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UNDERREPRESENTED JOURNEY: THE WALL HIT BY ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A POWER FIVE CONFERENCE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Ronald Reeves

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UNDERREPRESENTED JOURNEY: THE WALL HIT BY ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR
ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A POWER FIVE CONFERENCE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

by

Ronald Daniel Reeves

B.A., University of Detroit Mercy, 2007
M.S., Ithaca College, 2008

A Capstone Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Education in Educational Administration

School of Education
in the Graduate School
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CAPSTONE PROJECT APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Dr. Carmen Suarez, Chair

Dr. Saran Donahoo

Dr. Gary Kelly

Dr. D. John McIntyre

Dr. Terrell R. Morton

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
February 24, 2023

AN ABSTRACT OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT OF

Ronald Daniel Reeves, for the Doctor of Education degree in Education Administration Higher Education, presented on February 24, 2023, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: UNDERREPRESENTED JOURNEY: THE WALL HIT BY ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A POWER FIVE CONFERENCE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Carmen Suarez

There has been little to no research on Power Five Conference administrators of colors since the beginning on the Power Five Conferences in 2014. The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color, to becoming senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics, enterprise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color.

In this capstone project, I present a look into the careers of senior athletic administrators at Power Five institutions and a plan of change for the future. The data was collected from surveys and in-depth interviews. These methods were selected to answer my research questions. For this study I interviewed minority Athletic Directors of color at Power Five institutions. I am interested in what the best practices within diversity, equity, and inclusion are and how to effectively impact the recruitment, hiring and retention of minorities of color with athletic administration. I provide implications for the importance of improving, maintaining, and creating change in athletics administration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

This capstone project is dedicated to my grandmother and father. My grandmother, Georgia Ann, has always been a true leader in our family. She is a retired special education teacher, who taught me how to read, write, count and most importantly how to treat or reach your goals – with patience, respect, and a willingness to adjust. To my father, who passed when I was 7, you are the reason I push to be a great father to my daughter, Marisah. Lastly, Father Norman Thomas who passed away just months before this capstone project was completed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My Passion/Background

Growing up in the city of Detroit, Michigan, I found a love for sports. I played multiple sports growing up including basketball, baseball, football and track and field. It was not until I participated in the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) that I was exposed to a plethora of sports. I learned about sports like tennis, volleyball, soccer, and golf. It was great to have this exposure but when I attended school that next fall, I realized that those sports were not offered within the Detroit Public School System. This was problematic and something that sparked my interest in working in athletics and making a difference. As a middle schooler, I begun to develop an equal passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion while being a part of the Men of Isuthu mentoring program at Sacred Heart Church in Detroit. The program gave me insight in several different areas including family, community, education, disabilities, and relationships. It helped show me how to be diverse in my thinking, abilities, and how I treat others. Men of Isuthu also taught me how to be inclusive in my actions including sharing, not excluding other's ideas or thoughts, and most importantly listening and understanding before speaking. Over the years, I found that within collegiate athletics the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion, while important externally, have not been internally practiced at its highest level.

Purpose of the Study

This study will examine the path, for People of Color, to becoming a senior administrator within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). There is research regarding the path for minorities of color to become senior administrators in Division I institutions, but none exists regarding the Power Five conference

specifically. This study will serve to focus on the Power Five conference institutions. While I will include all minorities of color with the interviews and surveys of this study, a lot of the research and focus will be specifically on African Americans. Making this specific distinction serves a larger purpose as the majority of Power Five student-athletes of color are African American. The Power Five institutions are among some of the most well-known academic and athletic institutions. These institutions are also the institutions with the most exposure via social media, television contracts and championships. For example, of the top participating sports by minorities (basketball, football and running) only 31% of championships won since the 2014 installation of the Power Five were by non-Power Five institutions and only in basketball. These three sports, basketball, football and running (indoor or outdoor track and field and cross country) are the sports with the largest number of scholarships and roster sizes. These sports highlight the strength of Power Five institutions.

One way to foster the path for minorities of color to become senior administrators in the Power Five institutions is to create a pipeline into athletic administration for minorities who are interested in the field. There are not enough coaches and administrators that represent the minority groups, and that has the potential to be problematic for the student-athletes that want to work within an athletic department at a Division I institution in the future. This can become problematic with student-athletes not seeing people who look like themselves, not providing them with mentorship, seeing an example of a path to athletic administration. This predicament raises the questions, is there diversity within the population of student-athletes, the administration both within and outside of the athletic departments at the university level, and if not, what does diversity, equity, and inclusion look like? I wish to examine the diversity, equity, and inclusion of student-athletes and administration within the Power Five institutions. My

passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion in athletics is linked to my desire to become a senior administrator at a Power Five institution someday. This capstone project paper will aide in the research to understand the demographics, policies, procedures, and adjustments needed within NCAA Power Five athletics to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Research Questions

This study will focus on finding the answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the typical demographics and paths for the Power Five Athletic Directors of color?

RQ2: What are some strategies that will help improve representation of minorities of color within senior administration?

Significance of the Study

The resulting data from this study can help NCAA athletic departments minimize the gap in diversity within senior administration. This data can also be used to show the similarities in the demographics, backgrounds, and expertise of current administrators of color. Future administrators of color can learn how to best model their career to potentially reach for high-ranking senior administrative roles.

This data is available to institutions' human resources, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and leadership departments during the hiring processes for senior level positions within collegiate athletics. Finally, this study will add to the limited research available on Power Five administrators of color within collegiate athletics.

Definitions

To further explain the value of focusing on Power Five institutions, the structure of the NCAA and the senior administrator roles must be further discussed.

- NCAA –The NCAA is broken down into divisions and subdivisions including Division I, II and III. The Division I includes 37% of the overall NCAA student-athlete population and offers "cost-of-attendance athletics scholarships", and "57 % of athletes receive athletics aid" (NCAA, 2020r, para. 4). The Division II includes 25% of the student-athlete population, offers "partial athletics scholarship", and "60 % of athletes receive athletics aid" (NCAA, 2020r, para. 4). Lastly, the Division III includes 39% of the student-athlete population, offers "no athletics scholarships" and "80 % of athletes receive non-athletics aid" (NCAA, 2020r, para. 4).

- Power Five – To further breakdown the NCAA Division I, the division has three subdivisions classified based on football participation. Schools that participate in bowl games belong to the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS or Division 1-A), the schools that participate in the NCAA sponsored championship are in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS or Division 1-AA) and the schools that do not offer football are in the Division 1-AAA. Within the FBS are the Power Five conferences and the Mid-major football schools. The NCAA changed forever in 2014 with the restructuring of Division I and the addition of the College Football Playoff (CFP). "The new model also grants flexibility to schools in the Atlantic Coast (ACC), Big 12, Big Ten, Pac-12 and Southeastern (SEC) conferences. The Power Five changed rules for themselves in a list of specific areas within Division I (Hosick, 2014, p. 1)." This model gave Power Five schools the autonomy to govern and make decisions independently of other Division I conferences. Power Five conferences gained the ability to obtain larger television contracts, participate in the top revenue games, bowls, and tournaments, and indirectly exclude the Mid-major conferences from those same opportunities. The Power Five

incorporates 65 schools, those that make up the five largest and richest conferences in

college athletics (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, SEC) plus Notre Dame which is an

independent football school. Additionally, all 65 Power Five institutions are

Predominately White Institutions (PWI).

- Athletic Administration – The athletic administration within the Power Five institutions

    can be broken down by the top three positions within collegiate athletics. Those

    positions are the Athletic Director, Associate Director of Athletics and Assistant

    Director of Athletics. These positions are referred to as the senior administration and are

    tasked with making the decisions for the overall department. These decisions have a

    large impact on the lives of the student-athletes who the administration serves. It is

    important for the diversity of the athletic administration to mirror that of the student-

    athlete population to create an environment where the student-athletes feel represented

    and supported.

Limitations of Study

Given the multitude of universities in the NCAA, this study will focus just on institutions

that are a part of the Power Five conferences and because these institutions are the top athletic

and financially performing in the NCAA. The open-ended interview questions will provide the

respondents of this study the opportunity to be truthful, which will not impact the validity of this

study. The findings from this study should not be generalized to other institutions.

The Researcher

Athletics has been a part of my life since I was a young boy. Throughout my life athletics

prepared me for and has given me the opportunity to perform at the collegiate level. I was a track

and field student-athlete at the University of Detroit-Mercy (UDM). At UDM I was not only a

student-athlete, but also the editor of the school newspaper, *The Varsity News*, where I focused

on being a sports photojournalist along with my duties as the editor. I was also a work-study

student for athletics and recreation, officially starting my career in athletic administration. Upon

graduating with my bachelor's degree in Journalism, I continued to follow my dream to work in

athletics as a graduate student and track and field graduate assistant at Ithaca College studying

Sport Management.

After graduation in 2008 with the economy being in a recession, I obtained my first full-

time job working for the Department of Defense as a recreation assistant for the United States

Air Force. While this was not a role specifically within collegiate athletics, this was a start in the

field of athletics. I continued to work within the governmental and non-profit sector with jobs

including the Department of Defense, Parks & People Foundation, and the Pentagon Athletic

Center. I continued to apply and strive towards a role within collegiate athletics. My interest was

in finding a role to help with making direct change within athletic departments in the areas of

diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the time, there were no such roles outside of working directly

for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). I finally received my first full-time

NCAA job at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University as a Ticket and Business

Operations Assistant. This began my career in collegiate athletics. Each institution that I have

worked for has allowed me to create and assist with diversity, equity, and inclusion practices

while completing my duties. I have worked at other institutions including the University of North

Carolina, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Florida

Agricultural and Mechanical University and now for the University of Colorado. All my roles

have included revenue generation and diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have been able to match

my passion, expertise, and education to form a career where I can not only be a top revenue

generating professional, but an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

In this capstone project, I present a look into the careers of senior athletic administrators at Power Five institutions and a plan for future change. The data was collected from surveys and in-depth interviews. These methods were selected to answer my research questions. For this study I interviewed minority Athletic Directors of color at Power Five institutions. I am interested in finding the best practices within diversity, equity, and inclusion and how to effectively impact the recruitment, hiring and retention of minorities of color with athletic administration.

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of the literature on diversity, equity, and inclusion of athletic administration, comparison of the overall student-athlete and university administration and the NCAA's diversity, equity, and inclusion areas. Chapter Three will provide the methodology and methods used to collect the data. In Chapter Four, I will analyze the data by answering the following research questions: What are the typical demographics and paths for the Power Five Athletic Directors of color? What are some strategies that will help improve representation of minorities of color within senior administration? Answering these questions will guide a discussion and analysis on appropriate deployment of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and actions to develop a plan for improvement in the future.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The NCAA forever changed in 2014 with the conference restructuring of Division I athletics and addition of the College Football Playoff (CFP). This restructuring provided "flexibility to schools in the Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Big Ten, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences to change rules for themselves in a list of specific areas within Division I" (Hosick, 2014). The new model created the nickname "Power Five", which refers the group of five conferences (Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Big Ten, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences) that joined to form the CFP. This model gave the Power Five schools the autonomy to govern and make decisions independently of other Division I conferences.

This new structure brought forward a new hierarchy of collegiate athletics and new revenue generating standards. Revenue from the prior BCS model brought in approximately $155 million in broadcasting rights. The new model brings in approximately $608 million per year. This averages out to $31 million per bowl game during the BCS era and now $101 million per bowl game for the CFP (College Football Playoff, 2017). This influx of revenue has ushered in a change in strategic planning for the Power Five schools and an increase in athletic department budgets.

To explain the hierarchy within collegiate athletic departments one must examine the various areas including:

- Academic support

- Business operations (finance)

- Communications (media, productions, and sports information)

- Compliance (rules)

- Development (fundraising)

- Equipment

- Facility and event management

- Human Resources (hiring and diversity, equity, and inclusion)

- Marketing

- Sport Administration (team and coach oversight)

- Sports Medicine (physicians, therapist, nutrition, etc.)

- Strength & Conditioning

- Student-athlete development (professional development and life skills)

- Ticketing (sales and operations)

While each area has its own hierarchy, the positions of Associate and Assistant Athletic Director lead each department. The position of Associate and Assistant Athletic Director can be interchangeable with other positions including Deputy Athletic Director, Executive Athletic Director, Senior Associate Athletic Director, and many others. For this study and NCAA demographics, the positions of Athletic Director, Associate and Assistant Athletic Director are called "senior staff" positions. The objective of this review is to examine and compare the percentage of student-athletes of color to that of senior staff members at Power Five universities.

Understanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within Collegiate Athletics

The NCAA defines diversity as "any way in which people differ. Of course, some characteristics among people are more salient and symbolically meaningful than are others" (NCAA, 2009, p. 6). The most salient and symbolic characteristic is race, the focus of my capstone project. Additionally, the NCAA states that "diversity, by its very nature, has the

potential to benefit athletics teams and organizational workplaces. Bringing together varied perspectives, life experiences, and viewpoints adds value to the workplace and reinforces the concept of inclusivity" (NCAA, 2009, p. 6). These definitions provide an overview of the term diversity within the NCAA and what institutions are required to look for when building the culture and climate along with the staff and administration within athletic departments. Diversity within athletic departments is not solely focused on race, gender, and other demographic characteristics, but is also meant to foster inclusion by creating an environment with a variety of thought, expertise, backgrounds, and education.

When we examine the hiring practices of collegiate athletic administration, athletic departments are structured under the institution's practices, as their hiring practices are governed by their institutions. The traditional approach for hiring within university departments is an open search that should include a diverse pool of applicants. In recent years, athletic departments have used their membership to the NCAA as justification for private searches rather than an open search with a diverse applicant pool. Interested coaches and administrators could lose their current job if their interest in another job was publicized. Additionally, to hire some coaches and administrators you must act quickly as these individuals are in high demand, so the traditional hiring practices are not efficient. Many athletic directors now use search firms for their coaching searches for multi reasons including (Staples, 2019):

Cover

Plausible deniability

Inside information

Background checks

To further explain the use of a search firm, a search firm will allow an institution to maintain

confidentiality. However, in the search process this causes lack of transparency as to the efforts, if any, to diversify the applicant pool.

> Search firms allow ADs to gauge the interest of potential candidates without anyone from the school ever contacting those coaches. This is important for the AD—who doesn't want to conduct the search in public—and to many of the candidates—who may not want anyone to know they're contemplating leaving their current job. That's the cover (Staples, 2019).

The plausible deniability is used when Athletic Directors are asked if they have spoken to a particular candidate or a candidate from a diversity background. The Athletic Director can easily respond with a process answer related to the use of the search firm. They can hide behind the cover when asked if action steps were taken to recruit diverse candidates. "If Coach X passes his background check and the AD decides Coach X is a top candidate, the search firm will ask the agent if the coach wants to interview after his season ends. Only then will the AD actually speak to Coach X" (Staples, 2019). In these instances, athletic departments are allowed hiring waivers to bypass the traditional hiring practices. For this reason, coaching positions and administrative roles are normally given to applicants who look like the athletic director and/or those who are the biggest financial supporters of the department -- which are typically white alumni as discussed in Kilvington and Price (2018). This brings to light the critical issue of should there be "some required early discussion with the institution's top diversity officers about diversifying the actual hiring process, with the latter also having mandatory input into the final hiring itself" (Kilvington & Price, 2018, p. 24).

While the NCAA itself does not follow specific hiring practices, professional associations like the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) do. For

example, the National Football League (NFL) created the Rooney Rule in 2003. The Rooney

Rule "requires that an NFL team with a head-coaching vacancy must interview one or more

minority candidates for the position" (Proxmire, 2009, p. 87). While there have only been 20

minority coaches hired in 17 years, since the installation of the Rooney Rule, that is more than

the prior 86 years where only nine were hired. The National Basketball Association (NBA) has

historically pushed for diversity, equity, and inclusion with their staff and administration. A

prime example is the 14 female assistant coaches throughout the NBA's history including Becky

Hammon of the San Antonio Spurs who on December 30, 2020, was the first to serve as head

coach of a team. Hammon was the head coach during the Spurs game after the head coach Gregg

Popovich was ejected from the game. With the rise in discussion of social injustice in the United

States, the NCAA has begun to make a conscious effort to increase diversity by creating an

Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee (ADID) assignment to an existing athletics

administration position. The designation of ADID "will serve as a gatekeeper of information who

will engage with various audiences such as national office staff, student-athletes, athletics

department and conference administrators, and campus officials who are involved with athletics

or university inclusion" (Dent, 2020, para. 2). This role is not a full-time position for all

designees as it creates an additional duty for supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion within an

athletic department. The ADID position plays a key role not only within the institution but also

in the NCAA as the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion are included in the title (ADID) and

are core values within the NCAA.

Inclusion speaks to the culture and climate of the environment within the institution. For

minority student-athletes, especially Black student-athletes, having to navigate through a climate

with a lack of diversity and/or inequalities within the student-athlete population and

administration can be detrimental to their success at the institution. The 2017 article by Bhopal discusses the racial inequalities in higher education. "Universities must listen to and address the challenges that Black and minority ethnic students face in higher education" (Bhopal, 2017, p. 2298). The NCAA has attempted to address many of the social and racial inequalities within collegiate athletics. The NCAA has recognized that this is an issue not only within collegiate athletics, but within the university system. "A failure to acknowledge that racism and exclusionary practices exist in higher education, results in a failure on the part of universities to take action to address such practices" (Bhopal, 2017, p. 2298). The NCAA also has a vested interest in the overall diversity, equity, and inclusion within the university system and academia. Universities oversee athletic departments; therefore athletic departments need to comply with the institution's rules and regulations as well as the NCAA's. Universities must implement programs and initiatives to address diversity, equity, and inclusion issues because "racial diversity is considered to be one of the defining features of a university, particularly how universities are ranked in terms of their curricula and how they address issues of equity and diversity" (Bhopal, 2017, p. 2295). Tienda (2013) also argues that "universities are uniquely positioned to foster integration through curricular and cocurricular practices that purposefully activate the coalition-building system through experiences that leverage diversity" (p. 472).

The NCAA highlights diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values. Their inclusion statement shares, "the NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators" (NCAA, 2020j, para. 1). This brings life to the diversity of thought, expertise, backgrounds, and education with the inclusion of student-athletes, coaches, and administrators. The decisions are not made within just the administration and leaders of the departments, but value is put on the inclusion of others as well.

The Office of Inclusion within the NCAA organization oversees the development and implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion procedures and policies for over 1,100 college and university athletic departments. "The office supports student-athletes and individuals who teach and lead across the core areas of disability, international, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity and women" (NCAA, 2020j, para. 1). Scholars like Tienda (2013) would not agree with the NCAA's grouping of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a like term,

> Diversity is a sufficiently neutral term to accommodate myriad dimensions—cultural, political, economic, and of course, racial. Perhaps it is too neutral. Increasingly, the term diversity is paired with the term inclusion as if both terms imply each other, but I will argue that the presumption is unwarranted (p. 468).

The NCAA prides itself on the importance it places on the terms, diversity, and inclusion, as not only like terms but as core values. The term equity is not defined in a concrete manner by the NCAA but there are many equity initiatives highlighted in their programming including the Gender Equity Task Force and the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity (NCAA, 2020j). Equity focuses on the acknowledgement and action to address the fact that all people do not start from the same playing field or level and it requires an ongoing process to ensure that fairness is maintained (National Association of Colleges and Employers, n.d.). Each of the NCAA's five core areas within the office of inclusion has their own set of ideals and programs. The following provides an overview of the NCAA's five core areas within the office of inclusion which includes disability, international, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity and women. To fully address how the NCAA defines diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is important to discuss each dimension of diversity included in their core areas. A brief overview of how the NCAA has approached these core areas is further explained below. While all of these core areas

are not the focus of my capstone project, it is important to illustrate the foundation of how the NCAA defines diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Disabilities

In the Student-Athletes with Disabilities core area, "the NCAA believes in and is committed to an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds" (NCAA, 2020p, para. 1). This area also focuses on Education Impacting Disabilities, Adaptive Sports Model and Accommodations for Student-Athletes with Disabilities. Education Impacting Disabilities has special academic eligibility standards and qualifying disabilities. These standards include learning disabilities or disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), mental health disorders, medical conditions, deaf or hard of hearing and Autism spectrum disorder. The Adaptive Sports Model was approved in 2014 by the NCAA, U.S. Paralympics, and the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) to provide opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities to compete at a championship level. One example of this is the ECAC swimming and diving championships featuring women's and men's Paralympic swimming events (100-yard freestyle and backstroke) as an event at their championships. The NCAA provides accommodations for Student-Athletes with Disabilities by encouraging "participation by student-athletes with disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their interests and abilities" (NCAA, 2020p, para. 3). Each student-athlete who participates in collegiate athletics with disabilities is provided a reason modification or accommodation of a playing rule, provided that the modification or accommodation would not:

- Compromise the safety of, or increase the risk of injury to, any other student-athlete;
- Change an essential element that would fundamentally alter the nature of the game; or

- Provide the student-athlete an unfair advantage over the other competitors (NCAA, 2020p, para. 3).

As one of the core areas of the office of inclusion, disability efforts within the NCAA has improved to include individuals with disabilities as of 2014, an important step toward inclusion with this core area.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – International

The NCAA has over 20,000 student-athletes that qualify as international students. The NCAA's international students "face unique challenges once they land on campus, including additional travel, language barriers, difficulties in adjusting to a new sports culture, acclimatization issues and isolation" (NCAA, 2020g, para. 1). According to the NCAA in 2018-19, countries including Canada (4,138), United Kingdom (1,941), Germany (1,253), Spain (1,210), and Australia (1,061) all have at least 1,000 student-athletes competing in the NCAA (NCAA, 2020g, Figure 1). The NCAA does programming geared towards international student-athletes including the summer "A Global Perspective" program. The program was a two-part series including Part 1: International Student-Athletes Navigating Current Events in the US and Part 2: Regulatory Information to Support International Student-Athletes during COVID-19. In Part 1, "international student-athletes shared their lived experiences navigating uncertain factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice in the United States, and new rules issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security" (NCAA, 2020g, para. 3). In Part 2, "the purpose of the session was to provide practical information to athletics administrators, coaches and international student-athletes about NCAA eligibility, admissions and enrollment, travel restrictions and border closures, visas and other required documentation" (NCAA, 2020g, para. 4). The NCAA continues to push for continued diversity of nationality and has even allowed

international student-athletes who were not in season to stay in their native countries for the fall 2020 semester during COVID-19 as the world works towards a new normal. The NCAA's programming to support international students highlights the totality of their efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ)

The NCAA Office of Inclusion "is committed to providing education and resources that support LGBTQ students and the coaches and administrators who teach and lead them in athletics departments across the country" (NCAA, 2020h, para. 1). The NCAA put together the LGBTQ subcommittee, which created the *Champions of Respect — Inclusion of LGBTQ Student-Athletes and Staff in NCAA Programs* in 2012 by Griffin, Taylor, and Morrison. The subcommittee's charge was to "provide leadership and advocacy, raising awareness of and providing resources to address issues related to equitable opportunities, fair treatment and respect for LGBTQ student-athletes, coaches, administrators and all others associated with intercollegiate athletics" (Griffin et al., 2012, para. 1).

The NCAA (2018) also has a full breakdown of their definitions of the LGBTQ terms including some of the following:

- Sex Assigned at Birth: Refers to the designation of a newborn child's sex based on inspection of their external genitalia.
- Gender Identity: One's inner concept of self as male or female or both or neither.
- Gender Expression: Refers to the ways in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, name, personal pronouns, and other forms of self-presentation.

- LGBTQ: A short-hand way to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer people. The "Q" can also refer to people who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The NCAA provides additional resources including five ways to have an LGBTQ-inclusive athletics department. This resource is a "guide to ensure athletics departments are providing an environment that is inclusive of all student-athletes, especially those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or questioning" (NCAA, 2020e, para. 1).

The Common Ground initiative was established in 2014 to "provide LGBTQ individuals, individuals of faith at public and private NCAA member institutions, LGBTQ organizations and faith-based organizations an opportunity to discuss commonalities and differences and learn how to work more cohesively within athletics" (NCAA, 2020a, para. 3). Lastly, the NCAA Division III LGBTQ OneTeam Program was put together with four major objectives including:

- To understand the involvement of the NCAA and Division III in LGBTQ issues;

- To recognize the importance of LGBTQ inclusion in college athletics; learn common LGBTQ terms, definitions, and concepts;

- To identify strategies and best practices for institutions and conferences to ensure all individuals may participate in an athletics climate of respect and inclusion, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; and

- To develop facilitation and presentation skills. The program is designed to provide peer-driven LGBTQ educational programming directly to Division III institutions and conferences (NCAA, 2020c, para. 2).

One example of the NCAA's support of the LGBTQ community was 2011's change to the policy for transgender participants. The update "requires one year of hormone treatment as a condition

prior to competing on a female team (for birth assigned males transitioning to females). Conversely, athletes assigned female at birth remain eligible to compete in women's sports unless or until that athlete begins a physical transition using hormones (testosterone)" (Mosier, n.d.). The NCAA has developed a variety of programs and initiatives to further support the LGBTQ community and has even created terms to live by for the institutions and NCAA. While the terms and definitions of the LGBTQ community continue to evolve, the NCAA must continue to evolve their policies and procedures to continue in their diversity, equity, and inclusion within this core area. The importance of the LGBTQ community is highlighted through changes to meet all participating student-athletes' needs and is another key to understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Women

The NCAA is "committed to supporting the membership as it strives to comply with federal and state laws regarding gender equity, to adopting legislation that augments gender equity and to establishing an environment that is free of gender bias" (NCAA, 2020f, para. 1). This NCAA core area of diversity, equity, and inclusion focuses on cisgendered women. Their definition of gender equity states equity is achieved when "the participants in both the men's and women's sports programs would accept as fair and equitable the overall program of the other gender" (NCAA, 2020f, para. 2). The women in collegiate athletics are governed and protected by Title IX. "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (U.S. Department of Justice, amend. art. XIV, § 1681). In 1981, the role of Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), the top non-Athletic Director female holding a position within the department, was created. The position was created

"to ensure women were involved in the male-dominated administration of college athletics" (NCAA, 2020n, para. 2). This position was also created to:

- Enhanced quality of decision-making resulting from the inclusion of diverse perspectives at the campus, conference, and national levels.

- Professional success for the SWA, resulting in leadership demographics more reflective of the student-athlete population.

- Visible presence of female role models for student-athletes and staff.

- Diverse points of contact on the senior management team for student-athletes and staff to bring issues or concerns (NCAA, 2020n, para. 4).

The NCAA has done an excellent job creating a lead position for the SWA at the university level. The issue with the SWA position is like the issue of the ADID position, as the term SWA is a designation but not a full-time position. Many SWAs hold senior administrative roles like Chief Revenue Officer, Chief Financial Officer or even are full-time head coaches. Their primary role is not the role of SWA but their full-time role, which makes the designation of SWA just a fulfillment of a requirement within the NCAA. As the NCAA continues its focus on diversity in all of its dimensions, the role of women within the NCAA will continue to grow through the role of the SWA, Title IX and professional organizations, with the long-term goal of more opportunities within administration and coaching.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Race/Ethnicity

The NCAA "aims to heighten awareness of racial/ethnic minorities' experiences across the landscape of intercollegiate athletics and support athletic communities in fostering inclusive environments" (NCAA, 2020l, para. 1). A major pillar for the race/ethnicity area is the establishment of the NCAA affiliation through the National Association of Collegiate Directors

of Athletics (NACDA), called the Minority Opportunities Athletic Association (MOAA).

MOAA was established in 2000 to provide "opportunities to exchange ideas, advocate increased

participation and administrative opportunities for minorities in athletics" (MOAA, 2020, para. 1).

The NCAA has placed a strong focus on identifying eight action items to address the

areas of racial justice and equity including:

- Conduct or host programming for national office staff and the membership.

- Review policies and procedures (and other manuals) for inclusive language.

- Implement unconscious bias training for all national office staff and add it as part of

  the onboarding process for new employees.

- Engage and provide service to the local community.

- Enact a consortium with external organizations, businesses, and associations to

  develop solutions and actionable efforts to address the issues of racism in society.

- Review initial-eligibility requirements, specifically the requirement for the

  SAT/ACT.

- Review the NCAA Academic Progress Rate and its impact on historically Black

  colleges and universities and other limited-resource schools.

- Work with coaches' associations to seek student-athlete input and participation in

  changes to conference-level and national-level rules and policies (NCAA, 2020k,

  para. 2).

The NCAA has also put together several manuals, research articles and books related to the topic

including:

- Inclusion Best Practices Manual

- Race/Ethnicity Resources: Websites & Ted Talks resource guide (including websites

like Black Lives Matters and the Ted Talk featuring Novelist Chimamanda Adichie)

- NCAA Best Practices: Achieving Excellence Through Diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Mind, Body, and Sport: Harassment and discrimination – ethnic minorities

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Workplace (NCAA, 2020l, para. 7).

During the 2020 NCAA Inclusion Summer Series, the programming sections on race/ethnicity including a two-part series featuring:

- Part 1 – Creating Communities of Belonging: Understanding the Perspectives of Student-Athletes on Racial Justice

- Part 2 – Creating Communities of Belonging: Stronger Together – Best Practices to be Anti-Racist (NCAA, 2020l, para. 4-5).

The NCAA continues to develop programs and now, with the addition of the ADID designees, there should be a strong focus on the connection between the race and ethnicity programs and initiatives at the institutional and national level. Organizations like MOAA and NACDA will help lead the way towards intentional efforts in the future. Race and ethnicity are the most salient and symbolic core value for the true measuring of diversity, equity, and inclusion within institutions and the core focus of my capstone project.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – NCAA Programming

The NCAA promotes and educates about diversity, equity, and inclusion with research, committees, and a variety of programming. A prime example of how the NCAA provides understandings of diversity, equity, and inclusion within programs is displayed during:

a series of inclusion-focused online programs, in response to the cancelation of the 2020 NCAA Inclusion Forum due to COVID-19. The purpose of this series is to build

community, develop knowledge and skillsets, provide practical takeaways, and empower

participants' efforts on equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives on their campus.

The series comprises several programs – at least one program from each of the office of

inclusion's core areas: disability, international, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity, and women.

These webinars feature student-athletes, coaches, and administrators from within the

membership, as well as subject matter experts (NCAA, 2020q, para. 1-2).

According to the NCAA the Office of Inclusion "facilitates programming, provides educational

resources, and advocates for diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments that enhance the

student-athlete experience and provide opportunities for coaches and administrators" (NCAA,

2020j, para. 2). The importance of purposeful and intentional programming brings to life

diversity, equity, and inclusion through practice, teachings, and activities.

Student-Athletes & Athletic Administrators of Color

In his book, Hawkins (2010), examines the relationship between student-athletes of color

and their Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). In the Power Five conferences, all of the

colleges and universities are PWIs. Hawkins describes sport and society as such:

Sports has been described as a microcosm of the larger society. It has also been depicted

as a barometer for racial progress. However, sports are a powerful institution that

provides a context for critical examination because it informs dominant cultural practices

and informs ideologies that help to shape social interaction (Hawkins, 2010, p. 10).

Hawkins brings forth a saying that has been used within many urban communities of the PWIs

selling our young student-athletes of color pipe dreams in exchange for a slave-like living

structure.

Hawkins (2010), speaks of the systematic "indoctrination and assimilation that further

bound Blacks to the system of White supremacy" (p. 2). In school we have been taught that Europeans have discovered, invested and/or own everything. In athletics, those same individuals control your livelihood with control of your potential scholarships, playing time to be seen by professional leagues, as well as when and where you go, eat, and think. The rebellion to this so-called white man's world or working for the man is "to drop out or do just enough to get by" (Hawkins, 2010, p. 2). Hawkins goes on to define amateurism through the scope of the NCAA Manual, "Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental, and social benefits to be derived" (Hawkins, 2010, p. 137). Hawkins (2010), sees the amateurism definition from the NCAA as an indicator of the "paternalistic nature of the NCAA and its member institutions" (p. 136). Hawkins goes on to discuss the parallel between the nature of the NCAA and the traditional father-child relationship including the shared importance of the acceptance of the absolute authority figure or father, complying with all rules, and doing what father or the authority figure wishes.

Hawkins brings the book home with various personal experiences and an argument that "the New Plantation Economic motives situates Black male athletes as necessary entities in generating revenue for athletic departments at many predominately white institutions" (Hawkins, 2010, p. 106). This point is made apparent by the CFP model and the amount of revenue generated as a result of winning. Each Power Five conference in the CFP will receive $6 million for making the playoff. The conferences in the playoff receive an additional $300,000 if they meet the standard for Academic Progress Rate (APR). The reward for simply making the playoff is 20 times that of achieving the academic standard of the APR and it is not a requirement for every participating playoff team to meet the standard for APR.

Coaches of CFP contenders earn bonuses between $250,000 and $1million compared to the average bonuses of between $100,000 and $250,000 for meeting APR standards from their universities. Hawkins points out that in the New Plantation Economic Model, "the NCAA and its member institutions not only profit off of the labor of athletes, in general, and Black athletes, specifically, they also profit off of their images" (Hawkins, 2010, p. 88). Hawkins (2010) does discuss the benefits for student-athletes of color who can "navigate the system effectively" (p. 8) including receiving a college education, networking for opportunities through access to elite groups and circles, and social mobility due to the potential of being drafted to play professionally.

Njororai (2012) addresses the journey of student-athletes of color and puts the onus not only on the student-athlete to improve their success rates in college and in life, but also on society and the PWIs. Two theories are prevalent within the article, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Student Involvement Theory (SIT). Critical Race Theory, as defined by Njororai (2012), "views race as a most important social construct to consider in the analysis of social, political and educational problems in society" (p. 41). This theory highlights the notion that being white places one at the top of the social hierarchy created through American societal racism. CRT acts as a structure or concept that helps, "sport management scholars identify, analyze and change those structural and cultural aspects of sport that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions" (Njororai, 2012, p. 41).

According to SIT, "an individual plays a central role in determining the extent and nature of academic growth according to the quality of effort or involvement with the resources provided by the institution" (Njororai, 2012, p. 42). For student-athletes of color to excel, not only on the field but in the classroom, they must have the opportunity to be involved in both. Njororai

discusses the disadvantage of being solely focused on athletics and classroom time as a student-athlete. This focus diminishes the time for office hours, social events on campus, and being more of a fully involved student.

Coakley et al. (2009), discuss hypotheses that contribute to the isolation of Black student-athletes, thus minimizing their academic commitment and capability including:

- Racial and athletic stereotypes that compromise the formation of supportive social relationships that foster academic success.

- Spending too much time on athletic related tasks and eliminating time for other campus activities.

- Campus activities fail to capture the imagination of Black students, hence intensifying the unwelcome feeling.

- Campus life that is not appealing to Black students forces them to withdraw and disconnect with the student body.

- Many white students feel uncomfortable relating with Blacks given the lack of prior exposure to diversity in their upbringing.

- Many white students perceive that Black student-athletes are privileged hence creating tension and thereby undermine any genuine social and academic interaction (p. 510).

These hypotheses contribute to lower graduation rates, higher dropout rates, and racially charged interactions that limit academic success for student-athletes of color at PWIs. The SIT theory places the responsibility on the individual to achieve academic success.

The SIT is often undermined by the single-minded pursuit of athletic success for many student-athletes of color. Unfortunately, "the root of the problems of the Black community is the

fact that Black families elect to push their children toward sports career aspirations, often to the neglect and detriment of other important areas of personal and cultural development" (Njororai, 2012, p. 48). This brings forth the unsettling stereotypes of Black people being athletic and fast, yet intellectually inferior as well as the notion that student-athletes of color have the skill but need to be coached to succeed. This single-minded pursuit also perpetuates the stereotypes that student-athletes of color are only capable of promoting shoes and their athletic ability but not their education. Society will glorify being a professional athlete to a higher degree than the President of the United States.

Overall, Njoroai (2012) focuses on six challenges for student-athletes of color that they must overcome: faculty stereotypes, academic underachievement, faculty and student-athletes of color interaction, social-culture isolation, athletics schedule, and academic rigor. Many student-athletes of color struggle to dismantle the already present stereotypes held by their professors and faculty. The reaction to this struggle are things like withdrawing from tough classes, not attending on a normal basis, and being disruptive, but of course not the answer. A great number of student-athletes do not come to college academically prepared to succeed. Additionally, universities often do not understand the importance of encouragement for student-athletes of color for their endeavors beyond the field. "Black college athletes who were encouraged to attend graduate school by faculty tend to get higher grade point averages (GPA)" (Njoroai, 2012, p. 53). Also, those students who are assisted in their professional goals by faculty often perform better for that faculty member. Regrettably, those who are only provided guidance regarding study skills do not perform as well and this highlights the disadvantage of being underprepared for college in the first place. The assumption is often that all students should already have the study skills necessary to succeed in college upon their arrival, but this is not the case for most

student-athletes of color due to their focus on athletics. Student-athletes of color tend to mainly focus on doing what they are mandated to do during their college experience which consist of attending class, practice and then studying. "Black student athletes are therefore given mixed signals when team priorities are set and academic studies are put second to practices and competitions" (Njoroai, 2012, p. 55). This does not include any extracurricular activities that could enhance their college experience or prepare them for opportunities after their athletic career ends. This also creates social-culture isolation, as all these students truly know, and experience is their teammates and coaches. Student-athletes of color are placed into an environment that does not facilitate their success outside of their athletic performance.

Similar to higher education, there is an absence of Black female administrators in athletics, leading to a lack of mentorship and opportunities for growth. Jones et al. (2012), examined the role of African American women in higher education administration. The number of African American women with degrees has increased over time. In 1970 less than 6% of African American women, age 25 and older had completed at least a bachelor's degree (Jones et al, 2012). By 2005, 19% of African American women from the same demographic had achieved at least a bachelor's degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The number of higher education administration positions held by women of color has not increased over this same time period. Jones et al. (2012), attempt to create an outline for African American women in the field of higher education who wish to obtain a high-ranking position in administration. The outline also extends to include information on how human resource and hiring professionals can work to recruit, train, and retain African American women in administration positions.

The deficit in networking and mentorship creates an additional obstacle for African American women in obtaining positions in higher education administration. Historically African

American women have issues with being regarded as equal to their male counterparts, even in a work setting. Since there are less African American women in high-ranking positions, there are fewer potential mentors. Also, networking normally occurs when individuals with some commonality. "The relationships that the authors have developed from networking have led to many things for them – including job opportunities and promotions, conference presentations, publications, supports, and advice" (Jones et al., 2012, p. 95).

Measurement of Diversity & Inclusion & Influence within Context

The NCAA (2020) provides a guide for measurement of diversity, equity, and inclusion within collegiate athletics called the NCAA Demographics Database. This database "compiles and provides statistical information regarding certain demographic characteristics of various groups within our member institutions and conferences" (NCAA, 2020b, para. 1). Since the 2011-12 school year this data has been compiled within the NCAA demographics database. The information provides a general view of recent and historical trends of the following racial and ethnic groups by gender, sport, division, and title:

- American Indian/Alaska Native.

- Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

- Black.

- Hispanic/Latino.

- White.

- Two or more races.

- Nonresident alien.

- Unknown (NCAA, 2020b, para.1).

The database breaks down each category by:

- Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS)

- Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS)

- Division I Subdivision (Non-Football)

- Division II

- Division III (NCAA, 2020b, Figure 1).

Lastly, the categories are broken down by title/position:

- Chancellor & President

- Director of Athletics (the leader of the collegiate athletic departments)

- Associate/Assistant Athletic Director

- Faculty Athletics Representative

- Head Coach

- Assistant Coach

- Student-Athlete (NCAA, 2020b, para.1).

The role of Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors can be explained as high level administrator, who often aspires to become a Director of Athletics. The faculty athletic representative can be explained as such, "The faculty athletics representative (FAR) plays an important role on college campuses, providing oversight of the academic integrity of the athletics program and serving as an advocate for student-athlete well-being" (Miranda & Paskus, 2013, p. 10). The institutions do not generally measure their own diversity, equity, and inclusion within their departments. The NCAA compiles the information for their overall NCAA demographics database. Individual departments can measure their diversity, equity, and inclusion, though they tend to make the information fit for their demographics (i.e., city population, university population, male to female sport ratios). The NCAA demographic database is not only a historical device but an

important tool for institutions as a measure of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity within the Student-athlete Population and the Student Population of the

University

The member institutions of the NCAA aspire to be more diverse than the college and

university student population. The table (1) below will demonstrate that, beginning with the Fall

2019 there were 19.9 million college students in the United States, with 10.5 million (53%) being

White in comparison to 47% minority students (Muniz, 2020, para. 18). In the same semester,

there were 44,104 Power Five student-athletes in total and 25,376 (58%) were White (NCAA,

2020b). This illustrates that the NCAA was less diverse than the student bodies within the United

States as a whole. While the percentage of NCAA Black student-athletes is higher than that of

the student population minus the student-athletes, the overall number does not change the

percentage of Black students at colleges and universities (NCAA, 2020b).

Table 1 – Student Population 2019 – Overall Student Body Including Student-Athlete (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	19,900,000	
White	10,500,000	53%
Non-White	9,400,000	47%
Black	2,600,000	13%

Table 1 provides the racial demographics of all college students in the United States in 2019

including student-athletes to aid in the further comparison to the demographics of student-

athletes at Power Five institutions.

Note. Adapted from "How Many College Students Are in the U.S.?", by H. Muniz, 2021, Best

Colleges (https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-many-college-students-in-the-us/).

In terms of the efforts within the 65 Power Five institutions, the aim is to be more diverse

in terms of the student-athlete population in comparison to overall student population and Director of Athletics in comparison to Chancellors and Presidents. The overall student population at these institutions are 53% White, 47% Non-White including 13% Black (see Table 1) in comparison to the Power Five student-athlete percentage of 58% White, 42% Non-White including 19% Black (see Table 2). This demonstrates that the Power Five student-athlete population is less diverse than the overall student population but does have a higher percentage of Black student-athletes in comparison to the overall student population. While the NCAA promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Power Five Black student-athlete population percentage is higher by 6% in comparison to the overall student population (see Table 2 and 3). The percentage of White student-athletes in comparison to the overall population of White students closely mirror each other with a ratio of 58 to 53 percent (see Table 2). Overall, the Power Five student-athlete population is less diverse than the overall student population, but only by a small percentage (5%).

Table 2 – Student Population 2019 – Overall Power Five Student-Athletes (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	44,104	
White	25,376	58%
Non-White	18,728	42%
Black	8,336	19%

Table 2 illustrates the difference in race between the overall student body of the United States colleges and Power Five student-athletes in 2019.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 3 – Student Population 2019 – Student Body minus Student-Athletes (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	19,400,000	
White	10,200,000	53%
Non-White	9,200,000	47%
Black	2,500,000	13%

Table 3 provides the racial demographics of the student body of the United States colleges

without accounting for student-athletes in 2019.

Note. Adapted from "NCAA Demographic Database" by NCAA, 2020

(https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database). Adapted from

"How Many College Students Are in the U.S.?", by H. Muniz, 2021, Best Colleges

(https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-many-college-students-in-the-us/).

Table 4 – Student Population 2018 – Overall Student Body Including Student-Athletes (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	18,900,000	
White	10,000,000	53%
Non-White	8,900,000	47%
Black	2,900,000	15%

Table 4 provides the racial demographics of all college students in the United States in 2018

including student-athletes to aid in the further comparison to the demographics of student-

athletes at Power Five institutions.

Note. Adapted from "How Many College Students Are in the U.S.?", by H. Muniz, 2021, Best

Colleges (https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-many-college-students-in-the-us/).

Table 5 – Student Population 2018 – Overall Power Five Student-Athletes (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of	
Total	44,161		
White	25,968	59%	
Non-White	18,193	41%	
Black	8,448	19%	

Table 5 illustrates the difference in race between the overall student body of the United States colleges and Power Five student-athletes in 2018.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 6 – Student Population 2018 – Student Body minus Student-Athletes (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of	
Total	18,400,000		
White	9,700,000	53%	
Non-White	8,700,000	47%	
Black	2,800,000	15%	

Table 6 provides the racial demographics of the student body of the United States colleges without accounting for student-athletes in 2018.

Note. Adapted from "NCAA Demographic Database" by NCAA, 2020

(https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database). Adapted from

"How Many College Students Are in the U.S.?", by H. Muniz, 2021, Best Colleges

(https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-many-college-students-in-the-us/).

Diversity of Institutional Administration in the Institution / Hiring Practices

The NCAA Demographics Database (NCAA, 2020b), as stated above, also breaks down the diversity within the position of Chancellor & President, Athletic Administration (Director of Athletics, Associate/Assistant Athletic Director) and faculty athletic representative. In the Fall of

2019, the continued fight for diversity, equity, and inclusion within administrative roles showed

great room for improvement in the top position of Chancellors and Presidents of colleges and

universities.

The data shows that the percentage of college and university Chancellors and Presidents

was less diverse than the overall Power Five student-athlete population in 2019. While 58% (see

Table 2) of the overall Power Five student-athlete population was White – 84% (see Table 7) of

the Chancellors and Presidents were White. The same can be noted regarding Non-White

Chancellors and Presidents compared to the student-athlete population, as 42% of the overall

Power Five student-athlete population was Non-White in comparison to 16% for Chancellors and

Presidents (see Table 7). In 2019, 19% of the overall Power Five student-athlete population was

Black (see Table 7) while only 3% of the Chancellors and Presidents were Black (see Table 7).

These demographics highlight a large discrepancy in the overall minority representation of

Chancellors and Presidents in Power Five institutions. There is a continued need to improve the

percentage of Black Chancellors and Presidents.

Table 7 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Chancellors and Presidents (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	77	
White	65	84%
Non-White	12	16%
Black	2	3%

Table 7 includes the race demographics of all Power Five Chancellors and Presidents for further

comparison to the student-athletic and athletic administration demographics.

Note. (Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b)

Of the Power Five colleges and universities' Chancellors and Presidents, 16% are Non-

White while 19% of the Power Five faculty athletic representatives are Non-White as well (see Table 7 and 8). "Within the sport domain, White men have historically and continue to shape narratives around diversity, equity, and inclusion" (Singer & Cunningham, 2018, p. 270). The percentage is even lower for representation of Power Five Black faculty athletic representatives with only 14% being Black, while 3% of Chancellors and Presidents are Black (see Table 7 and 8). The percentage of Power Five Black faculty athletic representatives is similar and not too distant in relationship to that of the Black Power Five student- athlete population while the percentage of Black Power Five Chancellors and Presidents is much lower than that of the student-athlete population.

Table 8 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Faculty Athletics Representatives (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	77	
White	62	81%
Non-White	15	19%
Black	11	14%

Table 8 includes the racial demographics of all Power Five faculty athletics representatives and continues the pattern of the predominance of White individuals.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

The position of Power Five Director of Athletics is (see Table 9) 75% White only 25% are Non-White including 16% Black. For the position of Associate/Assistant Athletic Director, the position that normally produces the future Directors of Athletics, the statistics are similar. While 80% of Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors were white, 20% are Non-White including 11% Black (see Table 10). These percentages are not close to the overall Power Five student-

athlete population and is a strong area for improvement in diversity for the NCAA (see Table 2, 9 and 10). The Power Five student-athlete population is more diverse than the Power Five faculty athletic representative population (see Table 2 and 8). The Power Five Chancellors and Presidents population is the least diverse of all demographics. The position of faculty athletic representative is "appointed by their campus president/CEO without nomination by the faculty governing body" (Miranda & Paskus, 2013, p. 14). This proves to be accurate as there is not a diverse population of Power Five Chancellors and Presidents to select the faculty athletic representatives.

Table 9 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Athletic Directors Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	64	
White	48	75%
Non-White	16	25%
Black	10	16%

Table 9 includes the racial demographics of Power Five Athletic Directors.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 10 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors (Race)

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Total	1,409	
White	1,134	80%
Non-White	275	20%
Black	149	11%

Table 10 includes the racial demographics of other athletic administrative roles including the Associate and Assistant Athletic Directors in the NCAA.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Regarding the institutional hiring and promotion diversity goals and progress towards those goals, each athletic department is governed by the same hiring practices of the university. There are some departments that are governed outside of the university (i.e., departments such as The Seminole Boosters (Florida State University), The Rams Club (University of North Carolina), and Gator Boosters, Inc. (University of Florida)) who are held to similar but not exact practices. The specific differences within an athletic department are positions such as ADID and SWA, who are tailored towards specific gender or race qualifications. Title IX hiring and student-athlete populations are also a factor in the diversity, equity, and inclusion of departments. In some instances, departments are required to hire female coaches for female sports and must provide equal funding and number of males to female student-athlete ratio to be compliant. Lastly, the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion within athletic departments in support of their institution's goals are similar but need to comply with the NCAA rules and regulations.

As referenced earlier during the discussion regarding the Rooney rule and changes to hiring practices within athletics, there has been a change in the overall decision-making processes for hiring and the need for an established professional to oversee these areas. There have been many suggestions given to improve practices including,

> The NCAA championed institutions who adopt a Rooney/Eddie Robinson type rule in their hiring approaches for all athletic related leadership positions including athletic director, coaching, faculty athletic representatives, athletic department staff, and college athlete academic support staff, then current trends could possibly shift towards a more racially diverse and inclusive staff (Cooper, 2017, p. 225).

Also working with the institution's chief diversity officers and penalizing departments for a lack of diversity have been other strong suggestions, "similar to how institutions are currently penalized for not meeting GSR and APR standards, consequences for non-compliance could be implemented to reinforce the NCAA's commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion" (Cooper, 2017, p. 225).

Power Five institutions are beginning to create diversity, equity, and inclusion roles to help put a stronger focus on this area. For example, the University of Colorado currently employs a Senior Associate Athletic Director for External Operations who oversees marketing, promotions, production, and ticketing. The additional responsibility of being the diversity, equity, and inclusion officer for the department along with the traditional external duties, has pushed the department to add an additional role. This role at Colorado, the Associate Athletic Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, will not only serve in a senior leadership position, but will "be responsible for supporting, developing, managing and implementing diversity, equity and inclusion strategies that promote and foster an accessible, welcoming and affirming environment" (University of Colorado, 2021, para. 3). Other institutions within the Power five have established similar positions like the University of Arizona (Assistant Athletics Director, Diversity, Inclusion and Employee Engagement), the University of Washington (Associate Athletic Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and the University of Maryland (Senior Associate Athletic Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Organizational Effectiveness). These positions are senior level positions, that place diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of their focus.

The NCAA has the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (MOIC) that serves to "champion the causes of ethnic minorities by fostering an inclusive environment, thereby

creating a culture that promotes fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources"

(NCAA, 2020i, para. 1). This committee continues to work toward improving the hiring

practices of NCAA institutions. While the group has a strong focus on presenting and rewarding

student-athletes and administrators for their accomplishments, other areas of concern have come

to the forefront. One of the concerns was promoting future leaders and in 2020, the MOIC group

created the Black Athletic Director Alliance which is,

> committed to promoting the growth, development, and elevation of Black athletics
>
> administrators at the Division I level. We engage industry decision-makers, provide
>
> exposure for aspiring Black college athletics professionals through purposeful mentoring,
>
> and foster connections with those who will aid in positioning leaders in intercollegiate
>
> athletics (LaSalle University Athletics, 2020, para. 4).

This group's focus is to mentor and help position top minority administrators for future roles in

the NCAA institutional and national hierarchy.

Another new hiring program created in 2020 through a partnership with the NCAA, is the

McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative through the McLendon Fund. The purpose of the

McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative is "to provide minorities a jump-start to their careers

through practical experiences, opportunities to build their network, and instilling the values of

John McLendon: Integrity, Education, Leadership, and Mentorship" (McLendon Foundation,

2020, para. 1). This program will provide more opportunities for up-and-coming coaches and

administrators including:

> Positions are uniquely created and tailored to the needs of the respective athletic
>
> departments and expected to be in but not limited to the following fields: Business
>
> Operations, Communications, Compliance, Equipment, Facilities, Finance, Donor &

Gifting, Game Management, Human Resources, Marketing, Team-Specific Roles,

Ticketing, and Video & Content Creation (McLendon Foundation, 2020, para. 6).

Programs like this will help the NCAA nudge/push institutions around the country to be more

action and results oriented in who they hire for senior athletics positions and its diversity, equity,

and inclusion long term. Athletic departments are also utilizing search firms to broaden their

applicant pool for a more diverse group of potential employees including firms like Executive

Search, Parker Executive and Spelman and Johnson. These companies help colleges and

universities find talent to fill top and mid-level positions. "The lack of African Americans in

leadership roles within intercollegiate athletics brings to bear the salience of diversity in this

context" (Singer & Cunningham, 2018, p. 270). The NCAA should continue to expand their

diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and procedures regarding hiring practices.

Diversity in Collegiate Athletics Administration

Diversity within the athletic department's administration is defined for the institution at

large similarly to how it is defined within athletics. In representational diversity, we count the

federally identified demographic groups (veteran status, disability status, gender, race/ethnicity).

As stated earlier, the NCAA defines diversity as "any way in which people differ. Of course,

some characteristics among people are more salient and symbolically meaningful than are

others" (NCAA, 2009, p. 6). Additionally, the NCAA states that "diversity, by its very nature,

has the potential to benefit athletics teams and organizational workplaces. Bringing together

varied perspectives, life experiences, and viewpoints adds value to the workplace and reinforces

the concept of inclusivity" (NCAA, 2009, p. 6). The discussion of why the faculty does not

mirror its students is like the discussion of why the coaching staffs and administration within

athletics do not mirror the student-athlete population.

The measure of diversity within an administration can be tailored towards different demographics based on need. For example, in sports like football there is a history of hiring only male administrators and coaches for these positions though it is not required to hire only males. Another example is an athletic department with a female athletic director does not need to have their SWA be a senior administrator, as they can be a coach or mid-level administrator. Meanwhile Title IX serves as a gender funding and equality requirement, the roles and importance of women and diversity, equity, and inclusion should not just be a role but a standard and it would be intentional beyond designations and titles. The responsibility of oversight for women and diversity, equity, and inclusion ideally should not be housed under one position – SWA (women) and ADID (diversity, equity, and inclusion) – but broadly spread across the department. These positions are the only NCAA mandated roles within the department to represent those areas. Because of the lack of progress on diverse hiring to date, the NCAA mandated these roles to shine a spotlight and provide accountability on the hiring processes in athletic administration. Overall, the measure of diversity within administration for each institution is still measured the same nationally.

When analyzing the data of administrative positions within athletics at the Power Five level, the data shows that the administration of athletics is more diverse than the administration of top university leadership (Chancellors and Presidents). The overall Power Five Director of Athletics population are 75% White, 25% Non-White including 16% Black (see Table 9) in comparison to the Power Five Chancellors and Presidents that is 84% White, 16% Non-White including 3% Black (see Table 7). This demonstrates that the Power Five Director of Athletics population is more diverse than the overall Power Five Chancellors and Presidents population. Lastly, when it comes to hiring and improving the diversity, equity, and inclusion within the

athletic department, it should start with the continued improvement of diversity in the Director of Athletics position. To improve the minority population within the position of the Director of Athletics, there needs to be more representation of minorities in the position that hires the Director of Athletics, which are the Chancellors and Presidents.

Demographics of Collegiate Athletic Administration and the Connection to the Diversity within the Student-athlete Population

Since the 2014 installation of the Power Five conferences there has not been information analyzed regarding the education, prior athletic playing experience, prior work experience and area of focus within those institutions' athletic administration. This is one of the main reasons for the focus of this capstone project study. The NCAA does however analyze the gender demographic of athletic administrators along with the racial demographics as explained in the earlier tables. NCAA regulations mandate that there be an almost equal male to female ratio within the student-athlete population. The Power Five student-athlete population is 52% male to 48% female (see Table 13). Unfortunately, within the athletic administration there are no such rules resulting in a less diverse population regarding gender. The Associate/Assistant Directors of Athletics population within the Power Five institutions are 69% male to 31% female (see Table 12). The biggest lack of diversity comes from the population of Power Five Athletic Directors within 92% male to 8% female (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Athletic Directors (Gender)

Gender	# of (app.)	% of
Total	65	
Male	59	92%
Female	6	8%

Table 11 includes the gender demographics of Power Five Athletic Directors and highlights the

male predominance.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 12 – Administrative Roles – Power Five Associate/Assistant Directors of Athletics (Gender)

Gender	# of (app.)	% of
Total	1,382	
Male	956	69%
Female	426	31%

Table 12 includes the gender demographics of other Power Five athletic administrative roles that

continues to exhibit male predominance.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 13 – Power Five Student-Athletes (Gender)

Gender	# of (app.)	% of
Total	44,104	
Male	23,147	52%
Female	20,957	48%

Table 13 includes the gender demographics of Power Five student-athletes which is much closer

to equal than that of the Power Five athletic administrators.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

While we do know the demographics of gender, race/ethnicity for collegiate athletic

administration, the NCAA does not provide demographics for disabilities, education, and area of

expertise. In an article in the Sports Business Journal, Wong (2014), research shows that

institutions value advanced degrees as a qualification:

> Every current Division I athletic director has earned a bachelor's degree, while 280 (80

> percent) have earned a graduate degree. A hiring trend in favor of advanced degrees has

> picked up over the last five years, as nearly 90 percent of athletic directors hired since

> 2009 have earned an advanced degree. The most common master's degrees are in sports

> administration (92 of 231) and education (75 of 231) (para. 18).

The area of concentration most synonymous with Director of Athletics is revenue generation.

While the focus of student-athletes is receiving a collegiate education, having expertise or

experience in academics is not as valued in a candidate for Director of Athletics. Within an

athletic department academics is not highly valued for those looking to become athletic directors.

The area of academics is more valued at the level of track and field/cross country than football

within the athletic department. While track and field/cross-country as a sport has the most

student-athletes within the department with six different options (including women's cross

country, men's cross country, women's indoor track and field, men's indoor track and field,

women's outdoor track and field and men's outdoor track and field), football has a much larger

value to the department. The football program generates millions of dollars through television

contracts, big money games and national exposure on a weekly basis. In comparison the

academic program, while important, does not generate the immediate gratification of fundraising

money for the department's needs. Therefore, the areas within revenue generation are the most

common paths to the position of athletic director. Overall, "the most common backgrounds

include fundraising/development (56 of 287, or 20 percent), operations (42, or 15 percent),

marketing (33, or 11 percent), finance (32, or 11 percent) and compliance (24, or 8 percent)" (Wong, 2014, para. 22). The backgrounds of fundraising/development and marketing are both areas within revenue generation.

In the past, the most common path to becoming a Director of Athletics was coaching. This has since changed as "only 20 percent of current Division I athletic directors held a head coaching position at any point during their career" (Wong, 2014, para. 24). A growing path to becoming a Director of Athletics has been to work in the business world outside of athletics before obtaining the role. At the time of Wong's study, 10% of the Director of Athletics were former business professionals outside of collegiate athletics. Lastly, there was a strong consideration to former student-athletes as over 55% of Directors of Athletics were former collegiate student-athletes. While this does not give us a full analysis of the Power Five athletic director's path to the position, it is a great start in completing research on this topic during the capstone project.

Summary

The future of collegiate athletics continues to evolve. While there have been some strides made towards the improvement of programming, resources and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, there has not been much change in administration. While institutions have made a conscious effort to improve their hiring practices for Presidents and Chancellors to mirror the student population, there has not been the same effort within athletic administration. The future can be predicted from the statistics about the Power Five roles of Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors. There are only 20% and 11% of Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors that are Non-White and Black respectively (see Table 10). These positions serve as the potential pool for future Directors of Athletics and with such a small percentage being Non-White, the likelihood

of this developing into a more diverse group of Directors of Athletics is marginal.

The student-athlete population needs to become more diverse as well. There was 58% of the Power Five student-athlete (see Table 2) population who identified as White in comparison to 53% of the overall student population being White (see Table 1). Change in diversity within athletic administration needs to be extremely intentional. Hiring and recruiting top minority talent into entry-level positions like those created through the McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative is a start. There should not be a need to create programs that are meant just for hiring minorities as this should be a part of the normal hiring process. There should be diverse recruitment of applicants for positions within each athletic department including former student-athletes (as there is a higher percentage of Non-White student-athletes), in mid to lower-level roles and individuals outside of the field of athletics who are experts within such fields. Also, while not all minority administrators want to become Directors of Athletics, mentors of those who want to become Directors of Athletics should at least advise them to strongly look at the revenue generation area as a focus. "The few racial minority leaders who do successfully ascend to the top of the corporate ladder may not lift as they climb or provide the benefits, they are in a position to provide for other racial minorities in the organization" (Singer & Cunningham, 2018, p. 271). These individuals also must be promoted and paid equally, along with having opportunities to become future Associate/Assistant Directors of Athletics.

The industry of collegiate athletics needs to continue to grow and become more diverse, sooner than later because the student-athletes want to relate to those who are a large part of their college careers and student-athlete experiences. Examining the core areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion as utilized by the NCAA highlights an attempt to work towards creating more diversity in athletic administration. The focus of this capstone project is to look deeper into the

NCAA's attempts regarding specifically race/ethnicity and to hopefully determine ways to work

towards more success in these efforts.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color, to becoming

senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics,

enterprise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color. Therefore, the

researcher decided to adopt a mixed methods approach for the study. Johnson et al. (2004),

defined the mix of methods as "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines

quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or languages

into a single study" (p. 17). This method will help to provide the best results for this research.

Research Questions

This study will be focused on finding the answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the typical demographics and path for the Power Five Athletic Directors of

color?

RQ2: What are some strategies that will help improve representation of minorities of color

within senior administration?

Research Design

There are several designs of mixed methods research that the researcher could choose

from. "Mixed approaches are not based on a fixed paradigm: they include a number of variants

and hybrid forms, including mixed models and mixed methods, allowing a flexible approach to

data collection and analysis" (Cropley, 2019, p. 103). For the purpose of this study, data was

collected using a quantitative demographic survey and an open-ended interview, also known as

the explanatory sequential design.

The researcher surveyed and interviewed Athletic Directors in Power Five institutions. By utilizing a quantitative demographic surveys and open-ended interviews, the researcher collected data based on the demographics and personal perceptions of each Athletic Director. According to Cropley (2019), quantitative research:

a) starts by defining differences among people in terms of "standard" variables that apply to everybody, although different people display differing *levels or amounts* of the variables (such as intelligence or extraversion or tolerance for ambiguity),

b) measures *how much* of each variable different people have, and

c) seeks to establish the existence of cause-and-effect relationships among the variables open-ended interviews, the researcher collected data based on the personal perceptions (p. 6).

He then continues by stating that qualitative researchers "examines the way people make sense out of their own concrete real-life experiences *in their own minds* and *in their own words*. This information is usually expressed in everyday language using everyday concepts" (Cropley, 2019, p. 5). Using the qualitative research method will provide information that will be humanized for the results and purpose of this study.

Population and Sample Selection

The population for this study consisted of all Power Five Athletic Directors for the survey and more specifically Power Five Athletic Directors of color for the interviews. There are sixty-five Power Five Athletic Directors and of the sixty-five, fifteen identify as people of color. Participation in the interviews was requested of all fifteen Athletic Directors of color and participation was received from five of those fifteen while the surveys participation included all

sixty-five Power Five Athletic Directors. Further discussion regarding this small sample size and its limitations will be discussed further in the Discussion section of this capstone project.   The researcher chose the NCAA Division I Power Five institutions as the sample for the study. The Power Five incorporates 65 schools, those that make up the five largest and richest conferences in college athletics (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, SEC) plus Notre Dame who is an independent football school.

Validity and Reliability

The surveys collected from the Athletic Directors that are part of the Power Five institutions, will be conducted by the researcher. Every student-athlete in the country is required to fill out this survey no matter the sport or division. Similar to the surveys, the interviews will be created and conducted by the researcher. Every athletic department has its unique hiring processes and requirements when it comes to the positions of athletic administration.

The researcher should not come across any bias in this matter because all Power Five Athletic Directors of color fill out the same survey. The survey will not come across any bias from the interviewees because each Athletic Director had his/her own journey to becoming an Athletic Director. By utilizing open ended interviews, the data collected by the researcher will be understandable to the public and it will explain the potential path to becoming an Athletic Director, which supports the external validity of this study. The researcher thinks that this study will be reliable because it will examine the same aspect within an athletic department, how can administrators of color become Athletic Directors.

Data Collection and Management

The study, the survey, and the interview format were approved by the Human Subjects Committee of Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Upon approval, the researcher contacted

the Power Five Athletic Directors by email and arranged for an interview. Not all interviewees responded to the first email and the researcher followed up with another email two weeks later, and then a phone call. Once the interview was completed the demographic survey was sent.

To collect the data, the researcher made sure that the triangulation of data could occur. Cropley (2019), states that triangulation, when applied to the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods – means the use of two (or more) separate research studies (such as a qualitative and a quantitative study), both of which involve the same object of investigation but are otherwise independent of each other, to see where the two results intersect (p.114). As Cropley (2019) stated, "quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed quite separately and without any cross-methodological influence, the only link being that both data sets relate to the same research topic" (p. 114). In this study, the triangulation was possible through the examination of personal interviews and demographic surveys given to the Power Five Athletic Directors.

Interviews

The researcher contacted the Athletic Directors from the Power Five Institutions via email and arranged an interview. A follow up email was sent two weeks later to the interviewees that did not respond to the initial email. The email contained information about the study, the interview, and the survey as well as a copy of the interview and survey protocol. Each interview was conducted using the software Zoom or by phone. In order for the researcher to be able to record the interview, the interviewees were asked to sign a consent form. The researcher provided the interviewees with the meeting ID, password, and date and time of the interview. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reminded the respondents that they have the right to deny participation in the study at any point.

Demographic Surveys

The researcher emailed the Athletic Directors in Power Five Institutions after the completion of the interviews. The email contained a short description of the meaning of the survey and the purpose of the study. The researcher provided the respondents with a timeline of completion. The initial time given was one week, and consequently there was a follow-up email one week later with another reminder of the completion of the survey.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Leavy (2017), "data analysis procedures allow you to determine your findings" (p. 111). Furthermore, she states that, "in quantitative research, the analysis process leads to a statistical rendering of the data generally represented in a set of tables or charts along with a discussion" (Leavy, 2017, p. 111). Consequently, "qualitative content analysis allows researchers to investigate the meanings embedded within texts" (Leavy, 2017, p. 146). The study used a mixed methods approach, and Leavy (2017) defines mixed methods research (MMR) as "collecting, analyzing, and in some way integrating both quantitative and qualitative data in a single project" (p. 9). According to Leavy (2017), the steps of data analysis and interpretation are the following:

- Data preparation and organization

- Initial immersion

- Coding

- Categorizing and theming

- Interpretation (p. 150)

The quantitative data was provided by the demographic surveys, and the qualitative data was collected via Zoom or phone interviews. As stated before, all interviews were recorded with the

consent of the respondents, and the recordings were transcribed using a computer software. The researcher created a Microsoft Excel document with the data from the interviews, notes, and answers from the surveys. The data collected from the demographic surveys was collected via Google Docs, and a report with the answers was downloaded in a Microsoft Excel format that was later added to the initial Microsoft Excel document created by the researcher. Descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze the demographic information from the surveys to obtain percentages.

According to Leavy (2017), "the coding process allows you to reduce and classify the data generated. Coding is the process of assigning a word or phrase to segments of data" (p. 151). Furthermore, Leavy (2017), adds that coding "should be linked to your research purpose and research questions. In other words, select a coding procedure based on what you want to learn from the data" (p. 151). Once the coding process is selected, the step of categorizing and theming begins. The researcher interprets the data and finds similarities between the answers from the respondents and categorizes the codes. Therefore, the researcher needs to "look for patterns and the relationships between codes" (Leavy, 2017, p. 152). This capstone project utilized a deductive coding process as I was already interested in analyzing themes surrounding peer support/mentorship, diversity, equity, and inclusion, career path, and the administration/future. The interpretation occurs at the end of the data analysis process, and the researcher interprets the data collected and draws conclusions from the answers of the demographic surveys and interviews to answer the research questions. The researcher's interpretation of the collected data is provided in the interpretation chapter.

Ethical Considerations

The study will be conducted with ethical behavior. The researcher is the conductor of the

ethical attitude and behavior. As Leavy (2017) stated that first, "ethical considerations emerge during the development of your research topic" (p. 31). She then continues by stating that the second step, the researcher "needs to consider the protection of the research participants and seek necessary approvals before you can begin working with human subjects" (Leavy, 2017, p. 31). The researcher has a responsibility towards his/her respondents, and that responsibility does "not end once you have collected the data for your study" (Leavy, 2017, p. 40).

Therefore, it is important that the researcher provided the interviewees with the survey and interview protocol, as well as with the consent form. At the beginning of each interview, the respondents were reminded that they agreed to have their Zoom and phone meeting recorded. The researcher also reminded the respondents that their anonymity will be respected, that they can end participation in the interview at any time.

Summary

Chapter three provides the methodology used for the study. A mixed methods approach was used in analyzing the data collected by the researcher. The data sources were in the form of demographic surveys and interviews with Athletic Directors in Power Five Institutions. Chapter four will be analyzing the data collected from the demographic surveys and the interviews. The answers to the research questions will also be provided with in depth descriptions.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Introduction

This chapter provides information on the individuals who participated in this study and their relationship to the topic of collegiate athletic administration at a Power Five level. This will include profiles for each participant to describe their respective backgrounds and demographics. Their profiles descriptions will aide in providing understanding of the results chapter. In the following section, I outline each participant and their athletic background based on the demographic data form and interview disclosure. Each participant's information is anonymous; each participant chose a pseudonym in place of their real name during the completion of the demographic data form and/or interview.

Profiles

Hazel Lesnar. Hazel is the Director of Athletics at the University of Ryan. She has been in this position for six years. Prior to this role, she worked at her alma mater for 13 years within athletics. At her alma mater, she played basketball, something that she points out was her ticket to attending college and the sport that she coached before moving into administration. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in sociology, a master in public administration, and a doctorate in sport administration. She is the first female Power Five athletic director of her descent. Hazel believes that if you work hard enough, you will achieve something bigger and better than you ever would have imagined.

Shane Moore. *Shane* is the Director of Athletics at Joseph State University. He has been in his role for five years. He has a bachelor degree and master's degree in sport leadership, returning to his undergraduate alma mater to work for fifteen years. Shane came from a family

that immigrated to the United States, expected to become a lawyer or doctor but his love for sport kept him on track to become the first Power Five athletic director of his descent. Shane believes in accomplishing your personal heights no matter what the task is, but to stay humble.

Miles Nelson. Miles is the Director of Athletics at Lilo University. Miles has been in his role for 11 years. He has a bachelor degree in organizational behavior and management and a master's in sports administration. Miles is a former student-athlete who played basketball, then later went on worked for the NCAA, before later working in athletic administration. He is a three-time athletic director, leading an FCS school and a non-football Division 1 school, before leading Lilo. Miles believes in understanding what is in front of you and focusing on where you came from, where you want to go, and developing throughout.

Randy Owens. Randy is the Director of Athletics at University of Cassie. Randy has been in his role for five years. He is a two-time Power Five athletic director and a former football student-athlete. He was a former athletic director at his alma mater. He has both his bachelor in business administration – finance and a master's of education in sports management. Randy believes in learning from the wins and losses of not only athletics, but on the field of "life".

Mary Smith. Mary Smith is the Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletic Director at Gail University. She has been in this position for three years. Prior to this role, she served as the Deputy Athletic Director and has served in the department for almost 20 years. She discovered her passion for athletics and the department as a former student-athlete and captain of the Women's Basketball team. Mary holds a bachelor of science degree in human and organizational development, a master's degree in counseling, and doctorate in higher education administration. Mary wants her institution to focus on positioning student-athletes to excel on and off the field of play.

Table 14 – **Participant Profiles**

Name	Title	Years in Current Role	Former student-athlete (Y/N)	Highest Degree Earned	Been an Athletic Director before this role (Y/N)
Hazel Lesnar	Director of Athletics	**6**	Y	Doctorate in Sport Administration	N
Shane Moore	Director of Athletics	5	Y	Masters Degree in Sports Leadership	Y
Miles Nelson	Director of Athletics	11	Y	Masters in Sports	Y
Randy Owens	Director of Athletics	5	Y	Masters of Education in Sports Management	Y
Mary Smith	Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Director of Athletics	3	Y	Doctorate in Higher Education Administration	N

Table 14 includes the participant information for the five Athletic Directors of color who

participated in the interviews for this capstone project.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the participants in the study. The profiles of each participant

help to illustrate their relationship to the topic of collegiate athletic administration at a Power

Five level. All of the participants have in common their leadership within athletics as leaders of

their respective departments, being minorities of color, and possessing a love for helping athletes

become top tier students, professionals, and champions on and off the playing surfaces. Their

love and passion for sport will help guide their interviews as I analyze the connection and

disconnection to their industry. In the next chapter, I will present the results of the study, as I

organize the data and address the research questions of the study.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Introduction

  The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color to becoming senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics, enterprise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the mixed methods research including a quantitative demographic survey and qualitative open-ended interviews. The demographic surveys were sent to all Power Five Athletic Directors first followed by the completion of open-ended interviews with Power Five Athletic Directors of color.

Surveys

  The researcher collected surveys from the sixty-five Athletic Directors that are part of the Power Five institutions. These surveys helped to analyze the demographics of all Power Five Athletic Directors and ascertain the similarities and differences of each demographic category. During each survey, individuals were asked the following:

1. What is your preferred pseudonym (i.e., fake name)?

2. Gender

3. If you choose to "self-identify", please complete the line below:

4. Name of Institution

5. Formal Title

6. How many years have you been in your current role?

7. Are you a former student-athlete?

8.   If you are a former student-athlete, what sport(s) did you participate in?

9.   Area(s) of expertise:

- o   Athletic Performance (Strength, Nutrition)

- o   Business

- o   Coaching

- o   Communications/IT

- o   Development

- o   Equipment

- o   Facilities/Event Management

- o   Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)

- o   Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)

- o   Outside of Collegiate Athletics

- o   Other: _____

10.   Which of the following have you worked at/as:

- o   Division I (Football Championship Subdivision Schools (FCS))

- o   Division I (Non-Football – AAA)

- o   Division II

- o   Division III

- o   NAIA

- o   HBCU (Historically Black colleges and universities)

- o   Coaching

- o   Professor

- o   Professional Sports

- o Conference Office

- o Other: _____

11. Highest Degree Completed & Major:

12. Please provide your phone number and email so that the researcher may contact

you to set up the interview.

I also provided implications for the importance of improving, maintaining, and creating change

in athletics administration.

Race Demographics

The majority of the Power 5 Athletic Directors identify as White at 76.92%, while

23.08% identify as Non-White with the majority of those who are Non-White identifying as

African American/Black at 18.46% (Tables 16 and 17 respectively). In the overall student-athlete

population (Table 2 and 5), white student-athletes represent 58% and 59% based on data from

2019 and 2018 respectively. So, while 58/59% of student-athletes identify as White, 76.92% of

the Power Five Athletic Directors identified as White. Non-White Athletic Directors represent

only 23.08%, while an average of 41.5% of student-athletes identify as Non-White based on data

from 2018 and 2019 (Tables 2 and 5). An interesting demographic is that Black Athletic

Directors represent 18.46% of the leaders in Power Five athletics (Table 17). This percentage is

very close to being representative of the 19% (Table 2 and 5) of student-athletes who identify as

Black. The 41.5% of Non-White student-athletes must be broken down even further to get a full

understanding.

Table 15 – Student-Athlete 2019 – Power Five Student-Athletes – Non-White Extended

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Non-White	18,728	42.46%

Black	8,336	18.90%
Hispanic	1,768	4.01%
Two or more races	2,273	5.15%
International	2,845	6.45%
Asian	844	1.91%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	216	0.49%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island	241	0.55%
Unknown	2,205	5.00%

Table 15 includes the racial demographics of all Power Five student-athletes in 2019 with an emphasis on the further breakdown of Non-White student-athletes in order to later compare to the racial demographics of Athletic Directors.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

Table 16 – Student-Athlete 2018 – Power Five Student-Athletes – Non-White Extended

Race	# of (app.)	% of
Non-White	18,193	41.20%

Black	8,448	19.13%
Hispanic	1,862	4.22%
Two or more races	2,061	4.67%
International	2,646	5.99%
Asian	817	1.85%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	195	0.44%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island	219	0.50%
Unknown	1,945	4.40%

Table 16 includes the racial demographics of all Power Five student-athletes in 2018 with an emphasis on the further breakdown of Non-White student-athletes in order to later compare to the racial demographics of Athletic Directors.

Note. Adapted from NCAA Demographic Database, 2020b

(http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database).

A comparison of the Non-White demographics of Power Five student-athletes (Table 14

and 15) to the race demographics of all Power Five Athletic Directors (Table 17) highlights a

disparity regarding the absence of Non-White Athletic Directors who identify as international.

The issue with this is, while there are about 6% of our student-athletes that are international,

there is no current opportunities for them to ascend to Athletic Director. Hispanic student-

athletes make up about 4% of the student-athlete population (Table 14 and 15) while Hispanic

Athletic Directors make up 3.08% of the Non-White Athletic Directors (Table 17). The same can

be said for those who identify as Asian as student-athletes make up (Table 14 and 15)

approximately 1-2% of student-athletes and 1.54% of Athletic Directors (Table 17). American

Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island, both make up less than 1% of the

student-athletes (Table 14 and 15) and currently do not have any Athletic Director

representation. Overall, White Athletic Directors and student-athletes are the majority and the

76.92% of Athletic Directors identifying as white surpasses the student-athlete representation of

58-59% of student-athletes who identify as the same. The surplus of 18% would be more

representative of the student-athlete population if those Athletic Directors were international

citizens, American Indian/Alaskan Native, as well as the other non-white underrepresented

groups. My results regarding the race of Athletic Directors in the NCAA Power Five did not

include those who identified as two or more races or whose race was unknown. If the race

demographics of all Power Five Athletic Directors were to match the demographics of student-

athletes who identify as international, American Indian/Alaskan Native, two or more races, or of

unknown race it would account for that 18% surplus of White Athletic Directors.

Table 17 – Race Demographics (White vs. Non-White Athletic Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	65	
White	50	76.92%

| Non – White | 15 | 23.08% |

Table 17 details the percentage of White vs. Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors in 2018-2019.

Table 18 – Race Demographics (By Race of Athletic Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	65	
African American/Black	12	18.46%
American Indian/Alaskan	0	0.00%
Native	0	0.00%
Asian	1	1.54%
Hispanic/Latinx	2	3.08%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	0	0.00%
White	50	76.92%

Table 18 further breaks down the demographics of Non-White Athletic Directors into specific racial/ethnic groups to better compare to the totality of student-athletes.

Gender Demographics

Power Five Athletic Directors are largely male with 89.23% (Table 18, 19, 20 and 21) of all Athletic Directors being male. This disparity is not as large when looking at Non-White (73.33%) and Black (75.00%) Athletic Directors, meaning that there are more double-minority Athletic Directors (26.67%) than White female Athletic Directors (6.00%). This proves to not only be larger by percentage but also by numbers, as there are four female Athletic Directors of color out of the 15 in total – while there are only three White female Athletic Directors out of 50 White Athletic Directors. Although Athletic Directors of color are the minority, the White female Athletic Directors represent a smaller minority.

Table 19 – Gender Demographics (All Athletics Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	65	
Female	7	10.77%
Male	58	89.23%

Table 19 includes the gender demographics of all Power Five Athletic Directors and highlights

the male predominance of the career.

Table 20 – Gender Demographics (White Athletic Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	50	
Female	3	6.00%
Male	47	94.00%

Table 20 continues to exhibit the male predominance of White Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 21 – Gender Demographics (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	15	
Female	4	26.67%
Male	11	73.33%

Table 21 shows that this male predominance is also present in Non-White Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Table 22 – Gender Demographics (Black Athletics Directors)

Gender	# of people	Percentage
Total	12	
Female	3	25.00%
Male	9	75.00%

Table 21 highlights that the male predominance is also present in Black Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Years Worked in Current Role

The years worked in Athletic Director's current role averages 5.58 years. White Athletic Directors average the longest stints at the position at 5.88 years, Non-White Athletic Directors average 4.6 years, and Black Athletic Directors average 5 years. This difference highlights increased longevity of the careers of the current White Athletic Directors.

Former Student-Athlete Demographics

There is an obvious link to becoming an Athletic Director that is evident by the 64.62% of them being former student-athletes. Interestingly, the percentage is slightly lower for White Athletic Directors at 60.00% (Table 24) of them being former student-athletes compared to the 80.00% of Non-White Athletic Directors who are former student-athletes. Being a former student-athlete is almost a pre-requisite to become an Athletic Director for people of color. The percentage rises from 64.62% in all Athletic Directors (Table 23) to 80.00% (Table 25) for individuals of color and 91.67% (Table 26) for Black Athletic Directors as there was only one who was not a former student-athlete.

In this male dominated position, there is no surprise that the leading sport for Athletic Directors who are former student-athletes is Football at 41.30% (Table 23). Basketball and Baseball are also sports that had a large amount of participation from Athletic Directors (21.74% and 19.57% respectively). White Athletic Director demographics follow just about the same overall percentage with Baseball at 21.21% placing it slightly higher than Basketball at 18.18% (Table 23). For Non-White Athletic Directors Football (38.34%) and Basketball (30.77%) are highly participated in as former student-athletes. Black Athletic Directors followed the same pattern with 41.67% being former Football student-athletes and 33.33% being former Basketball

student-athletes (Table 26).

Table 23 – Former Student-Athlete Sports Participated (All Athletics Directors)

Sport	# of ppl	Percentage
Baseball	9	19.57%
Basketball	10	21.74%
Field Hockey	1	2.17%
Football	19	41.30%
Golf	1	2.17%
Ice Hockey	1	2.17%
Softball	1	2.17%
Swimming and Diving	1	2.17%
Track / Cross Country	3	6.52%

Table 23 includes the sports that Power Five Athletic Directors participated in as former student-athletes.

Note – Some former student-athletes played multi-sports

Table 24 – Former Student-Athlete Sports Participated (White Athletics Directors)

Sport	# of ppl	Percentage
Baseball	7	21.21%
Basketball	6	18.18%
Field Hockey	1	3.03%
Football	14	42.42%
Golf	1	3.03%
Ice Hockey	1	3.03%
Softball	1	3.03%
Swimming and Diving	0	0.00%
Track / Cross Country	2	6.06%

Table 24 focuses on the sports that White Power Five Athletic Directors participated in as former student-athletes.

Note – Some former student-athletes played multi-sports

Table 25 – Former Student-Athlete Sports Participated (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Sport	# of ppl	Percentage
Baseball	2	15.38%
Basketball	4	30.77%
Field Hockey	0	0.00%
Football	5	38.46%
Golf	0	0.00%
Ice Hockey	0	0.00%
Softball	0	0.00%
Swimming and Diving	1	7.69%
Track / Cross Country	1	7.69%

Table 25 focuses on the sports that Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors participated in as

former student-athletes.

Note – Some former student-athletes played multi-sports

Table 26 – Former Student-Athlete Sports Participated (Black Athletics Directors)

Sport	# of ppl	Percentage
Baseball	2	16.67%
Basketball	4	33.33%
Field Hockey	0	0.00%
Football	5	41.67%
Golf	0	0.00%
Ice Hockey	0	0.00%
Softball	0	0.00%
Swimming and Diving	1	8.33%
Track / Cross Country	0	0.00%

Table 26 includes the sports that Black Power Five Athletic Directors participated in as former

student-athletes.

Note – Some former student-athletes played multi-sports

University Title Demographics

The overall title of Athletic Directors is simply Athletic Director (66.15%) (Table 27).

The percentage increases to 70.00% (Table 28) for White Athletic Director with only 28% of them having a higher title (a higher title would mean that they would likely have more oversight than Athletics or have earned more structure recognition). There is also one Athletic Director with the lower title of Interim Athletic Director, 2.00%, as they have not been given the permanent title and are being assessed for the full-time role. In comparison, 53.33% of Non-White Athletic Directors have the Athletic Director title (Table 29). Additionally, 46.67% of the Non-White Athletic Directors have earned a title above Athletic Director. For Black Athletic Directors, the percentage of those with the title of Athletic Directors is almost equal to those with other higher titles (Table 30). This demographic is very intriguing considering Non-White and Black Athletic Directors on average have shorter tenures in their roles but have earned higher titles than their White counterparts.

Table 27 – University Title (All Athletics Directors)

Title	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	65	
Senior Vice President	1	1.54%
Vice President	14	21.54%
Vice Chancellor	5	7.69%
Associate Vice President	1	1.54%
Athletic Director	43	66.15%
Interim Athletic Director	1	1.54%

Table 27 includes the breakdown of titles held by all Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 28 – University Title (White Athletics Directors)

Title	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	50	
Senior Vice President	0	0.00%
Vice President	9	18.00%
Vice Chancellor	4	8.00%
Associate Vice President	1	2.00%

Athletic Director	35	70.00%
Interim Athletic Director	1	2.00%

Table 28 includes the university titles held by White Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 29 – University Title (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Title	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	15	
Senior Vice President	1	6.67%
Vice President	5	33.33%
Vice Chancellor	1	6.67%
Associate Vice President	0	0.00%
Athletic Director	8	53.33%
Interim Athletic Director	0	0.00%

Table 29 includes the university titles held by Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 30 – University Title (Black Athletics Directors)

Title	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	12	
Senior Vice President	1	8.83%
Vice President	4	33.33%
Vice Chancellor	1	8.83%
Associate Vice President	0	0.00%
Athletic Director	6	50.00%
Interim Athletic Director	0	0.00%

Table 30 focuses on the university titles held by Black Power Five Athletic Directors.

Areas of Expertise Demographics

A common conversation within collegiate athletics is what area of expertise helps to get one to the Athletic Director position with the quickest path. The overall Athletic Director demographic matches the common theme of Development being that area of expertise with 55.38% of Power Five Athletic Directors having this area of expertise (Table 31). The area of development focuses on fundraising for athletics including raising money for scholarships,

facility upgrades, and other important departmental needs. This theme becomes even more

apparent for White Athletic Directors who report 68.00% with expertise is Development (Table

32). Then pattern is different for Athletic Directors of color with 46.67% reporting Student

Services expertise (Table 33). Development is not even the next most prominent expertise for

Athletic Directors of Color. It is surpassed by the expertise of Revenue Generation (26.67%) for

Athletic Directors of color. The expertise areas of Law and Development tie for the third most

prominent with 13.33% of Athletic Directors of color having those expertise areas. For Black

Athletic Directors (Table 34), Student Services represents an overwhelming 58.33% of their

expertise areas. This area is followed by Revenue Generation at 25.00% and then both Law and

Development at 8.33%.

Table 31 – Areas of Expertise (All Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	65	
Athletic Performance (Strength, Nutrition)	1	1.54%
Business	1	1.54%
Coaching	1	1.54%
Communications/IT	1	1.54%
Development	36	55.38%
Equipment	0	0.00%
Facilities/Event Management	3	4.62%
Law	2	3.08%
Outside of Athletics	1	1.54%
Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)	9	13.85%
Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)	10	15.38%

Table 31 includes the areas of athletic expertise held by all Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 32 – Areas of Expertise (White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	50	
Athletic Performance	1	2.00%

Business	1	2.00%
Coaching	1	2.00%
Communications/IT	1	2.00%
Development	34	68.00%
Equipment	0	0.00%
Facilities/Event Management	3	6.00%
Law	0	0.00%
Outside of Athletics	1	2.00%
Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)	5	10.00%
Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)	3	6.00%

Table 32 focuses on the areas of athletic expertise held by all White Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Table 33 – Areas of Expertise (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	15	
Athletic Performance	0	0.00%
Business	0	0.00%
Coaching	0	0.00%
Communications/IT	0	0.00%
Development	2	13.33%
Facilities/Event Management	0	0.00%
Law	2	13.33%
Outside of Collegiate Athletics	0	0.00%
Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)	4	26.67%
Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)	7	46.67%

Table 33 focuses on the areas of athletic expertise of all Non-White Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Table 34 – Areas of Expertise (Black Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	12	
Athletic Performance	0	0.00%
Business	0	0.00%

Coaching	0	0.00%
Communications/IT	0	0.00%
Development	1	8.33%
Facilities/Event Management	0	0.00%
Law	1	8.33%
Outside of Collegiate Athletics	0	0.00%
Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)	3	25.00%
Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)	7	58.33%

Table 34 focuses more specifically on the areas of athletic expertise of Black Power Five

Athletic Directors.

Highest Form of Education Demographics

While having a master's degree is not a pre-requisite, it has become a preference to at

least have one graduate degree to become an Athletic Director. Sixty percent of Power Five

Athletic Directors have obtained a master's degree (Table 35). In comparison, 21.54% have a

bachelor's degree while 18.46% have either a law degree or a doctorate. Sixty-four percent of

White Athletic Directors have a master's degrees, 24% a bachelor's, and 12% a law degree or

doctorate (Table 36). The percentages are lower for the Non-White Athletic Directors with

46.67% having a master's degree and 13.33% having a bachelor's degree (Table 37). The

percentages are more than double their White counterparts for those with a law degree or

doctorate degrees with 40% of Non-White Athletic Directors having those higher degrees

compared to 18.46% of the White Athletic Directors. The Black Athletic Directors match the

education levels of the Non-White Athletic Directors more so with 16.67% having a bachelors,

41.67% master's, and 41.67% with a law degree or doctorate (Table 38). This is likely due to the

fact that the majority of the Non-White Athletic Directors are in fact Black.

Table 35 – Highest Form of Education (All Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	65	
Bachelors	14	21.54%
Masters	39	60.00%
J.D.	7	10.77%
Doctorate	5	7.69%

Table 35 includes the highest form of education achieved by all Power Five Athletic Directors.

Table 36 – Highest Form of Education (White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	50	
Bachelors	12	24.00%
Masters	32	64.00%
J.D.	4	8.00%
Doctorate	2	4.00%

Table 36 focuses in on the highest form of education achieved by all White Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Table 37 – Highest Form of Education (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	15	
Bachelors	2	13.33%
Masters	7	46.67%
J.D.	3	20.00%
Doctorate	3	20.00%

Table 37 focuses in on the highest form of education achieved by all Non-White Power Five

Athletic Directors.

Table 38 – Highest Form of Education (Black Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Total	12	
Bachelors	2	16.67%

Masters	5	41.67%
J.D.	2	16.67%
Ph.D.	3	25.00%

Table 38 further focuses in on the highest form of education achieved by all Black Power Five

Athletic Directors.

Areas Worked Outside of Current Power Five Position Demographics

Working in areas outside of Power Five athletics is strongly encouraged. While 14 out of 65

athletic directors did not have experience in the areas listed in the survey, 78.47% did. Overall,

there was no dominating area with five areas representing more than 10% of Power Five Athletic

Directors (Table 39):

- Conference Office (11.39%)

- Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) (18.99%)

- Division I (Non-Football – AAA) 16.46%

- Other / Outside Athletics (12.66%)

- Professional Sports (17.72%)

For White Athletic Directors there is a clear front runner regarding experience areas with 21.05%

having experience in Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) institutions (Table

40). Working in a conference office or coaching are much less popular with only 8.77% and

10.53% of White Athletic Directors having this experience respectively (Table 44). For Non-

White Athletic Directors, 22.73% have experience working in Professional Sports while 13.64%

have worked as a professor (Table 41). There are fewer Black Athletic Directors with experience

working for a Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) institution and there are

surprisingly no Black or Non-White Athletic Directors with any HBCU (Historically Black

Colleges and Universities) experience (Table 42).

Table 39 – Areas Worked Outside of Current Position (All Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Coaching	7	8.89%
Conference Office	9	11.39%
Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision)	15	18.99%
Division I (Non-Football – AAA)	13	16.46%
Division II	1	1.17%
Division III	4	5.06%
HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)	0	0.00%
NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)	1	1.27%
Other / Outside Athletics	10	12.66%
Professional Sports	14	17.72%
Professor	6	7.59%

Table 39 includes on the areas worked outside of the current AD role for all Power Five Athletic

Directors.

Note – Some Athletic Directors have worked in multiple areas

Table 40 – Areas Worked Outside of Current Position (White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Coaching	6	10.53%
Conference Office	5	8.77%
Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision)	12	21.05%
Division I (Non-Football – AAA)	9	15.79%
Division II	1	1.75%
Division III	4	7.02%
HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)	0	0.09%
NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)	1	1.75%
Other / Outside Athletics	7	12.28%
Professional Sports	9	15.79%
Professor	3	5.26%

Table 40 focuses on the areas worked outside of the current AD role for all White Power Five

Athletic Directors.

Note – Some Athletic Directors have worked in multiple areas

Table 41 – Areas Worked Outside of Current Position (Non-White Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Coaching	1	4.55%
Conference Office	4	18.18%
Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision)	3	13.64%
Division I (Non-Football – AAA)	4	18.18%
Division II	0	0.00%
Division III	0	0.00%
HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)	0	0.00%
NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)	0	0.00%
Other / Outside Athletics	3	13.64%
Professional Sports	5	22.73%
Professor	3	13.64%

Table ## focuses on the areas worked outside of the current AD role for all Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors.

Note – Some Athletic Directors have worked in multiple areas

Table 42 – Areas Worked Outside of Current Position (Black Athletics Directors)

Area	# of ppl	Percentage
Coaching	1	6.25%
Conference Office	3	18.75%
Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision)	1	6.25%
Division I (Non-Football – AAA)	2	12.50%
Division II	0	0.00%
Division III	0	0.00%
HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)	0	0.00%
NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)	0	0.00%
Other / Outside Athletics	3	18.75%
Professional Sports	4	25.00%
Professor	3	18.75%

Table 42 further focuses on the areas worked outside of the current AD role for all Black Power

Five Athletic Directors.

Note – Some Athletic Directors have worked in multiple areas

Interviews

The interviews were conducted via Zoom or phone, during which I notified the participants that their responses would be audio recorded. They were reminded that they can choose to discontinue their participation at any point during the interview. During the interview, I asked fourteen questions grouped into four categories (see Appendix D):

1. Path (Career Progression)

2. Peers/Mentorship

3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

4. Their Administration/Future

The interviews averaged between thirty to forty minutes. Following the interviews, I transcribed all recorded interviews into text using Google Docs voice typing feature. Those responses that could not be transcribed, I manually transcribed their responses when needed.

Interview Themes

Path – Athletics as the Driver, Outside Forces as a Retention Tool

The five athletic directors all became interested in becoming an Athletic Director from their experiences within the field. This theme came in different shades. The two women grew into their interest in the role throughout their professional careers. The opposite can be said for the men as they grew up being athletes and wanting to be Athletic Directors from a young age. Hazel Lesnar stated,

> I grew up a church kid in a very tight family and I was the tomboy of the bunch. I was the one who was always organizing the boys and would be one of the best at any sports that we played including racing and football. I exceled in sport, being able to travel, then get recruited before going to college on a scholarship at a school my family could not afford.

I later down the line coached, going up my mind to see the other side of athletics and I knew working in administration beyond coaching would open up so many doors for my family and I long term.

While Mary Smith stated,

I knew that when I was done with being a student-athlete; I wanted to work in higher ed. (education) long-term. I didn't think about athletics at the time but was given an internship within the student affairs office. That internship gave me the opportunity to work with a former Athletic Director. He was over that office but later took over athletics under his scope. He asked me to continue to work with him but on the athletics side in compliance and the rest in history. He was a big champion for me; someone that encouraged me and gave me countless opportunities.

On the contrary, Miles Nelson, Randy Owens, and Shane Moore knew their path much earlier in life, in some instances even before becoming professionals. Miles Nelson stated,

I knew that I wanted to be an athletic director when I was in 10th grade. I grew up in a college town where all you did was the support our team, wear the gear and go to a lot of games. I went to a game one day and was curious about who was in charge of this game. I picked up a media guide and saw that the AD (Athletic Director) spot and instantly strived to work toward getting into that seat one day.

Owens stated,

I knew that I wanted to be a leader in the sports business world as a young kid but I did not understand that I could do that at the highest level until I got to know the athletic administration at my alma mater. Our AD (Athletic Director) and coaches introduced me to the league Commissioner who ended up offering me an internship during my masters

in sport management. This set me off to become a leader in the conference office, later

compliance and then fundraising. I knew I wanted to be in the business world but how I

got there was relationships and hard work – very hard work.

Moore also shared early aspirations toward becoming an Athletic Director, as he stated, "I knew

as a teenager, I will do what I wanted, no matter what and that was to become the leader of

athletics." Their responses show that the aspiration to lead an athletic department can be a

lifelong concrete goal or it can be something that blossoms from a passion for sports.

The path to become an athletic director can take the usual path of having to move

between many roles, cities, and ultimately chase the right positions in order to one day sit in the

chair (become an athletic director). For others, they may be lucky enough to stay in one place

and grow within one city and institution and end up becoming the face of the department as

athletic director one day. For these five athletic directors, their paths are similar but very

different -- one with a NCAA conference beginning, another from coaching, another starting

back work to move for their family and another starting as an intern. Nelson's big break came

when he worked for the Final Four and soon thereafter the NCAA office.

Nelson stated,

I was a former Ivy league basketball player and was mentored by our Athletic Director.

He recruited me to work with him later at a school that hosted the Final Four. Working

with him and at the Final Four I made a ton of connections that setup my career path. I

eventually worked in the NCAA office for eight years, becoming a well-respected

professional, then was recruited to work at Power Five school, then received my first

athletic director job out East at a DI-AAA (non-football) for four years, later going to an

FCS school, before becoming the Power Five athletic director that I am today. I increased

my worth by first working for the NCAA office.

For Lesnar, she was first a professional basketball player, then coach, then radio and television broadcaster. Her administrative break came when she interned for an Athletic Director. Lesnar stated,

> I wanted to get out of coaching, and by faith my husband took a role at a university where I took a job working on campus in student' services. I had a connection with their Athletic Director so I volunteered while I was completing my PhD. My career took off from their as I next took a role at two consecutive SEC schools (one being her alma mater) before becoming the Athletic Director at my institution now.

Smith started as a student-athlete at the same institution that she is now the Athletic Director of, stating:

> I started full time in academics, after working in the student affairs office, as the academic lead for men's basketball, adding women's basketball later. The department had a lot of turn over and ended up with a full restructure – as the head of compliance left, I was given an opportunity to head compliance. This was a huge change/jump for me – a job that was initially a staff of one. I grew the staff growing the lead from the Director of Compliance to Associate Athletic Director, to Senior Associate Athletic Director over student services, then became Deputy – then Senior Women Administrator before becoming the Athletic Director. It was a very long road but all in the same place.

Each Athletic Director talked about their pride in being a part of NCAA committees and organizations but were most excited about their connections outside of the NCAA. Nelson stated,

> I am a part of the USA Basketball board and the NCAA representative for USA

basketball. I am also the former chair of the NCAA Basketball committee. Honestly, the

United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, College Advisory Council and

Women's Sport Foundation roles are the roles that I am most part of because it helps our

department connect with minority opportunities that are often overlooked for those

national roles like basketball and football. Our student-athletes get a lot of exposure from

those connections and I am proud to be a leader within those communities.

Smith stated,

My NCAA favorite experience was the NCAA Pathways, a very challenging program

that I went through the year before I became an Athletics Director that I did not know I

needed at that time. We were assigned a mentor that was a sitting President or Athletic

Director, given a stipend to travel to see your mentor and learn from them. I am more a

mentor as a sitting Athletic Director, which brought this full circle for me. As a member

of my local community for over 25 years, I would have to say that my experience at our

local leadership institution was wonderful, as I was around and learning from other

leaders in our community – that I can now call friends as they not only support our

department, but me and my personal growth.

Moore stated,

My work on committees for the NCAA has been vast. I served as Vice President for

NACDA, which is huge for being a part of the who's who in athletics. I would be remiss

if I did not talk about the NCAA areas that get overlooked that I am a part of being the

Pac-12 ImPACt Leadership Council (social justice and anti-racism), Division I the

Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports committee. Change is needed and

while we can improve competitiveness, we need to improve issues important to the larger

student population, for life after sport. I am also proud to be a part of a race-based Hall of

Fame and will continue to be a strong supporter of DEI.

While each Athletic Director became an Athletic Director because of their love for sport, their

paths all include someone seeing something in them. Someone who was a part of their athletic

and professional careers who took a chance on them. Their appreciation for others, outside

connections, committees and opportunities is an important part of what make them leaders in

their field.

<center>Peers/Mentorship – Value All Connections, Be Yourself</center>

Each Athletic Director has had mentors along the way, both in and outside of athletics.

Their mentors are not all individuals of color, but some talk about their biggest mentors and

supporters being their White friends and counterparts. Nelson found a lot of his mentors through

the sport that he loves, basketball. Nelson stated,

> One of my first and closest mentors is a white man … the Executive Director of the
>
> College Football Playoff. He was a leader of the NCAA Final Four and a connector and
>
> advisor for me for years. Another basketball great, the late great … the Father of the Final
>
> Four, was right there hand and hand with my first mentor… one of my best former
>
> Athletic Directors, who happened to be Black. He is another basketball great as well.

Smith talked about Black professionals in the business that helped push her. She even referred to

Lesnar as one of her mentors. Smith stated,

> My mentors started back to one of the best, my position coach while I was a student-
>
> athlete. She was my first and best mentor to date, we continue to be close now. The
>
> Athletic Director that hired me was not only a mentor but like a father figure to me. I
>
> look at others like Lesnar who recruited me when she was a coach, to now as she may not

know just how much of an impact, she had on me. She normalized being in the chair

(being an Athletic Director) for me, as she is now a colleague and was before as a Senior

Woman Administrator when we were both in the same conference. I honestly have many

mentors outside of the (sports) industry who are very important as I find it very important

to have ones (mentors) who are not in the business for a fresh prospective.

The love for fellow Athletic Directors and outside mentors continued with Owens,

I can name a lot of coaches and professors that helped mentor me to be the Athletic

Director that I am now but a few come to mind as a man who has needed it much more

than most. Nelson and two Big Ten Athletic Directors have been very helpful. I also have

two close Division I Black Athletic Directors that I explore the country with when I have

time. I also have to be honest but my family has been full of leaders, mentors, and

supporters of my passions.

The advice for young professionals who want to become a Power Five athletic director someday

given by the Athletic Directors was very powerful and focused on being true to yourself. Owens

stated,

Be able to laugh at our own expense, you will not be an AD (Athletic Director) from day

one so you will hear a lot of jokes. My mother once said when my wife and I were getting

serious, "start thinking about getting a real job". I told her like many others, you will be

fine, I know what I am doing. Do not forget about the importance of what you are doing,

we are still seeing firsts in 2022, I am the first Power Five Athletic Director of my race,

but I will not be the last … Oh yeah, be humble. Be comfortable being you.

Nelson continued with self-identity advice stating,

Be persistent – know your craft and be confident in your own skin – can't be afraid to

take advantage of the opportunity – don't get stuck thinking you should be at this place or here at this time – be flexible if your thought process is to get the chair. If you, are you, you will thrive as you.

Smith wants you to lean into who you are and those who offer help.

Take in as much as you can. People are willing to pour into you, but you cannot have this sense of entitlement. You should really listen and be a sponge. At times younger professionals do not understand that part of it, listen. I feel so fortunate to have been able to take in so much from others. Of course, even if it doesn't make sense for you at the moment – keep it, it will come back to you at the right time.

Listen, be yourself, be flexible, and be humble.

Peers – White DEI Top Professionals – A Thought, but not a continual one

One interesting topic was identifying top White, Power Five Athletic Directors who they felt exhibited leadership in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and why they felt they exhibit such qualities. This was a question that drew some thoughts and hesitation, but overall gave me an understanding. Here are some of the comments,

- More often than not – those Athletic Directors value it (DEI).

- But they struggle to put it into practice.

- This is a space built for white men by white men.

- When you don't fit in that box, it is harder for you – if you are not a male and not white.

- People are trying hard to attack the status quo, but we still have majority white men as Athletic Directors.

- Hesitant to give names of top White Athletic Directors who exhibit DEI leadership for fear of leaving out other who seem to be into DEI overall.

- After George Floyd died … everyone was talking about it, but now, not so much.

- That is a concern … people just don't know how to fix it anymore with NIL (Name, Image and Likeness), the continued arms race for funding, and their jobs being on the line.

The topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion is not one that is reserved for people of color especially in the realm of college athletics. The comments from the interviewees regarding the values and actions of the perceived White DEI professionals illuminated the complexity of addressing DEI concerns in a way that does not simply follow after any major, public social injustice but instead utilizing practices that create long term change that administrators of all backgrounds can maintain.

<center>Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) – Change but no Progress</center>

The average ranking of DEI in NCAA Power Five Athletics of the Athletic Director's interviewed in this study was a 2.5 with 0 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest. Nelson brought into perspective the recent heightened discussion of DEI, but for the wrong reasons and the recent return to less interest in the efforts,

I would rate it as a 3 that could easily become a 5. The George Floyd murders had it at a 5 at that time, but was that something sustainable, no. Now unfortunately, there are other things that have become just as important at this time that may require more of our attention right now. I would give it a 2 (in comparison to Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), Alston) as issues can become an issue depending on the times that we are in.

The understanding of DEI being a timing issue continues with Lesnar,

A 2.5 for now, we were or are very high on DEI when something goes wrong. Let's change that to a norm, we still talk about the first things, the first that, we are still saying

things as male vs female, when will we get to being sportspeople instead of
sportMANship. I really push to continue to make change, but I know it is an ongoing
dilemma.

Smith wants the changes made recently to become, progress,

A 2 … as it is disrespectful to say 1, because there is much more happening now than it
was before, but that's still sad because it is still not a lot. We had a light being shined on
athletics, helping to increase diversity – there is a bylaw in our conference to interview
diverse candidates and to attend conferences that promote the same. There are more
woman and POCs (people of color) getting opportunities, eventually this diversity will
expand to sexual orientation. One day I can see there being the first openly gay male AD
(Athletic Director).

A common theme is the change that they see/saw in the area of DEI but the lack of long-term
progress. Even with the topic of research that needs to be done, the Athletic Directors saw there
being a lot of research on the topic as a whole – Nelson stated it best,

Two years ago, it was a big issue – there is more action, schools taking action, in the next
few years we hope that those actions help to create a long-term impact.

In comparing DEI efforts from when their careers started to the efforts today and if they would
have done anything differently at the beginning of their career, the answers were focused on
progress. Smith stated,

DEI has not changed much, but some of this is situational, as there has been five Black
Athletic Directors ever in our conference and my school has hired three of them. In my
20+ years at this institution, we have been very progressive as at one point we had a
Black Athletic Director, Black Football coach and Black men's basketball coach. In our

conference we also see more student-athletes of color, more coaches of color, more female basketball coaches. I would still say that I would not rate us very high as I would have wanted to see more change in the 20 years in our conference and my career. At the beginning of my career, I wish I would have known – that getting to the table was not just a big prize. The Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) meetings were far more rigorous and intellectually stimulating then the AD meetings – those are some super smart women – but sadly the SWA room has its ceiling.

Nelson stated,

I do see lots of changes in DEI though we have a journey ahead of us to make sustainable change… Twenty years ago, I would pay much more attention, seek more mentorship, in all areas within athletics – eyes wide open – better myself each and every day. I would have read more books, becoming a better long-term learner.

At times looking at athletics from the outside world one may believe that there has been a lot of change made over the last few years. Administrators of color would beg to differ because though there has been a multitude of changes made, they prove to be mostly surface level. The change that the Administrators of color who participated in this capstone project would like to see is change that remains for the long-term.

Their Administration/Future – More about Emotional Intelligence vs. Technical Skills

Unlike technical fields, these Athletic Directors prefer the candidates who are the best fit, as emotionally intelligent sports professionals who are there to work for the student-athletes. Often, athletic administrators are praised for being professionals who can raise money and manage the business aspect of athletic departments, but the interviewees responses highlighted a preference for candidates who are in tune with the student-athlete population and their needs

over the technical skills to manage the business of athletics.

Nelson prefers,

> People who are passionate, experts in their craft, very confident and eager, who will
>
> speak up, willing to listen, and will be yourself – culture is big.

Owens states,

> Again, be humble, be great but understand you must be a teammate.

Lesnar states,

> Be a fighter for our student-athletes, on and off the playing surface. Attack the job with
>
> gratitude and not entitlement. Not everyone will fit certain situations, cultures, or
>
> departments.

Moore states,

> Know what you are getting into. A lot of people come into our field with dreams of
>
> getting paid a lot and enjoying games. Not for many of us, know your worth though.

Smith states,

> I value education because I invested in my own, but it is not at all a tipping point. You
>
> must match the core values of the institution and be deeply committed to student-athletes.
>
> I need someone who would have an understanding the HOW – how to appeal – not who
>
> is the smartest. Lastly, a strong sense of self, someone who is real and authentic.

All Athletic Directors believed that academics is the most important area of expertise in their

department. Though others gave a simple response of education when asked what was the most

important area of expertise, Smith elaborated more,

> Taking care of the kids is number one but let's be honest you next need to be able to pay
>
> for it (fundraising). You need the right people in the right seats and I have no tolerance

for people who are trying to undermine what I am doing as a whole. So, if you do not fit,

it's time to go. I did not understand that as a Senior Woman Administrator, but I do now

as I see what areas are very important in the department.

Everyone's vision also focused on academics and DEI. Smith stated,

We can't lose sight that we are educators FIRST and student-athletes need to see

themselves. They need to see Black and brown people in athletics, as seeing white just

isn't going to fly anymore for student-athletes.

Lesnar stated,

DEI is a major impact, not only in color but gender, nationality, among many other

demographics. Student-athletes will run the world, so why don't we focus on giving them

reasons to want to be the best they can be while on our campuses.

Owens stated,

The vision will change so much but if you have a core vision, educate, graduate, and

imagine with your student-athletes. They will bring back more to your university in so

many different colors of money including future student-athletes, donations, and long-

term memories.

Moore stated,

Unleash is our vision. We want to bring the passion in our student-athletes, our

community to be teammates with the institution, student-athletes, and be top 10 in

NCAA. We have to provide the resources, diversify our education and facilities, and

achieve together.

Nelson stated,

We will continue educating young people to help them better themselves for a lifetime to

come. We need to continue to push legislative circles like NIL, Alston, etc. At the root of it should still be about educating and giving them an opportunity to have fun on the field. In order to work towards better understanding how to diversify the future of athletic administration it is important to understand what skills are valued by those who currently hold the title of Athletic Director. The interviewees illuminated the importance of emotional intelligence over the more technical skills including business management and fundraising experience. Having this information can help guide those future leaders striving to take on these roles in athletic administration.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color, to becoming senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics, expertise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color. I adopted a mixed methods approach for the study. The research and exploration of literature provided a framework for understanding the research needs to help close the gap of the lack of Power Five Athletic Director and DEI research.

The participants included in this study were five Athletic Directors of color from Division I Power Five institutions. I conducted virtual (Zoom) interviews and phone calls with all of the participants and audio-taped and transcribed the interviews. This chapter will address the links between the demographics of the surveys, the demographics of past stories and the correlation to the current state of Power Five athletic administration. It will also address what the typical path is for Power Five Athletic Directors of color and the strategies needed as we move forward to continue to improve diversity within athletic administration. The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What are the typical demographics and path for the Power Five Athletic Directors of color?

2. What are some strategies that will help improve representation of minorities of color within senior administration?

This chapter will seek to answer the research questions using data from the 65 survey

demographic participants and five one-on-one interviewees. The four areas of exploration in the interviews are: Path, Peers/Mentorship, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Their Administration/Future.

Research Question #1

This section will discuss the typical demographics and path for the Power Five Athletic Directors of color. It will also discuss the current demographics of all Power Five Athletic Directors.

The Path by the Numbers

The typical Athletic Director of Color has the following (putting the top percentage of demographics for each category with the percentage listed):

- Race – Black (80%)

- Gender – Male (73.33%)

- Former Student-Athlete – 80%

- Former Student-Athlete Sports Participated – Football (38.46%) and Basketball (30.77%)

- University Title – Athletic Director (53.33%) and Vice President (33.33%)

- Areas of Expertise – Student Services (46.47%)

- Highest Form of Education – Masters (46.67%)

- Areas Worked Outside of Current Power Five Position Demographics – No specific dominating demographic

    o Professional Sports (22.73%)

    o Conference Office (18.18%)

    o Division I (Non-Football – AAA) (18.18%)

o Professor and Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) (13.64%)

o Note – HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) (0.00%)

Referencing the interviews with Athletic Directors of color, they all discussed the importance of Student Services and taking care of the student-athletes. This may prove why there is a higher percentage of Athletic Directors of Color being in higher positions on campus – they can offer more to the academic mission that most institutions put as priority number one. We know that those departments cannot run without money, but money is not priority number one. I think about being told to get into Development, as it was the ticket to the top and academics was not. At this moment, Development is not the ticker for Non-White and Black individuals aspiring to become Power Five Athletic Directors.

Research Question #2

The strategies that will help improve representation of minorities of color within senior administration can be categorized into three themes – Understanding and Filling the Gap, DEI – Change vs. Progress, and Using Your Outside Help.

Understanding and Filling the Gap

While the Athletic Directors that were interviewed spoke about connection, they made it clear that connection should be intentional, a good fit, and approached with humility. There has been a lot of change in athletics to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion, but there has not been true long-term progress. All Athletic Directors have a connection to sports through past experiences, family, competing, among other things. How does one get to become an Athletic Director? The statistics show that Black Athletic Directors are getting hired at a rate that matches the Black student-athlete population representing a welcomed change with 18% of Power Five Athletic Directors being Black and 19% of student-athletes identifying as Black. However, there

is a disparity in the other senior level positions like Assistant and Associate Athletic Directors with only 11% identifying as Black (Table 10). This disparity highlights a deficit in the potential pipeline for the next Black Athletic Directors. Growing this pipeline is one strategy to maintain the welcomed change of Black Athletic Directors being hired at a rate that matches Black student-athletes. Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors make up 20% of all Power Five Athletic Directors while 41/50% of student-athletes identify as Non-White (Table 2 and 10).

If the race demographics of all Power Five athletic administrators were to match the demographics of student-athletes who identify as international, American Indian/Alaskan Native, two or more races, or of unknown race it would account for that 18% surplus of White Athletic Directors. This is a gap that needs to be filled, but it presents limitation. For those international student-athletes or administrators who aspire to be Athletic Directors, there has been no opportunity for you and with the Verified International Stay Approval (VISA)and government regulations, it becomes even harder for those individuals to see a path to becoming a senior level administrator. There is a limitation of those percentage of student-athletes that identified as unknown race, as that percentage, yet small can be mighty in understanding the full scope of demographics. The NCAA needs to expand their DEI efforts to hire more individuals that identify as minorities of color including American Indian/Alaskan Native, or two or more races. The NCAA also should explore ways to sponsor and retain more international students, who would like an opportunity to remain in the U.S.

<div align="center">Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Change vs. Progress</div>

Another area that will helps to bring long-term stability and opportunities to help improve representation of minorities of color within senior administration is understanding that there has been a lot of great change within collegiate athletics, but there has not been a lot of progress.

Throughout my interviews, I heard words and phrases like, "let's change that to a norm" (in regard to DEI improvement), "there was a focus after a shooting … a jury verdict … a racist comment at a sporting event," but what about the everyday interaction.

We can see the efforts for change over time including, adding the position of SWA in 1981 "to ensure women were involved in the male-dominated administration of college athletics" (NCAA, 2020n, para. 2) and the Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee (ADID), added in the past four years, a position that plays a key role not only within the institution but also in the NCAA as the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion are included in the title (ADID). Those changes have helped women get into the second highest seat in athletics but not ascend to the top. When the Power Five was started in 2014-15, there were 4 (out of 67) female Athletic Directors representing (6% of the Athletic Directors), while there 47% of student-athletes being female (NCAA, 2020b). After the 2018-19 year, there again 4 (out of 63) female Athletic Directors representing (6% of the Athletic Directors), while there 47% of student-athletes being female (NCAA, 2020b). While there has been changed to add the SWA designation, there has not been progress toward having the leadership at those institutions mirror the student-athlete population.

Another example from Athletic Directors of color, was the failure to understand what it means to be Black and Brown as a leader. One Athletic Director said,

> The price of being Black and Brown as a leader – it's very exhausting, at times of controversy – they start putting you down – calling you the N word, the voicemails, and the emails (the subtle things that happen and remind you that this space was not created for you) again change does not mean progress. Change is a position, progress would be for them to not call me these names, leave me these voicemails, etc. for them to see me as

a qualified person who earned this role as leader.

A common theme, from speaking with the Athletic Directors of color, was that institutions act as if we/they have reached the goal by implementing change. The change being represented by the hiring of a bunch of Black and Brown individuals as a way to make change. The problem with this is these individuals are being left with being a part of "horrible environments", "diversifying their staffs but not including us," "putting us in our DEI role or bubble, without allowing growth", "paying us less but working us more," and "pushing us out of the door when we have an opinion." To take it one step further, one said, "while we are talking about DEI, how about a gay, trans, or non-traditional Athletic Director." Overall, while there has been change, the focus should be on progress – retention of these administrators, paying them equally, and treating them as they are equal, humans, no matter what it going on in the world.

<div align="center">Using Your Outside Help</div>

A topic that the Athletic Directors of color spoke about was understanding the need for outside help as you ascend to the Athletic Director chair. This outside help can come in four main areas that you can access and work outside of the Power Five, the network that is outside of athletics, the peer and family support, and your willingness to be a lifetime learner. The interviews and statistics shown that 78.47% of Power Five Athletic Directors worked in areas outside of the Power Five athletics. This means that athletic administrators should be diverse in their areas of expertise and experience. The track to Athletic Director used to be through coaching, but now a past coaching path only has produced just under 10% of current Athletic Directors. This means that more opportunities have come about for those who come from outside athletics, or have a law background, among other areas.

Everyone should have friends outside of their family and so do Athletic Directors.

Throughout the interviews, they talked about having mentors who are leaders in their own industries outside of athletics, volunteering and being a part of local, city and national organizations that serve a different and/or bigger cause. Each Athletic Director of color interviewed talked about their peers, even saying that they have been each other mentors, mentees, and close friends. Athletics is a field that is built out of teamwork – so your families, local mentoring and community building groups, doctors/therapist, and spiritual families, are just as important as your industry mentors, mentees, and coworkers, if not more. Being a lifetime learner is very important to the longevity of your career. If an Athletic Director from the early 2000s used the same philosophies that were popular back then to now, they would fall short of the diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, nor understand the Name, Image, and Likeness changes to now allow student-athletes to generate income. You have to continue to grow through trainings, education, reading, and mainly understanding the student-athlete population and needs for this current time period.

Strengths and Limitations

Upon starting the background research for this study in 2019, there was little to no literature regarding Power Five institutions and the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) space in collegiate athletics. This capstone project serves as one of the first to look into the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within collegiate athletics, a hot topic in the 2020s. This study does so while also highlighting the larger revenue generating conferences of the NCAA, the Power Five. This study will bring value to those young people of color already working in collegiate athletics and those who are interested in working in the field. It will also help those Athletic Directors and institution leaders who are looking to better understand how to continue to improve the structure of athletics and the makeup of their departments.

This study included a diverse sample set – including surveys from all Power Five Athletic Directors and one on one interviews with five individuals from a range of ages, racial and gender groups, levels of education, and experience. However, it is not without limitations with some being the timing of the study, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fresh and everchanging importance of DEI, a smaller sample size and an ever-changing field. Timing – I was not able to speak with several Athletic Directors of color due to timing. The flow of the school year presents challenges for all Athletic Directors and often times I had to catch them in the middle of one project and before beginning another. COVID-19 – My research started in 2019 but the interviews did not start until 2020/2021 and in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Athletic Directors did not have the mental space to place much importance on taking outside calls, Zoom meetings and responding to surveys. While emails were sent requesting interviews with all 15 Power Five Athletic Directors of color, only five responded and completed interviews within the timeframe allotted to complete this capstone project. The everchanging DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was important in 2019 but became increasingly important to the masses after the death of George Floyd in 2020. This changed the thought process of many Athletic Directors, with the importance of DEI either rising through the roof or being so low that it created discomfort for many Athletic Directors in discussing their opinions. A smaller sample size created another limitation. There are only 15 Athletic Directors of color in the Power Five so it took some time to get interviews with the 5 that were required. On top of that, I had to make sure that those five were a diverse set of individuals including non-Black, female, and from different conferences. Lastly, the ever-changing field of athletics. There has been much turnover within athletic administration over the years and two of the individuals that I planned on interviewing left their role before I was able to reach them. It proved to be challenging to get Athletic

Directors from all five of the Power Five conferences and I was only able to get a sample from four of the five conferences. Another limitation was while doing my research, I later realized that the demographics of international and multi-race not being a choice on the surveys that I compiled. While the NCAA demographics (NCAA, 2020b) listed, International and Two or More Races as an option, the Power Five Athletic Director statistics did not for 2019 (representing the 2018-19 academic year) nor 2020 (representing the 2019-20 academic year). These demographics should be further examined to provide an accurate representation of the full sample set/population.

Future Research

There are some gaps that were discovered during my research including the gap between international student-athletes becoming potential Athletic Directors. There should be research done through interviews with the current White Athletic Directors, how they see DEI, change vs. progress, and where athletics needs to go. There should be more research from the student-athlete point of view on what is missing, understanding the similar percentages of Black Athletic Director compared to the corresponding student-athlete population. There should also be interviews and opinions given from those top level senior athletic administrators, the Power Five conference commissioners, and even from the NCAA on the topics, past and present, and their future plans. Additionally, with athletic administrators now leaving collegiate athletics in large numbers – research is needed to understand why. Is it solely work/life balance, or does it include issues of pay, diversity. We need further data to examine what are the factors that will help future administrators best understand and survive.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the understanding that diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are

improving and changing, but there is a lot of progress still to be made. There has been a significant uptick of Black Power Five Athletic Directors being hired, but what can we do to improve those statistics with other Non-White races, the female gender, and what gaps are we missing? This study suggests at a minimum examining international and two or more race candidates and conducting further research. This study shows the current difference in paths for White (an expertise in development) and Non-White (an expertise in academics and on the field), but also shows that the Non-White Athletic Directors are rewarded with higher positions and titles. However, this study also highlighted the fact that Non-White Power Five Athletic Directors have obtained higher levels of education than their White counterparts potentially indicating a pattern toward higher education being required for candidates of color than White candidates for the same Power Five Athletic Director roles.

Future research may need to build around expanding the NCAA demographics to include sexual orientation and disability status along with international status in order to fully address the totality of the core areas of diversity. Additionally, future research should focus on why the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) designation has not produced more female Power Five Athletic Directors. While the designation of SWA may add prestige to the women who take on the title, it is merely a designation not a full-time title. Women with this designation are not able to be fully committed to the work of a SWA due to them often holding other administrative roles like head coach or Chief Financial Officer. This designation rather than full time title poses a threat to creating true gender equity and may be the reason that its creation has not produced more female Power Five Athletic Directors. Despite this choice, the SWA designation has still proven to be very pivotal and important for advancing gender equity in collegiate athletics as well as athletic administration. In my conversations with Athletic Directors who have been

former SWAs, I have consistently heard that they have felt more challenged and fulfilled in the SWA position than as Athletic Directors. Another common thread of conversation has been that these women have felt more impactful regarding improving student-athlete experiences as SWAs than as Athletic Directors.

It is also important to try to work towards understanding why future Athletic Directors are avoiding working at HBCU institutions. Anecdotally, administrators tend to avoid working at HBCUs due to the pattern of a decreased caliber of athletic departments that can be linked to decreased funding, poor student-athlete graduation rates, and poor media coverage. This pattern is the opposite of what is expected and typical of most Power Five institutions. Having personal career experiences at HBCUs, I have seen this pattern firsthand but I have also seen improvement over the past decade including more diverse administration including diversity of race, educational background, and previous experiences such as career history at Power Five institutions. Since the completion of this capstone project, there has also been instances of former HBCU Athletic Directors being hired for senior administration roles at Power Five institutions. The improvements that have occurred over the last decade highlight movement in a positive direction but the current path to becoming a Power Five Athletic Director still does not typically include connection to HBCUs.

Additionally, my findings may help guide the NCAA and University leadership to further examine the role of the student-athlete population on the hiring of athletic administrators and bring attention to not just hiring Athletic Directors of color, but also Assistant and Associate Athletic Directors of color to create a stronger pipeline to the senior administration roles. Increasing the hiring of Athletic Directors of color will likely in turn increase the hiring of people of color in the Assistant and Associate Athletic Directors. In the instance mentioned

above regarding the former HBCU Athletic Director gaining employment in Power Five senior

administration, a person of color working at the Power Five institution helped bring that former

Athletic Director to the institution. Creating and maintaining this pipeline will also likely

increase the potential of similarities in lived experiences in these senior administration roles that

will increase an understanding of how to respect and retain athletic administrators of color at all

levels to keep the pipeline intact. Building this pipeline will improve opportunities for people of

color to be considered for the position of Athletic Director at a Power Five institution.

For university leadership (presidents, chancellors, boards of trustees) and White athletic

administrators, this research should speak volumes to the progress that is necessary to support

individuals of color in university athletics including the student-athletes, athletic administrators,

and aspiring leaders. Leadership and White athletic administrators will need to be the leaders that

not only look to hire people of color, but to pay, train, and promote those individuals while

deploying an equity lens. Fostering equity will require them to have the resources and the

ongoing goal of supporting people of color by helping to foster a safe place for them. These

resources may include appropriate mental health services, the presence of affinity groups among

administrators, or even built-in leave or time off specifically for maintaining good mental health.

This goes beyond the superficial attempts of the past such as diversity, equity, and inclusion

slogans or statements being printed onto basketball jerseys, football helmets and other uniforms.

These surface level changes lasted a few months to a year. When Athletic Directors and

administrators of color are attacked physically, verbally, and on social media by fans, supporters,

and critics, university leadership and White athletic administrators should stand up for their co-

workers and peers. Many of the interviewees spoke about it being lonely in the chair (of Athletic

Director). They talked about having the support of the white peers in public spaces, in

interviews, but not on a one-on-one level. Some also discussed the opposite -- being praised and supported one on one but lacking that public support at times when allyship is needed the most.

At the beginning of this capstone journey, I worked as an athletic administrator within a non-Power Five Predominately White Institution (PWI). My ultimate goal was to become a great administrator at a senior leadership level, at a Power Five but not an Athletic Director because my view of the Athletic Director role required more time away than I desire. Most of my mentors were either current senior administrators or Athletic Directors who previously enjoyed their former roles as SWAs more than their current role as Athletic Director. I wanted to be able to be there for the staff and serve as a sport administrator, more than to be on the road. I was advised to work towards a career focus on Revenue Generation. My start in college athletics was in ticketing and I later moved into as I started in ticketing, later moving into Development with oversight over sports and External Operations (marketing, communications, etc.). Throughout this process a lot of my personal aspirations have changed. While I have a continued love for athletics, I realized working 60–70-hour weeks and getting paid as much as I did – would soon cause me to become sick (kidney disease and later transplant), high blood pressure, make rash long changing decisions, and to be stressed in ways that I did not need to be. I say all of this not to discourage anyone but to point out one key point that was overstated by the Athletic Directors of Color that I spoke to – which was to be yourself, but with focus on maintaining emotionally intelligence. Hearing the changes and sacrifices made of those Athletic Directors of Color, were timely, as they did not just make changes and sacrifices while in the chair (of Athletic Director) but throughout their career. They talked about the family struggles, the mental struggles, along with the struggle of working to remain the best in class to even obtain and maintain their roles. I remember going through my sickness and receiving a lot of support from my peers in Athletics,

during my time away from work.

This capstone did not further encourage me to become an Athletic Director, it actually did the opposite. All of the Athletic Directors of Color talked about wishing that they could have been more active in their communities, social and ethnic organizations, and of course travel (for fun) while being around their families. I went through a significant health crisis while working as an athletic administrator and upon my return to work it seemed like the expectations were even higher than prior to my medical leave. I was not able to receive the support and accommodations that would be commonplace working outside of the fast-paced environment of athletic administration. I have since changed careers as I continue on my journey toward improving my health and I have been able to work a hybrid work schedule, travel for fun, spend time with family, and most importantly take care of my personal and mental health. I love higher education and athletics, so while it may seem as though I am saying that I will not be returning, I beg to differ. I would return to a career in Athletics in a heartbeat for the right location, right pay, and most importantly to work with the right people. This capstone project has taught me to make sure that I am recruited, trained, paid, and promoted to be the best administrator that I can be if I decide to return to athletic administrator.

There is an obvious need to continue to hire, recruit, pay, and promote athletic administrators of color. The bigger issue though and the progress that needs to be made requires an understanding of how to retain and respect athletic administrators of color. Athletic Directors of color have different needs and the top-level university leadership alongside White athletic administrators need to acknowledge their privilege in taking the steps that it will take to even the playing field. People of color need to be hired but with an understanding of their needs and who they are. Inclusion requires everyone to be at the table with their identities, and privileges as

well, such as race and sexual orientation being welcomed, accepted, and understood. Maintaining and fostering this understanding bolsters equity of all those seated at the table. Leadership and White athletic administrators need to understand that they can treat people equally, but not all come to the table equally. An emphasis on equity and taking the necessary steps to address inequitable situations is required. A Black athletic administrator working for a Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) for the first time will need many more direct resources than their white counterpart. For example, a Black female administrator's interaction with social media will show her not only how the fans feel about her abilities but may also bring with it a higher level of stress due to potential aspersions using derogatory terms, comments made about her hair or her body type that her white counterpart, in particular, a white male counterpart, would not likely encounter. Society is cruel and in order to best support athletic administrators of color, White leaders at universities have to continue to educate themselves, recruit, train, pay, and promote administrators of color while also working to understand the needs of these administrators. This task will be proportionately higher when they are working at Power Five PWIs, with the attendant higher visibility, scrutiny and expectations, both internally and externally.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT AGREEMENT (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM)

My name is Ronald Reeves, and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Administration program in the Education Department at Southern Illinois University. Below is the consent form for the demographic data form:

PROJECT TITLE:
Underrepresented Journey: The Wall Hit by Administrators of Color on the Path to Becoming a Power Five Conference Athletic Director

INVESTIGATORS:
Principal Investigator: Ronald Reeves, M.S., Doctoral Student, Educational Administration, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color, to becoming senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics, enterprise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color.

PROCEDURES & SELECTION CRITERIA:
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic form and a 1-hour semi-structured research interview. This consent from is for the completion of a brief demographic data from. Participants should be individuals who work as Athletic Directors in Power Five institutions that are people of color (POC).

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:
There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. If you experience discomfort at any time, you may discontinue participation without penalty.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:
There is no expected benefit to you directly as a result of this research. However, it is possible that your responses will contribute to a greater understanding of the path that individuals of color that are interested in becoming Power Five institution's Athletic Directors need to take to be successful in their pursuit.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Electronic copies of this survey will be stored on the secure computer network at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Access to the data will be limited to the primary investigator of this study. Data will be de-identified and presented as a group. I will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will directly identify

you. Confidentiality will be maintained by the creation of a pseudonym of your choice. You will be asked to provide said pseudonym in the demographic data form.

CONTACT:
If you have questions about this research, please contact Ronald Reeves, ronald.reeves@siu.edu or Carmen Suarez, PhD, Department of Education, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Wham – Mail Code 4624, Carbondale, IL, 62901, 618-453-2415, carmen.suarez@siu.edu.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:
I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty. If there is question that you prefer not to answer, you can skip it and go to the following. If at any point you wish to withdraw from the demographic data form, you can skip all the question until the end of the survey. At the end there is the option to withdraw and then you submit your response. Any data submitted prior to withdrawal will be destroyed.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL STATEMENT:
This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Institutional Review Board. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the committee chairperson, Office of Research Compliance, SIUC, Carbondale, IL 62901. Phone (618) 453-4534. E-mail: siuhsc@siu.edu.

I understand that by checking the boxes below and by answering the questions that follow, I am agreeing to the statements above and am indicating my consent to participate.

By clicking NEXT below, I affirm that I am 19 years of age or older and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.
   o Next

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM

Thank you for your assistance with research for my capstone project. Please select the appropriate answer and/or write the appropriate answer in the space provided.

13.   What is your preferred pseudonym (i.e., fake name)? Please make sure that all or part of your legal name is NOT contained in the pseudonym you choose: _____

14.   Gender
    o   Female
    o   Male
    o   Self-identify

15.   If you chose to "self-identify", please complete the line below: _____

16.   Name of Institution: _____

17.   Formal Title: _____

18.   How many years have you been in your current role? _____

19.   Are you a former student-athlete?
    o   Yes
    o   No

20.   If you are a former student-athlete, what sport(s) did you participate in? _____

21.   Area(s) of expertise:
    o   Athletic Performance (Strength, Nutrition)
    o   Business
    o   Coaching
    o   Communications/IT
    o   Development
    o   Equipment
    o   Facilities/Event Management
    o   Revenue Generation (Marketing/Ticketing)
    o   Student Services (Academics/Compliance/Life Skills)
    o   Outside of Collegiate Athletics
    o   Other: _____

22.   Which of the following have you worked at/as:
    o   Division I (Football Championship Subdivision Schools (FCS))
    o   Division I (Non-Football – AAA)
    o   Division II
    o   Division III
    o   NAIA
    o   HBCU (Historically Black colleges and universities)
    o   Coaching

- o   Professor
- o   Professional Sports
- o   Conference Office
- o   Other: _____

23.   Highest Degree Completed & Major: _____

24.   Please provide your phone number and email so that the researcher may contact you to set up the interview.

Please indicate your availability for an interview during a typical week. Please remember that interviews may last up to 1 hour.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8:00 am (EST)							
9:00 am (EST)							
10:00 am (EST)							
11:00 am (EST)							
12:00 pm (EST)							
1:00 pm (EST)							
2:00 pm (EST)							
3:00 pm (EST)							
4:00 pm (EST)							
5:00 pm (EST)							
6:00 pm (EST)							

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

My name is Ronald Reeves, and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Administration program in the Education Department at Southern Illinois University. Below is the consent form for the demographic data form:

PROJECT TITLE:
Underrepresented Journey: The Wall Hit by Administrators of Color on the Path to Becoming a Power Five Conference Athletic Director

INVESTIGATORS:
Principal Investigator: Ronald Reeves, M.S., Doctoral Student, Educational Administration, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this study is to examine the path, for minorities of color, to becoming senior administrators within the Power Five conference institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This study will identify the similarities of demographics, enterprise, and background for current Power Five Athletic Directors of color.

PROCEDURES & SELECTION CRITERIA:
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a semi-structured research interview. The study should take no more than 1 hour to complete. Participants should be individuals who work as Athletic Directors in Power Five institutions that are people of color (POC).

AUDIO TAPE PROCEDURE:
The research interview will be recorded on the Zoom platform. You will be informed when recording begins and when recording ends. Throughout the recorded interview, I will use your preferred pseudonym and transcripts will be deidentified (e.g., names, dates, locations will be removed) to the furthest extent possible. However, we ask that you avoid using client, co-worker and other names belonging to individuals who are not participating in this study.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:
There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. If you experience discomfort at any time, you may discontinue participation without penalty. If at any point you wish to withdrawal from the study, all the data submitted prior will be destroyed. If the participant decides to withdrawal prior to the interview, they can do so during the completion of the demographic data form. If the participants wish to withdrawal after the completion of the demographic data form and prior the interview, they can email the researcher. If the participants wish to withdraw from the study during the interview, they can tell the researcher, and the recording will stop. During the interview, the participants have the option to skip any question that they do not feel comfortable answering.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:
There is no expected benefit to you directly as a result of this research. However, it is possible that your responses will contribute to a greater understanding of the path that individuals of color that are interested in becoming Power Five institutions Athletic Director need to take to be successful in their pursuit.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Electronic copies of this interview including the recordings and the transcriptions, will be stored on the secure computer network at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Access to the data will be limited to the primary investigator of this study. Data will be de-identified and presented as a group. I will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will directly identify you. If a participant does not want to be recorded, the researcher will be taking notes while interviewing. Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of the pseudonym you provided in the demographic data form.

CONTACT:
If you have questions about this research, please contact Ronald Reeves, ronald.reeves@siu.edu or Carmen Suarez, PhD, Department of Education, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Wham – Mail Code 4624, Carbondale, IL, 62901, 618-453-2415, carmen.suarez@siu.edu.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:
I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty. If there is question that you prefer not to answer, you can skip it and go to the following. If at any point you wish to withdraw from the demographic data form, you can skip all the question until the end of the survey. At the end there is the option to withdraw and then you submit your response. Any data submitted prior to withdrawal will be destroyed.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL STATEMENT:
This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Institutional Review Board. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the committee chairperson, Office of Research Compliance, SIUC, Carbondale, IL 62901. Phone (618) 453-4534. E-mail: siuhsc@siu.edu.

I understand that by answering the questions below I am agreeing to the statements above and am indicating my consent to participate.

"I agree_____/_____disagree to be recorded during the interview."

"I agree_____/_____disagree that Ronald Reeves may quote me directly using my chosen pseudonym."

Sign and date
_____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Path:

1. Please tell me what your job title is and your reporting line at the university, how long have you been working in your current position and how long have you been in collegiate athletic administration?
2. What was your initial motivation and/or reasoning for working to work in collegiate athletics?
3. What was your pathway, experience to get to the current Athletic Director position?
4. What organizations (i.e., NACDA, NCAA, Women in Sports Foundation) are you a part of and why?

Peers/Mentorship:

5. Who were your mentors and inspirations for working and/or participation in collegiate athletics?
6. What advice would you give to a young professional who wants to become a Power Five athletic director someday?
7. Name athletic directors not of color, who you feel exhibit leadership in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and why do you feel that exhibit such qualities?

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:

8. How would you rank diversity within collegiate athletics (scale of 1-5) and how can it be improved and what do you feel is going well?
9. What are some research areas, recommendations, considerations that you would recommend to help improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within collegiate athletic administration?
10. How would you compare equity, and inclusion from when you started your career to today? What would have done anything differently at the beginning of your career?

Their administration/Future:

11. What are you looking for in hiring a candidate for administration and/or coaching in terms of experience, expertise, education?
12. What area of expertise (i.e., development, academics, etc.) would you say is the most important to your department and why?
13. What is your vision for collegiate athletics in ten years?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to add in terms of the information that we have discussion regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion within collegiate athletics or beyond?

APPENDIX E

IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

SIU Southern Illinois University
CARBONDALE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD   siuhsc@siu.edu
OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE   618/453-4534
WOODY HALL - MAIL CODE 4344   FAX 618/453/4573
900 SOUTH NORMAL AVENUE
CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS 62901

To: Ronald Reeves
From: M. Daniel Becque
           Chair, Institutional Review Board
Date: February 10, 2022
Title: Underrepresented Journey: The Wall Hit by Administrators of Color on the Path
           to Becoming a Power Five Conference Athletic Director

Protocol Number: 22020
The above referenced study has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Institutional Review
Board under an expedited category.

This approval by Southern Illinois University IRB on **February 10, 2022,** is considered active.
The following IRB policies apply to protocols approved in expedited categories:

- Changes or modifications to the protocol, regardless of how minor, must be submitted for
  IRB review and approval prior to implementation, except to eliminate immediate hazard
  to subjects.
- Promptly report adverse events, off- protocol activities, or other noncompliance to the
  IRB within 5 business days. Contact the IRB for further guidance.
- The IRB will request an annual update each year the project remains active. Update
  forms must be received by the due date provided to maintain active status.
- The Principal Investigator is **responsible for reporting study closure to the IRB** in a
  timely manner. Please contact the IRB for a study closeout form when research activities
  are complete. A study is considered complete when you are no longer enrolling new
  participants, collecting or analyzing data.
- As always, you are responsible for compliance with Southern Illinois University
  Carbondale policies and procedures. If you have any questions or require further
  information, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office via email
  siuhsc@siu.edu or via phone at 618-453-4530.

Best wishes for a successful study.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the USDHHS Office of Human Research
Protection. The Assurance number is 00005334.

MDB:sk
Cc: Carmen Suarez

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Ronald D. Reeves
mrronreeves@gmail.com

University of Detroit Mercy
Bachelor of Arts, Communications – Journalism, 2007

Ithaca College
Master of Science, Sport Management, 2008

Capstone Project Title:
　　Underrepresented Journey: The Wall Hit by Administrators of Color on The Path to Becoming a Power Five Conference Athletic Director

Major Professor: Dr. Carmen Suarez