

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS IN NCAA DIVISION III
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department
of Exercise and Sport Science.

Chapel Hill
2013

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ABSTRACT

**BRIAN C. DAY: Athletic Director Leadership and Success in NCAA Division III
Athletic Departments
(Under the direction of Dr. Coyte Cooper)**

A need has been identified to examine leader behaviors that have a positive influence on the relationships between athletic directors and their subordinates, as well as behaviors that influence the health and effectiveness of the organization (Branch, 1990; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). The purpose of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Division III athletic director leadership, examine the relationship leadership has on success, and determine the leadership behaviors that are most valued. The results conclude Division III athletic directors are generally strong with interpersonal skills, yet lacking in creativity and innovation. No relationship exists between perceived leadership and success on the field, reinforcing the student-athlete experience and integration core values of Division III athletics. Finally, the study determined assistant athletic directors and head coaches value Division III athletic directors who build relationships, are visionary, fair, motivational, driven, and innovative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Coyte Cooper, and my committee members, Barbara Osborne and Dr. Greg Sullivan, who have each provided different insights and perspectives that have helped shape this paper. Thank you to Abbey, Ernie, Greg, Logan, Samantha, Mary Rob, Laniesa, DanDan and Brandon for their laughter, inspiration, and friendship. Most importantly, thank you to my parents, my sisters, and my beautiful Alexanna for their unconditional love and support.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Duderstadt (2000) described the role of an athletic director as the individual charged with the authority of hiring and firing coaches, managing the business operations of the athletic department, managing the welfare of the student-athletes and upholding the integrity of the university's athletic programs. Although this job description fits athletic directors at all three divisions, the Division III athletic director position is a unique one in comparison to its Division I and II counterparts. It is important to analyze the Division III athletic director position, its role, and the impact leadership from the athletic director's chair can have on an athletic department.

Armstrong (1993) suggested Division III athletic directors are often not prepared to be leaders administratively, having been chosen for the post solely because of coaching success or tenure at the institution. Although Armstrong's claim was made 20 years ago, current research shows the suggestion might still be accurate. While 79 percent of Division III athletic directors are former college coaches, this is the case for only 66 percent of Division II athletic directors and 42 percent of Division I athletic directors (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Leading a team of 18 to 22 year-olds as a coach is different than leading a group of peers with varying priorities and interests as the athletic director, suggesting the need to examine leadership behaviors that are effective administratively.

Although very little research and even less media attention is focused on Division III athletics, Division III is the largest NCAA membership level in terms of both number

of institutions (442) and student-athlete participation (172,000). Article 1.3.1 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Constitution states "a basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body." This most basic purpose most closely aligns with the Division III model, where the sole emphasis is on the student-athlete experience, coaches serve as educators, and student-athletes are integrated with the general student body. Although Division III athletic directors are not negotiating multi-million dollar media contracts, hiring high-profile coaches, or overseeing teams filled with future professional athletes, they have a tremendous opportunity to develop an athletic program that positively impacts the lives of student-athletes, coaches, supporters, and administrative officials.

In order to evaluate the leadership of athletic directors, this study will view leadership through the lens of the charismatic leadership theory, developed by Conger and Kanungo (1998). Conger and Kanungo frame charismatic leadership as a three-stage process – an evaluation of the organization's environment, the development of strategic vision and goals, and the provision of means to realize the vision and achieve the goals. Steyrer, Schiffinger, and Lang (2008) defined charismatic leadership as the ability to inspire, motivate and successfully demand high performance outcomes from others, on the basis of firmly held core values. Although not frequently used in college athletics research, charismatic leadership theory has been shown in the business literature to lead to increased organizational performance, internal cohesion, value congruence, and external support of organizations (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Flynn & Staw, 2004; Waldman, Javidan & Varella, 2004). As budgets get tighter and expenses increase,

athletic directors, especially at the Division III level, need to constantly strive to increase organizational performance and external support. In this way, charismatic leadership theory will provide a useful tool to evaluate Division III athletic director leadership.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify leadership strengths and weaknesses of Division III athletic directors, examine the relationship leadership has on athletic success, and determine the leadership behaviors and characteristics that are most valued by head coaches and assistant athletic directors.

Research Questions

[RQ1] To what degree do Division III athletic directors exhibit charismatic leadership behaviors?

[RQ2] Is there a relationship between perceived charismatic leadership behaviors of athletic directors and broad-based athletic success?

[RQ3] What leadership behaviors and characteristics of athletic directors do athletic administrators and head coaches identify as most valuable to the broad-based athletic success of the athletic department?

Significance of the Study

Student-athletes, coaches and administrators are competitors who strive to be the best. It is why they spend countless hours training, practicing, watching film, recruiting, fundraising and improving their trade. It is in this pursuit of excellence where lifelong lessons of hard work, sacrifice, dedication, teamwork and overcoming adversity are learned. The role of athletic administrators at the Division III level is to contribute to and enhance the education and experience of the student-athlete. This study is an attempt to

determine ways for athletic directors to improve their level of service to their constituencies and the level of success of their teams on the field. While not the only measure of success of an intercollegiate athletic program, on-field results are important and, to some degree, an aim of every athletic department.

As Branch (1990) indicated, it is important to study those leader behaviors that could have a positive influence on the relationships athletic directors have with their subordinates and the overall effectiveness of the department. This study will attempt to provide lessons for athletic department leadership and shed light on behaviors that might translate into positive relationships and successful athletic departments. This study will also highlight the leadership behaviors and characteristics most valuable to an athletic department and provide a guide to university officials to utilize when making important personnel decisions.

Definition of Terms

National Collegiate Athletic Association: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a voluntary membership organization of colleges and universities that participate in intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA develops and maintains rules and regulations governing the athletic programs and activities of its member institutions.

NCAA Division III: The classification of NCAA membership in which member colleges and universities choose not to offer athletically-related financial aid to student-athletes.

Directors' Cup: A program sponsored by the National Association for Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) that honors institutions maintaining a broad-based athletics program, achieving success in many sports, both men's and women's. Institutions earn points based on finishes in NCAA Championship events.

Athletic Director: The individual appointed to manage the intercollegiate athletics program at an institution.

Assistant Athletic Director: Any individual who holds an administrative position within the intercollegiate athletics programs and reports to the institution's Athletic Director.

Head Coach: The individual responsible for one or more sport programs at an institution.

Assumptions

- Respondents surveyed are truthful and accurate with their survey responses.
- The instruments used to conduct research are valid and reliable.
- Web sites of all Division III institutions provide accurate email addresses of head coaches and athletic administrators.

Delimitations

- This study is only representative of Division III institutions and cannot be generalized to Division I or Division II institutions.
- This study will only seek responses from head coaches and assistant athletic directors at Division III institutions who report to the athletic director.
- This study did not seek responses from institutions with interim athletic directors or institutions with a co-athletic director situation.
- The survey was not sent to head coaches who served a dual role as the institution's athletic director.

Limitations

- Due to the voluntary nature of the survey, there may be a non-response bias.
- Head coaches and assistant athletic directors may not feel comfortable evaluating their athletic director.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Charismatic Leadership Theory

In his essay *Politics as a Vocation* published in 1919 during a revolution in his home country, German sociologist Max Weber was the first to introduce the term charisma to the leadership literature (DiTomaso, 1993). Weber described three types of leadership in political organizations: traditional, based largely on the patriarchal system; rational-legal, based on the law; and charisma, based on heroism or other leadership qualities of an individual. For Weber, charismatic leadership was the revolutionary mechanism by which an old order was challenged and replaced by a new order. As the research developed, the more contemporary theories of charismatic leadership describe a management style rather than a social movement (DiTomaso, 1993).

Throughout the following decades, leadership research was mainly concerned with the relationships between the leader and the follower (House & Howell, 1992). In the 1970s, researchers began to not only look at leader-follower relationships, but also the impact the leader has on the organization as an entity. Robert House (1977) inspired an interest again in examining charismatic leadership in his work titled *A 1976 Theory of Charismatic Leadership*. House argued that charismatic leaders have a strong conviction in their own beliefs and ideals, a need to influence others, high self-confidence, and the ability to motivate high levels of task accomplishment through emotionally appealing goals and the arousal of followers' own needs for achievement, affiliation and power.

Unlike the traditional leadership theories which emphasized rational processes, the new theories of charismatic leadership emphasized emotions and values (Yukl, 1999). Charismatic leadership emphasizes symbolic leader behavior, visionary and inspirational ability, an appeal to ideological values, and high expectations for follower self-sacrifice and performance (House & Howell, 1992). In this way, charismatic leadership is seen as giving meaning to followers by infusing work and organizations with moral purpose and commitment (Yukl, 1999; House & Howell, 1992).

In the mid-1980s, Jay Conger and Rabindra Kanungo (1998) developed a model of charismatic leadership theory, which will be used as the theoretical lens in this paper. Conger and Kanungo define leadership as a process that involves moving organizational members towards some existing present state towards a future state. In other words, leadership is a movement away from the status quo toward the achievement of long-term goals. The assumptions in the Conger & Kanungo leadership theory are that a leader's charismatic role is considered an observable behavior process that can be analyzed in terms of a formal model, and charismatic leadership is an attribution based on follower's perceptions of their leader's behavior.

The model Conger and Kanungo (1998) developed is a non-linear, three-stage process. In Stage 1, the leader evaluates the status quo, assessing organizational resources, environmental constraints and follower needs. A charismatic leader is very critical of the status quo and actively searches out its existing and potential shortcomings. Charismatic leaders seek radical reforms to achieve their idealized goals for the organization and to transform their followers. A realistic evaluation of environmental

constraints and organizational resources needed to bring about change is also conducted in Stage 1 (Conger & Kanungo, 1998).

After the evaluation in Stage 1, the charismatic leader formulates and articulates the organization's goals in Stage 2 (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). The charismatic leader takes the information gathered in Stage 1 and formulates a strategic vision that is highly discrepant of the status quo. An inspirational vision represents an embodiment of a perspective shared by followers in an idealized form. Charismatic leaders use vision to heighten the meaningfulness of the organization's goals by promoting a strong sense of collective identity and encouraging followers to rise above their own self-interests (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993).

Finally, the charismatic leader provides the means to achieve the vision in Stage 3 by conveying goals, building follower trust and motivating the followers. The charismatic leader gains credibility in communicating the vision by projecting an image of being likeable, trustworthy and knowledgeable (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Management practices to be used for success in Stage 3 include being innovative, taking risks, and using unconventional behavior to set a personal example and empower followers (Conger & Kanungo, 1998).

The Conger and Kanungo charismatic leadership model hypothesizes that charismatic leadership leads to high internal organization cohesion, low internal conflict, high value congruence and high consensus among the group. A 2000 study by Conger, Kanungo and Menon revealed a strong relationship between charismatic leadership, follower reverence, follower trust and follower satisfaction. The follower's sense of collective identity and perceived group task performance are also affected by charismatic

leadership (Conger, Kanungo & Menon, 2000). Similarly, Judge and Mueller (2012) posited that the strength of the relationship between leadership and employee job attitudes suggests that leader behaviors such as showing concern and respect for followers, looking out for their welfare, and expressing appreciation and support are nearly synonymous with the extent to which followers are satisfied with their leaders.

It is important to note that a charismatic leader, in this case, should not solely be considered one with high self-confidence, charm, and the gift for captivating public speech. In an analysis of charismatic leadership theory and Mahatma Gandhi, Bligh and Robinson (2010) found that, although the Indian leader was far from a dramatic or polished orator, results support the importance of content in Gandhi's communications in creating a dramatic vision that resonated with his followers. As Klein and House (1995) eloquently stated, charisma resides not in a leader or a follower, but in a relationship between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment.

Self-Concept Charismatic Leadership Model

Building off the early work of Robert House (1977) and the Conger and Kanungo model of charismatic leadership, Shamir, House and Arthur (1993) developed a self-concept theory, proposing that charismatic leaders tie the self-concept of their followers to the goals and collective experiences associated with the mission. This model suggests leaders motivate followers by activating two behaviors: role modeling and frame alignment (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). True charismatic leaders are representative characters for their organizations, and the interests, values and beliefs of the followers are congruent with the leader's activities, goals and ideology. By using these behaviors,

charismatic leaders create personal commitment, instill a faith in the future, increase the intrinsic value of goal accomplishment and expectancies, and express confidence in their followers' ability to meet high expectations (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). As Murphy and Ensher (2008) suggested, leaders cannot be experts in every subject matter, but charismatic leaders are experts in encouraging followers to reach their full potential. This theory adds to the Conger and Kanungo model by focusing more on the influence process of the leader on a group of followers.

Ideal Conditions for Charismatic Leadership

Several researchers have described organizational situations and conditions where charismatic leadership is most effective. Charismatic leadership has been identified as non-linear and transitory, meaning charisma can be gained or lost as conditions change (Bryman, 1992; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Much of the research, even dating back to Weber's first look at charisma in 1919, indicates charismatic leadership is most likely to emerge under conditions of turbulence and crisis rather than under conditions of stability and continuity (Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 1999). In a study of 48 Fortune 500 firms, Waldman, Ramirez, House and Puranam (2001) found that charisma predicted performance under conditions of uncertainty, but not under conditions of certainty. Shamir and Howell (1999), however, posit that a crisis is not necessary, citing former General Electric Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jack Welch as an example of a non-crisis related charismatic leader who restructured and reoriented the corporation toward a vision of speed, simplicity and self-confidence.

Both Shamir and Howell (1999) and Yukl (1999) claim that when organizations have dynamic and organic structures, have challenging, complex or unique tasks with

ideological aspects, and when extrinsic rewards are not easily linked to goal attainment, they are ripe for charismatic leadership. Yukl (1999) warns that leaders become less effective and should be removed if their expertise is no longer unique, their unconventional behavior becomes dysfunctional or they lack the position power to ensure their survival. These organizational elements are often seen in college athletic departments, which have the unique task of balancing the educational, athletic and social goals of their student-athletes with financial and professional development goals of the department and staff members.

Some researchers have recognized the potential harmful effects of charismatic leadership, citing figures in history such as Adolf Hitler and Jim Jones. Musser (1987) suggested classifying charismatic leadership as positive or negative depending on the leader's orientation towards satisfying their own needs or satisfying the needs of their followers. House and Howell (1992) took this notion a step further, using the terms socialized charisma and personalized charisma to describe the differences.

Socialized charismatic leadership is described as collectively-oriented, egalitarian, non-exploitative, where the leader's high need for power is balanced with high activity inhibition, low authoritarianism, high self-esteem and an internal locus of control (House & Howell, 1992). Choi (2006) proposed socialized charismatic leadership is a combination of three behavior components: envisioning, empathy, and empowerment. Socialized charismatic leaders are supportive, sensitive, nurturing and considerate, rather than aggressive, demanding, dominant, and critical (House & Howell, 1992). Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela have been presented as examples of this type of leadership, where leaders operate with an altruistic intent, endeavor to cultivate values and abstain

from vices to build inner strength (Bligh & Robinson, 2010; House & Howell, 1992; Yukl, 2006).

On the other hand, personalized charismatic leadership is self-aggrandizing, non-egalitarian and exploitative, where the leader's need for power is coupled with low activity inhibition, high authoritarianism, low self-esteem, and high narcissism with an external locus of control (House & Howell, 1992). In a study of Enron's demise, Tourish and Vatcha (2005) blamed personalized charismatic leadership as the main cause of the corporation's downfall. Tourish and Vatcha characterized Enron as a cult, a group that exhibited the elimination of dissent, a promotion of a homogenous group mentality, and an accumulation of power at the center with leaders employing unethical and manipulative techniques of persuasion and control. The ethical nature of charismatic leadership manifests itself in the leader's motives, influence strategies and character formation (House & Howell, 1992).

Charismatic Leadership Theory Outcomes

Charismatic leadership theory has been used in the last few decades to analyze business leaders, political figures and social organizations. In a study of United States Presidents, House, Spangler and Woycke (1991) found that charisma does make a difference in regards to effectiveness. The most common charismatic leadership qualities found among these men were self-confidence, strong ideological conviction, high expectations of followers and great confidence in their subordinates. Jacobson and House (2001) chose six leaders, John F. Kennedy, Theodor Herzl, Charles Orde Wingate, Lee Iacocca, Adolf Hitler and Mary Baker Eddy, and performed 16 tests of empirical

manifestations. The pair found that the trends predicted in the model of charismatic leadership were all evident in these six leaders.

Several studies of the CEOs of small, medium and Fortune 500 companies have also found a strong link between performance and charismatic leadership. In a study of 69 firms from the United States and Canada, Waldman, Javidan and Varella (2004) found that the connection between top executives and firm outcomes depend to a large extent on the executives' charismatic leadership. De Hoogh et. al (2005) found that charismatic leadership was strongly related to subordinates' positive work attitudes. In a study of charismatic leadership training, trainees performed better on a declarative knowledge test, exhibited more charismatic behaviors than those in other conditions, and followers performed better on given tasks (Towler, 2003).

Perhaps most significantly for college athletic administrators, charismatic leadership has proven to influence external support for organizations (Flynn & Staw, 2004). Flynn and Staw found that the stock of companies headed by charismatic leaders appreciated more than the stock of comparable companies. Appeals from a charismatic leader led to increased investment in the firm and a greater attractiveness to outside investors. The leader's influence was also greater, according to the research, when the prospects for an organizational turnaround were more difficult.

Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008), in a study of 78 European companies, looked at leadership behavior, organizational commitment and organizational performance. Steyrer et al. assessed company performance by changes in sales volume, return on investment, and earning during the previous four years. The researchers found evidence that charismatic leadership is the most effective type of leadership at integrating

organizational values, goals and norms into employees' self-concepts and that organizational commitment positively correlated with economic measures of organization performance (Steyrer et al., 2008).

Division III Athletics

Due to its unique nature, it is necessary to examine the history, background, and philosophy of the Division III level to fully understand the Division III athletic director position. Founded in 1906 with 38 original members, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was created to establish rules that would minimize injuries to football players, 18 of whom had been killed while playing the game the year prior (Staudohar & Zepel, 2004). In the years to come, college athletics became widely popular in American universities and the NCAA's membership grew to over 100 members only 15 years later (Staudohar & Zepel, 2004). With this growth in membership, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a level playing field and competitive balance between small-budget schools and those with major athletics programs (Crowley, 2006).

Although conversations about a split in membership occurred during the next few decades, it wasn't until 1957 that the NCAA began championships for the College Division, comprised of the smaller-budget schools (Crowley, 2006). The first two championships were held in basketball and cross country, with more sports adding championships in the College Division in the 1960s. In 1968, the NCAA asked member schools to identify their programs as either in the College or University division, with the expectation that members of each would compete mainly against each other. Although there was now a split in the membership, meetings and legislation still occurred together (Crowley, 2006).

The NCAA created a Special Committee on Reorganization in 1971, which recommended the two divisions be distinct entities for legislative purposes (Crowley, 2006). Although this proposal was voted down, there was now more diversity in membership than the two divisions could reasonably handle. The NCAA determined the issue was still one to be examined and ultimately held a Special Convention in 1973, when it agreed upon the three-division format that is in place today. All under the auspices of the NCAA, each division was empowered to establish its own membership criteria and governance structure, and guarantees were provided for championships at all levels. Each school was permitted to select which division it would seek membership, with 237 schools choosing Division I, 194 selecting Division II and 233 deciding to be a member of Division III (Crowley, 2006).

Currently, Division III is the largest division of the NCAA in terms of number of member institutions and number of student-athletes participating (NCAA, 2012d). There are 442 member schools classified as Division III with more than 172,000 student-athletes participating, 40 percent of NCAA student-athletes overall (NCAA, 2012d). Division I is comprised of 340 institutions, while 290 compete at the Division II level (NCAA, 2012d). Eighty-one percent of Division III schools are private institutions, and enrollment ranges from 329 on the low end to over 22,000 on the high end, with an average enrollment of 2,625 (NCAA, 2012d). The division continues to grow, prompting conversations about restructuring or splitting the division to better meet member needs. Since 1990, 120 new members have joined Division III, two-thirds of which came from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) (NCAA, 2012d). Sixty more schools are projected to join the division by 2020, which would bring the total number of

Division III schools to 500 (NCAA, 2012d). Although this growth and increasing diversity of its member schools has caused some concern, over 80 percent of Division III respondents to a 2008 NCAA survey support the current structure of Division III.

While less than five percent of students play sports at most Division I institutions, more than one in five participate at Division III schools (Malekoff, 2004). Although athletes on Division III campuses aren't as high-profile as their Division I counterparts, the student-athlete subset of campus culture is greater due to the number of students participating in athletics (Sperber, 2001). Reports have showed that Division III student-athletes are more involved in extracurricular activities, interact more with professors and demonstrate significant absorption in academic activities (Sather, 2004). Faculty who work at Division III institutions are also more satisfied with athletics than those faculty who work at Division I or Division II (Sanger, 2011). According to a 2008 NCAA survey, 92 percent of Division III campus leaders believe there is appropriate balance between academics and athletics on their campus.

The Division III Philosophy

The most recognizable difference separating Division III from the other two divisions of NCAA competition is the absence of athletic scholarships. According to Bylaw 20.11 of the NCAA Division III Manual, Division III institutions “shall not award financial aid to any student on the basis of athletics leadership, ability, participation, or performance.” For many, this is where the knowledge of Division III athletics begins and ends. However, the Division III Philosophy Statement in the NCAA Manual, which is presented below in its entirety, details a very distinct vision for Division III athletics, one that most closely aligns with the NCAA's stated goals and values.

Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, and in which coaches play a significant role as educators. They also seek to establish and maintain an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among their student-athletes and athletic staff (NCAA, 2012d).

The Philosophy Statement is followed by 15 principles Division III institutions strive towards in order to fulfill the Division III philosophy. Two major themes emerge among these principles, including a focus on the student-athlete experience and an integration of student-athletes with the general student body.

One principle reads that Division III institutions “place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators and place greater emphasis on the internal constituency than on the general public and its entertainment needs.” One way this is accomplished is by “giving primary emphasis to regional in-season competition and conference championships.” In comparison, Division I institutions, according to Bylaw 20.9 of the NCAA Division I Manual, “recognize the dual objective in its athletics program of serving both the university or college community and the general public” and place special importance on “one or both of the traditional spectator-oriented, income-producing sports of football and basketball.” This distinction makes it clear that the sole focus of Division III athletics is the student-athlete, while athletic departments from the other NCAA divisions have multiple objectives.

The second major theme of the Division III Philosophy Statement is the integration of student-athletes with the general student body, words that are mentioned throughout the principle statements. Division III institutions are called to ensure student-athletes are not treated any differently from other members of the general student body and have established consistent admissions and academic performance standards with those of the general student body. Schools also assure “that programs support the institution’s educational mission by financing, staffing and controlling the programs through the same general procedures as other departments of the institution.” Additionally, one principle states “the administration of an institution’s athletic program should be integrated into the campus culture and educational mission” (NCAA, 2012d).

The NCAA’s values and fundamental policy most closely align with the Division III Philosophy Statement. Article 1.3.1 of the NCAA’s Constitution states that “a basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body.” The two major themes of the Division III Philosophy Statement, a focus on the student-athlete experience and the integration of student-athletes with the general student body, are stated explicitly in the NCAA’s basic purpose of intercollegiate athletics.

In 2010, the NCAA developed a Division III identity tool kit centered around the theme “Discover, Develop, Dedicate” to educate different constituencies about Division III athletics and promote its unique nature. The tool kit identifies six main values for Division III athletics: proportion, comprehensive learning, passion, responsibility, sportsmanship and citizenship. In order to differentiate from the other two divisions of the NCAA, a positioning statement was crafted:

Follow your passions and discover your potential. The college experience is a time of learning and growth, a chance to follow passions and develop potential. For student-athletes in Division III, this happens most importantly in the classroom through earning an academic degree. The Division III experience provides for passionate participation in a competitive athletics environment, in which student-athletes push themselves to excellence and build upon their academic success with new challenges and life skills. Student-athletes are encouraged to pursue the full spectrum of opportunities available during their time in college. In this way, Division III provides an integrated environment for student-athletes to take responsibility for their own paths, follow their passions and find their potential through a comprehensive educational experience (NCAA, 2010d).

Calls for Division III Reform

Although small college athletic programs are often considered to function in an environment that protects the values of higher education and the best interests of student-athletes, Division III athletics are not always “Pure and Simple”, the title of a 1994 Sports Illustrated article by Douglas Looney about Division III athletics and the New England Small College Athletic Conference. Even though Division III athletic programs operate on a much smaller scale with leaner budgets and less visible media exposure and commercialization, some of the same concerns and problems that occur in the larger divisions have been noted in Division III (Sanger, 2011). Shulman and Bowen first brought academic and athletic issues within the small colleges to light in their seminal work, *The Game of Life* (2001). One of the recurring themes in their research is Division

III schools tend to follow practices and patterns established in the other levels of the NCAA, albeit with a lag (Shulman & Bowen, 2001).

This led the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to create an initiative called the College Sports Project in 2003 to draw attention to the need for reform in Division III athletics (Malekoff, 2004). The group's goal is to more closely align Division III athletics programs with educational values and institutional missions. The project identified several factors for the primary causes of the growing divide between Division III athletics and academics, including the increased amount of time spent on sports, increased pressure on coaches to win, increased intensity and specialization in sports at the precollegiate level, and a greater emphasis on Division III national championships . Although the group recognizes the value in striving to be successful, the College Sports Project developed a reform agenda based on core principles and practices and concluded the dual initiatives of representativeness and integration would lead to positive outcomes (Malekoff, 2004).

The representativeness goal calls for student-athletes to resemble classmates from the standpoint of academic preparation, academic outcomes and participation in the campus community (Malekoff, 2004). The group's latest findings in 2009, after studying over 83,000 Division III student-athlete GPAs, reported that students who were recruited to play a sport at a Division III school had lower GPAs compared to both non-recruited athletes and non-athletes (Rampell, 2009). This gap is more evident at the most highly-selective colleges. The report also finds that Division III athletes are more likely to choose a social science major and less likely to choose humanities majors when compared to non-athletes. The integration initiative encourages athletic, academic and

student life dimensions to work jointly in attempting to align athletic programs with educational missions (Malekoff, 2004).

About the Division III Athletic Director Position

Duderstadt (2000) described the role of an athletic director as the individual charged with the authority of hiring and firing coaches, managing the business operations of the athletic department, managing the welfare of the student-athletes and upholding the integrity of the university's athletic programs. Although this job description fits athletic directors at all three divisions, the Division III athletic director position is a unique one in comparison to its Division I and II counterparts. It is important to analyze the Division III athletic director position, its role, and the impact leadership can have on the athletic department.

Center (2011) recently painted a profile picture of Division III athletic directors: 93 percent are white, 61 percent are male, 75 percent have earned a master's degree and 79 percent have experience as a college coach. Of note, out of the three divisions, there is a larger percentage of female athletic directors in Division III than any other division (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Thirty-eight percent of Division III athletic directors are female, compared to 20 percent at the Division II level and 10 percent at Division I. Division III institutions are more likely than Division II and I schools to hire a former college coach for the athletic director position (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Armstrong (1993) suggested the possibility that many Division III athletic directors are not prepared to be a leader administratively, having been chosen for the position only for their coaching record or longevity. While 79 percent of Division III athletic directors are

former college coaches, this is the case for only 66 percent of Division II athletic directors and 42 percent of Division I athletic directors (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011).

Division III athletic directors are often asked to do more with less. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2010), there are only 2.84 assistant athletic directors per Division III institution, many of whom also coach, forcing the Division III athletic director to wear a number of different hats. Division III athletic directors report they are most heavily involved in department finances, internal policy-making, sport operations and campus relations (Center, 2011). The most rewarding aspects of the job, as identified by Division III athletic directors, are a high level of control and autonomy, relationships with students, coaches and staff, a variety of responsibility and challenges, and witnessing the success of students, teams and coaches (Center, 2011; Robinson, Peterson, Tedrick & Carpenter, 2003).

The position is not without major challenges, with limited resources, financial concerns, and personnel issues at the top of the list (Center, 2011). In addition, Engbers (2010) cited keeping programs competitive, time management, risk management, reaching a balance between academics and athletics, and dealing with parents of athletes as challenges of the Division III athletic director. Consistent with the more recent research, Copeland and Kirsch (1995) found that the most stress-inducing duties among Division III athletic directors are budget demands and firing personnel. Despite these challenges, Division III athletic directors' attitudes are more closely aligned with the academic model of higher education, while Division I athletic directors attitudes are more closely aligned with a business model (Ceronie, 1993). Similarly, Ryska (2002) found

that Division I and II athletic administrators place a significantly greater emphasis on achieving their program's financial goals than athletic directors at the Division III level.

Athletic Director Leadership

In 1990, Branch indicated a need to examine in more depth those leader behaviors that could have a positive influence on the relationships between athletic directors and their subordinates, as well as those behaviors that influence the entire organization's health and effectiveness. Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) also identified a lack of leadership investigation within intercollegiate athletics. Since that time, a few studies have examined the leadership characteristics of intercollegiate athletic directors, however most focus on the perspective of the athletic director. For instance, Christian (2000) found the majority of athletic directors believe influential and motivational skills, followed by communication skills, are the primary leadership traits necessary for fostering an environment of athletic success. The study also showed athletic directors find delegation skills the primary trait necessary for the successful operation of an athletic organization (Christian, 2000).

Most of the recent sport management leadership literature has focused on transformational and transactional leadership (Peachy & Burton, 2010). Transformational leadership, a theory similar to charismatic leadership, was first defined as motivating followers to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming followers' attitudes, beliefs and values (Bass, 1990). Transactional leadership involves an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, such that followers receive compensation for complying with a leader (Burns, 1978). Findings have generally demonstrated that transformational leadership has a positive impact on organizational outcomes such as

leader effectiveness, job satisfaction, extra effort and commitment (Peachy & Burton, 2010). In their study of Division III athletic directors, Burton and Peachy (2009) suggested that transformational leadership has shown to be an effective type of leadership among athletic directors at the Division III level.

In a study of athletic directors' perceptions of their own leadership styles, Manning (2012) found Division I athletic directors believe themselves to utilize more transformational traits than athletic directors at the Division II or III level. Manning (2012) suggested Division I athletic directors are generally able to delegate task-oriented operations, allowing them to focus on strategic planning, budgeting and overall development of the athletic department. Meanwhile, Division II and III athletic directors are often not equipped with the staff or budget to delegate managerial tasks, giving Division I athletic directors the opportunity to demonstrate a more transformational style (Manning, 2012).

Geist (2001) surveyed both athletic directors and assistant athletic directors at the Division II level to evaluate athletic director leadership. Athletic directors gave themselves especially high scores for transformational behaviors related to charisma: individual consideration, the understanding the needs of followers to develop their full potential, and inspirational motivation, the ability to provide followers with a clear sense of purpose. Interestingly, the study found that assistant athletic directors gave athletic directors lower mean scores in every aspect of leadership than the athletic directors gave themselves (Geist, 2001).

A few studies have investigated the impact athletic director leadership has on the satisfaction of head coaches, with two specifically looking at the Division III level.

Kuchler (2008) studied selected Division III programs in the Midwest and found a significant association between coaches' perceptions of the athletic director's leadership and coaches' satisfaction. The top behavior identified as a source of dissatisfaction was the type of supervisory behavior, suggesting athletic directors become more attuned with staff perception of their leadership style (Kuchler, 2008). Yusuf (1998) used transformational leadership as a lens in his study of Division III athletic director leadership and coaches' satisfaction. The results indicate that coaches who evaluated their athletic directors as showing high transformational behaviors were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than coaches who evaluated their leader as exhibiting less transformational behaviors (Yusuf, 1998).

One of the main components of charismatic leadership theory is developing and articulating a strong vision (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). In an investigation of the relationship between Division III athletic director leadership and the organizational culture of the athletic department using the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Posner and Kouzes, Keiper (2002) found a negative relationship between the subcategories of inspiring a shared vision and authenticity. This finding suggests coaches have difficulty balancing the vision of their own programs with that of the entire athletic department. Scott (1999) also took a look at the impact of certain aspects of athletic director leadership and organizational climate. The research indicates athletic directors who are perceived as goal-oriented and proficient in obtaining resources are considered effective managers; however, athletic directors who spend time developing interpersonal relationships, creating vision, and establishing meaning for their department are more likely to be thought of as effective leaders (Scott, 1999).

In the only known study using charismatic leadership as a theoretical lens in the collegiate athletics literature, Kent and Chelladurai (2001) found that perceived charismatic leadership is positively correlated with members' affective organizational commitment in a case study of a Division I athletic department. Kent and Chelladurai highlight the need for leaders to be aware of the messages that are sent throughout the entire organization, especially at the middle-manager levels, and how the messaging can relate to the attitudes of employees and organizational effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

According to Conger & Kanungo (1998), understanding the phenomenon of charismatic leadership involves an examination of two sides of the same coin, a set of attributes by followers and a set of leader's behavior. This study examines perceptions of athletic director leadership attributes by their followers, the relationship the leadership of an athletic director has on the institution's success, and the leadership behaviors and characteristics most valued in an athletic director.

Subjects

The population of interest in this study is Division III head coaches and assistant athletic directors who serve under the athletic director. Assistant athletic directors most often included positions such as senior woman administrator, director of development, facility director, and sports information director. Institutions with interim athletic directors were omitted from the population due to the inability of coaches and administrators to accurately evaluate charismatic leadership behaviors of an interim athletic director. Because the instrument is used to assess one individual, institutions with co-athletic director situations were also removed. The total number of individuals in the sample is 7,014, representing 418 institutions.

Instrumentation, Distribution and Data Collection

The survey instrument is a modified version of the Charismatic Leadership Questionnaire (CLQ) developed by Conger and Kanungo (1998), in addition to a

qualitative response question. The CLQ is a 25-question instrument that asks participants to indicate the extent to which each item of the questionnaire is characteristic of the leader of their organization, in this case the institution's athletic director. There are six response categories including very characteristic, characteristic, slightly characteristic, slightly uncharacteristic, uncharacteristic and very uncharacteristic. The instrument is broken into five sub-scales: Strategic Vision and Articulation, Sensitivity to the Environment, Sensitivity to Member Needs, Personal Risk, and Deviation from the Status Quo. The CLQ was modified in the interest of length and to reduce redundancy.

In order to measure the concept with athletic success, data was collected from each institution's Directors' Cup point totals from each of the last three academic years, beginning with the 2009-10 standings. The National Association for Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) established the Directors' Cup, the first national collegiate all-sports recognition award, in 1993. According to NACDA's web site, the Directors' Cup is a program that honors institutions maintaining a broad-based athletics program, achieving success in many sports, both men's and women's. Institutions are awarded points based on NCAA championship finishes in 18 sports, the top nine men's and the top nine women's programs for each school (NACDA, 2012). Although the scoring system is often a point of debate, the NACDA Directors' Cup is increasingly viewed by athletic directors, presidents and boosters as an important measure of success for broad-based athletic programs (Hill, 2003).

Only athletic directors who have served in the athletic director role at their institution for five or more years were used in the analysis for Research Question 2. Including athletic directors who have not been leading their departments during the three-

year success window would not be an accurate representation of the question. Since success, or the lack thereof, of an organization in most cases cannot be rightly attributed to a leader in her first two years heading a department, a two-year buffer was used in the evaluation.

The survey will be distributed online via Qualtrics using email addresses of the designated recipients, which were collected through institutional web sites. The email contained a brief overview of the survey, as well as the link to complete the survey. The study guarantees anonymity and confidentiality in order to encourage honest responses. After two weeks from the initial recruitment email, a reminder email was sent to encourage participants who have not responded to complete the survey. The survey remained open for a total of four weeks.

Data Analysis

Following closure of the survey after the four-week time period, the data for Research Questions 1 and 2 was imported into SPSS for analysis. For Research Question 1, descriptive statistics, namely means and standard deviations, were tabulated to determine the degree to which Division III athletic directors exhibit charismatic leadership behaviors. Research Question 2 required comparing NACDA Directors' Cup point totals with charismatic leadership scores to evaluate the relationship between charismatic leadership and athletic success. Only schools that had responses from three or more individuals were considered. After removing schools with two or fewer responses, 115 institutions remained to evaluate Research Question 2. Six mean scores were computed for each athletic director: total charismatic leadership score, strategic vision and articulation score, sensitivity to the environment score, sensitivity to member needs

score, personal risk score, and deviation from the status quo score. Six correlations were tested, each comparing a particular score to Directors' Cup point totals.

Finally, in the evaluation of Research Question 3, qualitative evaluation methods were employed. Following an examination of the responses, themes were developed by the researcher to accurately characterize the data. A second coder was used to achieve intercoder reliability. Upon initial independent analysis, the comparison revealed a percent agreement of 93.6% percent and an adjusted Scott's Pi of 0.852, which is above the generally-accepted level for intercoder reliability.

CHAPTER 4: MANUSCRIPT

Introduction

Duderstadt (2000) described the role of an athletic director as the individual charged with the authority of hiring and firing coaches, managing the business operations of the athletic department, managing the welfare of the student-athletes and upholding the integrity of the university's athletic programs. Although this job description fits athletic directors at all three divisions, the Division III athletic director position is a unique one in comparison to its Division I and II counterparts. It is important to analyze the Division III athletic director position, its role, and the impact leadership from the athletic director's chair can have on an athletic department.

The purpose of this study is to identify leadership strengths and weaknesses of Division III athletic directors, examine the relationship leadership has on athletic success, and determine the leadership behaviors and characteristics that are most valued by head coaches and assistant athletic directors.

Armstrong (1993) suggested Division III athletic directors are often not prepared to be leaders administratively, having been chosen for the post solely because of coaching success or tenure at the institution. Although Armstrong's claim was made 20 years ago, current research shows the suggestion might still be accurate. While 79 percent of Division III athletic directors are former college coaches, this is the case for only 66 percent of Division II athletic directors and 42 percent of Division I athletic directors (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Leading a team of 18 to 22 year-olds as a coach is different than leading a group of peers with varying priorities and interests as an athletic

director, suggesting the need to examine leadership behaviors that are effective administratively.

Although very little research and even less media attention is focused on Division III athletics, Division III is the largest NCAA membership level in terms of both number of institutions (442) and student-athlete participation (172,000). Article 1.3.1 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Constitution states "a basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body." This most basic purpose most closely aligns with the Division III model, where the sole emphasis is on the student-athlete experience, coaches serve as educators, and student-athletes are integrated with the general student body. Although Division III athletic directors are not negotiating multi-million dollar media contracts, hiring high-profile coaches, or overseeing teams filled with future professional athletes, they have a tremendous opportunity to develop an athletic program that positively impacts the lives of student-athletes, coaches, supporters, and administrative officials.

This study will attempt to provide lessons for athletic department leadership and shed light on behaviors that might translate into positive relationships and successful athletic departments. This study will also highlight the leadership behaviors and characteristics most valuable to an athletic department and provide a guide to university officials to utilize when making important personnel decisions.

Research Questions

[RQ1] To what degree do Division III athletic directors exhibit charismatic leadership behaviors?

[RQ2] Is there a relationship between perceived charismatic leadership behaviors of athletic directors and broad-based athletic success?

[RQ3] What leadership behaviors and characteristics of athletic directors do athletic administrators and head coaches identify as most valuable to the broad-based athletic success of the athletic department?

Literature Review

A conceptual framework for the research is offered within the context of charismatic leadership theory. Additionally, an analysis of the Division III athletic director position and athletic director leadership is included. Each of these areas of literature was used to guide the research in the analysis of Division III athletic director leadership.

Charismatic Leadership Theory. In the mid-1980s, Jay Conger and Rabindra Kanungo (1998) developed a model of charismatic leadership theory, which will be used as the theoretical lens in this paper. Conger and Kanungo frame charismatic leadership as a three-stage process – an evaluation of the organization’s environment, the development of strategic vision and goals, and the provision of means to realize the vision and achieve the goals. Steyrer, Schiffinger, and Lang (2008) defined charismatic leadership as the ability to inspire, motivate and successfully demand high performance outcomes from others, on the basis of firmly held core values. Unlike the traditional leadership theories which emphasized rational processes, the new theories of charismatic leadership emphasized emotions and values (Yukl, 1999). Charismatic leadership emphasizes symbolic leader behavior, visionary and inspirational ability, an appeal to ideological values, and high expectations for follower self-sacrifice and performance (House &

Howell, 1992). In this way, charismatic leadership is seen as giving meaning to followers by infusing work and organizations with moral purpose and commitment (Yukl, 1999; House & Howell, 1992).

The Conger and Kanungo charismatic leadership model hypothesizes that charismatic leadership leads to high internal organization cohesion, low internal conflict, high value congruence and high consensus among the group. In organizations, charismatic leadership has been shown to lead to increased organizational performance, internal cohesion, value congruence, and external support (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Flynn & Staw, 2004; Waldman, Javidan & Varella, 2004).

About the Division III Athletic Director Position. Center (2011) recently painted a profile picture of Division III athletic directors: 93 percent are white, 61 percent are male, 75 percent have earned a master's degree and 79 percent have experience as a college coach. Of note, out of the three divisions, there is a larger percentage of female athletic directors in Division III than any other division (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Thirty-eight percent of Division III athletic directors are female, compared to 20 percent at the Division II level and 10 percent at Division I. Division III institutions are more likely than Division II and I schools to hire a former college coach for the athletic director position (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011). Armstrong (1993) suggested the possibility that many Division III athletic directors are not prepared to be a leader administratively, having been chosen for the position only for their coaching record or longevity. While 79 percent of Division III athletic directors are former college coaches, this is the case for only 66 percent of Division II athletic directors and 42 percent of Division I athletic directors (Center, 2011; Spenard, 2011).

Division III athletic directors are often asked to do more with less. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2010), there are only 2.84 assistant athletic directors per Division III institution, many of whom also coach, forcing the Division III athletic director to wear a number of different hats. Division III athletic directors report they are most heavily involved in department finances, internal policy-making, sport operations and campus relations (Center, 2011). The most rewarding aspects of the job, as identified by Division III athletic directors, are a high level of control and autonomy, relationships with students, coaches and staff, a variety of responsibility and challenges, and witnessing the success of students, teams and coaches (Center, 2011; Robinson, Peterson, Tedrick & Carpenter, 2003).

Athletic Director Leadership. In 1990, Branch indicated a need to examine in more depth those leader behaviors that could have a positive influence on the relationships between athletic directors and their subordinates, as well as those behaviors that influence the entire organization's health and effectiveness. Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) also identified a lack of leadership investigation within intercollegiate athletics. Since that time, a few studies have examined the leadership characteristics of intercollegiate athletic directors, however most focus on the perspective of the athletic director. For instance, Christian (2000) found the majority of athletic directors believe influential and motivational skills, followed by communication skills, are the primary leadership traits necessary for fostering an environment of athletic success. The study also showed athletic directors find delegation skills the primary trait necessary for the successful operation of an athletic organization (Christian, 2000).

Most of the recent sport management leadership literature has focused on transformational and transactional leadership (Peachy & Burton, 2010). Transformational leadership, a theory similar to charismatic leadership, was first defined as motivating followers to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming followers' attitudes, beliefs and values (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership involves an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, such that followers receive compensation for complying with a leader (Burns, 1978). Findings have generally demonstrated that transformational leadership has a positive impact on organizational outcomes such as leader effectiveness, job satisfaction, extra effort and commitment (Peachy & Burton, 2010). In their study of Division III athletic directors, Burton and Peachy (2009) suggested that transformational leadership has shown to be an effective type of leadership among athletic directors at the Division III level.

In a study of athletic directors' perceptions of their own leadership styles, Manning (2012) found Division I athletic directors believe themselves to utilize more transformational traits than athletic directors at the Division II or III level. Manning suggested Division I athletic directors are generally able to delegate task-oriented operations, allowing them to focus on strategic planning, budgeting and overall development of the athletic department. Meanwhile, Division II and III athletic directors are often not equipped with the staff or budget to delegate managerial tasks, giving Division I athletic directors the opportunity to demonstrate a more transformational style (Manning, 2012).

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A few studies have investigated the impact athletic director leadership has on the satisfaction of head coaches, with two specifically looking at the Division III level. Kuchler (2008) studied selected Division III programs in the Midwest and found a significant association between coaches' perceptions of the athletic director's leadership and coaches' satisfaction. The top behavior identified as a source of dissatisfaction was the type of supervisory behavior, suggesting athletic directors become more attuned with staff perception of their leadership style (Kuchler, 2008). Yusuf (1998) used transformational leadership as a lens in his study of Division III athletic director leadership and coaches' satisfaction. The results indicate that coaches who evaluated their athletic directors as showing high transformational behaviors were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than coaches who evaluated their leader as exhibiting less transformational behaviors (Yusuf, 1998).

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subcategories of inspiring a shared vision and authenticity. This finding suggests coaches have difficulty balancing the vision of their own programs with that of the entire athletic department. Scott (1999) also took a look at the impact of certain aspects of athletic director leadership and organizational climate. The research indicates athletic directors who are perceived as goal-oriented and proficient in obtaining resources are considered effective managers; however, athletic directors who spend time developing interpersonal relationships, creating vision, and establishing meaning for their department are more likely to be thought of as effective leaders (Scott, 1999).

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Methodology

The population of interest in this study is Division III head coaches and assistant athletic directors who serve under the athletic director. Assistant athletic directors most often included positions such as senior woman administrator, director of development, facility director, and sports information director. Institutions with interim athletic directors were omitted from the population due to the inability of coaches and administrators to accurately evaluate charismatic leadership behaviors of an interim athletic director. Because the instrument is used to assess one individual, institutions with

co-athletic director situations were also removed. The total number of individuals in the sample is 7,014, representing 418 institutions.

Instrumentation, Distribution and Data Collection. The survey instrument is a modified version of the Charismatic Leadership Questionnaire (CLQ) developed by Conger and Kanungo (1998), in addition to a qualitative response question. The CLQ is a 25-question instrument that asks participants to indicate the extent to which each item of the questionnaire is characteristic of the leader of their organization, in this case the institution's athletic director. There are six response categories including very characteristic, characteristic, slightly characteristic, slightly uncharacteristic, uncharacteristic and very uncharacteristic. The instrument is broken into five sub-scales: Strategic Vision and Articulation, Sensitivity to the Environment, Sensitivity to Member Needs, Personal Risk, and Deviation from the Status Quo. The CLQ was modified in the interest of length and to reduce redundancy.

In order to measure the concept with athletic success, data was collected from each institution's Directors' Cup point totals from each of the last three academic years, beginning with the 2009-10 standings. The National Association for Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) established the Directors' Cup, the first national collegiate all-sports recognition award, in 1993. According to NACDA's web site, the Directors' Cup is a program that honors institutions maintaining a broad-based athletics program, achieving success in many sports, both men's and women's. Institutions are awarded points based on NCAA championship finishes in 18 sports, the top nine men's and the top nine women's programs for each school (NACDA, 2012d). Although the scoring system is often a point of debate, the NACDA Directors' Cup is increasingly viewed by

athletic directors, presidents and boosters as an important measure of success for broad-based athletic programs (Hill, 2003).

Only athletic directors who have served in the athletic director role at their institution for five or more years were used in the analysis for Research Question 2. Including athletic directors who have not been leading their departments during the three-year success window would not be an accurate representation of the question. Since success, or the lack thereof, of an organization in most cases cannot be rightly attributed to a leader in her first two years heading a department, a two-year buffer was used in the evaluation.

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Data Analysis. Following closure of the survey after the four-week time period, the data for Research Questions 1 and 2 was imported into SPSS for analysis. For Research Question 1, descriptive statistics, namely means and standard deviations, were tabulated to determine the degree to which Division III athletic directors exhibit charismatic leadership behaviors. Research Question 2 required comparing NACDA Directors' Cup point totals with charismatic leadership scores to evaluate the relationship between charismatic leadership and athletic success. Only schools that had responses

from three or more individuals were considered. After removing schools with two or fewer responses, 115 institutions remained to evaluate Research Question 2. Six mean scores were computed for each athletic director: total charismatic leadership score, strategic vision and articulation score, sensitivity to the environment score, sensitivity to member needs score, personal risk score, and deviation from the status quo score. Six correlations were tested, each comparing a particular score to Directors' Cup point totals.

Finally, in the evaluation of Research Question 3, qualitative evaluation methods were employed. Following an examination of the responses, themes were developed by the researcher to accurately characterize the data. A second coder was used to achieve intercoder reliability. Upon initial independent analysis, the comparison revealed a percent agreement of 93.6% percent and an adjusted Scott's Pi of 0.852, which is above the generally-accepted level for intercoder reliability.

Results

The survey for this study was sent to 7,014 assistant athletic directors and head coaches representing 418 institutions. A total of 1,108 participants responded to the survey, which equates to a 15.8% response rate. Out of the 418 institutions in the sample, a total of 367, or 87.7%, schools were represented in the responses. It should be noted participants were informed they could elect to skip questions at any time, therefore the "N" for some questions will differ. The results are organized by research questions, with tables and charts intended to illustrate and supplement the data collected.

Research Question 1. The first research question aimed to determine the degree to which Division III athletic directors exhibit charismatic leadership behaviors. Assistant athletic directors and head coaches were asked to evaluate their athletic director based on

15 items of the Charismatic Leadership Questionnaire (CLQ). Each question utilized a six-point Likert scale, with possible responses including Very Characteristic (VC=1), Characteristic (C=2), Slightly Characteristic (SC=3), Slightly Uncharacteristic (SU=4), Uncharacteristic (U=5), and Very Uncharacteristic (VU=6). For each item, a mean and standard deviation were calculated. Items 7 and 11 were negatively worded to reduce a response bias and were reverse scored. Table 1 lists the mean and standard deviation beginning with the highest-ranked item. Note the highest possible score, in this case, is considered a 1 (Very Characteristic) and the lowest possible score is considered a 6 (Very Uncharacteristic). Interestingly, only two items were ranked as uncharacteristic: tries to differentiate from the status quo ($M=4.20$) and advocates following risky courses of action ($M=4.53$). Athletic directors were especially strong in items representing interpersonal skills: recognizes abilities and skills of organization members ($M=2.63$), expresses personal concern for organization members ($M=2.67$), and influences others by mutual respect ($M=2.84$). Overall, Division III athletic directors exhibit slightly characteristic charismatic leadership behaviors ($M=3.21$).

Table 1
Athletic Director Charismatic Leadership Characteristics

| Characteristics | Mean | S.D. | N |
|--|------|-------|-------|
| Recognizes barriers in organization's environment | 2.49 | 1.325 | 1,106 |
| Visionary | 2.60 | 1.516 | 1,108 |
| Recognizes abilities and skills of organization members | 2.63 | 1.507 | 1,097 |
| Expresses personal concern for organization members | 2.67 | 1.530 | 1,091 |
| Influences others by mutual respect | 2.84 | 1.588 | 1,093 |
| Recognizes new opportunities | 2.85 | 1.458 | 1,094 |
| Engages in self-sacrifice for good of organization | 2.90 | 1.525 | 1,095 |
| Entrepreneurial | 3.06 | 1.517 | 1,094 |
| Inspirational | 3.09 | 1.606 | 1,102 |
| Provides strategic and organizational goals | 3.27 | 1.499 | 1,098 |
| Engages in personal risk for good of organization | 3.39 | 1.576 | 1,092 |
| Exciting public speaker | 3.40 | 1.516 | 1,098 |
| Engages in unconventional behavior or nontraditional means | 3.90 | 1.475 | 1,090 |
| Tries to differentiate from status quo | 4.20 | 1.319 | 1,090 |
| Advocates following risky courses of action | 4.53 | 1.165 | 1,087 |

Note: The scale ranged from "Very Characteristic" (1) to "Very Uncharacteristic" (6)

A mean was also calculated for the five sub-scales of charismatic leadership (see Table 2). Of note, the athletic directors scored highest on the Sensitivity to the Environment ($M=2.56$) and the Sensitivity to Member Needs ($M=2.76$) sub-scales, while the weakest sub-scales were Deviation from the Status Quo ($M=4.05$) and Personal Risk ($M=3.61$).

Table 2

Athletic Director Charismatic Leadership Sub-Scales

| Charismatic Leadership Sub-Scales | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| Sensitivity to the Environment | 2.56 |
| Sensitivity to Member Needs | 2.76 |
| Strategic Vision & Articulation | 3.05 |
| Personal Risk | 3.61 |
| Deviation from Status Quo | 4.05 |

Note: The scale ranged from “Very Characteristic” (1) to “Very Uncharacteristic” (6)

Research Question 2. The goal of the second research question was to determine the relationship between perceived charismatic leadership behaviors of athletic directors and broad-based athletic success, as determined by NACDA Directors’ Cup point totals from the last three academic years. Only schools with an athletic director who has been in the position at the school for more than five years were included in the data for this question. Additionally, schools that received less than three responses were eliminated from consideration. In the final analysis for Research Question 2, 115 schools remained.

Individual responses from each school were collected to give each athletic director an aggregate charismatic leadership score and a score in each of the five sub-scales of charismatic leadership. Six correlation tests were run, an overall charismatic leadership score and the five sub-scales of charismatic leadership with Directors’ Cup point totals. The tests revealed no significant correlations, with only one sub-scale, Deviation from the Status Quo, approaching significance, $r(113) = .170, p < .05$ (see Table 3). In this study, the strongest charismatic leadership score is 1, with the weakest score being a 6. Therefore, if charismatic leadership of an athletic director has a positive impact on the success of the department’s Directors’ Cup scores, correlations would have been negative. However, only one sub-scale, Sensitivity to Member Needs, resulted in a negative correlation, $r(113) = -.009, p < .05$. Overall, there is no relationship between

perceived charismatic leadership of athletic directors and success in the Directors' Cup rankings.

Table 3
Athletic Director Charismatic Leadership and Success Correlations

| Charismatic Leadership Sub-Scales | N | Pearson <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> -value |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------------------|-----------------|
| Overall Charismatic Leadership | 115 | .084 | .374 |
| Strategic Vision & Articulation | 115 | .059 | .531 |
| Sensitivity to the Environment | 115 | .092 | .328 |
| Personal Risk | 115 | .145 | .121 |
| Deviation from Status Quo | 115 | .170 | .070 |
| Sensitivity to Member Needs | 115 | -.009 | .923 |

Research Question 3. The final research question identified athletic director leadership behaviors and characteristics head coaches and assistant athletic directors find most valuable to the broad-based success of the athletic department. An open-ended, qualitative question was used to answer Research Question 3. There were 725 participants who responded to this question; however, several mentioned multiple behaviors and characteristics, resulting in a higher number of total responses. Analysis revealed six major athletic director leadership themes identified by assistant athletic directors and head coaches that lead to success of the athletic department: Visionary, Drive for Success, Relationship Focus/Communication, Innovation, Fairness/Equity, and Motivational/Inspirational. Additionally, an Other category was created as a catch-all for miscellaneous responses. The themes, along with their corresponding response percentages, are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Athletic Director Leadership Characteristics Most Valued by Assistant Athletic Directors and Head Coaches

| Leadership Theme | No. of Mentions | % of Participants | % of Responses |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Relationship | 289 | 39.9% | 26.8% |
| Focus/Communication | | | |
| Visionary | 184 | 25.4% | 17.1% |
| Fairness/Equity | 138 | 19.0% | 12.8% |
| Motivational/Inspirational | 119 | 16.4% | 11.0% |
| Drive for Success | 115 | 15.9% | 10.7% |
| Innovation | 115 | 15.9% | 10.7% |
| Other | 56 | 7.7% | 5.2% |

Discussion

Branch (1990) indicated a need to study those leader behaviors that could have a positive influence on the relationships athletic directors have with their subordinates and the overall effectiveness of the department. This study provides a glimpse into the overall perception of Division III athletic directors by their followers and provides lessons for current and aspiring athletic directors to more effectively lead their departments.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Division III Athletic Director. Overall, assistant athletic directors and head coaches perceive Division III athletic directors to be strong in interpersonal skills and understanding the environment of Division III athletics. Athletic directors scored best on the Sensitivity to Member Needs ($M=2.56$) and Sensitivity to the Environment ($M=2.76$) sub-scales. Because most Division III athletic directors were former coaches and former Division III student-athletes before that, it is not surprising they are generally able to develop quality relationships with the coaches on the staff. Thus, Division III athletic directors should devote much of their time and energy to improving their weaknesses. Overall, that weakness lies in innovation, creativity, and trying new things. The two worst sub-scales of charismatic leaderships in

this study were Deviation from the Status Quo ($M=4.05$) and Personal Risk ($M=3.61$). To be discussed in further detail later in this section, innovation is a skill that will be required of a successful Division III athletic director, specifically in the area of increasing revenue for the department's programs given the current financial climate.

Leadership and Athletic Success. This study showed no correlation between perceived charismatic leadership behaviors of athletic directors and athletic success, as determined by NACDA Directors' Cup point totals. Moreover, none of the five sub-scales had any correlation with Directors' Cup point totals. There is a notion that winning and experiencing success cures a lot of ills in an organization. One might think head coaches and assistant athletic directors at schools with success in a lot of different programs would give their athletic directors positive leadership ratings because things are going so well on the fields of play. However, this study did not show any evidence of that line of thinking. There were some athletic directors from schools at the top of the Directors' Cup standings who received very poor ratings on the Charismatic Leadership Questionnaire. On the other end of the spectrum, there were some athletic directors who received very strong ratings and yet their institutions never appeared in the Directors' Cup standings in the three-year window. This study shows that there is no relationship between leadership behaviors of athletic directors and broad-based athletic success at the Division III level.

In the final analysis, this lack of correlation is not surprising and the fact there is no significant relationships between athletic director leadership at the Division III level and success on the field is significant. This finding reinforces the core values of Division III athletics, where the sole emphasis is on the holistic development of the student-

athlete, coaches serve as educators, and student-athletes are integrated with the general student body. Although the pressure to win exists regardless of the level of competition, athletic directors at Division III institutions must clearly communicate and exemplify a holistic definition of success that is consistent with Division III athletics values.

The main priority of Division III athletics is on the participants, rather than on the general public's entertainment needs. Respondent 91 said, "At the Division III level, creating a culture where the educational development of students is the primary goal of an athletic department is the MOST important leadership behavior of ANY successful athletic director. The Directors Cup distorts that goal and your use of that as a measure success at the Division III level is VERY flawed. That is a Division I goal." This sentiment is evident in the lack of correlation between success and leadership in this study. There is not a quantifiable tool, such as the Directors' Cup, that can accurately measure the educational development of student-athletes. Even if a measure of academic performance for Division III athletic departments existed, it may not be a useful tool because the educational development of student-athletes is more holistic, involving athletic success, academic performance, social skills, and lifelong growth as a person. Even though evaluating this type of success for Division III athletic departments is difficult and may never be accurately measured, Division III athletic directors need to develop a holistic mindset, embody that mindset, and communicate the need for coaches to embrace the mentality as well.

Relationship Focus and Communication. The most common leadership theme mentioned by assistant athletic directors and head coaches as the most valuable to the success of the department was Relationship Focus and Communication, an opinion

expressed by nearly 40% of the respondents. A strong athletic director is able to connect, engage, listen and develop relationships with a variety of constituents including coaches, student-athletes, administrators across campus, the local community, and donors.

Respondent 100 summarizes the overall sentiment in this category: “Interpersonal Relationships - you have to know the people you are leading in order to gain their trust and respect...Connections and visibility - you have to develop relationships with the key players on campus – administration, academics, facilities, custodians, grounds crew, etc.”

Communication skills most often accompanied Relationship Focus responses, making it impossible to separate the two categories. For example, Respondent 492 said, “One who communicates, not only well, but frequently with each member of the department. One who tries his/her best to know many of the student-athletes on a first-name basis.” Assistant athletic directors and head coaches want a leader who has open ears and is willing to listen and take the concerns, suggestions and opinions of coaches and student-athletes seriously. “Be invested in your coaching staff. Finding out what the AD can do to help his coaches and what are the needs of each program and the coach of each program,” said Respondent 188. “Establishing a culture where his coaches know they can pick up the phone and call the AD, or knowing they can stop in and see him/her.”

An aspect of relationship-building often mentioned was supportiveness, an athletic director who is there for the staff, communicates the value of athletics to the institution, and fights for the needs of the department. Respondent 528 said, “The ability to make coaches want to work for you, as they believe you care about them as a person and want to see them succeed...The willingness to go to bat for you with other

administrators. I want to know that they care enough about me to argue for me, rather than just accept what's being told to them.” Head coaches want advocates for their programs across campus and in the community.

Interestingly, athletic directors received the strongest ratings on the two sub-scales of charismatic leadership that dealt with interpersonal relationships, Sensitivity to the Environment and Sensitivity to Member Needs. Several of the items athletic directors received the highest scores represented interpersonal skills: recognizes abilities and skills of organization members ($M=2.63$), expresses personal concern for organization members ($M=2.67$), and influences others by mutual respect ($M=2.84$). Every individual item on the survey related to the two sub-scales received a mean score between 2 and 3, indicating that, overall, assistant athletic directors and head coaches perceive their athletic directors as having strong interpersonal skills. Athletic directors should not lose sight of the fact the people they are leading in their department crave a leader who is supportive, out of the office and visible, and able to create connections and relationships on campus.

Visionary. One of the main tenets of charismatic leadership is developing a strategic vision representing a shared follower perspective in order to promote a strong sense of collective identity and to heighten the meaningfulness of the organization’s goals (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Overall, head coaches and assistant athletic directors rated their athletic directors as slightly characteristic ($M = 3.05$) on the Strategic Vision and Articulation sub-scale. One-quarter (25.4%) of the respondents to Research Question 3 mentioned one of the critical elements of a successful athletic department is the athletic director setting a direction for the organization and laying out the mission, goals and

expectations in a clear and concise manner. Respondent 350 said, “(The athletic director needs) clear vision for the direction he/she wants the program to take and then knows the vehicle to get there and is able to convey that to everyone involved.”

Keiper (2002) suggested coaches have difficulty balancing the vision of their own programs with the vision of the entire athletic department. In order to build support and create buy-in for the vision as a whole, athletic directors need to involve all constituencies, including coaches, student-athletes, staff members, and campus administrators, in the development of the vision, mission, goals and strategies for success. Despite the time constraints that having a small staff and limited resources place on a Division III athletic director, leaders in athletic departments ought to carve out time to think a lot about the big picture. As Respondent 630 stated, “The most important leadership quality to me is having a vision for the athletics department. Some athletic directors get bogged down in the day-to-day functions and forget what the overall goals are (of the athletic department).”

Fairness and Equity. Twenty percent of the respondents mentioned fairness and equity as critical leadership characteristics for athletic directors. Respondent 176 said, “An important characteristic of a strong athletic director in a Division III program is one who is passionate about equity across all genders and all sports and finds creative ways to make resources available.” Many respondents in Research Question 3 recognized a difference between treating each sport program the same and treating each program fairly. For example, Respondent 431 said the most important thing is to maintain equal standards for programs. Respondent 27 also accepts that not all programs can be treated the same. “It is important for an athletic director to make all coaches feel important, but

also realizing that there are 'marquee' sports and that their success can better the department. Our AD always says 'the better we all are, the better we each are. The better we each are, the better we all are.' I think that is a very important concept to understand and to get your coaches to understand."

Another important aspect of fairness and equity is the athletic director not only treating each program fairly, but also exhibiting a genuine interest, understanding and enthusiasm for each sport. In order to achieve broad-based success, the athletic director has to personally invest in each sport, not just the traditionally popular sports such as football and men's basketball. At the Division III level, where the separation between revenue and non-revenue programs doesn't exist like it does at the Division I level, this leadership characteristic should be easier for Division III athletic directors to embody.

Motivational and Inspirational. In Stage 3 of Conger and Kanungo's (1998) charismatic leadership theory, leaders provide the means to achieve the vision so it can be carried out by the organization. Several items on the charismatic leadership questionnaire are related to motivation and inspiration. Each item had a mean in the slightly characteristic range, suggesting Division III athletic directors have room for improvement in this area. Item 4, "Inspirational; able to motivate by articulating effectively the importance of what organizational members are doing" ($M=3.09$) and Item 12, "Provides inspiring strategic and organizational goals" ($M=3.27$) each received mediocre results.

Sixteen percent of the respondents in Research Question 3 suggested an important aspect of athletic director leadership is motivating and inspiring assistant athletic directors and head coaches to accomplish the organization's goals and fulfill its mission. Respondent 623 said, "The ability to inspire and empower members of the staff to pursue

excellence is critical. Both elements are critical. Attempts to inspire without empowerment simply lead to frustration and a sense of futility.”

As Murphy and Ensher (2008) suggested, leaders cannot be experts in every subject matter, but charismatic leaders are experts in encouraging followers to reach their full potential. Athletic directors need to consider how their assistants and coaches are responding to their leadership behaviors and develop ways in order to more effectively motivate followers to reach the full potential of the individual staff members and the athletic department as a whole. As Respondent 165 said, “(An athletic director needs to) constantly push us to reach for higher goals, not letting us settle for what is easy or comfortable.”

Yukl (1999) warns that leaders become less effective and should be removed if their expertise is no longer unique, suggesting athletic directors should constantly evaluate how they are motivating their staff. Respondent 393 describes a situation where the athletic director has lost the inspirational touch with the assistants and coaches. “I think an athletic director needs to be a motivator...At my institution we have an athletic director who has put in close to 40 years of service at the university in one form or another and I feel the day to day operations have become very stale with a lack of excitement and energy to try and engage new practices or ideals. Meetings are very dry and monotonous with seemingly the same topics discussed every week but no accountability in the end.”

One way for athletic directors to consistently push and challenge head coaches and assistant athletic directors is to provide unique professional development opportunities. Athletic directors should develop specific, timely and relevant

programming aimed at continuing the education and leadership for their staff. This can be accomplished by inviting outside speakers, leading discussions based on a shared book or article reading, or creating an annual staff retreat focusing on development and team-building. These types of activities ought to become commonplace in athletic departments in order to develop an environment where individuals are relentlessly looking for improvements in themselves and each other.

It should be noted here that Christian (2000) found athletic directors identify motivational and inspirational skills as most important in achieving success as a department. This study shows that motivational and inspirational skills, while important, are not as critical as interpersonal relationships, being visionary, and establishing a standard of fairness.

Drive for Success. Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) suggest one of the ways charismatic leaders motivate followers is activating role modeling and frame alignment. True leaders are walking representatives of the organization's values, beliefs, and interests. By using these behaviors, charismatic leaders create personal commitment, instill a faith in the future, increase the intrinsic value of goal accomplishment, and express confidence in their followers' ability to meet high expectations. If athletic directors expect their assistants and coaches to have a passion for excellence, a strong work ethic, and a drive for success, they must exhibit the same behaviors.

This notion was mentioned by 15.9% of the respondents in Research Question 3. Respondent 679 said an athletic director needs to be a tireless worker. "Athletics is nearly a 365 days a year job, (an athletic director) must be willing to be on the ball all the time and create an atmosphere of success and encouragement between athletic teams."

Building a culture of excellence, both on the field and off, permeates throughout the entire department. If a leader begins to accept mediocrity at any time or in any area, mediocrity will also permeate the department. As Respondent 74 put it, "...a competitive spirit is contagious." Success, or the lack thereof, is also contagious.

It is important to note here that an athletic director, especially at the Division III level, must clearly define success. As previously discussed, for Division III schools, winning on the field cannot be the only measure of success. The Division III experience allows student-athletes to participate in a competitive environment and pursue the full spectrum of opportunities to push themselves to excellence and build upon their academic success with new challenges and life skills (NCAA, 2010d). The Division III athletic director must embrace these ideals, spread them throughout the athletic department and evaluate coaches on a comprehensive definition of success.

Innovation. One of the most interesting findings in this study is that out of the five sub-scales of the Charismatic Leadership Questionnaire, Division III athletic directors were perceived to be the worst at items relating to innovation. The Deviation from the Status Quo sub-scale received the lowest mean ($M=4.05$) of any of the five sub-scales, with Personal Risk ($M=3.61$) receiving the second worst. This finding indicates assistant athletic directors and head coaches think Division III athletic directors need to develop a more creative mentality and constantly strive to find a more effective way of doing their job. Respondent 20 said, "An athletic director needs to be a thought leader and a risk taker."

Generating new revenue sources and improving fundraising efforts often accompanied responses in this category. Coaches need more resources for their programs

for facilities, equipment, travel, recruiting, etc. An athletic director can make a significant impact on athletic programs by developing innovative sources of revenue and increasing fundraising. Respondent 399 described innovative thinking in an athletic department. “A lot of Division III athletic departments have a restricted budget. Being able to think outside the box and be willing to try new ideas is essential to keep the athletic department moving forward.”

One of the significant roadblocks Division III athletic directors face towards being more innovative is a lack of staff and a lack of time. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2010), there are only 2.84 assistant athletic directors per Division III institution, and often times, those administrators also double as coaches. Manning (2012) suggested Division I athletic directors are generally able to delegate task-oriented operations, allowing them to focus on strategic planning, budgeting and overall development of the athletic department. Meanwhile, Division II and III athletic directors are often not equipped with the staff or budget to delegate managerial tasks, giving Division I athletic directors the opportunity to demonstrate a more transformational leadership style. Effective athletic directors at the Division III level must find a way to carve more time into their day to think big picture and be more innovative. Although budget restrictions might not allow an athletic director to hire more staff, perhaps athletic directors can combat this challenge by recruiting student volunteer assistants, delegating managerial responsibilities throughout the staff, or streamlining processes to make efforts such as paperwork and game-day operations more efficient. Another method to develop an innovative mentality is to create a team of administrators and coaches charged with the task of creativity and finding better ways to do things.

Often times, athletic directors and assistant athletic directors at Division III schools also serve in a dual role as a coach. Perhaps, the time and thought commitment necessary for success requires administrators to give up their coaching duties to focus full-time on their role as administrator and leader of the department. To remain motivated and inspired towards the organization's vision and mission, athletic department employees need to be invigorated with fresh ideas, and an innovative approach can accomplish that goal.

Future Research

An interesting extension of this study would be to include both Division I and Division II athletic departments to compare the results of the three divisions. Because Division I athletic departments have more resources and athletic directors at big-time athletic schools are in the spotlight more than Division III athletic directors, perhaps the position calls for someone who exhibits very strong charismatic leadership characteristics. Additionally, success on the field is often the top priority for Division I athletic directors and research might reveal a stronger correlation between athletic director leadership and success. Assistant athletic directors and head coaches also might place value on different leadership behaviors of their athletic directors than their Division III counterparts identified in this study.

The present study did not ask for much demographic data from respondents. Future research might look at differences in responses based on age, gender, longevity at the institution, and sport. For example, perhaps females and coaches of Olympic sports place a higher value on fairness and equity than a male football coach. Future research might also reduce the size of the sample in order to investigate the qualitative data more

thoroughly. Semi-structured interviews or case studies are potential research methods that could shed more light on athletic director leadership. University administrators might also be included in the next study of this type to get a 360-degree view of athletic director leadership and investigate the types of leadership characteristics university administration is looking for when making an athletic director hire.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify leadership strengths and weaknesses of Division III athletic directors, examine the relationship leadership has on athletic success, and determine the leadership behaviors and characteristics that are most valued by head coaches and assistant athletic directors. Overall, Division III athletic directors are strong with interpersonal skills, yet lacking in the innovation and creativity aspects of leadership. The study revealed no relationship between perceived leadership of a Division III athletic director and success on the field, reinforcing the student-athlete experience core values of the Division III level. Finally, the study determined assistant athletic directors and head coaches in Division III value athletic directors who have a strong focus on building relationships, are visionary, fair, motivational, driven to be successful, and innovative.

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