like endurance, teamwork, and motivation (Ehlrich, 1995). America’s first organized intercollegiate sporting event was a rowing regatta between Harvard and Yale in 1852 (Smith, 1988). Students were responsible for the general administration of these early athletic activities. They would train themselves and condition on their own. There was no full-time coach, systematic training, or lengthy preparation to win (Smith, 1988).

Intercollegiate sports continued to evolve through the late 1800s with a primary focus on rowing, baseball, and in the later part of the century, football (Smith, 1988). The first intercollegiate football game was held in 1869 between Princeton and Rutgers (Davenport, 1985) and football quickly became the sport that created the most excitement and controversy on college campuses (Thelin, 1994). Problems associated with intercollegiate athletics were becoming apparent by the late 1800s (Duderstadt, 2000). Eligibility issues surfaced as some of these early athletes were paid; while others were not even registered students at the institutions they represented (Fleisher et al., 1992).

Attempts at Reform

According to the Knight Foundation Commission (1991), three of four Americans believed television dollars, not administrators, controlled college sports. While eight of ten Americans believed intercollegiate sports were “out of control” and athletic programs were corrupted by big money. The calls for academic, athletic, and leadership reform of intercollegiate athletics have been made for over a century, beginning in 1898 with the Conference on College Athletic Reform. The conference
committee was made up of eight northeast colleges, which recommended that students should not be paid, that they must be in good academic standing, and have limited athletic eligibility. The committee also recommended that athletic departments eliminate gate and commercial interests (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). McMillen (2002) believed big-time college sports erode the integrity of our institutions of higher learning where athletes breaking the rules were the norm and the term “student-athlete” was an oxymoron. Mahony, Fink, and Pastore (1999) suggested that scholars have continuously pointed to the incidences of corruption in sport and called for significant changes to the current structure of intercollegiate athletics. President Theodore Roosevelt was displeased with the rugged nature and numerous injuries and deaths in college football, thus prompting him to call for changes in the management of intercollegiate athletics (NCAA.org, 2006c). The Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was formed in 1906 with 62 founding members. With this the NCAA was formed taking on its present name in 1910 (NCAA.org, 2006c).

Howard Savage completed one of the first national studies on the need for reform in intercollegiate athletics, which was sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and included over 130 colleges and universities. This study questioned university presidents for their inability to defend the integrity of higher education and recommended that college presidents and faculty gain control of college athletics (Savage, Bentley, McGovern, & Smiley, 1929). The findings of this three-year study found professionalism, illegal recruiting, academically weak students, heavy commercialism of sport, and corruption to be major problems throughout most of the institutions (Savage, et al., 1929). Commercialism was defined as “a condition that exists
when the monetary and material returns in sport are more highly valued than the returns in play, recreation, and moral well-being” (Christy, 2007; Savage, et al.1929). This study failed to offer any structural changes that may benefit the institution by gaining control of athletics but it did become the standard for reform proposals and policies in intercollegiate for many years to come (Thelin, 1994).

The NCAA developed a document entitled “Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics” in 1946, which later became known as the "Sanity Code” (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Part of the “Sanity Code” was a set of guidelines for recruiting, permitting scholarships based on need, and exercising institutional control. This code was an attempt by university delegates to come to a compromise between two schools of thought. Mostly southern schools advocated full athletic scholarships, whereas, Ivy League schools (Yale University, Harvard University, and Princeton University) insisted that athletes be treated no differently than other students (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Many university delegates believed that the Code was unenforceable and schools in the south were taking advantage of this weakness. Therefore, by 1950 there was a vote of no confidence and the Sanity Code was soon abolished (Christy, 2007, p. 26).

The American Council on Education (ACE) developed a committee made up of ten prominent college presidents of institutions with high regards for athletics and academics. In 1951 this committee recommended changes in intercollegiate athletics (Christy, 2007, p. 26). In addition, they were concerned about the “professional” coach because there was no Code of Ethics to guide behavior. Institutions were given two to three years to react to these recommendations. Due to low public interest, misleading or incomplete reporting from the press and the lack of power by the ACE president’s
committee to implement its observations and recommendations little was changed (Sperber, 1998; Thelin, 1994). The American Council on Education, headed by George Hanford, then vice-president of the College Entrance Examination Board, published another study in 1974 on intercollegiate athletics. The heart of this study was the financing of college athletics, which was seen as only getting worse (Sperber, 1998). The report called for an end to the pretense of amateurism and stated that big time college sports were in the entertainment business. What separates Hanford’s report from the ACE Committee and the “Sanity Code” is that it was proactive and not triggered by any spectacular event that took place. This report was kind of an early warning system that anticipated a new set of problems in intercollegiate athletics (Thelin, 1994).

Knight Commission

During the late 1980s the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation investigated intercollegiate athletics with the hopes of developing solutions to the problems with intercollegiate athletics and restoring the integrity of higher education (Knight Foundation Commission 1991).

The Knight Foundation report found academic neglect, professionalization of the student-athlete, corrupt recruiting, and commercialization of intercollegiate athletics were a source of concern for everyone involved in intercollegiate athletics. The Knight Foundation believed that the university presidents were the key to successful reform, stating “they must be in charge, and be understood to be in charge, on campus” (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991 p. 3).

As a result, the commission proposed a “one-plus-three” model for reforming college athletics. The model called for university presidents “one” to lead their institutions toward the “three” goals of academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification. The “one” represented presidential control where trustees,
alumni and boosters would defer to the president of the institution, and the president would have the same degree of control over athletics that they exercised within the university.

The first part of the “three” in the proposed model dealt with academic integrity where cutting academic corners in order to admit an athlete into school would not be tolerated and the graduation rates of student-athletes in each sport would be similar to the graduation rates of other students who have spent comparable time as full-time students. A “no pass, no play” policy would be the byword for college sports in admissions, academics, and graduation rates (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991).

The second component of the “three” was financial integrity of the athletic department. The report stated that athletic departments would not operate as independent subsidiaries of the university. All funds raised and spent for athletics would go through the university’s central financial controls and would be subject to the same oversight and scrutiny as funds in other departments. Furthermore, institutional funds could be spent on athletic programs (Christy, 2007, p. 29). It was thought that this would affirm the educational role of athletics and relieve some of the financial burden on the revenue-producing teams to support the non-revenue producing teams (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991).

The final component of the “three” was an external independent certification. This process was put in place so that each NCAA institution awarding athletics aid would be required to participate in a comprehensive certification program. This program would ensure that athletic departments follow institutional goals, fiscal controls were sound and that athletes in each sport resemble the rest of the student body in admissions, academics
and graduation (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991). In 1996, one of the most
significant recommendations made by the Knight Commission was approved when the
NCAA voted to replace a governance structure controlled by athletic administrators with
a system that put college presidents in charge of all planning and policy activities,
including the budget (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001).

The philosophy behind the Knight Commission was not to abolish sport, nor to
disband the growing athletic associations affiliated with the institutions. Instead, they
proffered to “endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in all matters of athletic
governance” (Knight Foundation Commission, 1993, p. 12). The commission sought to
promote the notion that intercollegiate athletics should reflect the values of the university.
The global perspective taken by the Knight Commission allowed for discussion and
reform for all critical areas of athletic governance. Financial integrity, academic integrity,
self-certification as well as standardized operating principles such as hiring, terminations,
evaluations and administrative roles, were all key components vital to the reform of
intercollegiate athletics.

In their attempts to promote fiscal integrity, the Knight Commission forwarded
initiatives that would reduce costs in athletic programs as well as recommending grant-in-
aid for full costs of attendance for the very needy. Recommendations to temper the
independence of the athletic foundation and booster club were meant to strengthen the
oversight of the president, and weaken the grasp of these two invested groups. By
initiating reviews of athletic spending for coach’s salaries and requiring approval by
university presidents, fiscal integrity would again be restored over time.
Academic integrity became a major focus of reform efforts as reports of weakened admission standards began to surface. Student-athletes were being admitted to institutions with significantly less preparedness for the rigors of college academics. This then led another contravention of the mission, by coursing student-athletes through majors and classes that did not lead to matriculation. They were being enrolled in courses that led to no definitive degree and were being kept eligible via enrollment. To address these concerns, the Commission forwarded initiatives that strengthened initial eligibility standards, admission standards, and academic progress towards degree and kept record of graduations rates (Knights Foundation Commission, 1993, p. 18).

Presidential control would be the cornerstone initiative from the Knight Commission. To advance presidential control, athletic administrators were to return all key matters to the advisement and attention of the university president at the institutional level as well as at the NCAA level. By wielding votes and brandishing the ability to raise motions at the NCAA convention, the presidents possess the ability to shape the governance of intercollegiate athletics. Oversight by the university president in matters of financial integrity, academic integrity, and the certification of all athletic policies and governance structure would contribute to the continued reform of intercollegiate athletics. The commission sought to legitimize intercollegiate athletics and the role it played within the institution. Intercollegiate athletics had become entrenched within the university and the commission sought to re-align its mission with that of the institutions that housed it. It was noted by Chairman James Knight “we recognize that intercollegiate athletics have a legitimate and proper role to play in college and university life” (Easley, 1998, p. 63).
Commercialization of Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate athletics began as students competing amongst themselves, organized as intramurals. The formation of campus athletic associations like the Harvard Athletic Association and the Columbia College Athletic Association gave a formal structure to student administration of these programs, but as the games grew it became more and more difficult for students to maintain adequate control over the direction and scale of the activity (Rasmussen, 1997, p. 9). With the industrialization of the United States, and the proliferation of intercollegiate competition, universities began to sense the powerful bond and attraction to sport.

Intercollegiate athletic programs have evolved into complex, extensive, commercialized enterprises (Nyquist, 1985). According to Thelin (1994), athletics allows similar schools to differentiate themselves in the public eye, to attract applicants and boosters not just locally, but, with modern media coverage, around the country, and even internationally. At the turn of the century, the popularity of sport had increased. Crew matches were being reported between Ivy League schools, with significant implications that tied the success of these intercollegiate competitions to the prestige of the universities. Students began to attend games in large numbers and newspapers reported eagerly on the games and their outcomes (Freedman, 2002). The advent of admission fees to these events provided a stream of revenue unrealized by institutions to this point, as noted by the following, “institutions found that they needed more money to provide the product demanded by students and alumni” (Freedman, 2002, p. 42).

In 1870, University of Chicago President Harper, attempted to promote his institution with winning teams by hiring Amos Alonzo Stagg, an integral member of
football coaching lore (Lytle, 2003, p. 45). It was this recognition of the power of intercollegiate athletics, which ultimately perverted the educational mission of institutions. The need for local money and the influx of alumni and booster support, created a necessity to forfeit some of the stringent controls placed by the NCAA. The post-World War II landscape in intercollegiate athletics, was one dominated by “big time college football and basketball” (Lytle, 2003, p. 45).

Several factors were identified as the cause for the growth of intercollegiate athletics and the exponential financial backing it received from institutions. Sage (1990) identified the growth of mass media and television revenues, the development of rapid and convenient air transportation, as several factors that advanced the regional rivalries between institutions, prompting more coverage both locally, regionally and nationally for institutions. Those that defended athletics were quick to reference the benefits of sports programs, such as visibility and funding, as well as creating and nurturing a campus culture of support and community. According to Schmidt (1957) and Thelin (1994) academia has struggled to reconcile the increasing emphasis colleges and universities place on their athletics programs with their founding educational missions. Riley and Baldrige (1977), note that universities have pushed their athletic departments into external partnerships by not increasing their athletic budgets. As early as the 1940’s, the NCAA had already begun to lean upon post-season tournament revenues to supplement the regular season ticket sales and revenues (Shavers, 2004). The pressure to conduct winning programs escalated into a competitive chase for financial resources.

Institutions began to differentiate themselves by conducting their departments with different emphases. It was during this time that the NCAA realized they would be
hard pressed to serve all of their constituents with members such as the Southeastern
Conference rejecting an initiative to raise entrance standards (Shavers, 2004, p. 38). By
the 1980’s universities were striving to enjoy the success of “Big Time” athletics
(Duderstadt, 2000; Sperber, 2000). Institutions began to compare conference media
revenues and conference post-season tournament revenues to determine the more
lucrative membership for the institution. Sperber (2000) notes that institutions benefited
from expanded schedules, seasons and post season play which generated additional
revenue at the gates and through concession sales in addition to conference payouts. In-
state rivalries gave way to additional revenues, while the facilities became more state of
the art, and the media dictated schedule became increasingly instrumental in recruiting.
Naming rights became a valuable revenue stream for athletic departments to offset the
costs for operating a highly competitive athletic program, as did corporate sponsorships.
With the influx of external dollars, these invested constituents exerted more control over
the commodity they were supporting financially. As a result, the condition of NCAA
Division I intercollegiate athletics in 2010 resembles the professional sport model more
now than ever.

Presidential Control of ICA

Mallette and Howard (1992) wrote that the college presidency is a complex job
with multiple responsibilities, many competing values and priorities, and an abundance of
distractions. A significant portion of the direction of intercollegiate athletics on any
campus, hinges upon the leadership and vision of the university president. The adherence
to that vision and the founding educational mission of the institution should be
recognized as the driving force for intercollegiate athletic decision-making. The key
figure in reform of college athletics remains the university president (Thelin, 1994). Estler and Norton (2005), contend that Division I University presidents must attempt to balance the educational and economic benefits of a successful athletic program while keeping the school’s moral and academic integrity intact.

The Knight Commission introduced a new model of intercollegiate governance that encouraged more presidential oversight (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991). Presidential influence had been absent during the formative years when the autonomy of the athletic director yielded only to the external pressures for success in the big time college sport. The re-introduction of presidential control placed emphasis on more oversight of the financial operations, contract negotiations, governance decisions, gender equity, academic integrity, and conference membership. Leadership boards such as the President’s Commission were formed in 1984 to wield more influence in the governance of intercollegiate sport through the membership as well as at the NCAA level (Sperber, 1990). Legislation that resulted from the efforts of this group and others included minimum admission standards, an institutional self-study and an annual financial audit (Presidents’ Commission Handbook, 1997).

In addition to these foundational principles, several legislative passages can be traced to the efforts of the Presidents’ Commission. Reduction of time demands on student-athletes; the re-instatement of the partial qualifier in Division I, and permitting these individuals to receive need based non-athletically related financial aid (Presidents’ Commission Handbook, 1997). The commission has incorporated presidential control through the restructuring of the NCAA at all three levels. The commission agenda promoted cooperative efforts of governance at the divisional level as opposed to each
institution individually pursuing their own tangential goals and solving their contextual athletic issues. Bok (1993) noted that they could act within a common framework of collective rules that maintained adequate minimum standards, which proved to benefit the cause of the group.

One complication in presidential leadership in intercollegiate athletics was the notion that presidents are hired and fired by governing boards. Therefore, it is a rare occurrence when the president takes a position on an athletic issue, which does not closely resemble the position held by the governing board. Thelin (1989), asserted “the more intense, the more visible and the more costly the athletic program, the less influence the CEO has over it” (p. 75). With the president at the forefront of a host of issues pertaining to the entire university, there is a need for an executive level leader, most commonly referred to as the athletic director.

Athletic Directors

Athletic Directors must operate today’s athletic departments much like a Fortune 500 company. These individuals must display competencies in business, marketing, resource acquisition, licensing, facility management and finance (Duderstadt, 2000). They have become the face of athletic associations and the intercollegiate athletic programs for each respective institution. Athletic directors have the duty of ensuring compliance with NCAA bylaws and legislation, hiring and firing of coaches, fundraising, managing physical and financial resources, marketing, and overseeing the academic success of student-athletes (Bailey & Littleton 1991; Duderstadt 2000),

According to Lapchick (1987) and Thelin (1989), many of the problems in athletics can be traced to the fact that athletic directors, coaches, and athletic departments
have operated separately from the institution with little or no accountability to the
president or chancellor. Historically athletic directors have operated without the scrutiny
of the university president, as university presidents do not always know what the role of
the athletic director should be. As noted by Spivey (2008), athletic departments are run as
auxiliary units and are typically given considerable independence to manage their own
budgets and finances. It has been this independence that has led to the influx of external
resources commanding more influence over the decision-making, policies and practices
of intercollegiate athletics. The independence granted to the athletic department and the
questionable control by the university president has sometimes led to difficulty in
unifying an athletic department with the institutions mission (Duderstadt, 2000).

Athletic directors have the complex responsibility of providing exceptional
leadership in pursuit of one main goal with several peripheral goals that are as elusive as
national championships. Ad’s must attempt to balance the educational and economic
benefits of a successful intercollegiate program while keeping the school’s academic and
moral integrity intact (Estler & Nelson, 2005); in addition to this balance, athletic
directors must weigh the outside influence exerted upon their program by those that
provide financial and other forms of support. With mounting pressure to win and
produce championships and the exponential growth of intercollegiate athletics, the
athletic director is the caretaker of the department.

The athletic director is responsible for the integrity and ethical operation of the
athletic department. S/he must invest more into the academic mission of the institution,
instead of simply complying at the minimum levels. Athletic directors as a group “have
done a great job in promoting athletics and growing the industry to unparalleled success”
(Spivey, 2008, p. 42). Many have faced difficulties in maintaining their sense of ethics in the win-at-all costs environment of intercollegiate sports. Through successful athletic endeavors universities are able to garner national prestige. Athletic directors have been instrumental in cultivating financial resources as a result of requisite national prestige. In addition to their efforts to cultivate financial resources, they must also work to promote and sustain the traditions and values of the university through athletic endeavors.

In light of the scandalous past of athletics, the Knight Commission (1991) recognized that in order to regain America’s trust in sport in higher education, athletics must be grounded in the academic tradition that created and nurtured it. The athletic director must work in conjunction with the university president to organize and operate a financially sound athletic department that focuses on the wellbeing and educational success of the student-athletes.

Governance of Intercollegiate Athletics

According to Adrianna Kezar (2004) governance is referred to as the “process of policy making and macro-level decision making within higher education” (p. 375). This definition will suffice when referring to the governance of intercollegiate athletics. It is the process of policy making within the athletic department, which ensures compliance with NCAA bylaws, fiscal management, personnel management, resource acquisition and most importantly, academic policy making that ensures the opportunity for successful student-athletes. Kezar continues by describing governance as “a multi-level phenomenon including various bodies and processes with different decision-making functions. Certain entities tend to have authority over specific kinds of decisions (Kezar); the same can be said of the governance in athletics. There are levels of authority within
athletics with each level possessing a particular authority concerning decision making. The presidential level of decision making presides over all decisions with the senior level of athletic administrators making a bulk of the policy decisions, and then down to the micro level with the mid-level management and head coaches developing immediate operational policies to manage day to day functions. Policy decisions that would apply to all of intercollegiate athletics include NCAA bylaws, reform initiatives promoted by the Knight Commission, such as Academic Progress Rate, Progress toward Degree, Initial Eligibility Standards and the like, are examples of administrative governance. Simply, these are policies legislated by the governing body of intercollegiate athletics.

Institutional level governance is characterized by examples of policies that refer to how large expenditures are approved through the president and university financial officers, the hiring process and the manner in which positions are filled. Decisions and operational policies such as these can reflect similar university policies or they may deviate from the university model for quicker response to the dynamic environment of athletics.

The American Alliance of University Professors’ (AAUP) Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics believed that the ultimate authority for athletic governance should lie with the university presidents and the president should have the backing of the board and boosters in order to effectively align athletics with the academic mission of the institution (Christy, 2007). The Knight Commission emphasized a new model of governance where the president presided over all major functions including financial operations (including television contracts), and administration. According to Spivey
(2008), this recommendation monumentally changed the governing structure of intercollegiate athletic programs.

According to Smith (1988), governing boards were the real power behind big time athletics. It could be noted that most major decisions that represented athletic interests, such as the hiring and firing of presidents, athletic directors, coaches, the erection of colossal stadiums, all originated with a governing board. There are no measures in place to deter or promote decisions made at the governing board level. Based on the agenda put forth by the governing boards, presidential control can be negated when presidents’ views are not in accord with the views of the board. When the two are leading with the institutions benefit in mind, sound governance and decisions are made. The Knight foundation reiterates that with the support of a good governing board, a conscientious president makes a difference with the institutional control of athletics (Mallette & Howard, 1995; Schultz, 1989; Thelin, 1989).

By appointing the athletic director as a vice president, university presidents are introducing them to a new level of leadership. With this appointment, athletic directors may be prompted to learn a new set of competencies, but also must manage a new role and new identity within that level of leadership. Understanding how athletic directors have constructed this new role and identity is the purpose of this study and it is through social constructivism, that this research views this phenomenon.

Emerging Model of Leadership

In 2003, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee cited “the segregation of intercollegiate athletics from the lifeblood of the university as the wrong direction to move (Neel, 2004, p.46), following this assertion the entire athletics department at
Vanderbilt was re-integrated into the university structure, leaving some to question if this deconstruction was the answer to reforming the separation of athletics from the institution. Traditionally the athletic director has operated atop his/her department with consistent contact with the President.

With the emergence of this new model of leadership, this appointment incorporates the voice of athletics into the highest level of institutional governance. Additionally, the athletic director now has direct insight regarding the need for a fit and direct alignment with higher education. While very little literature exists to qualify this emerging model as a true model, the research conducted through this study will attempt to determine if it is a model that could replace the current structure of intercollegiate athletic leadership and governance. In this model the term governance refers to matters associated with academic and athletic policy-making that renders the intercollegiate athletics department in compliance with institutional and NCAA rules and standards.

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Social Constructivism

Learning is a skill that requires effort and thoughtful deliberation. It is the development of this skill that distinguishes between rote memorization and higher order mental processes. The active engagement in knowledge acquisition has also been
referenced as constructivism. Constructivism is an umbrella term for various views on learning (Gijbels et al., 2006), which focus on how learners create meaning and which argue that this knowledge construction process requires active engagement by the learner (Loyens, et. al., 2008, p. 446). It is also considered a learning theory, which proposes that “people are not recorders of information but builders of knowledge structures,” (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989, p. 4). Sparks (1994) notes that teachers and administrators will collaborate with their peers, to makes sense of the teaching/learning process in their own context” (p. 27). It is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that “by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in” (Toh, Ho, Chew, Riley, 2004, p. 201).

For the participants of this study, creating meaning from the new processes and policies becomes integral to their success as a university vice president. Assimilation of this new experience and role becomes a function of their knowledge acquisition. Athletic directors have traditionally come from an athletic background, while some have had the distinction of having a business model background. It is a rare occurrence when the athletic director has a significant level of experience in the governance of higher education. The governance of the two entities has rarely intersected in this manner, which is why this study will be critical to establish precedence in the literature.

Introducing an athletic director to the processes of higher education governance could cause a contextual dissonance. The constructivist lens then requires the athletic director to notice and think about governance in a different manner than they are accustomed. Welch (1996) notes that “the growth of knowledge is the result of individual constructions made by the learner” (p. 14). Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) viewed this
“acquisition of knowledge as active change in patterns of thinking brought about by experiential problem-solving situations” (p. 454). This new role could offer the opportunity to impact intercollegiate athletic governance in a positive manner.

Smith (1993) notes “the aim of constructive epistemology is to use some logical system as a template so that the construction of its fundamental notions can be investigated empirically” (p. 36). As executives of the athletic department, these individuals have a specific semblance of the nature of policy and how it shapes the decision making processes associated with athletics. The experiences they have accumulated have contributed to their knowledge base or schemata of athletic governance. The appointment as vice president can be viewed as an expansion of a foundation of governance that has been relegated to one component of the university. To this end, athletic governance becomes their template or temporary scaffolding, upon which the athletic director can build the newly acquired knowledge system.

In contrast to the input and acquisition of knowledge, the insight into the role that prior knowledge plays when introducing an athletic director into the governance of higher education can inhibit the acquisition process. Watson and Konicek (1990) state that much of the literature on constructivism indicates that many things in one’s prior experiences can block conceptual change. Leinhardt believed that “teachers need to help make explicit students’ prior knowledge and build upon it, so as to promote reflection and expansion of thoughts” (1992, p. 23). Assimilation to the complex nuances of governance from an athletic administration background will certainly require a shift in contextual goals and behaviors.
Currently there are four notable core features or learning constructs that characterize constructivism. These constructs can be labeled as (1) knowledge construction, (2) cooperative learning, (3) self-regulated learning, and (4) the use of meaningful, authentic problems in education (e.g. Driscoll 2005; Marshall 1992, Loyens, 2008, p. 446). These four constructs are enumerated below and explicated in the following paragraph:

In short, knowledge construction refers to the use of prior knowledge when new information is interpreted. Second, cooperative learning embodies the idea that social interaction and negotiation can help learners in their knowledge acquisition process. A third construct within constructivist learning, self-regulated learning, presupposes aspects such as goal-setting, meta-cognition, and self-assessment and is viewed as the key to successful learning. The use of meaningful problems in education, finally, refers to confronting students with complex, meaningful problems to make learning situations more similar to real-life, professional situations, which promotes transfer of knowledge (Loyens, 2008, p. 446). (For a detailed discussion, see Loyens et al., 2007a)

As detailed earlier, the use of previously held constructs lends itself to the construction of new knowledge. When the intake of new information is being processed, it allows for an easier acquisition when it can be related to previous experiences and practice. Knowledge construction (Loyens, et.al.2008) should be considered the foundation for all new learning. Cooperative learning (Loyens, et al.2008), the second core, infers there are collaborative efforts to aid athletic directors engaging in the governance of higher education. Whether by observation or inquiry, associating with other vice presidents could benefit knowledge acquisition.

Self-regulated learning (Loyens, et. al.2008) involves the personal and self-directed effort of ingesting the new constructs that are particular to the new knowledge system. Athletic directors may have to create reminders or learning mechanisms that
foster acquisition and construction. It should be noted that athletics does not function quite like general administration of higher education. The sense of urgency present in intercollegiate athletics requires decisive leadership, where issues in higher education governance can be tabled for months until an appropriate solution or problem can be reached.

Social Constructivism is the framework for this study because it lends itself to the analysis of how athletic directors engage in their new role as vice president. When considering the several knowledge constructs that are inherent in athletic administration, the acquisition of new knowledge leads to a new schemata of knowledge as well as the deconstruction of one set of knowledge and the re-application of old schemata with the new. Athletic Directors repositioned as institutional vice presidents may be exposed to a level of governance that may be completely foreign to their pre-existing schemata. They may have very little exposure to the executive level of university governance and must be allowed to construct their own interpretations of how higher education is governed and how athletics fits into that governance model. The relationships between the two functional roles can lead to an enlightening tenure as both AD and VP, or they may cloud the primary functions of either role and cause role ambiguity. In some cases there are no comparable experiences to draw from, thus the athletic director then has to construct their own reality. Wadsworth describes this condition as such;

“sometimes a stimulus cannot be assimilated because there are no schemata in which it readily fits. The characteristics of the stimulus do not approximate those required of any of the person’s available schemata. Essentially one can do one of two things: One can create new schema in which to place the stimulus, or one can modify an existing schema so that the stimulus fits into it.”
(Wadsworth, 1996, p.17)
The preceding passage speaks to the athletic director’s capacity to take the functions and roles associated with an executive member of the university’s governance structure, and either create a new set of knowledge constructs in accordance with their previously existing functions, or modify their antecedent functions to accommodate the newly acquired ones. The process of creating necessary knowledge, assimilation and accommodation of newly acquired functions, is a necessary cognitive and psychological course of action that can occur systematically or disorderly. The next section will describe the methodology and techniques that will be utilized to gather insight into how the athletic directors assimilate this knowledge.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Methodology and Research Design

In this chapter, there will be an overview of the research method and design appropriateness, the research questions guiding the study along with the purpose of the study. This chapter will also include participant selection, interview strategy, data collection, instrumentation, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

This study will examine if this is a new model and how this executive leadership model influences the governance of intercollegiate athletics. The research will also seek to gain an understanding of the development of the dual role for Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as university Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism Framework. Through developing an understanding of the Executive Leadership model, recommendations for continued reform in athletic leadership and governance may surface.

This study is necessary because the Executive Model of leadership has not been identified previously in research. Implications based upon the evolution of the new model of intercollegiate athletic leadership may have a significant impact on college sport now and in the future. Additionally, athletic directors serving jointly as a university Vice President have not been the subjects of study to date and therefore examination is necessary in order to gain insight into how they construct their professional identity as leaders with a dual role serving both intercollegiate athletics and the institution of higher education.
Purposeful Sampling

According to Creswell (2007) a key consideration of qualitative research is “the basic concept (is) that knowledge claims must be set within the conditions of the world today and in the multiple perspectives of class, race, gender, and other group affiliations” (p. 25). This study is associated with intercollegiate athletics, which contains very specific attributes that establish membership within the community being studied.

Creswell (2002), states that researchers intentionally select participants based on the notable fact that the individuals are information rich with similarities in the defining characteristics of the central phenomena. Patton (1990) bolsters this assertion noting that subjects possess a characteristic, which distinguishes them from others. Qualitative inquiry also seeks to represent the interpretation of the participant’s world as relayed through the researcher and the broad assumptions held by the researcher. The athletic directors who hold the post of university vice president have a distinct perception of sport in higher education and how sport fits within the university governance structure. A secondary scope of this study seeks to understand how those who hold the post of vice president and athletic director perceive the place of sport in higher education and how the dual role of AD/VP influences leadership and governance at the university level. Utilizing proper sampling techniques of qualitative research, the researcher will be able to delve into the essence of the participants’ professional identity development. In exploring a sample population in such a way, the researcher will be listening to individuals with expertise and in turn allow the researcher to draw a picture based on their ideas (Creswell, 1998). The sample will be constructed by homogenous sampling technique, which identifies individuals based on their membership grouping.
characteristics. The first characteristic for membership in the study is holding the post of athletic director of a Division I athletics program. Each participant will occupy this position for consideration in this study. The second characteristic considered is that the participants have been appointed to full vice president, and not assistant or associate vice president. The third characteristic rendering these participants as homogeneous is their institutions affiliation with a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conference, or a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) conference. Other characteristics utilized in selecting candidates were their membership to a diverse demographic, which could include ethnicity, educational attainment, and/or gender. The final component in selecting the participants for this study is the size of the athletic department they are responsible for. The size can be determined by three ways, the number of sports the department sponsors, the number of student-athletes, as well as the number of employees working in the department. This sample is varied in an attempt to acquire multiple perspectives about this shared experience. These multiple perspectives will develop a full and rich viewpoint, allowing the emergence of themes and in turn providing strong validity to the research.

There exists little to no literature about this small community of athletic administrators because their distinction is fairly new and previously unnoticed. Creswell (2007) indicated that the final product is a holistic cultural portrait of the group that incorporates the views of the participants as well as the views of the researcher (p. 72). When considering the status of the participants, a great deal of respect, reciprocity and ethical representation must be offered and assured during the conduct of the study. The
detailed descriptions and shared themes that emerge may be utilized to address a need for the larger community to which these participants belong.

Prior to commencing with the collection of data, each of the participants will receive an email introducing and explaining the purpose and significance of the study. Attached to the email, will be a brief bio about the researcher and how the study emerged. In addition to these components, the eight interview questions will be forwarded upon receipt of the signed informed consent form. This will offer the participants the opportunity to frame their responses and think deeply about their responses prior to the interview.

Once consent is reached, there will be two face-to-face interviews and three telephone interviews. On the day of the interview, the researcher will review the consent form and revisit the purpose of the study. The participants will be reminded during the interview that it will be digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The participants will also be assured that their responses, once transcribed, “will be locked in a cabinet for a period of three years, after which all electronic and transcribed documents will be destroyed” (Massengale, 2009, p. 53).

Instrumentation

The researcher will conduct in-depth interviews that will be unstructured. There will be two interviews conducted face to face and the remainder over the phone. The interview questions were constructed based upon the research questions and existing literature that speaks to this phenomenon. The questions will be rooted in five main areas: (1) experience and skill as an athletic administrator; (2) policy making processes; (3) presidential involvement (4) the main issues surrounding ICA, commercialism, academic
reform, fiscal integrity, institutional control; and (5) the emerging leadership model. Each of these areas of intercollegiate athletic leadership is integral to the core functions as an athletic director/vice president and has surfaced in the literature concerned with intercollegiate athletic reform. The use of Social Constructivism may give the participants a lens and a specific language to understand and relay their experiences with accuracy.

Research Questions

The appointment of the athletic director to university vice president was an unprecedented move when it first appeared in 1997, at Gardner Webb University. Since that time there have been 16 appointments at the NCAA Division I level. This alignment of athletic leadership with the higher education governance structure presents an emerging model of intercollegiate athletic governance. Using the research questions as guidelines along which to ask interview questions, they will serve to maintain a logical focus on both the responses given and the discussions that occur during interviews. The research questions have been crafted to investigate the essence of the Athletic Director’s identity development as well as the influence on the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletic departments within these universities.

Participant Selection

At present, there are 120 NCAA Division IA institutions that house athletic departments. Of the 120 distinct athletic departments, there are 17 athletic departments that employ an athletic director that has been appointed to the post of university vice president. For the purpose and depth of information for this study, only five of the 17 will be utilized for the interview process. Five were chosen in an effort to maintain
anonymity. Due to the national recognition of these members of a very distinct community, utilizing more than five could compromise the integrity and confidentiality of the research. The five participants were chosen in efforts to maximize the variation of backgrounds and respective university conditions. Patton (2002) urges that by identifying diverse characteristics for the sample, the researcher increases the interest in common themes that emerge due to the varied perspective of the responses. The appropriateness of utilizing only five participants can be verified by the following statement by Patton (2002):

Thus when selecting a small sample of significant diversity, the data collection and analysis will yield two kinds of findings: (1) High quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged from heterogeneity. (p. 245)

The athletic director/vice presidents will have intimate knowledge about their own processes and development into the role they currently occupy, which will contribute to the validity and richness of data collected. The five participants were chosen purposefully based upon the following several distinctions. They currently hold the post of athletic director and university vice president. Three were selected because of their affiliation with a BCS or FCS Conference, which subscribes to the corporate model of intercollegiate leadership. Among the five participants, several were selected based upon their membership to a diverse demographic (e.g. ethnicity, educational attainment, and/or gender). The size of the respective athletic departments was a significant determinant for selection of the participants in addition to the alternate criteria decided upon. When considering the size of the participants’ athletic departments, several components were considered. The number of student athletes was the primary component, followed by
number of employees working in the athletic department and number of sports sponsored
by the department. Five athletic directors/vice presidents should serve this study well in
providing rich and in-depth perspectives and explicit responses that enrich the analysis of
this emerging model. These multiple perspectives will develop a full and rich viewpoint,
allowing for emergence of themes and in turn providing trustworthiness to the findings.

Interview Strategy

Prior to commencing with the question portion, the researcher intends to engage
the participants in a brief but genuine open-ended conversation about their backgrounds
and their thoughts about ICA leadership. Once the researcher intuits a comfort level the
interview will begin. There will be a set of 8 interview questions utilized in the process.
These questions will be developed to solicit in-depth responses and will engender a
dialogue that reveals very specific details about the duality of the role, but also some
general principles that are relevant to the leadership of intercollegiate athletics at their
particular institutions. Questions will progress from the individual perspective about their
personal development within the two roles and proceed to how the appointment affects
their view of athletic department leadership within the governance structure of the
university. The responses will be recorded via digital recorder and transcribed into a
word processing file for storage and analysis. The interviews should take between one
full hour and one hour and a half. Considering the diverse regions where the participants
are located, several telephone interviews will be necessary in addition to the face-to-face
interviews. Sweet (2002), states, “the telephone interview can be an equally valuable data
collection approach” (p. 1). The interview questions can be found in Appendix C at the
end of this manuscript.
Data Collection

Data collection can be described as a series of activities that occur during the research process. These activities have been described by Creswell (2005) as a “circle of interrelated activities” (p. 117). Securing the individual for interview, gaining access and acquiring consent to do the interview and establishing a rapport with the individuals are all critical steps in the data collection “circle”. These are all pre-requisite activities that occur prior to the actual investigation. Sampling, collecting the physical data, recording information, and storing the data are all the methods critical to the latter half of the data collection process.

Selection of the site will most likely result in a natural setting for most of the participants of the study. The participants whose professional location extends beyond the resources of the researcher (time and money to travel) will be interviewed by telephone and recorded by digital recording device. Participants A and C were interviewed via face to face interview strategy, while the others were interviewed over the telephone, utilizing the same digital recording device. Establishing a rapport with the participants can be as consuming as the actual interview itself. Gaining the trust of the participants and putting them at ease about the line of questioning, the purpose of the study and even the interviewer is integral in establishing a rapport with the participants. The researcher intends to do this by communicating with the participants prior to the interview, in an attempt to familiarize the participants with the research and researcher via conversations, in preparation for the interview. Torrence (2009) notes spending time with the participants outside of the actual interview space proves beneficial. Creswell (2005) notes that providing full disclosure, the option of anonymity and the purpose of the study, helps
build rapport with the participants. Once arriving at the site to interview, Creswell (2005) specifies “the interviewer should have the interviewee fill out the consent form once they have agreed to participate” (p. 134). Having the participants complete the consent form will satisfy a portion of the requirements of obtaining Institutional Review Board approval (appendix B) prior to conducting the study. After reviewing the purpose of the study and the plans for the results and outcomes, the researcher will proceed with the interview.

Analysis

This study will follow the strategy of Strauss and Corbin (1998) utilizing a constant assessment of themes method. The constant examination of data will lead to the emergence of complex relationships of similarity and disparity. Creswell (1998) discussed the process of data analysis as the reduction of information, analysis of relevant statements, identification of relevant themes, and constant exploration of emerging themes expanding from the data. Initiating with the preparing and organizing step, the researcher must organize the data in a way that is conducive to categorizing (Neuman, 2003, p. 441). After each interview, the responses will be coded using Atlas ti software. Once the transcribed responses are entered and preliminary themes are created, Atlas ti will be utilized to build more distinct themes and descriptions. Creating lists of preliminary themes will help to organize the themes and create clarity of findings. Once these themes are organized, each will be explored for content and explicit meanings and connections. The coding process results in generating a description of the sample’s perception of the central phenomenon of the research, as well as themes for analysis (Creswell, 2002 & 2005). Representing and reporting the findings and then interpreting
the findings will be the critical processes before delving into data analysis. This process will allow for a reflection on personal biases and will create an environment “for the researcher to conduct interviews and analyze the data with a clear sense of personal and intrinsic biases” (Kramer, 2008, p. 47).

Reliability and Validity

Rather than explicating how rigor was attained in qualitative inquiry, a number of leading qualitative researchers have argued that reliability and validity were terms pertaining to the quantitative paradigm and were not pertinent to qualitative inquiry (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Leininger, 1994). In seminal work in the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of “trustworthiness,” containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Within these were specific methodological strategies for demonstrating qualitative rigor, such as the audit trail, member checks when coding, categorizing, or confirming results with participants, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, structural corroboration, and referential material adequacy (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated that while all research must have “truth value”, “applicability”, “consistency”, and “neutrality” in order to be considered worthwhile, the nature of knowledge within the rationalistic (or quantitative) paradigm is different from the knowledge in naturalistic (qualitative) paradigm. They noted that, within the rationalistic paradigm, the criteria to reach the goal of rigor are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. On the other hand, they proposed that the criteria in the qualitative paradigm to ensure “trustworthiness” are credibility, fittingness, auditability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Also important were
characteristics of the investigator, who must be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances, holistic, able to maintain processional immediacy, sensitivity, and possess the ability for clarification and summarization (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Consulting with the principal investigator about the voice of the participants and the voice of the researcher assisted in averting researcher bias. Acknowledging the responsiveness to unexpected responses allowed the researcher to curb his presumptions. Transcribed interviews were sent to the participants as well as the initial themes extrapolated from the initial efforts at encoding the data.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the research considers and caters to the ethical concerns of research including human subjects, IRB or Institutional Review Board approval will be obtained prior to the commission of any data collection from participants selected for the study. The IRB will be housed and reviewed by the UNLV Office of Protection of Human Subjects Rights. This entity will determine the risk associated with participation in this study and grant or deny permission to proceed. There may be additional considerations necessary to protect the anonymity and integrity of the respondents and responses.

Confidentiality is a pivotal concern for conducting research. Protecting the confidentiality for the participants is the ethical responsibility of any person conducting research (Neuman, 2003). Confidentiality will be essential for this study due to the small sample of participants being utilized. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all responses will be coded by alpha-numeric identification in addition to the respondents being referenced using pseudonyms in the following chapters.
Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine how this executive leadership model influences the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics. The focus centers on understanding the role of Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism framework. Through developing an understanding of the Executive leadership model, recommendations for further reform efforts in athletic leadership and governance may surface. Qualitative analysis will be utilized to achieve the kind of examination necessary to uncover the rich and in-depth perspectives of the participants. Once the interviews are conducted, recorded and transcribed, a six step process will be used to analyze the data by “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, exploring and coding the data, describing and developing themes from the data, representing and reporting the findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy and credibility of the findings” (Creswell, 2002, p. 257). In the next chapter, these findings will be extrapolated and displayed by emerging themes as well as tables to demonstrate the commonality of experiences as well as differences.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This qualitative study captured the in-depth experience and unique perspectives of NCAA Division I athletic directors who concurrently served as university vice president. The investigation examined how these dually engaged administrators developed into their new role professionally, as well as how the Executive Leadership Model affected the leadership of intercollegiate athletics. Utilizing the social constructivist framework, this study sought to understand and report how each athletic director developed the knowledge base to serve on the executive level in an institution of higher education. Additionally, this study sought to uncover any effects the executive leadership model had on governance in higher education. The following research questions were utilized to satisfy this purpose:

1. How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?

2. How does this executive leadership model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

Chapter four is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief profile of each of the participants in the study. The second section describes the major themes emerging from the data as well as the sub-themes identified during the data analysis. The third section provides evidence to support the key themes and findings. The fourth section serves as a summary based on the research questions and details how each discovered theme aligns with the research questions posed.
Participants

Each of the participants at the time of the study occupied the position of Athletic Director as well as University Vice President. While the ordering of the title may have been different (i.e. Director of Athletics, Vice Chancellor), the identification of the role was congruent despite the difference in title. Each of the participants served as the director of an athletic department at the NCAA Division I level. The following table presents a brief vignette of each participant accompanied by descriptors of their university athletic department. To maintain confidentiality, participants have been given pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were selected because the size of the sample population was relatively small. The participant pool was equally small and thus disclosure of gender may have compromised confidentiality. Each participant was assigned a capital letter to distinguish them from the other participants.

Table 1
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Division I Distinction</th>
<th>Tenure in Athletic Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>Mid-Level Division I</td>
<td>20 + yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>BCS Level Division I</td>
<td>7 + yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant C</td>
<td>Mid-Level Division I</td>
<td>25 + yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant D</td>
<td>Mid-Level Division I</td>
<td>20 + yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant E</td>
<td>BCS Level Division I</td>
<td>10 + yrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant A

Participant A served as the Vice President/Director of Athletics at a mid-level Division I university. Participant A has been in athletic administration for over two
decades and has been engaged in various committees and functions within athletics at the university as well as at the national level. S/he was very active on campus as well as with several national governing bodies of sport aligned with the purpose of the NCAA.

Participant A has been in the Vice Presidential role for less than five years. S/he has witnessed several key changes with regard to role expansion and institutional perspective on how athletics aligns with higher education.

Participant B

Participant B was the Vice President and Director of Athletics at a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conference affiliated university. Participant B has been in athletic administration for less than 10 years and came from a non-traditional background for an athletic administrator. S/he did not spend significant time in intercollegiate athletics prior to being appointed to the athletic director position. His/her appointment to Vice President occurred within the last five years. The use of the term non-traditional when used in referring to the athletic director post is merely an indication of the career path taken by this participant. While there are many paths taken by the 120 Division I athletic directors, it has been the standard that they come from an athletic background, whether as a player, coach, or administrator. This participant did not subscribe to that path.

Participant C

Participant C was the Vice President/ Director of Athletics for a mid-level Division I university. Participant C’s experiences were representative of a more traditional athletic director who had spent time as a student-athlete, transitioned into coaching then transitioned into administration. With a career span in athletics of over 20
years, Participant C embraced the Executive Leadership Model and reported this model was a good fit considering athletic directors tended to be engaged in so much of campus life and therefore should be a part of the overall discussion with campus issues. Participant C had served in this role for over seven years. Participant C has been very engaged in numerous committees throughout his/her tenure, serving on boards and various governing bodies that are aligned with the NCAA.

Participant D

Participant D was one of two participants with a terminal degree. S/he was the Vice President/ Director of Athletics at a mid-level Division I university. Participant D has been in athletic administration for over 20 years and with just under a decade of that tenure serving as vice president and athletic director. During his/her career Participant D had raised an athletic program from one NCAA division to the next, had spent considerable time at the conference level and had spent time as the vice president of a national professional organization specifically geared towards athletics. Participant D had been pivotal in the university’s revamped development efforts, which proved beneficial to the institution and the athletic department. S/he attributed this success to the expanded role as Vice President.

Participant E

Participant E had been the Vice President/Director of Athletics for just under a decade and felt just as strongly about the Executive Leadership Model as the other participants. Participant E had the longest tenure at any one institution as compared to the other participants. As a result, s/he had witnessed substantial growth in both the athletic
department and the institution. His/her path was that of a traditional athletic administrator advancing from coaching to administration.

This group of athletic administrators, while similar in office and standing with the university, all came from different backgrounds and have several years of experience as an NCAA Division I athletic director. Consequently, with the appointment, these athletic administrators endured a shift of perspective, role and responsibility. The subsequent sections will detail the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the dialogue with the researcher.

Emerging Themes

This study followed the strategy of Strauss and Corbin (1998) utilizing the constant assessment of themes method. The constant examination of data led to the emergence of complex relationships of similarity and disparity. Creswell (1998) discussed the process of data analysis as the reduction of information, analysis of relevant statements, identification of relevant themes, and constant exploration of emerging themes expanding from the data. The researcher organized the data in a way that was conducive to categorizing (Neumann, 2003, p. 441). After each interview, the responses were coded using Atlas Ti software. After transcribing the data, it was separated line by line and each line received a distinctive color depending upon the topic of that particular line. A preliminary grouping of colors yielded the first level of coding which rendered the first level of themes. These were the more common responses.

The interview questions were utilized to organize the responses as each line became an independent response. From each independent response Atlas Ti utilized word recognition to group words between the responses. The tangential responses that
remained separate from those groupings (i.e. role of athletics, university alignment, and value of the vice president) became the sub-themes. The sub-themes were clustered after more interpretation and consideration. After developing the overarching themes, and situating the responses that belonged with those themes, the sub-themes were then aligned with the larger themes. The relationship between larger themes and sub-themes became solidified once the alignment to research questions became more apparent. The tertiary level themes were developed to accommodate the responses that could not be tied to the research questions. These responses (i.e. budget, professional preparation, responsibility) were grouped together and left out of the results as they had no bearing on the outcome of the research. The independent response approach was utilized and it began to yield smaller more intricate themes that required more interpretation into the context of the questions that prompted the response. These became the findings of the research, which addressed the fundamental issues associated with the responses.

Once the transcribed responses were entered and preliminary themes developed by the researcher, Atlas ti was utilized to build more distinct relationships between the themes, questions, and direction of the responses. Creating lists of preliminary themes helped to organize the themes and create clarity of findings. Scanning for similarities in responses to similar questions developed these preliminary themes. Once the themes were organized, each was scrutinized for its meaning and connection to the responses. The lived experiences as described by the participants were combed through and stranded into codes and themes resounding through each of their experiences. The major themes that emerged from the data were: 1) At the Table; 2) New Perspective; 3) Learning the Role; 4) Integration; and 5) The Executive Leadership Model. From these five major themes
several sub-themes were generated as evidence that the major themes did not encompass the entire experience of the participants. The coding process resulted in a description of the sample’s perceptions on the central phenomenon researched, as well as themes for analysis (Creswell, 2002 & 2003). The following table presents the themes and subthemes aligned with each research question posed.

Table 2: Themes and Sub-Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ 1: How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Table:</strong> Athletic Directors Conveyed a sense of entitlement and engagement by serving at the executive leadership level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ 1: How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Perspective</strong> This theme emerged as evidence of the change in perspective as each participant expressed a change in how they viewed athletics’ fit into the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning the Role:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This theme emerged as the participants revealed their knowledge acquisition process. This theme revealed how they learned higher education governance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ 2:** How does the executive leadership model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Integration:</strong></th>
<th><strong>University Alignment:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Transparency:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each participant remarked about the resultant sense of integration they felt once appointed to the executive level. This theme answered both research questions as it contributed to the professional identity development as well as affected the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics.</td>
<td>The philosophical alignment of the athletic department with the university became a significant discussion point when considering how this model affects the connection between the AD and the University.</td>
<td>The integration of athletics into the executive level brought about a sense of greater transparency at the leadership level as each participant conveyed a sense of responsibility to share all necessary and vital information with the president.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ 2:** How does this executive leadership model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Executive Leadership Model:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Presidential Involvement:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Perception of the Vice President Title:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The participants indicated this model reflected a new level of engagement and promoted presidential involvement. They also perceived this model as a return to the educational mission of higher education</td>
<td>This sub-theme emerged as a byproduct of the structural changes resulting from the joint appointment.</td>
<td>This sub-theme served as evidence of the validation the participants felt due to their executive level position and broadened responsibility They each relayed a sense of belonging and renewed status due to their title change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

RQ 1. How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?

Theme 1: At the Table

Each of the participants made multiple references indicating their status as vice president rendered them to a unique position when dealing with issues concerning both athletics and the university. This theme, “at the table”, was the most critical theme to surface from this research. There were several comments by the participants that spoke to the notion of being at the table with the president and other vice presidents “contributing” to the overall conversation. Participant A noted “when I’m at the table on the institutional side, I understand better”. This point resounds throughout the interviews as each participant spoke to the value of being a part of the executive cabinet. Participant D noted, “you are sitting at the table for all strategic initiatives regarding the university”.

Without question there was a parallel drawn between having a seat at the table where university decisions were being made, and being involved in the executive level of leadership and governance. Participant A brought to light the shortcoming of not being “at the table” saying that, “if I wasn’t a vice president sitting at the table, it’d be really much harder for us in athletics to be more integrated with the university”. This last remark was not an indication that the other models of athletic leadership were not as effective or efficient. It merely suggests that this particular participant felt athletics became more integrated within the university when the model was employed. This quote provided validation for the appointment of an athletic director to the executive cabinet. In terms of making contributions to the university agenda, Participant C noted that “I’m
considered a contributor to the decisions that affect the entire university”; this statement served as confirmation that this individual took advantage of full participation in the role and responsibility the office carries. The office of Vice President connotes a genuine involvement in the policy making and governance structure for the entire university. The participants all echoed similar sentiments. Their involvement in the policy making and overall university leadership was not tangential but primary to their dual role.

Sub-theme: Value of the VP

The position of Vice President carries with it a significant amount of status when referring to the governance and leadership of a university. Even outside of higher education, the term vice president implies a significant amount of respect. Participant B perceived the following to be true about the appointment: “I do think that the vice president title gives me a certain stature with the president”. Bearing the vice president title has given ascribed value to these athletic directors, which they in turn must wield carefully. Participant D noted that when dealing with the president, “I think as a vice president, he’s sort of used to that relationship with other vice presidents and so I think he treats me like that, which I think is really good”; This statement offers a rationale as to why athletic directors could be a natural fit for the executive level cabinet. Participant B remarked that the role of vice president gives the other vice presidents in the room a certain level of comfort knowing that athletics is being brought into the university governance structure instead of remaining tangential and obscured by independence. Participant B shared

“on the other hand I think the vice president role connotes that there’s a certain executive level of leadership and I am diametrically centered, I think you get the best of both worlds, and me being a VP myself, I think helps everyone’s comfort level with me being a direct report to the president”.

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Again, the reference to having the benefit of both perspectives, of vice president and athletic director, brought forward the idea of enhanced acceptance among colleagues while also bringing athletics into the broader campus community. One could perceive through these interviews that participants felt that a valuable exchange had occurred with this appointment and an ally has been created in a sense within the executive leadership of the university.

Sub-theme: Communication

Participant C was the most adamant about the communication between the two offices. Communication was improved by removing the filter of another vice president. Both Participant C and Participant A were tightly aligned when talking about the manner of communication now that s/he was a direct report to the president. Participant A noted, “it is my responsibility to take responsibility for the relationship and to be very candid in my communication”. These two participants spoke to being the responsible parties for communicating with the president. Participant C said “the athletic director answered through a vice president before. I don’t think that’s good for the athletic department to have that filter there”. This quote speaks to the transparency that has been called for by faculty members and administrators since intercollegiate athletics’ inception. The notion of transparency will be discussed in chapter five.

Participant A led into question five with the summation that s/he was “a self-starter”. S/He completes a monthly report that details where the athletic department is financially, academically, and athletically. The communication about fundraising efforts, campaign projects and major initiatives originates from the desk of the athletic director and now lands on the president’s desk without impediment. Participant B noted that
his/her communication commitment exists so “that there are no surprises”; implying that the relationship is predicated on the president finding out from the athletic director versus an outside source. The commitment to proactive communication was reported to be critical in the development of this new relationship. It was also thought to be integral to the successful execution of the dual roles as athletic director and vice president.

The final theme that contributed to the answering of research question one is also a theme that contributed to the answering of research question two. This theme is reflective of both questions as it brings to light the identity development via the dual role, as well as having an impact on the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics. Integrated Into Leadership is a valid response to both research questions as evidenced by the following. This theme and sub-themes serve as evidence of the identity development of the participants in the emerging model of leadership as well as the influence on intercollegiate leadership and governance.

Theme 2: New Perspective

The responses for this theme were congruent for all five participants and there was a tremendous sense of similarity about how their perspective developed. In large part, it was a common assumption that being “at the table” for campus initiatives, helped these participants gain the perspective that the needs and issues of the athletic department were secondary, if not tertiary, to the issues faced by the university. Participant B said in response to question four that, “being a vice president has allowed me to take a global view of athletics”. Three of the five participants referenced the term myopia when discussing their previous views about athletics within academe. Participant C noted that “I really think it’s helped me not be myopic about the issues for athletics”, which was a
benefit of being at the table and experiencing the executive level of governance. Knowing the university issues allowed several of the participants to weigh carefully what issues s/he brought to the table because of timing, meaning the significance of the athletic issue may not have been appropriate to raise at that time. Participant E stated “I think it gives athletics an advantage because I get to see what’s on their worry list”. From a relational standpoint, the participants have been given a macro lens to view their department, within the context of the university. As a group, they shared the impression that pulling away from athletic specific issues and viewing the campus from a much more global scope was beneficial to athletic administrators.

Additionally, the manner in which the participants acquired a new perspective demonstrated a deeper understanding of how logistically the campus works. This perspective also supported a new understanding about how the campus serves athletics. Participant B indicated that achieving this understanding of the “institutional role has really helped me have a broader horizon when it comes to athletics issues, frankly it’s probably helped me maneuver those shoals a little better because I understand what’s behind all that stuff”. It must be noted that the participants were re-creating their context by participating in executive level meetings and being engaged in global campus issues. They were gaining an understanding of the university governance process. Participant E articulated his/her new understanding behind the reason for dealing with certain campus offices when negotiating to upgrade facilities, or human resources to reclassify a position, by noting that “there was this idea that you have to balance all the needs of the institution, so the minute I understood all the other conflicting opinions and the other pushes on the same issues, you see the global perspective”. This quote provided clarity with regards to
the development of their new perspective. It was also a demonstration that these athletic directors were able to see what their decisions meant to the campus, outside the athletic context.

Through this understanding these executives became better equipped to navigate decisions in accordance with the direction of the university. Several of the athletic directors suggested that their new perspective added to their expertise in dealing with athletics issues. They offered that knowing the industry standards and best-known practices provided a sense of sophistication when dealing with executive cabinet members as well as external university constituents. Participant A noted that when dealing with athletics issues at the executive cabinet level, s/he often felt “that it gives you much more sophistication as you deal with your own issues, because you now know the best practice throughout the industry and you can see where you align good or bad”. This quote provided another example of how a heightened perspective has benefitted the athletic directors in developing as institutional vice presidents.

Sub-theme: Division Difference

This sub-theme became more apparent as the responses for question four were analyzed. Participant E made the most divisive comment about the difference between the athletics and academics units, remarking that, “athletics is a much different entity on any campus than I believe any department. We are very unique”. This is a clear indication that the participants honor and understand that the athletic department is fundamentally different from academic departments and the needs of an athletic department are decidedly different. Participant B provided an insightful perspective into the difference between the two entities noting that,
“We have to sell tickets, we have to sell sponsorships, we have to put on events, and that’s a little different than the archeology department, because we’re really close to the economic, the economics of people not having much money to spend to buy tickets, or companies not having as much money to sponsor events, I’m in a real retail role”.

This quote points out that athletics deal more intimately with sport consumers and engages the public in a more transactional way that may not directly translate to academic departments. Athletics depends upon the loyalty of groups external to the university, in addition to internal groups. Academic units tend to be less consumer-oriented and more focused on the discipline.

Sub-theme: Subordinate Role in Leadership

Several of the participants echoed the sentiment that sometimes s/he comes to an impasse with the administration and sometimes this renders athletics at a disadvantage with other conference schools. Participant C stated

“I’m sure there are times I disagreed with decisions that were made and I became vocal about them. I’ve tried to push from different angles and if I can get people to change their minds, great”;

This sentiment was conveyed by two other participants when reflecting on how they handle receiving directives from the top as opposed to delivering the directives. Participant A reinforced the idea by saying “the directives come down for good reason, for the university”. At face value this may be misconstrued as patronizing, but this participant was genuine when stating his/her understanding of why the directives were made and whom the beneficiary should be. Presidential directives and decisions in this example were about the university and not just the athletic department. All of the participants were able to voice this in their own way using various examples. Participant B noted that a particular institutional policy created a hardship for the athletic department
and their ability to recruit top-notch coaches. The program in question could have caused a considerable disadvantage with other schools in the conference being able to offer their coaches a benefit that participant B’s institution had designs to eliminate. After negotiation and deliberation, the university saw value in the athletic department’s position and kept the policy while allowing a discretionary provision for athletics.

Participant D spoke in terms of the admissions standards for the university and how the standards were raised bi-annually. The result was an unintended difficulty in recruiting for the athletic department. Coaches were recruiting two years in advance of admittance thus, without knowing what the admission standards would be in two years, recruiting was more difficult. Having insight about impending academic changes that the university sought to implement provided a catalyst for deliberation about how these changes would affect athletics.

By engaging the executive cabinet, posing ways to bolster the university admission standards while still allowing athletics the continuity to recruit, a compromise was made. These examples demonstrated how the presidential directives were issued to fulfill the university agenda and the athletic department had to respond to the directives whether they were beneficial or not. In both instances, provisions were able to be made. Thus, athletics was spared the negative consequences of an initiative that benefitted the entire university community.

The next answer to research question one is Structural Alignment/Engagement. The following theme and sub-themes contributed to the development of this finding.
Theme 3: Learning the Role

Participant A was the most vocal about his/her learning experiences in the transition from being solely the athletic director toward becoming a vice president, indicating:

“I really think it helped me not be myopic about the issues for athletics. There’s a process of education that I’m going through, so I think the institutional role has really helped me have a broader horizon”.

This quote serves as the umbrella for all participant quotes because the sentiments were similar when discussing how the learning curve presented new information and offered a new perspective with each day served in the dual identity. Participant A again noted how s/he learned from the board of regents/trustees through observation in monthly meetings, indicating:

“that you learn just by being in the room with them, you learn by sitting at the table and watching how they handle conflict, how they handle challenges, how they get consensus, how they brand the university message. Being there is so rich”

It was this experience that was at the root of understanding what the participants were engaged in at the core of their experience. They were essentially learning how to be vice presidents and engaging with the executive cabinet like never before. These athletic directors were learning aspects of governance and leadership beyond the limitations of the athletic department. They were learning how to run a university and how to govern at the institutional level. Participant C noted that learning how the institutional side manages conflict has helped “maneuver the shoals a little better”. The exposure the participants were provided has benefited their respective athletic departments. Participant A suggested “I steal ideas from them all the time”; which was an indication that the role of vice president has some legitimate impacts on how s/he leads the athletic department.
The participants were learning from the institutional side, how to engage and govern the athletic side more effectively. Participant E offered a very candid explanation noting that “I’ve been learning the job of Vice President in the role of higher education and I think part of it is just that greater sensitivity of how we act, how we interact and how it can be interpreted”. This passage suggested that the participants must be cognizant of their behavior and how s/he pursue their tangential athletic goals while engaged in the executive cabinet. Participant A noted “being in the room with the best minds helped me reflect on my own personal leadership and management style”. S/he can then take these lessons learned back to the athletic department and model a more inclusive leader. When it comes to being a more effective leader in academe or athletics, each participant felt that s/he engaged athletic issues with more sophistication and awareness than prior to their vice presidential appointment. Participant D noted

“when I’m at the table on the institutional side, I understand better why we have to work through the architect’s office to proceed with facilities issues, why we need to work so closely with human resources to work with posting and job classification”.

Participant A shared that “I feel it gives you much more sophistication as you deal with your own issues, if you know best practice throughout the industry, you can see where you align, good or bad”. One final note to close out this section was provided by Participant C who said “I think my role is to understand how the institution works”, which elicits a heightened awareness of where athletics fits into the bigger picture, but also how the university works. These athletic directors were learning the functions of their dual identity, but also enduring an adjustment in their own psyche about the fit of athletic leadership within higher education.
Sub-Theme: Role of Athletics

Athletics has a very distinctive role when it comes to the institution. The participants considered it the most visible of any entity on campus. As a result, the missions and philosophies of both entities must align. Athletics can be viewed as a vehicle to disseminate the values and mission of the institution that houses the athletics programs. These athletic directors/vice presidents have been charged with facilitating the university brand through intercollegiate athletic competition. The teams and competitions are often the most visible commodity offered by the institution. The athletic department holds events with the purpose of entertaining the public, the community, alumni, and several other external constituents. University athletics can help in establishing a campus climate that fosters university support, loyalty and identification through the sports programs. In contrast, athletics can compromise the mission of the university through transgressions. Either way, athletics has an extremely pivotal role for the institution.

Participant A affirmed that the athletic department is concerned with where the departments “stack up athletically, socially, and academically”. These athletic administrators were equally concerned with aligning athletics with the university mission and making sure the respective departments represented the best of the university.

The next answer to research question one is Change in Perspective. The following theme and sub-themes contributed to the development of this finding.

Theme 4: Integration

Each of the participants felt the executive leadership model was the catalyst for integrating athletics into the university governance structure. Participant C indicated the model “is mostly tied to institutions wishing to make sure that athletics are within the
structure of the university”. It could be speculated that one byproduct of this model is the ability to directly supervise and exercise concentrated oversight over athletic operations. The resounding message throughout the interviews was that the model, and thus their VP role, fostered involvement and integration on the highest level of the university.

Participant E interjected that the VP role caused his office to become “fully integrated in the university”. As in the previous section, the athletic directors reiterated that their meetings with the executive cabinet on a monthly basis constituted a unique situation unseen before in intercollegiate athletics governance. Participant C was adamant about “athletics becoming part of the process instead of the crisis at the end”. Similar sentiments were shared when conveying a sense of linkage between athletics and academics. In one example provided, the presence of an athletics voice resulted in the preservation of processes for the recruitment of prospective student-athletes. Because the institution sought to implement new admissions standards, athletics was able to voice the impending hardships the adjustment would have caused.

The ability to have a voice in these deliberations presented athletics an opportunity to weigh in on legislation that would have positive and negative impacts on student-athlete recruitment. Without having a “seat at the table” and being integrated into the policy making structure, the athletic department would have been limited to maneuvering around or circumventing the university standards in an attempt to remain competitive. Each participant stressed the importance of athletics being integrated into the mainstream of the academy, and noted the significant role the executive leadership model played in accomplishing this goal. Each felt that both the general student population as well as student-athletes would benefit from the integration over time.
Sub-Theme: University Alignment

Participant A noted, athletics needs to be “aligned with the university philosophically, educationally, and socially”. The philosophical alignment of the athletic department was a genuine issue for several of the participants. Some echoed that if the philosophy of the institution is not congruent with the structure, then the executive leadership model is simply for show. But if the philosophy is congruent between the athletic department and the academy, then the model has advantages that will surely yield benefits. The philosophy, as participant E noted, is an “educationally based one”, which needs to be reflected in the values of the athletic department. Participant A noted, the values of the athletic department need to remain a reflection of the institutional values because athletics is the most visible representative for the university. Participant A stated  

“our commitment to the athletics program is that we run a program that enhances the university image that we are in complete alignment with the academic mission of the university that we provide a positive look for the university and we want to make sure that the missions are aligned.”

Sub-Theme: Transparency

Participant B offered illustration through this sub-theme. Referring to his/her experiences prior to becoming athletic director, where s/he was comfortable with and valued transparency. S/he went on to distinguish athletics as much like a public entity where the constituents bore the right to know what was going on at all times. Noting “I’m comfortable living in a world where you assume there are no secrets”, which was followed by “I think sometimes athletic directors and other university officials fall into the trap of feeling like they’re uncomfortable with transparency and everyone knowing what goes on behind the department doors”. Participant E noted that s/he goes about his/her business knowing that everything must be reported, from the miniscule to the
major. S/he, too, has adopted the philosophy that “it’s better to come clean in private than perish in public”.

Theme 5: The Executive Leadership Model

The support for the executive leadership model was overwhelming at times. Each of the participants spoke highly of their new level of engagement. The responses from the other vice presidents were consistently reported as supportive. Participant E posed the question, “has it changed the role of athletics? Not necessarily it hasn’t, I can’t say it has, but again, it’s just a different model of education”. Each participant voiced how s/he felt the campus had responded positively to the appointment. Participant C noted that, “I am really very positive about this model”, while participant B shared, “I do think personally it’s a good model, I think it should be done more often”. These sentiments were echoed throughout the interviews especially early on in the interviews during the responses for question one. Participant E reflected on the impact the title made with various campus constituencies by noting, “I think is has made a difference on campus as well and I think it makes perfect sense”.

Participants B and C clearly articulated the differing leadership models that exist in athletics. Specifically, each spoke about the business based models and how the athletic director’s role at these institutions was disparate from their current role as institutional vice president. Their shared comments were about athletic departments being led by CEO’s and CFO’s instead of educational leaders. Participant B noted that, “the retired football coach moving into the athletic director’s chair, no longer exists”. This type of comment also demonstrates how the role as vice president has been attached to the model of athletics that aligns more directly to the educational mission of the
university. Participant C shared a bit of criticism suggesting “those institutions aren’t going to embrace the vice presidential mantra”; suggesting, there will be several institutions that will not find value in the educational model presented in this research and continue to promote the business/entertainment model of intercollegiate athletic leadership. Institutions that are willing to accept and promote the Executive Leadership Model seem likely to attribute their success to following an education based model, whereas those who do not employ this new model most likely adhere to the business/entertainment model.

Sub-theme: Presidential Involvement

This theme emerged as participants conveyed the various depths of involvement among their respective presidents. Most of the AD/VP’s echoed the point that they were involved and engaged in the monthly executive cabinet meetings. Every university vice president did not always populate these meetings. Participant C noted that his/her president “loved all parts of it, and was always very involved” with athletics. Participant E reported that the president knew very little about athletics but came to all of the events. With this conversation, each athletic director began to relay his/her preferences about how much involvement was desired. Participant A completed monthly reports that contained everything the president and other vice presidents needed to know. Participant A took responsibility for the relationship and made an effort to maintain presidential involvement at a level s/he was comfortable with. Participant D echoed what the others had offered, saying that “the dual role allows the president to remain fully informed on all issues facing the university”. Participant C was the only athletic director who felt the
president had become a bit of a micromanager, simply because of his love for athletics and desire to really be a part of it all.

Sub-theme: Perception of the Vice President title

Participant E spoke to how the title of Vice President made him/her feel a certain status when entering the executive cabinet meetings. The validity of the athletic director’s role in the executive cabinet was directly attributed to the title. None of the athletic directors mentioned that the primary role of athletic director created a sense of unworthiness or not belonging, but each voiced how the title of vice president afforded them a confidence or worthiness with regard to being at the table. Participant E went on to conclude how this titular relationship brought with it a pre-existing professional comfort, noting “I think as a vice president, he’s sort of used to that relationship with other vice presidents so I think he treats me like that. Which I think is really good”.

Participant B spoke to the prestige associated with the vice president title by saying “on the other hand, I think the vice president role connotes that there’s a certain executive level of leadership”. The value of the title has given these dual role agents a sense of worth and belonging on a level s/he previously felt did not belong. The title has afforded them a proper place at the table as well as influenced their perspective on the governance of issues in both higher education and athletics.
Summary

In this chapter, the research participants voiced their perceptions about how the
constructed their identity while serving on the executive cabinet as well as how they have
learned the role of Vice President while concurrently serving as Athletic Director. Theparticipants in the study offered similar and oftentimes congruent explanations and
rationales about their very personal experiences. These experiences have contributed to
the understanding of how each participant has learned the role and acquired the identity
of a vice president, as well as how the model has affected the leadership and governance
of intercollegiate athletics. The shared responses have been displayed in themes and sub-
themes. In the following section the responses will be displayed through their connection
with the research questions.

RQ 1: How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within
this emerging model of leadership?

Each participant noted that s/he was able to see how athletics fit into the campus
view of the institution and how s/he was able to shed some of the myopia that had
plagued his/her decision making since taking the post of athletic director. Participant B
said “Being a vice president has allowed me to take a global view of athletics”; this
sentiment was echoed by Participant A who said “when I’m at the table on the
institutional side, I understand better”. These statements were the foundation for the
theme titled “new perspective”. Each of these participants relayed a renewed perspective
about how their respective departments fit into the macro level of the university. The
participants were learning how to govern a university and this was evident in the theme
titled “Learning the Role”. Participant A shared, “I think that it gives you much more
sophistication as you deal with your own issues”. It was this shared thinking that led to
congruent statements, which tied together the experiences of learning the new role and developing into it. The opportunity to have a seat at the table of university governance also allowed each participant to develop into the vice president role. Participant A shared “I am considered a contributor to decisions that affect the entire university”. While Participant C rendered a similar notion saying “we need to have a skin in the game and the only way to have a skin the game is if you at the table”. Both of these statements reflected how each participant grew into the mentality of an executive cabinet member and how that membership allowed him/her to construct a new identity congruent to with the role of vice president.

The next research question was developed to better understand the impact of the emerging leadership model. The interview questions aligned with the second research question were designed to expose the impact of the model on the participant’s leadership and governance experiences.

RQ 2: How does the executive leadership model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

The initial theme that bore a significant indication of how this model has affected leadership and governance was the “integration” theme. There were several cues from the responses that served as evidence that the model has had an immediate and beneficial impact on governance and leadership. Participant C shared that “athletics becomes part of the process instead of just part of the crisis at the end”. This statement speaks to the involvement and immediacy with which executive cabinet members can impact athletics instead of the delayed responses that plague traditional models. Participant E eludes to how there were very tangible and realistic linkages between themselves and the other members of the executive cabinet. S/he noted that “part of it is I think the daily
experiences of working with the president’s cabinet”, which can lead to a very transparent and mission driven department.

The emerging leadership model was found to be a catalyst toward meaningful integration of the athletic department. The dual role as AD and VP has created better channels of communication. Participant D noted “my dual role has allowed the president to be fully informed on all issues impacting the athletic department in a timely manner”. Participant C shared the sentiment “I don’t think it’s a good thing to have that filter there”. These statements support the comments of all participants. Having the ability to communicate directly with the president has given the athletic department voice, as well as access to the information necessary to respond to the challenges faced by the university. The communication between entities on campus has become more of an exchange of ideas and initiatives instead of an offering of explanations and expectations.

Lastly, bearing the title of vice president has given each participant membership on the executive cabinet. Prior to their appointments the sense of community and shared governance was absent. Incorporation of the new model has provided each participant the opportunity to legitimately contribute on a larger scale. The participants valued the title of vice president because it impressed upon the athletic community a genuine connection to the university. The Executive Leadership Model, as it will now be referred to, has seemingly bridged the chasm between the university and athletics, by integrating the leadership of the athletic department into the leadership of the university administration.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Intercollegiate athletics began in the early 1900’s as informal gatherings of students engaged in athletic contests against their classmates. The organization of athletics was originally a student led and student-organized activity. Without a formal governance structure, the students were competing without a purpose other than alignment with the “Muscular Christian movement” of the mid-nineteenth century (Noverr & Ziewacz, 1984). While disinterested initially, the university faculty began to take note when reports emerged of horrific injuries, significant fines, suspension of students and even dismissal from the institution. These misdeeds led to the need for leadership. By the end of 1905, sixty-two schools agreed to be governed by the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, which in 1910, became known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Lewis, 1969). The climate of intercollegiate athletics was such that rules violations, commercialism, and academic fraud had become more synonymous with the institutions and athletic programs than the rich academic histories. The NCAA came about amidst the clamor for reform of college athletics, including a call for leadership from the athletic directors and university presidents.

Spivey (1998) noted, “Athletics departments are traditionally run as auxiliary units on the campus and are given, under the direction of the athletics director, considerable independence to manage their own budget and finances” (p. 8). According to Frey (1984), Lapchick (1987), and Thelin (1989) “a number of problems in college
athletics can be traced to the fact that many programs have operated separately from their institutions, with little to no accountability to the president or chancellor” (Easley, 1998, p. 38). Several scholars have noted a widening chasm between the values of the academic units and the interests of the athletic department (Hanford, 2003; Sack, 2001; Suggs, 2001). It was this chasm, which Dr. Gordon Gee originally sought to bridge in 2003. By restructuring the athletic department and re-introducing it under the supervision the Vice President of Student Affairs, Gee created a new model for leadership. The Executive Leadership Model, as it has come to be known in this study, has demonstrated to be a viable option for directly aligning intercollegiate athletics with institutional governance. The results have demonstrated that this model engenders a presidential oversight as well as a greater sense of presidential involvement.

Presentation of the results in chapter four detailed several themes and subthemes that were obtained through analysis of the data gathered in this study. This chapter will detail each of those themes to extract conclusions, which will address the research questions and provide implications for further research. Chapter five has been broken into several sections: the overview of the study, discussion of the findings, implications for practice as they relate to the replication of the Executive Leadership Model, and the conclusion.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine how the Executive Leadership Model has influenced the leadership of intercollegiate athletics. The primary focus centered on understanding the role of the athletic directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism framework. The Executive Leadership
Model has emerged through research as a practical option in support of the reform efforts recommended for intercollegiate athletics. In pursuit of this purpose, the researcher interviewed five athletic directors who concurrently served as university vice president. The interviews were conducted with the following research questions as the foundation for the inquiry:

- How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?
- How does this emerging model influence the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university?

This study utilized the Strauss and Corbin strategy (1998), which was the “constant assessment of themes” method. Creswell (1998) discussed the process of data analysis as the reduction of information, analysis of relevant statements, identification of relevant themes, and constant exploration of emerging themes expanding from the data. Lists of preliminary themes helped to organize the data and created clarity among the findings. Once the themes were organized, they were then analyzed for explicit meanings and connections. The coding process resulted in generating a description of the participant’s perceptions of the central phenomenon of the study, as well as themes for analysis (Creswell, 2002 & 2005).

Discussion of the Findings

By using the four core components of social constructivism as the framework for developing the research questions, this study was able to uncover significant data, which served as evidence of learning among the participants. Knowledge construction, cooperative learning, self-regulated learning and the use of meaningful, authentic problems in education e.g. Driscoll 2005; Marshall 1992;
Loyens, 2008, each served as a guide for the extrapolation of the data regarding how these athletic directors constructed their professional identities as vice presidents. In response to research question one “How does the AD/VP construct his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership?” the data yielded the following outcomes, 1) The dissolution of myopia that plagues most Athletic Director's perception of intercollegiate athletics' place within the institution, 2) The model encouraged a change in perspective for the participants dually engaged as Athletic Director/Vice President 3) The structural alignment at the table of institutional governance aided in the construction of participants new identity, 4) The model resulted in the integration of the athletic director into the university governance structure. When describing and responding to research question two which was “how does this model affect the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university”, the following results surfaced 1) The Executive Leadership Model was referred to as an educational model, 2) The model is one of integration and synergy, 3) The Executive Leadership model is a model that promotes transparency at the leadership level. These results have been displayed purposefully in order to demonstrate their alignment with the overall purpose of the study.

Professional Identity Development

Athletic directors have traditionally existed as the top executive, often referred to as the CEO of the athletic department within most NCAA Division I universities. These individuals must display competencies in business, marketing, resource acquisition, licensing, facility management and finance (Duderstadt, 2000). A recent trend has
emerged, an evolution of their position, title, and responsibilities. The participants in this study have been serving as both the director of athletics and fulfilling the role of vice president. According to the participants these appointments were made with differing motivations among the university presidents and differing desired outcomes. The Executive Leadership Model was reported to be beneficial for both the individuals interviewed, and the departments they represented. Social Constructivist theory was instrumental in deciphering how the AD/VP constructed his/her professional identity within this emerging model of leadership. Several key findings emerged from this study and will be detailed in the following sections. These findings have contributed to the validation of the Executive Leadership Model.

Dissolution of Myopia

Funk (1991) described the current state of athletics as one driven by television revenues and ticket sales. Sperber, (2000) notes that the NCAA sports enterprise, with the addition of profits earned from football, surpassed every professional league in the world. The pressure to produce winning teams was further compounded by the heavy financial burden of Division I athletics departments (Funk, 1991). The current climate according to Spivey, (2008) contends that in the win-at-all costs environment of intercollegiate athletics, economic growth and increased spending had become standard practice. This particular environment had caused a narrowed focus for athletic directors as they pursued athletic excellence with institutional and departmental goals in mind. Over the past few decades, this environment has resulted in a myopic approach to athletic leadership and decision-making. Athletic directors have honed their business skills in revenue generation, media rights negotiations, external relations and institutional control.
Participant B and C both acknowledged their own reduction of myopic thinking by relaying the following, respectively, “being a vice president has allowed me to take a global view of athletics” (participant B), and “I really think it’s helped me not be myopic about the issues for athletics” (participant C). Several of the participants expressed how the reduction of their myopia helped them acquiesce into their institutional role and develop a new understanding of university governance.

Participant E articulated his/her new understanding behind the reason for dealing with certain campus offices when negotiating to upgrade facilities, or human resources to reclassify a position, by noting that “there was this idea that you have to balance all the needs of the institution, so the minute I understood all the other conflicting opinions and the other pushes on the same issues, you see the global perspective”.

From the constructivist approach, the reduction of myopia constitutes the acquisition of knowledge. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) viewed this acquisition of knowledge as an active change in patterns of thinking. These new patterns are the byproduct of being engaged in problem-solving situations. While developing a schema about the new role of vice president, Wadsworth (1996) asserts that the participants are experiencing a new stimulus and are attempting to modify an existing schema so the new stimulus fits. Participant B indicated that achieving this understanding of the “institutional role has really helped me to have a broader horizon when it comes to athletic issues, frankly it’s probably helped me to maneuver those shoals a little better because I understand what’s behind all that stuff”. This idiom serves as evidence of the change in understanding among the athletic directors about their role and place within the university. Several of the participants were conscientious enough to acknowledge the
subtle dissolution of their myopia and how it contributed to their development in the new role as vice president.

Seat at the Table

In 1996, one of the most significant recommendations made by the Knight Commission was approved when the NCAA voted to replace a governance structure controlled by athletic administrators with a system that put college presidents in charge of all planning and policy activities, including the budget (Knight Foundation Commission, 2001). This was a major step towards university and college presidents gaining institutional control of intercollegiate athletics. In the model emerging from this study the athletic director has both a physical and figurative seat at the table of institutional governance, making their role commensurate with other vice presidents as their respective departments are subject to similar guidance and supervision.

The Executive Leadership Model provided structure for this supervisory relationship, which was reflected in participant’s responses. “The benefit of that is you are engaged and you are sitting at the table for all strategic initiatives regarding the university. You see the global perspective for the university and you become much more aware of the challenges and also much more aware of the role, that athletics plays, positive, negative in that mission” (participant B). This structural alignment has increased the engagement of the athletic director with senior level administration and this model is at the epicenter of promoting presidential involvement. This kind of structural change has involved the athletic director/vice president in a manner uncommon to the normal experience of athletic leadership and has had considerable effect on their personal and professional growth. Participant D noted, “you are sitting at the table for all strategic
initiatives regarding the university, if I wasn’t a vice president sitting at the table, it’d be really much harder for us in athletics to be more integrated with the university”.

The Knight Foundation believed that university presidents were the key to successful reform, stating “they must be in charge, and be understood to be in charge, on campus” (Knight Commission, 1991 p. 3). According to this study the athletic director/vice president is engaged with the president for most institutional initiatives and is contributing to the deliberations as well as having others contributing to the governance processes of intercollegiate athletics. Engel, (2007) notes that the Vanderbilt President Gordon Gee deconstructed the Vanderbilt University athletic department to re-integrate athletics into the university structure and reduce the disconnect between the two entities. This model, much like the initial recommendations from the Knight Commission in 1991, has established a re-alignment of the athletic department leadership within the university governance structure and has engendered more presidential involvement in intercollegiate athletic issues. Appointing athletic directors to the post of vice president has successfully re-structured and simultaneously integrated the athletic departments represented in this study, achieving what most reform efforts have called for over the past two decades. Regarding the development of the individual, each participant identified being at the table of institutional governance as a catalyst to their development, into the role of vice president/athletic director.

Change in Perspective

Ward (2011), effectively argues that a balanced perspective relative to the institutions academic, financial and athletic priorities must be maintained in order to operate a healthy athletic department. He argues that this perspective must be moderated
by institutional objectives and not the objectives of external constituencies. The athletic
director and president must serve as the moderators of these external objectives. This
model has broadened the perspective of these dually engaged athletic administrators by
creating a panoramic lens with which to view athletics’ place within academe. The
participants each echoed similar sentiments, which credited this model with changing the
perspective with which the participants viewed athletics. Participant E asserted “there
was this idea that you have to balance all the needs of the institution, so the minute I
understood all the other conflicting opinions and the other pushes on the same issues, you
see the global perspective”. The perspective shift emerged from the interviews as each
participant expressed their opportunity to view the issues from a universal vantage
instead of an athletic funnel. Instead of leading athletics through the lens of revenue
generation, commercialization and national branding strategies, these athletic directors
have affixed their perspective with the greater good of the institution while still
maintaining their fervor for athletic competition and excellence. This model has afforded
them the perspective to govern athletics from an institutional perspective and not solely
from an athletics perspective.

From the Constructivist frame Sparks (1994), noted that teachers and
administrators will collaborate with their peers, to make sense of the teaching/learning
process in their own context” (pg. 27). Participant B, conveyed on several occasions that
his/her interactions with the governing board and university leadership expanded her
breadth of expertise when dealing with her own issues in athletic governance. The
constant collaboration afforded her the perspective alteration that has demonstrated a
significant alignment with reform outcomes proffered by the Knight Commission,
President’s Commission, Drake Group and others. Additionally, the transition between the two perspectives has been described by the following, “by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in” (Toh, Ho, Chew, Riley, 2004, pg. 201). The change in perspective served as an indication that these athletic directors/vice presidents achieved a level of understanding of the institutional priorities when it comes to athletics as well as athletics’ fit within the university. This shift in perspective has greatly contributed to their development in their dual role as AD/VP.

Education Based Model

The Executive Leadership Model is an education-based model. While each of the participants’ athletic departments was conducting high-level intercollegiate athletic programs, the departments were reported to be aligned with the educational mission and vision of the institution. Easter (1997), noted “within this framework, equity, compliance with NCAA rules, and doing “what’s best for students” were valued within the department and were seen as consistent with the educational model”( p. 88). The model under examination in this study has demonstrated that it has been an effective response to the desired alignment with the educational mission of the university. This finding also demonstrates how this model has affected the leadership and governance of athletics within the university. By aligning the athletic director with the executive governance structure of the university, two things were accomplished.

First, presidential control was achieved via the appointment of the AD to vice president. According to the Knights Commission “It was suggested presidents should demonstrate the same degree of control over athletics as they exercise elsewhere in the
university as well as asking trustees, alumni and boosters to defer to presidential control over athletics” (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991). While the participants echoed that their respective presidents were not micro managers, each detailed that the level of communication with their presidents since being named vice president had increased. Their involvement with the executive cabinet had prompted them to present athletics issues in a more collaborative manner. This collaboration with the other vice presidents led to more presidential control as athletics became a university operated department instead of an athletics run department. According to Frey (1984), Lapchick (1987), and Thelin (1989), “a number of problems in college athletics can be traced to the fact that many programs have operated separately from their institutions, with little to no accountability to the president or chancellor” (Easley, 1998,). Evidence supporting this education-based model from this study has demonstrated that it can be a significant step in the right direction to prevent or reel in the intercollegiate programs that have been operating apart from the institution.

The second key finding aligned with research two was a concerted effort to align intercollegiate athletics with the values and mission of the university. The American Alliance of University Professors’ (AAUP) Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics believed that the ultimate authority for athletic governance should lie with the university presidents and the president should have the support of the board and boosters in order to effectively align athletics with the academic mission of the institution (Christy, 2007). Participant A asserted,

“our commitment to the athletics program is that we run a program that enhances the university image that we are in complete alignment with the academic mission of the university that we provide a positive look for the university and we want to make sure that the missions are aligned.”
The executive leadership model has positioned the athletic director/vice president within the institutional governance structure. It potentially has had an impact by increasing the alignment of athletic decisions with university values and priorities.

Research question two examined how this model affected the leadership and governance of the intercollegiate athletic department. As an education based model, it is incumbent upon the athletic director/vice president to align the decisions and values of the athletic department with those of the institution. Within that decision making structure lays the ideal that the athletic department has been aligned with the university. According to participants, these athletic departments are no longer operating apart from the institution nor were they operating in a vacuum where decisions only affect the athletic department. Through this new structural alignment, these administrators have had the benefit of weighing decisions that affect the entire university, expanding their role just as institutional oversight has expanded over athletics.

Model of Integration

The Executive Leadership Model was in fact a new model. In 2003, Vanderbilt president Gordon Gee stated “the segregation of intercollegiate athletics from the lifeblood of the university as the wrong direction to move” (Neel, 2004, p.46). This statement served as an indication that President Gee’s goal was “the mainstream integration of athletics” (Engel, 2007, p. 17). After the dismantling of the athletic department at Vanderbilt, it was re-integrated into the university community under the direction of the Office of Student Affairs. As noted in chapter two of this study, the Executive Leadership Model is not so far detached from the traditional model. The motivations are similar in the sense that the Executive Leadership Model has integrated
intercollegiate athletic interests into the university leadership and governance process. By incorporating the athletic director into the executive cabinet of leadership for the university, the sense of integration, as described by the participants increased exponentially. Shavers (2004), describes athletic directors as set apart by two things, expertise and office. Their expertise in intercollegiate athletics has been demonstrated. By adding the responsibility as a vice president to their role, the athletic director has been fully absorbed into the university governance structure.

The athletic director/vice president is now aligned more directly with the academic vice presidents of the institution. Instead of aligning athletics as its own individual branch structurally, the leadership along with the athletic department have become fully integrated into the university structure. The synergy of this structure was found to be a unique benefit for university administrators engaged in this model. Shavers (2004), notes “they must be adept in understanding that the university is a system of “interdependent activity, which administrators must rely upon the cooperation of others, both insiders and outsiders, to accomplish goals” (p. 109). These athletic directors must rely upon the university leadership as well as their external constituents to run this education-based model effectively. Pratt and Foreman (2000) addressed the reformation of athletic leadership structure. They suggested that managing dual-identity organizations requires deemphasizing conflict and finding productive synergy among the academic and business identities. In essence, this model achieves that synergy by integrating the athletic director into the executive cabinet.

The integration has afforded the athletic director/vice president the opportunity to develop into their new role from within the executive level of leadership instead of from
the outside. Each of the participants echoed the sentiment of being at the table, among the
other vice presidents, and contributing to the broader discussions. Participant E asserted,
“I think it will be a very good model for integrating or helping to integrate athletics into
the university”. Additionally, several other participants made reference to this integration.
This integration had significant bearing on the development of their identities as
participants grew into the role of vice president. Through this model, a synergy between
athletic administration and academic administration has been achieved by working
collaboratively to balance the priorities of the institution and the athletic department.
Participant D shared “you are sitting at the table for all strategic initiatives regarding the
university, if I wasn’t a vice president sitting at the table, it’d be really much harder for us
in athletics to be more integrated with the university”. As evidenced by findings in this
study, the athletic director/vice presidents are positioned at the fulcrum of decision-
making. S/he has a voice to contribute to the deliberation and in turn this voice has
proven to be beneficial to both the governance of the institution as well as the leadership
of their respective departments

Model of Transparency

The notion of transparency has been part of the discussion in reforming
intercollegiate athletics for over two decades. The Executive Leadership Model has
demonstrated that the alignment of the athletic director directly into the governance
structure of the university influences the communication between the department and
president’s office. According to Auerbach (2009), “administrators on both sides felt as
though transparency was a critical component to decision making and overall leadership”
(pg. 104).
The participants in this study conveyed a sense of self-responsibility for the effective communication that needed to take place on their end of the governance and leadership structure. Participant A took full responsibility for communicating through a monthly report the details of the athletic department’s finances, academic competitiveness amongst conferences, as well as within conference. This report also detailed other major initiatives that could impact the university. This voluntary effort to improve communication achieved consensus among the participants as they each described their efforts to govern more transparently. Participant E noted in their interview “it was better to come clean in private, than to perish in public”.

One of the many desired outcomes from the Knights Commission (1991) was improved presidential control. With increased presidential control would come a greater sense of communication between athletic administrators and university administration. The executive leadership model has essentially solidified the communication pipeline by aligning the athletic director with the academic vice presidents, making the athletic department’s business, university business. In fulfillment of the “one” in the “one plus three model” proposed by the Knight Commission (1991), the Executive leadership Model has provided a clear line of communication without the filter of upper administration. By aligning the athletic director with the deliberations and governance strategies, this dual role has also promoted integrity in the “three-prong” approach recommended by the Knight Commission (1991).

Bailey and Littleton (1991), noted that the athletic director must lead with integrity, and comply with all national governing rules in addition to the institutional rules. Similarly, athletic directors must also adhere to the educational values associated
with higher education. In the climate of intercollegiate athletics that exists today, the opportunity for any athletic department staff member to behave unethically makes transparency all the more critical for the effective leadership of intercollegiate athletics. Participant B communicated through his/her response by saying “I think sometimes athletic directors and other university officials fall into the trap of feeling like they’re uncomfortable with transparency and everyone knowing what goes on behind the department doors”. The Executive Leadership Model was recognized in this study as a catalyst for true transparency.

Implications for Future Research

Prior to this study, there was little to no research about the experiences of athletic directors who also serve as institutional vice presidents. This study has led to several compelling questions for future research. First, what perspective is maintained by the presidents of the institutions studied regarding the appointment of their athletic director to the executive level of governance? What motives were driving the President’s decision to alter the governance structure in this way? While this particular research encompassed the athletic directors’ perceptions, one limitation acknowledged is that this study represents only one perspective. A further investigation should be conducted with the university presidents, as their perceptions may or may not reflect the findings of this study. Additionally, research should be initiated to uncover the use of this model among various competitive levels, i.e. NCAA DI, DII, and DIII. In essence, is this model more necessary or more likely to be found in the business driven division of NCAA DI athletics? Research could also attempt to uncover how engaged the athletic director/vice presidents are in matters outside of intercollegiate athletics.
Implications for Practice

During the late 1980s the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation investigated intercollegiate athletics with the hopes of developing solutions to the problems with intercollegiate athletics and restoring the integrity of higher education (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991). The philosophy behind the Knights Commission was not to abolish sport, nor to disband the growing athletic associations affiliated with the institutions. Instead, they proffered to “endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in all matters of athletic governance” (Knights Commission, 1993, pg. 12). In 2003, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee cited “the segregation of intercollegiate athletics from the lifeblood of the university as the wrong direction to move (Neel, 2004, p.46). In the years following, 17 NCAA Division I institutions have been identified as employing a new model with regard to institutional governance of intercollegiate athletics.

While a policy cannot legally be implemented by the NCAA or individual athletic conferences that would mandate implementation of the Executive Leadership Model, support and promotion of the model among institutional presidents and constituents could lead to a greater awareness of a structure offering solutions to improve presidential control with regards to issues such as the athletics arms race, commercialization, academic integrity and fiscal accountability. The literature associated with intercollegiate athletics leadership reform has recommended increased presidential oversight and an alignment of athletics with the institutional values and mission. The Executive Leadership Model has emerged as a viable contribution to those efforts. Through the Social constructivist lens, this research has demonstrated how the knowledge acquisition
has contributed to the development of the AD/VP’s identity and prompted the four results associated with research question one.

According to the participants of this study, this model deserves to be replicated. Participants experienced the dissolution of myopia about athletic issues and a broadened perspective regarding the priorities of the university. Their engagement with the executive level of institutional governance promoted a perspective shift that will continue to contribute to their professional development within the dual role. The perspective shift could possibly permeate into their decision making process as they begin to deliberate athletic values weighed against those of the institution. This shift in alignment has positively impacted the participants by expanding their alignment of athletic priorities within the university priorities. It has impacted the participants by fostering presidential involvement and engendering transparency at the top leadership level.

Each of the participants referenced occupying a seat at the table of institutional governance, which served as a figurative and literal alignment with the executive level. Figuratively, they were formally engaged in the daily deliberations of campus governance despite not being physically present during these deliberations. Additionally, they literally held a seat at the table due their vice president position. These appointments have granted access and a formal connection to the executive level of university governance. The leader of intercollegiate athletics has the obligation to contribute to the governance of the campus as well as receive similar contributions to the governance and leadership of the athletics department.

The participants of this research have indicated that the Executive Leadership Model is an education-based model. It has promoted the alignment of athletic values with
the educational and institutional values. In the current climate of conference re-alignment, this model has held firm to the ideal that athletics should prioritize according to the educational values of the institution and not the market-driven values of commercialization.

The executive leadership model promotes integration. Each participant referenced the integration of ancillary services to assist in the leadership of athletics. In addition to the structural alignment, the figurative alignment of having an athletic director as a vice president implied a concern and understanding that athletics is a department of the university just as the other colleges and units that require executive leadership and presidential control. As noted by Shavers (2004) the university is an intricate web of “interdependent activity”, inferring that cooperation by all units and departments is necessary for success.

This model served as a catalyst for transparency. In efforts to improve communication between the athletic administration and the administrative leadership, several of the participants noted that they took the lead on communicating the very details of the department, both positive and negative. These participants were very effusive about making sure the president was in the know about the department initiatives, progress, successes, and shortcomings. These discoveries were byproducts of a model that works and warrants replication to demonstrate that this is the next logical step towards reforming intercollegiate athletics in accordance with associated literature calling for the reform of intercollegiate athletics Drake Group, (1976) as well as the recommendations brought forth by the Knight Commission (1991; 2010).
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how this emerging model is influencing the leadership of intercollegiate athletics. The primary focus centered on understanding the role of Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism framework. Through developing an understanding of the Executive Leadership model, recommendations for further reform efforts in athletic leadership and governance have surfaced. The constructivist framework has given the participants a succinct language to describe and explain their experiences as they developed into the dual role. Each participant has echoed similar sentiments when referencing the knowledge acquisition and shift in perspective when describing their experiences. The Executive Leadership Model has proven to be effectively aligned with previous reform efforts called for by the Knight Commission (1991). Based on the outcomes of this study, replication is certainly necessary to further these reform efforts. The constructivist framework allowed the participants to detail their experiences in this dual role. The model itself has had a positive impact on the participant’s leadership of intercollegiate athletics. Future research should be utilized to further our understanding of related efforts toward the reformation of intercollegiate athletics.
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER TO ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Dear Sir or Madam,

As the Athletic Director of a Division I-A athletic department that also serves as a University Vice President, you are being asked to participate in a research study. The study is investigating how the Athletic Director of a Division I-A institution serves concurrently as University Vice President and how that individual creates their professional identity as well as how this emerging model of governance impacts the governance of intercollegiate athletics within the university.

This research will be used in my doctoral dissertation in the Department of Sports Education & Leadership at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. The title of the dissertation is *BRIDGING THE CHASM: EXAMINING THE EMERGING MODEL OF LEADERSHIP IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC GOVERNANCE*.

At present, there are 17 such individuals who serve concurrently as Athletic Director and University Vice President. I have chosen to examine this dual role of the Athletic Director because as an athletic administrator engaging in the governance of higher education it may lead to further reform in intercollegiate athletic leadership and governance. This research may provide a basis for greater alignment of intercollegiate athletic programs with the educational mission of the university. You may be on the cusp of an emerging model of leadership in intercollegiate athletics and could shape the subsequent direction of the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics.

**ALL RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!!!**

After participating in this research, you will receive a digital copy of your responses as well as the digital word-processed version of your responses and the researcher’s interpretation of what you offered.

Thank you so much for your time in taking part in this study. Results will be available upon completion of the research.

Sincerely,

John C. Chandler III
4505 S. Maryland Pkwy
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:
BRIDGING THE CHASM: EXAMINING THE EMERGING MODEL OF THE LEADERSHIP IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS GOVERNANCE

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Nancy Lough, Associate Professor, Sports Education Leadership
College of Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

John C. Chandler III, Doctoral Student
University of Nevada-Las Vegas, 702-994-6797

You have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by John C. Chandler III, from the College of Education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, as part of the requirement toward a Ph. D of Education. You were selected as a participant in this study because you have been identified as an Athletic Director at a Division I-A institution that concurrently holds the position of University Vice President. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to examine how this emerging model of leadership is influencing the governance of intercollegiate athletics, as well as the relationship between athletic departments and the institutions that house them. The primary focus centers on understanding the role of Athletic Directors who concurrently serve as institutional Vice Presidents using the Social Constructivism framework. I have chosen to examine this dual role of the Athletic Director because as an athletic administrator engaging in the governance of higher education it may lead to further reform in intercollegiate athletic leadership and governance. This research may provide a basis for greater alignment of intercollegiate athletic programs with the educational mission of the university. You may be on the cusp of an emerging model of leadership in intercollegiate athletics and could shape the subsequent direction of the leadership and governance of intercollegiate athletics.

Study Procedures
You will be asked a set of questions designed to elicit an in-depth response, upon which rendered, follow-up questions will be asked regarding your professional development into the role of University Vice President. You will also be asked questions to identify if serving as Vice President along with Athletic Director has affected the governance of intercollegiate athletics within your university. Your answers will be recorded digitally with an identification number associated with the responses provided and the corresponding digital file. If you do not wish to be audiotaped, but wish to participate in the study, please inform the researcher of your wishes and your responses will be
captured via written notes. These notes will be filed and logged under the identification number assigned with the participant.

**Potential Risks**
There are no anticipated risks physically to the participants, as they will only be asked to respond to questions through an interview process. There may be the risk of taking too much time during the interview process and causing a tardiness or absence of a pre-arranged meeting.

**Potential Benefits**
There are no potential individual benefits anticipated for this study. However, there may be societal benefits as the research conducted may lead to continued reform efforts of intercollegiate athletics.

**Payment/Compensation**
The participants of this research study will not receive compensation for their participation or responses.

**Confidentiality**
There will be no information gathered that will directly link you to any response or allow for identification. Your name, address or other information that might identify you will not be recorded during this study. The publication of this research study will not contain any information that will directly or indirectly lead to any single participant.

The information utilized by the researcher will be identified in the research presentation as well as the data storage under the identification numbers assigned to each participant, for example a 7-digit number that will be chosen randomly. The participants will be given pseudonyms to conceal their identity throughout the research.

Only the researcher and the research advisor will have access to the data associated with this research study. The data will be stored on UNLV grounds in a locked office and housed in a drawer that will be locked. Upon completion of the study, the data will be deleted and destroyed.

You will have the right to read and review all transcripts and made aware of all edits that apply to your personal set of responses, as well as a digital copy of your responses should you desire them.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information provided from the study that would reveal your identity will be included. However, data derived from this study may lead to subsequent interviews, studies and inquiries along these same guidelines upon your consent.

**Participation and Withdrawal**
Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You do not waive any rights to
legal claims or remedies as a research subject. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Integrity Human Subjects Research, 4505 Maryland Pkwy, Box 451047, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154, 702-895-2794, or visit their website http://research.unlv.edu/ORI-HSR/  

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following investigators:

John C. Chandler III  
Doctoral Candidate  
Dept. of Sports Education & Ldrshp.  
College of Education  
(702) 994-6797  
John.chandler@unlv.edu

Dr. Nancy Lough  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Sports Education & Ldrshp.  
College of Education  
(702) 895-5057  
Nancy.Lough@unlv.edu

Signing the Consent Form

I have read this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I am not giving up any rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

________________________________________________________  
Print Name  
Signature  
Date
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The emerging model of leadership:

The current director of athletics has been appointed to university vice president and assumes the title, duties, and responsibilities of a university vice president. The individual now has two roles within the university and engages in matters for both intercollegiate athletics as well as university governance.

**Interview Questions**

1. Please give your thoughts regarding this emerging model of leadership

2. How has being Vice President influenced your view of athletics and its place in higher education?

3. How have you utilized your experiences/skills in athletic governance in the VP position?

4. To what extent has your exposure to institutional governance influenced the manner in which you lead athletics and what extent has your exposure in athletics influence the manner in which you govern higher education?

5. How has your dual role (AD/VP) influenced presidential involvement in the athletic department operations?

6. Please describe a time when the institutional priorities attributed to the VP role conflicted with the priorities of the athletic department.

7. Please describe a time when your role as athletic director conflicted with your role as VP?

8. Please discuss your thoughts regarding this model of intercollegiate athletic leadership and the likelihood it will become replicated.
REFERENCES


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Hanford, G. H. & Greenberg, M. (2003). We should speak the “awful truth” about college sports…or does the public like the status quo? *Chronicle of Higher Education, 49*, 10-13.DOI


Objective: To obtain an administrative position within the higher education setting committed to the development and betterment of students.

Education:

**University of Nevada Las Vegas**

Doctor of Philosophy (Sport Administration)  
Dissertation: “Bridging the Chasm: Emerging Model of Leadership in Intercollegiate Athletics Governance”  
Las Vegas, NV  
2011

**Tennessee Technological University**

Master’s Degree (Secondary Education/Curriculum & Instruction)  
Educational Specialist Degree (Instructional Leadership/Instructional Technology)  
Cookeville, TN  
2003

**University of Kansas**

Bachelor’s Degree (English)  
Lawrence, KS  
2000

Experience:

**Student-Athlete Academic Advisor**

Created and managed individual portfolios for 105 Student-Athletes  
Developed and implemented strategies to assist with At-Risk Student-Athletes  
Provided counseling and mentoring for student-athletes under my supervision  
Completed Initial Eligibility and Continuing Eligibility for Incoming S/A’s  
Evaluated and recorded mandatory progress checklist for all student athletes  
Prepared detailed and accurate reports for eligibility for Athletic Director and Mountain West Conference  
Developed and Coordinated Leadership Seminar Series for Football Student Athletes  
Collaborated and Communicated with Coaches daily on student-athlete progress and welfare  
Held several off-campus lectures and panel discussions about initial eligibility  
Assisted sports teams with recruiting presentations for prospective student athletes  
Identified and met with approximately 45 At-risk student athletes weekly  
Generated multiple reports detailing performance, semester grades, summer school needs  
Worked in compliance with all NCAA Bylaws  
Worked collaboratively with the SAAS unit to monitor and track student-athletes  
Communicated effectively with Faculty and University Administration on behalf of student-athlete needs  
Served on several hiring committees in the recruitment of new advising staff members  
Served on several Ad-Hoc committees for policy development and implementation  
Consistently engaged in multiple projects intended to enhance student-athlete experience  
Initiated and fostered working relationship with College of Education to assist SAAS staff with personnel development and student-athlete development  
Maintained knowledge of introduced and revised academic legislation by the NCAA.  
Evaluated current monitoring structure and participated in the re-structure according to industry best practices and standards
**Compliance Assistant/University of Nevada-Las Vegas**
Las Vegas, NV 2007-2009

Responsibilities include, Agent Education Facilitation, Amateurism, Gambling, Banned Substance Education, Rules Interpretations, Completion of Self-Reports for Secondary Violations, Facilitate NCAA Pass Gate at Football and Basketball Events, Record Management for Official Visits for all Prospective Student-Athletes, Served as Operations Assistant during Mountain West Conference Basketball Championships, Maintained working knowledge of pending legislation revision and introduction, Developed and Presented rules education sessions for Head Coaches and Student-Athletes.

**Research Assistant/University of Nevada-Las Vegas**
Las Vegas, NV 2007-2010

Responsibilities include Conducting, Execution of Research Projects, Managed Scholarly Journal Submissions for JOCA, Construction and Distribution of Gender Equity Survey for CCSD Athletic Administrators, Website Building and Maintenance, Newsletter Creation, Recreational Facility Monitor/Co-Supervisor, Doctoral Student, Advanced proficiency with Computers and Software Programs.

**Assistant Football Coach/Tennessee Tech University**
Cookeville, TN 2002-2006

Tracked and Maintained Student-Athlete Degree Progress and Eligibility for my Position, Responsibilities include the Preparation and Performance of Running Backs, Assisted Offensive Coordinator with Development and Execution of weekly Game plan, Strength and Conditioning Coordinator, Developed and Implemented In-Season and Off-Season Conditioning Programs, while supervising three Graduate Assistants, Developed and monitored a yearly budget to operate strength and conditioning program, Conducted several Pro-Day exhibitions and brought in Speed Training expert Frank November, Film Coordinator, responsible for the Preparation and Distribution of weekly opponent films, weekly practice film, and setup of video exchange, Facilitated the Transition from analog to digital video exchange via the Internet, in Compliance with the Ohio Valley Conference, Supervised two assistants who filmed practice and games, Worked in compliance with all NCAA Bylaws and Regulations, Served as the Executive and Coordinator for the “In Our Prayers” Fundraising Campaign for the Hixon Family.

**Skills:**

- Technical Proficiency in MAC OS/X Jaguar, Tiger including, Garage Band, IMovie, and all Microsoft Applications.
- Technical Proficiency with LDBSi Database for NCAA Bylaw Interpretation.
- Technical Proficiency with SurveyMonkey, Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer, Adobe Acrobat, Dreamweaver.
- Student Data Management Warehouse Software, PeopleSoft, SIS, DARS.
- Engaged in several doctoral research projects and produced peer reviewed literature.
Accomplishments:

Awarded Graduate/ Research Assistant at University of Nevada Las Vegas for the Department of Sports Education and Leadership.
Awarded Graduate Assistant at Tennessee Technological University for Football
Elected Chapter President of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, Zeta Omicron Chapter
Elected Chapter Treasurer of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, Zeta Omicron Chapter
Student-Athlete, University of Kansas 1995-1999

Presentations:

October 2011  Guest Speaker for CCSD Guidance Counselor Seminar on NCAA Initial Eligibility
April 2011    Rules Education Session Desert Oasis High School: NCAA Initial Eligibility Education
October 2010  Guest Speaker for CCSD Guidance Counselor Seminar on NCAA Initial Eligibility
May 2009       Rules Education Session: NBA Prospects Rights and Responsibilities
April 2009    Rules Education Session: NCAA Banned Substances Education
October 2008  G.R.I.P.S. (Graduate Research in Preparation Symposium) Athletic Directors as Vice Presidents

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