

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND  
ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC SUCCESS: A QUANTIATIVE CASE STUDY OF BLACK  
MALE FOOTBALL STUDENT-ATHLETES AT A MAJOR DIVISION I  
SOUTHEASTERN INSTITUTION

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## ABSTRACT

JOSEPH N. COOPER: The Relationship between the Critical Success Factors and Athletic and Academic Success: A Quantitative Case Study of Black Male Football Student-Athletes at a Major Southeastern Division I Institution

(Under the discretion of Dr. Edgar Shields)

The purpose of this study was to identify the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) of current Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public predominantly White institution who exhibited a high level of success academically and athletically. A group of 42 Black male football student-athletes were targeted in this study. The Critical Success Factor Success Survey (CSFS) was separated into personal development, social harmony, engagement with a strong support system, time management skills, career aspirations and organized religion. A 4-point Likert type scale was used for the responses of the 19 multiple choice questions and, 11 yes/no questions. Each subject was classified by the following categories: year in college, academic success level and athletic success level. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were used in this study. The results revealed no statistically significant findings. However, the responses produced from the survey revealed significant implications for further research.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Nationally, Black student-athletes have consistently graduated at a lower rate than their student-athlete counterparts (Lapchick, 2007). According to a recent study published by the NCAA from a 1998 cohort of student-athletes, Black student-athletes graduated at a rate of 53% significantly lower than their White student-athlete counterparts who graduated at a rate of 66% (NCAA News, 2006). Despite their outstanding athletic contributions Black male student-athletes particularly those in revenue generating sports were simply not making the grades in the classroom. Black students at Predominantly Whites Institutions (PWIs) encountered various challenges such as hostile campuses, culturally ignorant students and staff, limited and decreasing economic assistance, lack of Black faculty, and cultural alienation and isolation (Easley, 1993; Hawkins, 1989; Nagasawa & Wong, 1999; Taylor, 1989). As a result, Black male student-athletes underperforming academically at the college level has been a longstanding dilemma facing our colleges and universities.

Specifically, Black male football student-athletes have consistently graduated at lower rates than their White male football student-athlete counterparts (NCAA, 2006). In 2006, the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of Black male football student-athletes in Division IA was 56 percent; in comparison to White male football student-athletes in Division IA

whom had a graduation rate of 79 percent; and the Division I student-athlete population at large at 77 percent (NCAA, 2006). The disparity between Black and White male football student-athletes in terms of graduation rates undermines the mission of the NCAA which guarantees a quality educational experience for all student-athletes (NCAA, 2006). However, there are some Black male football student-athletes who have emerged as academically and athletically successful at PWIs. It is the thesis of this study to examine the relationship between six CSFs: personal development, social harmony, engagement with a strong support system, career aspirations, time management and level of organized religion and the level of academic and athletic success of Black male football student-athletes at a Southeastern PWI.

Furthermore, these regressive graduation statistics regarding Black male football student-athletes are not shocking, but rather raise questions about the reasons surrounding the low graduation and academic progress rates of Black male student-athletes at PWIs. Research has revealed that the cultural and intellectual climate of many PWIs has been unwelcoming, hostile and uncomfortable for many Black male student-athletes who were only viewed as commodities for their athletic talents with minimal academic and intellectual capabilities (Fleming, 1984). Adler and Adler (1991) suggested that the inadequate social settings for Black student-athletes at PWIs involved alienation and isolation due to the nature of an unfamiliar environment. African-American male student-athletes specifically have negotiated the dualism of being students and athletes; in addition to the other roles they fulfill such as breadwinners for their families, role models for their community, etc. (Barbalias, 2004). As a result, African-American student-athletes experienced a range of emotions based on precollege and college experiences that affected their academic performance, social stability, and personal development (Barbalias, 2004).



In order to address the problem effectively, there must be a thorough analysis of the historical and contemporary trends of Black male student-athlete success at the college level. Historically, Black student-athletes have been victims of cultural discrimination, social isolation, and academic exploitation (Gallien, Jr., 2005). Many researchers suggested that the social, cultural, intellectual, and academic climate at many institutions was not compatible with the personal development and interests of Black students particularly at PWIs (Chickering, 1981; Fleming, 1984; Gallien & Peterson, 2005). Black students and Black student-athletes experienced institutional and cultural racism (Hawkins, 2001). It is critical to identify whether institutions of higher education have committed Black male student-athletes a disservice by luring them to campuses where the system strictly nurtured their athletic contributions and disregarded their academic and social development (Barbalias, 2004).

The problem facing Black male student-athletes is multi-faceted with responsibility extending to the institutions and the student-athletes. Hawkins (2001) recommended that intercollegiate athletic departments must consciously veer from the values of professional sports that focus solely on revenues generated and winning games. Hence, many institutions functioned as internal colonial systems that colonized and exploited the athletic resources of Black student-athletes (Hawkins, 2001). Unless institutions redirect their focus from solely athletic success to a more well-rounded perspective of developing these Black male student-athletes on and off the field the problem of low graduation and academic progress rates will persist. Conversely, Black student-athletes must take a greater responsibility in receiving the best education possible (Hawkins, 2001). In order to maximize their potential, they must not rely only on coaches and athletic administrators to effectively support them academically when winning may appear to be their sole objective, therefore these Black male student-

athletes must understand this systemic structure of exploitation and take the initiative to enhance their academic and personal skills (Hawkins, 2001).

The overall purpose of this study is to identify the CSFs of Black male football student-athletes at a Southeastern PWI who have successfully navigated the higher education system, both academically and athletically. Unlike much of the research that focuses on low graduation rates and low student retention this study will focus on the critical success factors of Black male football student-athletes. This examination provides a voice for Black male football student-athletes to describe their experiences at a Southeastern PWI as well as to describe the CSFs in their lives that allow them to be successful. There are several Black male student-athletes who have “transformed their negative experiences on these campuses into productive careers in the following occupations: professors, lawyers, doctors, political leaders, managers, accountants, and other occupations” (Hawkins, 2001, p.4). In order to create more positive outcomes for these Black male student-athletes we must have a better understanding of their experiences and identify those factors that are currently working for those who are emerging successful on and off the field.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the CSFs of current Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I major Division I Southeastern public PWI who exhibited a high level of success academically and athletically.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. Is there a relationship between the academic and athletic success levels of Black football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI?

2. Is there a relationship between academic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI and their level of the following CSFs:
  - Personal Development
  - Social Harmony
  - Engagement with a Strong Support System
  - Career Aspirations
  - Time Management Skills
  - Organized Religion
3. Is there a relationship between athletic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI and their level of the following CSFs:
  - Personal Development
  - Social Harmony
  - Engagement with a Strong Support System
  - Career Aspirations
  - Time Management Skills
  - Organized Religion

#### Null Hypothesis Statements

1. Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the academic and athletic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI.
2. Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the academic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern PWI and the levels of the following CSFs:
  - Personal Development
  - Social Harmony
  - Engagement with a Strong Support System

- Career Aspirations
  - Time Management Skills
  - Organized Religion
3. Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the athletic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern PWI and the levels of the following CSFs:
- Personal Development
  - Social Harmony
  - Engagement with a Strong Support System
  - Career Aspirations
  - Time Management Skills
  - Organized Religion

#### Research Hypothesis Statements

1. There is a statistically significant relationship between the academic and athletic success levels of Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI.
2. Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI with high academic success levels will report higher levels of the following CSFs:
  - Personal Development
  - Social Harmony
  - Engagement with a Strong Support System
  - Career Aspirations
  - Time Management Skills
  - Organized Religion
3. Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI with high athletic success levels will report higher levels of the following CSFs:
  - Personal Development

- Social Harmony
- Engagement with a Strong Support System
- Career Aspirations
- Time Management Skills
- Organized Religion

#### Operational Definitions

**Success** is described by two definitions--academic and athletic.

\*One full academic year at the major Division I Southeastern public PWI is required for qualification. All redshirt freshmen and first year students are excluded from this study.

- **Academic success** is defined as:
  - **High Success**- 2.41 or higher Cumulative GPA
  - **Low Success**- 2.40 or lower Cumulative GPA
- **Athletic success** is defined as:
  - **High Success**-eligible, full or partial scholarship, participated and/or started in between 12-24 games in the previous season.
  - **Low Success**-eligible, full or partial scholarship, participated and/or started in 0-11 games in the previous season.

\*\*Players who incurred injuries will be recommended to complete the survey from the perspective of their healthy status. For example, if a healthy player would have been a starter and as a result of an injury did not play then they would still be considered a highly successful student-athlete.

- **African American/Black**-a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa (except those of Hispanic origin)
- **Caucasian/White**-a person having origins of any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin)
- **Ethnic Minority/Minority**-a ethnic group in the United States that is does not represent the politically dominant voting majority of the total population of the

United States. African-Americans/Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos and Asians are all examples of ethnic minority groups in the United States.

- **Critical Race Theory (CRT)**-a theory that emphasizes the socially constructed nature of race in terms of judicial conclusions to be the result of the impacts of power and opposes the continuation of all forms of discrimination.
- **Predominantly Whites Institutions (PWIs)**-institutions of higher education in the United States that enroll a majority of White students.
- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**-institutions of higher education in the United States established prior to 1964 with the purpose of serving the black community.
- **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**-a national governing body comprised of nearly 1,200 institutions created for the purpose of preserving competitive balance, academic integrity and amateurism for all its institutions and student-athletes.
- **Student-Athlete**-a person who is enrolled as a full time student at a institution of higher education and participates on a athletic team at the same institution.
- **Critical Success Factors (CSFs)**-a set of qualities that help a person achieve their goals. For the purposes of this study these six CSFs will be measured by the CSF Survey. The six CSFs are:
  - **Personal Development**-includes degree of participation in leadership, social, pre-professional and extracurricular activities.
  - **Social Harmony**-consists of the quality of peer social relationships at and perceptions of campus environment at a Predominantly Whites Institution.
  - **Engagement with a Strong Support System**-the quality of interaction between a student-athlete and their family (biological family members), athletic staff (coaches), faculty (professors), peers (friends) and mentors (influential people outside of the aforementioned groups).
  - **Career aspirations**-the presence of post college goals (athletic or non-athletic) in a student-athletes frame of mind.
  - **Time Management Skills**- defined as the ability to effectively manage multiple tasks.
  - **Organized Religion**-defined as the presence of a belief and practice of religious principles and spiritual values.

- **Redshirt Student-Athlete**-a student-athlete who is enrolled full-time as student and does not participate in competition for a full athletic season.

#### Independent and Dependent Variables

- Independent variables
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Classification (second-year, third-year, or fourth-year)
  - Level of Personal Development
  - Level of Social Harmony
  - Level of Engagement with a Strong Support System
  - Level of Time Management Skills
  - Level of Career Aspirations
  - Level of Organized Religion
- Dependent variables
  - Academic Success
    - High Success- 2.41 or higher Cumulative GPA
    - Low Success- 2.40 or lower Cumulative GPA
  - Athletic Success
    - High Success-eligible, full or partial scholarship, participated and/or started in 12-24 games in the previous season.
    - Low Success-eligible, full or partial scholarship, participated and/or started in 0-11 games in the previous season.

#### Limitations

- Due to the time constraints and resources this study is limited to a sample of current Black male football student-athletes at the major Division I Southeastern public PWI.
- This study will not include all Black male football student-athletes. Specifically, it excludes all red shirt freshman and first year student-athletes.

- This study will not consider the quality of education provided prior to enrollment at the major Division I Southeastern public PWI.
- This study will not include the parental status of the Black male football student-athlete participants.
- This study will not include the socioeconomic status of the household of the Black male football student-athlete participants.
- This study does not reference an all-inclusive solution to the obstacles facing all Black student-athletes.

#### Delimitations

- This study will be exclusive to current Black male football student-athletes at the major Division I Southeastern public PWI and thus the findings cannot be generalized to all Black student-athletes.
- This study will only include the current Black male football student-athletes with the exception of first year and redshirt freshman Black male football student-athletes.

#### Assumptions

- It is assumed that all student-athletes answered all questions honestly and completely.
- The completion of the survey and participation in the study is voluntary for all targeted student-athletes.

#### Significance of the Study

The information gathered from this study will provide useful information to the athletic staff, administrators and faculty of a Division I Southeastern public university for the purpose of developing and promoting programs that cultivate positive academic and athletic outcomes for Black male football student-athletes. Ensuring a positive academic and athletic experience for all student-athletes should be the goal of every intercollegiate athletic department. Identifying the CSFs of Black male football student-athletes will enhance programmatic effectiveness for these Black male football student-athletes. In addition, this study will provide insight to administrators, coaches, faculty members and student-athlete



support staff at other universities as to how they could potentially enhance their services to improve the experiences of Black male football student-athletes at their respective institutions.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Prior to the landmark legislation *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*, the landscape of college athletics was dominated by Whites at PWIs. Also, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were the primary options of higher education for Black student-athletes. During the 1930s, only the best Black student-athletes were accepted into the colleges' athletic communities, and very few found a safe haven in the social community (Wiggins, 1991). These Black student-athletes found themselves on predominantly White campuses surrounded by predominantly White communities, and these institutions made minimal efforts to recruit Black students who were not athletes (Wiggins, 1991). Thus, "universities and athletic departments have gained huge gate receipts, television revenues, national visibility, donors to university programs and more, as a result of the performances of gifted basketball and football players, of whom a disproportionate number of the most gifted and most exploited have been Black" (Edwards, 1983, p.37).

Consequently, many Black male student-athletes suffered from a lack of personal development aside from athletics. Barbalias (2004) concluded that "the isolation that Black student-athletes endured, as they perfect their talents and skills in practice and showcase their ability to perform in front of a roaring crowd, hindered their development of interpersonal relationships" (p.4). Many Black student non-athletes may have grown up in similar

backgrounds; however, the critical difference was that non-athletes may have had a better understanding of their role and purpose of their attendance, at these institutions whereas Black student-athletes' perceptions were that they were there to play ball and win championships (Hawkins, 2001, p.39). Additionally, separate living arrangements for these student-athletes further contributed to their seclusion from the general campus population (Barbalias, 2004). Collectively, these various challenges helped to create a tumultuous campus environment which manifested in low enrollment and graduation completion rates for Black male student-athletes.

According to Benton (2001), following *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*, the enrollment of Black students at PWIs was a gradual and arduous process filled with conflicting interests. Prior to 1954, HBCUs housed the majority of Black students; subsequently by 1973, three-fourths of Black students attended PWIs (Benton, 2001). Progressively “the 1960s showed an enthusiasm for sports as Black student-athletes began to prosper in football, basketball, and track; however soon after enrolling with optimistic ideals, they struggled with discrimination in the classroom and on the playing surface” (Barbalias, 2004, p. 1). The conflicting interests consisted of Black male student-athletes seeking a higher level of education and social acceptance at PWIs.

Many of the students and faculty on these campuses were unwelcoming to the Black student-athlete largely due to pervasive negative stereotypes disseminated by the historically segregated American society (Fleming, 1984). In spite of the increasing number of Black student-athletes at these institutions, disconcerting issues of academic negligence and social isolation began to arise at these institutions which stemmed from societal discriminations, which then limited Black student-athlete integration into campus life outside of athletics (Barbalias, 2004). Hence, aside from the fact that many institutions promoted their philosophies of equal

opportunity for all students in practical terms, many failed at facilitating intellectual and personal growth for students of color (Fleming, 1984).

After the 1960s the negative reactions from Black student-athletes became worse over time, with harsh criticism surrounding low Black enrollment, social isolation, disproportionate number of Black faculty and staff and racial discrimination from faculty members as well as others (Fleming, 1984). Despite significant strides post-Civil Rights Movement, there remained a lack of culturally enriching activities for underrepresented students remained pervasive at PWIs; hence the perpetuation of negative campus environments surrounding African-American students (Gallien & Peterson, 2005). During the mid-1970s, the emergence of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) served as a response to the failure of critical legal studies (CLS) which failed to address the effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The CRT was created initially from the work of legal scholars Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). CRT focused primarily on the effects of race and racism as well as addressing the hegemonic system of White supremacy on the meritocratic system (Cook, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995; Dalton, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The CRT incorporated primary tenets or factors of underrepresented groups in the form of (a) counter storytelling (Matsuda, 1995), (b) the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992, 1995; Lawrence, 1995), (c) Whiteness as property (Harris, 1995), (d) interest convergence (Bell, 1980), and (e) the critique of liberalism (Crenshaw, 1988). In regards to intercollegiate athletics, without taking into the account the various ways race and racism perpetuate social inequalities and academic disparities it is impossible to understand the experiences of underrepresented populations such as Black male student-athletes.

The first tenet of the CRT framework is counter-storytelling. Delgado and Stefaniec (2001) defined counter-storytelling as a method of telling a story that “aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (p.144). Among these accepted premises or myths is the idea that Black male student-athletes were intellectually inferior. The use of these counter-stories served as a means to providing a voice to marginalized groups such as Black male student-athletes (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Moreover, Bell (1992) stated that “racism is a permanent component of American life” (p.13). The acceptance of the idea of the permanence of racism involves adopting a “realist view” of the American societal structure (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). Inherently PWIs possessed dominant White cultural views that viewed minorities as academically inferior and socially atypical. In order to improve Black male student-athlete graduation rates PWIs must actively promote and embrace counter-storytelling by engaging in dialogue with Black male student-athletes.

Whiteness as property is another key component of the CRT (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Harris (1995) described the three property functions of Whiteness as the right of possession, the right to use, and the right to disposition. Each of these property functions created an environment of hostility and dissension between White (faculty and students) and Black students at PWIs. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) used the CRT framework to suggest that educational inequity, and specifically, access to high quality, rigorous curriculum, has been almost exclusively been enjoyed by White students. The academic achievement gap existed prior to a Black male student-athletes’ enrollment at a higher education institution. Historically, Black male student-athletes have been victims of the Whiteness as a property philosophy where their educational, social and personal needs were overlooked at the expense of their athletic

development; therefore, it is no surprise that there remains to be a persistent academic achievement gap at the college level (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004).

Interest convergence is another important tenet of the CRT (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Bell (1980) suggested that the gains made by the Civil Rights movements were directly attributed to the convergence of interests of Blacks and Whites. In terms of modern day (post-1980), the recruitment of Black male student-athletes is a byproduct of this convergence of interests. These institutions desired to raise the competitiveness of their athletic teams by recruiting more African-American student-athletes and these African-American student-athletes were seeking a way out of their low income communities with hopes of achieving financial prosperity (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004).

The final tenet of the CRT framework is the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). The basic ideas behind liberalism were the principles of color blindness, neutrality and incremental change (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). It is evident by reviewing the historical segregation of the U.S. as well as the current educational statistics that colorblindness and neutrality in terms of racial equality were not effectively practiced throughout the country. In addition, Williams (1997) suggested that colorblindness made it impossible to interrogate both the ways that White privilege was deployed and the normalizing effects of Whiteness. In summary, applying the CRT allows institutions and researchers to view the connection between racial discrimination and low Black male student-athlete academic achievement.

Prior to the stricter restrictions in the late 1980s, many institutions lowered entrance requirements for student-athletes to maintain a rich and talented Black student-athlete pool from which to select (Wiggins, 1991). For several years, college athletics sacrificed the student for the

athlete, which yielded rather damaging and horrific consequences. Even though these Black student-athletes possessed an eagerness to pursue a college education, many Black student-athletes began to arrive unprepared (academically and socially) to undertake the rigors of campus life while maintaining a balance focus on both academics and athletics (Wiggins, 1991).

#### Black Male Student-Athletes at PWIs

For years PWIs tended to admit any student-athlete who would generate revenue for the institution despite the fact many of them were ill-prepared for the rigors associated with being a student at a higher education institution (Wiggins, 1991). Funk (1991) offered that “academic abuses and problems are most prevalent in the two high-profile revenue-producing sports, and often these problems involve Black or minority student-athletes” (p. 28). Their logic was that any Black student-athlete who demonstrated unparalleled athletic ability could contribute to the success of a reputable national athletic program (Barbalias, 2004). Edwards (1973) referred to these Black male student-athletes as *Black gladiators* who were brought to college only to play sports and not to earn an education. Consequently, this same Black male student-athlete could fail to attract the attention of professional scouts and agents, and after four years of service to the institution and no meaningful education the only place for that Black male student-athlete to go is back from whence he came (Barbalias, 2004). Thus the time spent at the institution was a tease whereby the institution furnished a glamorous lifestyle for four years. Then when the Black male student-athlete’s athletic days were completed, the institution replaced him with a new Black male student-athlete anxious to take his place (Barbalias, 2004).

An example of discriminatory abuse of African-American male student-athletes was illustrated in Singer’s (2005) study of African-American student-athletes and their perceptions of faculty involvement at a PWI. His findings included that respondents indicated certain

individuals within the athletic department such as academic advisors treated them differently than their White student-athlete counterparts in regards to the selection of classes. One respondent described his feelings of resentment toward this process:

“Sometimes, sometimes I feel like the academic counselors, they um, you know I don’t know if they don’t think Black people are just as smart as the White people are, because you know, when it comes to Black people, they want to, they just want to get us by, by giving us any old class, you know what I mean. Where the White person, they are like, ‘Well, you need to take this, this and this’. Where with the Black person, they are like, ‘Well, we’ll give you this’, you know, ‘you just take this’, you know. Sometimes it’s like that I think” (Singer, 2005, p.378).

This quote typified the sentiment of many Black male student-athletes whom felt that in terms of their class schedules they were intentionally misguided. The lack of prioritization and support from the athletic department in regards to the selection of classes and majors for these Black male student-athletes were detrimental to their academic progress toward degree completion and even worse had a significantly negative impact on their overall personal development.

The cultural mismatch theory discussed the disconnection between Black students and White culture. The theory suggested that whenever communication between the student and teacher is not culturally congruent, there could be an adverse outcome for students (Gallien & Peterson, 2005). The cultural mismatch theory emphasized these various obstacles and placed the responsibility of Black male student-athlete achievement on not only the Black male student-athletes, but also the members of the majority culture they encountered at PWIs.

The role theory focused on the systems, or institutions, into which interaction fits (Adler & Adler, 1991, p.28). For Black male student-athletes the system is White hegemonic institutions that exploit their athletic talents at the expense of their academic and personal development. The tenets of the role theory involve statuses, roles, identities and self (Adler & Adler, 1991, p.28). According to Adler & Adler (1991), “statuses are positions in organized



groups or systems that are related to other positions by a set of normative experiences” (p.28). Historically, Black males student-athletes have been stereotypically labeled with the status as superb athletic specimens and *dumb jocks* with remedial intellectual capabilities. Roles refer to the activities people of a given status are likely to pursue when following normative expectations for their positions (Adler & Adler, 1991). Since Black male student-athletes are projected to be ostentatious athletes with little intellectual capabilities they subconsciously fulfill these roles as if it is their obligation to conform to these preconceived positions.

Furthermore, Adler and Adler (1991) define identities as the self-conceptions people develop from occupying a particular status or enacting a role. Black male student-athletes immerse themselves in the identity of athlete first and student second, if at all, because of the social expectation that tells them that their athletic abilities are more important than any other aspect of their lives. Adler and Adler (1991) refer to the self as the “more global, multirole, core conception of the real person” (p.28). The true self of many Black male student-athletes exceeds more than just being athlete; they are sons, brothers, students, role models and fulfill many other roles. Those Black male student-athletes who successfully emerge academically and athletically along with developing their social, personal and emotional identities fulfill their true self and do not limit their capabilities to a single role as an athlete.

Additional processes associated with the role theory are role engulfment, role domination and role abandonment (Adler & Adler, 1991). Role engulfment involves the process of student-athletes identifying themselves “as athletes first and sacrificing their interests, activities and consequently, dimension of their selves” (Adler & Adler, 1991). Role domination is “the process by which athletes became engulfed in their athletic role as it ascended to a position of prominence” (Adler & Adler, 1991, p. 27). For example, for a talented Black male football

student-athlete at a major Division I institution on a successful football team would increase their value of their athletic self-identity as the success of their team increased. Role abandonment is “the process by which student-athletes progressively detached themselves from their investment in other areas and let go of alternative goals or priorities” (Adler & Adler, 1991, p. 27-28). These components collectively explain how many Black male student-athletes underperform academically at these institutions as they did not identify themselves as students at all.

### NCAA Graduation Rates

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was founded in 1905 after widespread concerns surrounded football’s “rugged nature, typified massive formations and gang tackling, resulted in numerous injuries and deaths and prompted many institutions to discontinue the sport” (NCAA, 2008a, p.1). The NCAA began as a discussion group and rules-making body and in 1973 three legislative and competitive divisions known as I, II and III were created (NCAA, 2008a). Over the NCAA’s 103 year existence, the challenge of balancing the role of the student-athlete within the larger institutional mission has been increasingly complex. The battle between the commercialism of college sports and the academic integrity of higher institutions has been intensified by exorbitant television contracts, soaring coaches’ salaries and increasing scholarship expenses. Today many student-athletes, particularly Black male student-athletes, at these NCAA institutions are viewed more as athletes than students and this perception presents a major dilemma for institutions of higher education.

For years the NCAA has acknowledged the problem of minority student-athlete academic underperformance. In 2006, the NCAA reported that less than half (48%) of Black male student-athletes were graduating from their respective institutions (NCAA News, 2006). In 1985, the NCAA instituted Proposition 48 which required that “freshman athletes who want to participate

in sports in the nation's 277 Division I colleges and universities must attain a minimum score of 700 (out of 1,600) on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or a score of 15 (out of 36) on the American College Test (ACT)" (Greene, 1984, p. 10). They must also have achieved "at least a C-average in 11 designated high school courses including English, mathematics, social sciences, and physical sciences" (Greene, 1984, p.10). In 1991, the Knight Commission, an organization created to monitor the academic integrity of NCAA institutions, conducted research on the problem of the commercialism of college sports which they believed "threatens to undermine the integrity of higher education" (p. I). Both Proposition 48 and the Knight Commission were milestones in the history of the NCAA in terms of making strides toward upholding the foundational mission of the NCAA to provide a quality education for all student-athletes with a special emphasis on academic performance.

Moreover, according to the Knight Commission (1991), male student-athletes have underperformed academically in comparison to their non-athlete peers. In response, to these claims of undermining the integrity of higher education, the NCAA created programs to assist student-athletes' transition from high school to college. For example, the NCAA Life-Skills Program attempts to enhance all student-athletes' deficiencies in communication, career development, and interpersonal skills in the following areas: academic and athletic excellence, personal development, service, and career development (Mott, 1994). Black student-athletes specifically benefited from these programs given the various unique challenges they undertook at PWIs. Wiggins (1991) described these advantages stating that Black college student-athletes were privileged with opportunities to develop non-sport identities, learn job-related skills or enhance their knowledge about life outside sport, create meaningful relationships with influential

people in positions of power, gain material resources, and develop an awareness of abilities needed to nurture careers outside of sport.

Recently, the NCAA has revamped its tracking methods to increase reporting accuracy through its implementation of the Academic Progress toward Degree Standards, a revised Academic Progress Rate (APR) and an updated Graduation Success Rate (GSR) (NCAA, 2007a). The new academic progress toward a degree standard provided more transparency among institutions in regards to their level of dedication toward ensuring that student-athletes are not simply reaping the athletic benefits of being a student-athlete, but also attaining meaningful college degrees. Thus, the new academic progress toward a degree standard asserted that any student-athlete entering their third, fourth or fifth year of collegiate enrollment must have completed successfully at least 40, 60 or 80 percent respectively of their course requirements in their specific degree program (NCAA, 2007a).

Similarly, the academic progress rate (APR) was designed to be a one-year snapshot of the academic progress of athletic programs. From year to year, institutions can measure their improvements and with the new APR they can make better decisions about the content of the programs they offer for their underperforming student-athletes whom often time as the NCAA statistics revealed are Black male student-athletes (NCAA, 2007a). The new APR formula encompassed the total number of retention and eligibility points earned divided by the total retention and eligibility points possible multiplied by 1000 (NCAA, 2007a). The new APR rewards institutions for retaining and graduating student-athletes at a consistently high rate and does not factor those who transfer to another institution, which is a key measurement tool for the success of Black male student-athletes.

The new APR awards two points, “2-for-2,” to each term to student-athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution (NCAA, 2007a). A “1-for-2” student-athlete is one who leaves an institution at the end of a term and has not graduated. A “1-for-1” student-athlete is one who earns a retention point but leaves school for one of the following reasons: 1) degree program or sport has been discontinued, 2) medical exception such as a life-threatening injury or natural disaster, 3) uncontrollable and exempt financial difficulties, 4) harassment, 5) pursuit of a professional athletics career and 6) other unforeseen events and/or circumstances out of the control of the student-athlete’s and/or institution (NCAA, 2005b). A “0-for-2” student-athlete is one who is neither academically eligible nor remains with the institution. A “0-for-2” student-athlete might be one who transfers, leaves the institution for personal reasons or leaves to turn pro *and* would not have been academically eligible had he or she returned (NCAA, 2007a).

In addition, there are two types of penalties associated with low APR rates, contemporaneous and historical (NCAA, 2007a). Contemporaneous APR penalties refer to institutions given an APR score less than 925 and as a result they are unable to re-award a one year grant-in-aid or one year scholarship for that institution if a student-athlete leaves while ineligible to continue (NCAA, 2007a). Contemporaneous penalties hold institutions accountable for ensuring that student-athletes are academically eligible during their college tenures at their institutions (NCAA, 2007a). Historical APR penalties refer to institutions with an APR score less than 900 which renders progressive or graduated penalties including a warning letter, loss of financial aid and loss of practice time and a loss of post-season competition (NCAA, 2007a). The new APR format offers a semester to semester report card on their own institutional academic

progress goals, which allows institutions to better compare their academic progress with other institutions.

In terms of APR, the NCAA has produced several research documents comparing APRs of institutions on a national scale such as the *National and Sport Group Three Year APR Averages* (April 2007), which disclosed the academic progress of all Division I institutions. Overall, nearly 60% of Division I institutions had an APR level above 950, which indicated that many institutions have student-athletes progressing toward a degree at an acceptable rate. In regards, to football, across all Division I institutions the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) had the lowest average APR for male student-athletes at 949 (NCAA, 2007b). Overall, for Division I institutions across all sports, the average APR for all student-athletes was 960; for FBS schools the average APR for all student-athletes was 961; for Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) the average APR for all student-athletes was 960 and for Division I schools without Football the average APR for all student-athletes was 961 (NCAA, 2007b).

Similarly, this data supported the claim that most schools had student-athletes staying eligible at a sufficient rate, yet male student-athletes were still not graduating at a rate comparable to their student-athlete counterparts. It is also important to note that although the overall data revealed a higher graduation rate for all student-athletes it does not highlight the lower graduation rates among the Black male student-athlete cohort. As a result, many institutions may mask their academic performance records by boosting high overall student-athlete averages (e.g. White female student-athletes) despite specific sports underperforming academically such as football, baseball and men's basketball.

Currently, according to the *National and Sport Group Three Year APR Averages* the three sports with the highest percentage of teams who have an APR below 925 were football, baseball and men's basketball. The average APRs for football, baseball and men's basketball for the three-year APR were 931, 934 and 927, respectively (NCAA, 2007b). With squad adjustment (the application of the APR formula with the roster size of each team being taken into account), the APR percentage of student-athletes below 925 for football, baseball and men's basketball were 20.0 % (47 student-athletes below), 15.8 % (46 student-athletes below) and 10.7 % (35 student-athletes below), respectively (NCAA, 2007b). Without squad size adjustment (the application of the APR formula without taking the roster size into account), the number and proportion of football, baseball and men's basketball with APR scores below 925 were 39.6 % (93 student-athletes below), 34.7 % (99 student-athletes below) and 43.6 % (142 student-athletes below) (NCAA, 2007b). Despite the overall high APR scores it is clear that the major male-dominated sports were still struggling in the achievement of high student-athlete academic levels.

Similarly, the new GSR was adopted in the fall of 2005 by the NCAA (NCAA, 2007a). Similar to the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR), the GSR measurement includes a six-year window that accounts for the freshman-cohort of eligible student-athletes; however, unlike the FGR it also adds those students who enter mid-year and other student-athletes who transfer into the institution (NCAA, 2007a). The new GSR measurement also subtracted student-athletes who are considered allowable exclusions, such as those who either died or became permanently disabled, those who left the school to join the armed forces, foreign services or attend a church mission, as well as those who would have been academically ineligible to compete had they returned to their original institution (NCAA, 2007a). The new GSR, which enhanced rather than

replaced the federal methodology, provided credit to institutions for eligible transfers-both incoming and outgoing-while also holding these institutions accountable by deducting academically ineligible student-athletes who transferred out of the institution or those who simply did not return or completed their degrees as well as accounted for those mid-year enrollees (NCAA, 2007a).

The *NCAA Fact Sheet* (2008b) reported that the overall GSR for the 1995-1998 Division I student-athlete cohort was 76 % in comparison to the FGR of 62 % (NCAA, 2008b). Due to the fact that the GSR takes into account transfer students, the cohort size for the GSR was 91,511 student-athletes in comparison the FGR cohort was 67, 211 student-athletes (NCAA, 2008b). Female student-athletes displayed a significantly higher GSR of 86 % in comparison to their male student-athlete counterparts who had a GSR of 69 % (NCAA, 2008b). The statistics revealed that the three major male dominated sports of football, baseball and men's basketball had GSRs of 64 %, 65 % and 58 %, respectively (NCAA, 2008b). Alarming, the significant difference of GSRs between gender groups suggests that the need for additional research and concerted efforts toward increasing the academic achievement levels of male student-athletes in football, baseball and basketball.

In terms of the FGR, Black male student-athletes in 1998-1999 had rate of 48 % in comparison to the FGR of Black female student-athlete during the same time period was 63 % (NCAA, 2008b). Even within the Black racial group, Black males were under-performing more than their Black female counterparts in regards to their academic performance and degree completion at higher education institutions. It is noteworthy to mention that Black male student-athletes did have a slightly higher (8 percent higher) FGR than their Black male non-student-athlete counterparts (NCAA, 2008b). These FGR statistics indicate that athletic participation



could be associated with the higher graduation rates and retention rates for Black male student-athletes.

Furthermore, according to the NCAA (2005) *Division I Aggregate Data: 1998-1999 Freshman Cohort Graduation Rates*, there were a total of 18,622 Black student-athletes, 13,424 male and 5,198 female, who were enrolled as full-time undergraduate students in the Fall 2003-2004 (NCAA, 2005a). From the 1998-1999 freshman cohort, Black male student-athletes had the second lowest graduation rate of 48 % only ahead of American Indian male student-athletes who had a graduation rate of 39 % (NCAA, 2005a). In contrast, White male student-athletes shared the highest male student-athlete graduation rate with non-resident alien male student-athletes, both of whom had freshman-cohort graduation rates of 59 % (NCAA, 2005a). The GSR of Black male student-athletes was the lowest among both male and female student-athletes at a rate of 54% (NCAA, 2005a). The GSR of White male student-athletes was 23 percentage points higher at 77 %; White female student-athletes was 35 percentage points higher at 89 %, as well as Black female student-athletes had a GSR 19 percentage points higher at 73 % (NCAA, 2005a).

Quite alarmingly, Black male student-athletes who participated in one of the three major sports of, basketball, football or baseball appeared to be underperforming the more than any of the other sports. The GSR for Black male student-athletes for the 1998-1999 Division I freshman cohort for football, baseball and men's basketball were 54 % , 47 % and 49 % (NCAA, 2005a). In contrast, the GSR for White male student-athletes from the same cohort for football, baseball and men's basketball were 76 %, 68 % and 76 % (NCAA, 2005a). The drastic difference along racial lines in terms of GSR suggested that there is a major lack of effective academic support for Black male student-athletes. Black male student-athletes who participated in one of these sports were more susceptible to claims of academic fraud, delinquency and underachievement. As long

as institutions continue to reward championships and winning seasons and not equally promote academic integrity and graduation completion Black male student-athletes will continue to be victims of athletic exploitation.

In a more recent study by the NCAA (2007) entitled *Six Year Trends in Graduation Success Rates at Division I Institutions* football, baseball and men's basketball all have consistently scored lower GSRs than the average score for all male student-athletes. In the 1995 there were 13,411 reported student-athlete graduates in comparison to 2000 where there were 16,128 report student-athlete graduates (NCAA, 2007c). In 1995, the GSR for all male student-athletes was 68 % in comparison the GSR for football (FBS), baseball and men's basketball was 63.1 %, 65.3 % and 55.8 % (NCAA, 2007c). Additionally in 2000, the GSR for all male student-athletes was 72 % (4 percent increase from 1995) in comparison to the GSR for football, baseball and men's basketball was 66.6 %, 67.3 % and 63.6 % (NCAA, 2007c). Similar to the APR statistics, the difference in the overall male student-athlete GSR and the GSR of the three male dominated sports revealed how at first glance the final data could be misleading.

The most recent study conducted by the NCAA (2008c) revealed that latest GSR for African-American football players entering in 2001 was 58 % (three percentage points down from the previous year) in comparison the GSR for White football players entering in 2001 was 80 % (NCAA, 2008c). This 22 % disparity is unacceptable considering the mission statement of the NCAA which promotes a quality education for all student-athletes. Furthermore the GSR for the entering class of 2001 overall was 79 %; GSR for entering classes of 1998-2001 overall was 78 %; 1998-2001 GSR for male student-athletes 71 %; 1998-2001 GSR for female student-athletes was 87 % (NCAA, 2008c). In men's basketball and football, when the total number, each cohorts decreased, the number of student-athletes who graduated slightly increased (NCAA,

2007c). For men's basketball, in 2000 there were 42 fewer students in the cohort than in 1995, yet there were 55 more graduates (NCAA, 2007c). Similarly, in 2000 football teams reported 132 fewer students than in 1995, but had 35 more student-athlete graduates (NCAA, 2007c).

### Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

The term Critical Success Factors has been used to describe effective business management techniques that help a company successfully attain their goals. The necessity of simple, clear, and unifying objectives has been used in various management theories, such as key success indicators (KSI), key performance indicators (KPI) and critical success factors (CSF). Miller (1996) described the critical dimensions of success of efficiency, effectiveness, and growth through learning as he attempted to expand the framework for project success. Furthermore, Daniel (1961) in his review of why leading companies were in the crisis stage, singled out required areas of planning information. The identification of gaps in management information led Daniel (1961) to structure three basic categories of necessary planning in any company in a particular industry: environmental, competitive, and internal data.

Most of the data on CSF was developed on information and project management control programs (Fortune & White, 2006). Anthony, Dearden & Vancil (1972) applied the concept of crucial factors when they evaluated the design of management control systems. Following Daniel's (1961) research, Anthony et al. (1972) expanded the CSF approach and identified three significant requirements of any such organizational management system:

“The control system must be tailored to the specific industry in which the company operates and to the specific strategies that has adopted; it must identify the “critical success factors” that should receive careful and continuous management attention if the company is to be successful; and it must highlight performance with respect to these key variables in reports to all levels of management” (p.140).

This CSF progression placed emphasis on the need for customization to the organization's specific goals and its management team. Thus, these critical factors can now vary from "company to company and from manager to manager" (Anthony et al., 1972, p.148).

In 1979, Rockart investigated the real needs of the CEO, executive officers, and general managers as they struggled to identify, from their numerous reports and printouts of information, of approximately their needs for growth. Rockart (1979) believed that the byproduct, null, and key indicator approaches were ineffective in the streamlining process and avoidance of bias. Rockart (1979) and his MIT research team determined that the CSF approach was "efficient in terms of the interview time needed to explain the method and to focus attention on information needs" (p.85). His practice of CSF was designed to meet the ever changing needs, soft and hard information, of individual managers. Rockart (1979) defined CSF as:

1. The limited number of areas in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization. They are the few key areas where things must go right for the business to flourish. If the results in these areas are not adequate, the organization's efforts for this period will be less than desired.
2. The areas of activity that should receive constant and careful attention from management...each area should be continually measured, and that information should be made available (p.85).

For the purposes of this study, critical success factors (CSF) are aspects of an individual's life that assist them in achieving successful outcomes academically and athletically. These CSF could be personal, environmental, physical, social or psychological. For this analysis, CSF develops during an individual's childhood and typically expands throughout adolescence and adulthood. For Black male student-athletes the possession of CSFs was critically important to their success at PWIs since they faced difficult challenges ranging from social isolation to unrealistic athletic expectations (Funk, 1991). Researchers such as Fleming (1984), Boykin (1986) and Tinto (1987) have all presented models of Black student development at PWIs that

involved a form of CSFs. Chickering and Reisser (1993) also presented a model of student development that was not exclusive to Black male student-athletes, however, the seven vectors mentioned were relevant to all college students. Collectively embracing parts of each model, six CSFs have been identified as significant for increasing successful outcomes of Black male student-athletes: personal development, social harmony, engagement with a strong support system, time management, career aspirations and level of organized religion.

#### Critical Success Factor #1: Personal Development

Personal development is one key factor that could enhance a Black male student-athletes' chance at being successful at the college level. For the purpose of this study, personal development is defined as the level of involvement with any extracurricular, leadership development, community service, social or pre-professional organizations aside from mandatory athletic and academic commitments. Development encompasses learning practical skills such as problem solving, interpersonal relationship skills, and role playing (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Barriers for personal development of Black males, particularly student-athletes include obstacles "ranging from academic to attitudinal to environmental" (Funk, 1991, p.36). The pervasive negative campus climate of many PWIs has been counterproductive to the personal development of Black male student-athletes. Thus, in order to increase positive academic outcomes for Black male student-athletes there must be a more concerted effort to improve their personal development at PWIs.

Subsequently, the lack of personal development among Black male student-athletes raised concerns about the steps that should be taken to effectively improve the personal development of Black male student-athletes at PWIs. For example, Astin (1984, 1993) found that those who became more involved in various aspects of college life tended to have better

outcomes, both in short and long terms. This “input-environment-outcome” model, through which the quality and degree of involvement in their college experience, was directly proportional to students’ learning and development (Astin, 1993, p.7). Additionally, there was more supporting evidence suggesting that increased campus involvement could lead to positive outcomes. Berger and Milem (1999) found that becoming involved in campus activities during the first year not only predicted future involvement in activities but also was positively related to institutional commitment, integration into campus social and academic life, and persistence.

In conjunction with this data supporting personal development of minority students at PWIs, it has been a longstanding stereotype that Black male student-athletes did not see the value or importance of participating in extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless, high school records revealed that many young Black male students were previously involved in extra-curricular activities while in secondary school (Turner, 2000). The researcher identified Black male students who were oftentimes even admitted to higher education institutions largely due to their active involvement in extra-curricular activities as well as their involvement with athletics. Similarly, some of the most recent data indicated that the most successful traditional-age Black male students tended to have a balance between the academic and social environments of college life, and were skillful at negotiating the educational pipeline (Hrabowski, et. al. 1998). Therefore, in order to promote more successful academic, social and emotional outcomes for Black male student-athletes there must be a consistent promotion of healthy extracurricular involvement focused on their personal development outside of sport.

#### Critical Success Factor #2: Social Harmony

Social harmony is another CSF associated with the academic and athletic success of Black male student-athletes at PWIs. Researchers have found that many Black male student-

athletes at PWIs felt out of place on campus due to the fact that they did not fit the *norm* culture on campus (Rhoden, 1989). William C. Rhoden (1989) posited in his study that Black male student-athletes expressed a greater level difficulty in getting to know other students and in being liked by others for just being themselves. Jackson and Finney (2002) found that regardless of a student's racial or ethnic background that developing close relationships with others is a central concern for most people. These researchers also found that the desire to associate with others has been linked to the need for affiliation, the need for social comparison, and the need for intimacy. Unfortunately, for ethnic minorities, this problem of developing relationships at a PWI was more complex and thus more difficult to establish and sustain due to vast cultural differences between the Black minority culture and the White majority culture.

In addition, many institutions of higher institutions with larger athletic programs were PWIs where the presence of cultural disconnections between Black male student-athletes and the majority of the campus was more prevalent. Astin (1993) acknowledged that the college environment was an important part of this process, as it was the setting that afforded students opportunities for interaction and involvement in campus life. He found that factors such as interactions with other students and faculty were positively related to degree completion, in addition to a wide range of other outcomes (Astin, 1993). Being minorities at these PWIs Black male student-athletes were far more likely to suffer from social alienation and emotional distress. The same attention that is devoted to the development of their athletic skills should be applied to their overall personal development. Without a sound understanding of the social pressures these Black male student-athletes experience there is little hope for developing assistive programs and services to meet their needs.

For several years, the model of student integration proposed by Tinto (1987) was widely used and analyzed in higher education literature. He presented a longitudinal, predictive model of attrition that established the integration into the academic and social systems of the institution as the main culprit of the attrition process for minority students. Integration into the college environment is an emergent process that is largely a function of formal and informal interactions students have on campus, in both academic and social capacities (Tinto, 1987). He also suggested that through interactions in social and academic realms, students either reaffirmed or reevaluated their initial goals and commitments. As a result, the researcher provided that students such as Black male student-athletes who lacked sufficient interaction with others on campus or had negative experiences decided to depart the university as a result of this reevaluation.

Tinto (1987) divided the process of integration into social and academic realms. Both social and academic realms were essential and interrelated; hence, the identification of methods that promoted socially healthy campus climate for all students, particularly minority students, could lead to more successful academic outcomes. Moreover he offered insight into the idea that the environment a minority student grows up in has a significant impact on their perceptions and behaviors at a PWI. He stated that “for persons whose initial goal and/or institutional commitments are weak, the impact of those communities may make the difference between persistence and departure” (p.60). Continual research centered on increasing positive social outcomes for Black male student-athletes could lead to more positive academic outcomes for these student-athletes.

### Critical Success Factor #3: Engagement with a Strong Support System

The engagement with a strong support system is another major CSF that contributes to success outcomes for Black male student-athlete development. A strong support system consists



of primary and secondary groups. A student-athletes' primary support group includes their family, coaches, and faculty. A student-athletes' secondary support group consists of their peers and mentors who serve as allies for the student-athletes' overall development. Underwood (1984) emphasized the significance of a strong support system for student-athletes.

“If the NCAA is really serious about increasing the academic achievement of student-athletes, it should mandate that all its member institutions of higher education be required to implement and develop systematic comprehensive support programs for student-athletes” (Underwood, 1984, p. 26-27).

Without the engagement with a strong support system, Black male student-athletes were subject to face insurmountable academic, social, emotional and psychological challenges without a vital support base to encourage, guide and uplift them. Conversely, if a Black male student-athlete engaged with a strong support system then they would be more equipped with the necessary foundation to successfully manage and overcome the various obstacles they inherently faced as a marginal group at a PWI.

The most prominent aspect of a strong support system for Black male student-athletes is their family. The family serves as the base foundation of the shaping of the values, beliefs and perceptions of themselves and the world around them (Boykins, 1986). Harris and Duhon (1999) found that among the Black student participants, Black student-athletes and non-student-athletes alike identified family as the single most significant factor in their college success. Additional studies have linked successful college adaptation to the quality of relationships with one's parents using an *attachment theory model* (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Kenny, 1987; Lapsky, Rice, & Fitzgerald, 1990). Hence, the promotion of positive familial relationships among Black male student-athletes could lead to more positive academic outcomes for these student-athletes at PWIs.

Similarly, Nora and Cabrera (1996) found that the transition to college was less difficult for students who have supportive family and friends from their past. Holmbeck and Wandrei (1993) revealed that the attachment and support from parents was a very important predictor of positive adjustment to university life. Both male and female college students who perceived a higher level of support from their families tend to report high levels of adjustment to university life, irrespective of whether or not they left home for the first time to attend school (Lafreniere et. al., 1997). Although these studies and findings were not exclusive to Black male student-athletes they were significantly relevant. Black male student-athletes who suffered from social alienation at PWIs relied heavily on their family and friends for personal and emotional support. The families of these Black male student-athletes provided a level of assurance and familiarity that was too often missing at the PWIs these student-athletes attended.

Another influential support group for Black male student-athletes must come from the faculty at higher education institutions. Tinto (1987) stated that the moment faculty comes in contact with students they become actively involved in the nurturing process of student development. He suggested that if the faculty singled out certain students whom they feel has potential for growth, namely White students, and excluded other students such as Black male student-athletes, then this action sent a message to the latter group that they did not have the support and confidence of their professors. In addition to their preconceived notions about their own educational capacities, the lack of positive faculty intervention can further dissuade Black male student-athletes from persisting through graduation. Tinto (1987) recommended that only those faculty members that reached beyond the traditional academic structure and established intellectual, social and cultural connections with minority students would be able to successfully create a classroom environment that was conducive to minority student retention.

More recently, a respondent from the Singer (2005) study expressed that the preferential treatment awarded to White student-athletes did not only come from the academic advisors, but also from their coaches. He expressed that White student-athletes were allowed to make more mistakes off the field and still retain their positions on the team whereas he felt that this same treatment was not granted to African-American student-athletes (Singer, 2005). If coaches provided preferential treatment to White student-athletes, then Black student-athletes internalized that they were not valued or supported the same way as their White teammates.

#### Critical Success Factor #4: Career Aspirations

All across the country in urban areas young children idolized superstar athletes such as Emmitt Smith, Michael Jordan, Ken Griffey, Jr. and Charles Barkley, and they received positive images of escaping the clutches of poverty and welfare (Barbalias, 2004). These visions motivated these children to spend countless hours perfecting their jump-shot that could one day earn them millions of dollars, they believed, rather than investing their time with their academic work (Barbalias, 2004). Edwards (1990) indicated that the myths and stereotypes created by the media and the student's home experiences were often further supported by the educational system particularly at the collegiate level, thereby creating in children a false sense of reality of a possible career in professional sport. For example several recruiters from attractive Division I programs who confirmed that a professional career in sports was within their grasp. Seldom did these student-athletes consider the educational opportunity that accompanied collegiate athletic scholarships, and coaches emphasized winning the first day they arrived on campus (Barbalias, 2004).

Several researchers provided reasons for this trend of Black male student-athletes pursuing the dream of becoming a professional athlete at their own expense. Hawkins (1999)

stated that since many of these Black student-athletes came from impoverished conditions a large number of them viewed their athletic talents as their only hope of improving their immediate conditions and the conditions of their families (p.1). The researcher referenced a study conducted by the American Institute for Research which provided data that Black student-athletes' families made up 49 % of the lowest socio-economic status group whereas White student-athletes' families made up only 13 % of this group (AIR, 1989). In order for athletic administrators, coaches and faculty to possess a broader perspective on the issues facing Black student-athletes they must understand the cultural, social and economic environments that these students come from. The immense pressure Black male student-athletes undertake induces them to overemphasize their athletic talents at the expense of their academic, personal and emotional development.

Another researcher Harris (1989) further explained the reasoning by this growing trend by suggesting that these myths of professional sport careers were overstated to Black youth by their social network. These overstated myths were inherently detrimental to the Black community and thus created opportunities for Black student-athlete exploitation which placed a higher priority on their athletic success over their academic, social and intellectual development. Harris (1989) studied Black and White youths at summer camp and arrived at several conclusions. Blacks were more likely than Whites to perceive themselves as being good at sports and Blacks were of lower economic status than Whites, yet they still aspired to attend college. Subsequently, Harris (1989) affirmed that perhaps Blacks were using athletics as a method of *bridging the gap* to the mainstream and to being successful. These findings provided an insightful explanation as for why Black college students indicated that future income and future status had a greater influence on their career choice than on the career choice of their White

counterparts (Daire, LaMotte, and Fuller, 2007). The stark difference is rooted in the fact that Black student-athletes often times viewed professional sport as their primary avenue for financial wealth, whereas White student-athletes merely viewed athletics as a means to develop skills that could be transferable to a career outside of sport.

Furthermore, additional research suggested that these perceptions of athletic success were constructed and promoted from early childhood. Underwood (1984) showed in a five year study of 500 Michigan State University student-athletes that 62 % of the student-athlete participants were encouraged by their fathers at an early age to participate in athletics, and in most cases researchers suggested that adults emphasized sports to children as a means of engaging them in the American values system. Likewise, the NCAA study “The Experiences of Black Intercollegiate Student-athletes at NCAA Division I Institutions” revealed that 44 % of Black football and basketball players at PWIs said they expected to become professional student-athletes, but only 7 % said it was almost a certainty that they would become pros (Rhoden, 1989).

Similarly, 14 % of those who said they expect to play professionally were on the second and third team in their respective sports (Rhoden, 1989). The role institutions of higher education should undertake is the role of active promoters of academic, social and intellectual development for Black male student-athletes. Without this reinforcement, for personal development aside from athletics, from institutions and athletic departments many Black male student-athletes will continue to suffer academically at PWIs and in their post-athletic lives. Edwards (1990) found that Black families are four times more likely to view their children’s involvement in athletics as something that could lead to a professional sports career. The combination of societal stereotypes, unrealistic cultural expectations and poor academic support caused many young

Black males to pursue unlikely careers as professional athletes at the expense of their personal and academic development.

Moreover, in defining a purpose, student-athletes struggled most in developing educational and career goals (Gordon, 1986). A study conducted by Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1997) revealed that student-athletes in comparison to non-student-athletes expressed greater uncertainty concerning their major and showed a higher likelihood of changing their major. Additionally, the study provided that student-athletes reported having more difficulty selecting a major than nonstudent-athletes. Both groups felt that a likely reason for completing graduation requirements was to get a better job. However, nonstudent-athletes responded needing a degree in order to enter graduate or professional school frequently while student-athletes seldom responded in this manner. For Black student-athletes the ramifications associated with solely focusing on their athletic skills at the expense of their academic development were significantly higher than for their White student-athlete counterparts who often had advantages such as pre-established social networks that lead to future sustainable careers.

#### Critical Success Factor #5: Time Management Skills

The possession of effective time management skills is another CSF that affects the academic and athletic success of Black male student-athletes. Athletic participation inherently added additional challenges above and beyond the normal developmental challenges faced by college students (Watson, 2006). Many student-athletes regularly devoted in excess of 20 hours per week to sport practice and participation, leaving little time for academic work (Watson, 2006). This attitude of prioritizing athletic responsibilities above academic tasks was expressed by former Indiana University standout basketball player and NBA All-Star Isaiah Thomas:

“When you go to college, you’re not a student-athlete but athlete-student. Your main purpose is not to be an Einstein but a ballplayer; to generate some money, put people in the stands. Eight or ten hours of your day are filled with basketball, football. The rest of your time, you’ve got to motivate yourself to make sure you get something back” (Boykin, 1986, p.302)

The coaches encouraged this attitude when they demanded that players spend 50 or more hours a week on a sport, an athlete cannot refuse or he risked the possibility of losing playing time or even worst losing his athletic scholarship (Boykin, 1986). Some student-athletes even spent upwards to 40 hours a week on their sport, and when they were finished practicing or playing they were often in pain from intense physical activity, and emotional exhaustion; as a consequence, the motivation to study loses priority to getting rest (Edwards, 1990). It is evident that student-athletes had few options but to spend excessive amounts of time on their athletic endeavors at the expense of their academic and intellectual development in order to preserve their scholarships and positions on their respective athletic teams.

More specifically, the typical Black student-athlete at a PWI practiced 28 hours per week, spent 11 hours preparing for class and 12 hours in class according to the NCAA study conducted in the mid-1980s entitled “The Experiences of Black Intercollegiate Student-athletes at NCAA Division I Institutions” (Rhoden, 1989). In comparison, the Black student-athlete at an HBCU spent 25 hours in practice and 12 hours preparing for class and 14 hours in class (Rhoden, 1989). Even during the off-season student-athletes particularly with football were bombarded with strenuous conditioning and strength programs (Boykin, 1986). The difference in time devoted to sport versus time devoted to academics could have significant implications in terms the student-athletes’ overall well-being and academic success. The trend of placing a higher value on athletics over academics was manifested by pressure from coaches, family and other outside influences that directly tell these student-athletes that their athletic success was more valuable

than their academic success. Shifting the requirements and application of time management toward time spent on academics could be the first step taken by institutions in improving academic and career success outcomes for Black male student-athletes at PWIs.

Additional research has been conducted measuring the time management skills of freshmen student-athletes in comparison to their freshman non-student-athlete counterparts. A study conducted by Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1997) compared attitudes of 73 freshmen student-athletes toward their college experience. The data suggested that freshman student-athletes were significantly more likely than their non-student-athlete counterparts to report: (1) difficulty in getting good grades, (2) greater career confusion, (3) a lack of time as a barrier to college adjustment, (4) an easier time obtaining leadership skills, and (5) less concern in paying for their education.

Similar results were found by Etzel et. al (1991), as respondents stated that practice and competition drastically reduce the amount of free time they have for seeking needed services such as academic assistance, psychological counseling and personal down time. One of the consequences many student-athletes face was the pressure to choose a major that they have little knowledge of or interest in because they did not have the time needed to gather information and explore other career interests (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1997). The researchers concluded that this casual method of choosing majors was applied by many student-athletes and thus eliminating the possibility of selecting a major that will truly satisfy the student-athlete. For these student-athletes, time was cited as a major factor in interrupting their personal career development. In addition, the authors suggested that a lack of time was one reason that student-athletes were more anxious about their grades. Accordingly, the researchers suggested that it could be more common for student-athletes to apply this casual approach to selecting majors



based on the fact that they did not have had time to develop what they want to accomplish in their careers.

Time constraints for student-athletes are extremely stringent in comparison to their non-student-athlete counterparts. The NCAA instituted that student-athletes were not allowed more than 20 hours per week for activities associated with participation in an intercollegiate sport (Watson, 2006). However, often times this rule has not been effectively monitored. Since many schools relied on the success of their athletic teams for financial revenues, namely football and men's basketball, many administrators would turn a blind eye to the fact that coaches disregarded this rule for the sake of producing competitive teams. As a result, a typical day for a student-athlete included classes, practices, games, and homework; seemingly student-athletes were faced with a number of demands with less time to meet all these demands successfully (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1997).

In 2003, the NCAA reported that over 377,000 student-athletes participated in intercollegiate sports. As the number of college student-athletes increased it became imperative that the barriers to seeking counseling and support services for college student-athletes must be identified and successfully addressed (Watson, 2006). One of the three internal sources of resistance reported among student-athletes was time management. In conjunction, with the exhilarating victories on the playing field, student-athletes also must manage the rigors associated with academic responsibilities which inherently required effective time management skills. Ferrante (et. al, 1996) suggested that student-athletes must embrace the collegiate experience with the same academic, emotional, personal goals, and concern as other students if they desired to attain successful academic outcomes.

However, the challenges facing student-athletes were not exactly congruent with their non-student-athlete counterparts. All student-athletes have to attend athletic practices, in addition to the demands of an academic schedule leave little time during the day for additional concerns (Watson, 2006). Student-athletes do not have the luxury of choosing whether or not to sacrifice athletic or academic time to seek help for personal problems and often, by default, turn to their coaches and teammates for the help and support they needed (Watson, 2006). Both Watson (2006) and Etzel et al. (1991) reported results that indicated time as a major reason why student-athletes underperformed academically and deferred from seeking institutional counseling services. The respondents stated that “ between practice sessions, game preparation time, travel, and academic class schedules, the student-athlete has few available times to access college or university counseling services even if desired” (Watson, 2006, p.40).

In order to effectively address the demands of time facing student-athletes there could be programs in place specifically for student-athletes educating them on effective time management skills. Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1997) proposed that a formal class on effective time management skills should be required for all student-athletes. Since student-athletes faced distinct time constraints different from their non-student-athlete counterparts, they must also have specific courses that take into account these stark differences. In addition, administrators must hold coaches accountable for violations of the 20 hour-a-week rule instituted by the NCAA. Quite possibly, if these coaches are not held accountable to this rule, then student-athletes will continue to prioritize their athletic participation above their academic, social and career development.

## Critical Success Factor #6: Organized Religion

Traditionally, organized religion has been central to the African-American culture system (Boykin, 1986). Religion refers to the degree to which individuals adhere to the prescribed beliefs and practices of an organized religion or a Higher Power (Constantine et. al, 2006). Spirituality refers to individuals' belief in the sacred nature of life in all of its forms and the manifestation of this belief in a quest for goodness and interconnectedness with other persons and things (Howard & Howard, 1995; Mattis et al., 2004; Walker & Dixon, 2002). It has been identified by many researchers that African-Americans have higher baseline rates of religious participation in the U.S. than other ethnic groups (Christian & Barbarin, 2001; Constantine et. al, 2000). Although religion and spirituality are often used interchangeably it is important to note that a person could be spiritual and not identify with an organized religion. Conversely, a person could affiliate with a particular religion and not identify with the belief of spiritualism.

The roots of African-American religious culture stem from traditional African worldviews, such as communalism, which emphasize the importance of human relationships and the interrelatedness of people, unity, cooperation, harmony, balance, creativity, and authenticity (Constantine et. al, 2003; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Myers, 1993; Utsey, Adams and Bolden, 2000). In particular, religious, spiritual, and communal values were reflected in the context of many African-Americans' daily activities and lives (Constantine et. al, 2006). The function of religion has been identified to play a role in shaping African-Americans' cognitive outcomes including a role in framing such events in times of adversity (Brodsky, 2000; McAdoo, 1995). Thus, Black student-athletes may rely on their religion to assist them managing the adverse conditions they experience at PWIs.

Howard and Howard (1997) suggested that religion was a filter through which religious or spiritual people assigned meaning to their lives. Subsequently, researchers have found that that the cultural variables of religion and spirituality play vital roles in many individual's career decision-making processes (Bogart, 1994; Colozzi & Colozzi, 2000; Fox, 2003; Seaward, 1995). Ashar and Lane-Maher (2004) discovered that the perceptions of success were related to their work experiences, sense of accomplishment, and ability to have "meaning" and "purpose" in life. If Black male student-athletes associated their religious beliefs or sense of purpose with one aspect of their lives more than another, such as athletics over academics, then there is possible reasoning to explain the academic achievement gap among Black male student-athletes and their counterparts. Research in the area of Black male student-athletes' level of spirituality and engagement with organized religion is critical in order to develop future programs that effectively assist them academically, athletically, personally and socially at PWIs.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the critical success factors of current Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI who exhibit a high level of success academically and athletically. A sample of current Black male football student-athletes will be targeted in this study.

#### Subjects

Black male football student-athletes from the entering class of 2005, 2006 and 2007 at a major Division IA football program were the participants of the this study. Scholarship and non-scholarship student-athletes were surveyed for purposes of this study. This study included 42 Black male football student-athletes was at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI. Non-Black male football student-athletes and current first-year and redshirt Black male football student-athletes were excluded from this examination.

#### Instrumentation

The data for this study was collected through surveys given to the 42 participants. The questions on the survey queried pertaining the participant's classification/year in college, estimated cumulative grade point average (GPA), total games participated in last season, personal development, social harmony, presence of strong support system, time management skills, career aspirations and spirituality and/or organized religion. In order to maintain

confidentiality pertaining to personal questions given to the participants, no names were placed on the survey. The principal investigator remained outside of the room where the participants completed the survey. All information was then collected and categorized for the purposes of this study.

#### Data Collection

The participant's academic success was measured based on the individual's estimated cumulative grade point average (GPA) and current eligibility status. If the participant currently maintained GPA above 2.4 and was currently eligible to compete they were placed in the category of high success academically. If the participant currently maintained a GPA of 2.4 or below and was currently eligible to compete they were placed in the category of low success academically.

For athletic success level, the participant's total participation in games last season was used. If a participant participated and/or started in twelve to twenty-four games last season they were placed in the category of high success athletically. If a participant participated in 0-11 games last season they were placed in the category of low success athletically. Both academic and athletic success categories were measured individually in relationship to level of personal development, social harmony, a presence of strong support system, time management skills, career aspirations and level of spirituality and/or organized religion. Each of these CSFs was placed in a separate category with five questions per category.

Each of the five questions was placed on either a four-point Likert type scale or a yes/no response used to measure the degree to which the subjects identified with the CSF. The survey questions were created to measure of the level or significance of each CSF for the participant. If

a participant answered very good (4) or yes for each question the highest score they could receive on the survey was a 108 points which would translate to a significant presence of each CSF in the life of the participant. The maximum points per section: personal development (20), social harmony (18), engagement with a strong support system (40), career aspirations (5), time management skills (20), and organized religion (5).

If a participant answered none (1), never (1), not good (1) or no for each question in each section, then the lowest score attainable was zero, which would translate to a low level of significance for each CSF. There are two multiple choice questions in the CSF #3 section of Social Harmony. The points will be calculated for these 4-point Likert type scale questions such that the answer of (e) would translate into 4 points and the answer of (a) would translate into zero points.

#### Data Reduction and Analysis

The data was entered into the statistical program SPSS for Windows version 17.0. The information was coded by classification/year in college, academic success level, athletic success level, level of personal development, level of social harmony, level of presence of strong support system, level of time management skills, level of career aspirations and level of organized religion. A set of descriptive statistics and Chi-Square tests conducted to determine the relationship between academic and athletic success and the presence of CSFs of the participants.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

There were 42 Black collegiate football student-athletes from a major Division I Southeastern university who participated in this study. Each participant answered a set of demographic questions in regards to their year in school (classification), estimated cumulative grade point average (GPA), number of games participated and started and the racial diversity of their high school. Out of the 42 participants there were 19 sophomores, 18 juniors and 5 seniors.

#### Data Analysis

##### Grade Point Average

Exactly 50% (21 out of 42) had a GPA less than or equal to 2.4 while the other 50% (21 out of 42) had a GPA higher than 2.4. Those who had a GPA of 2.4 or below were categorized as low academic success and those who had a GPA above 2.4 were categorized as high academic success.

##### Athletic Participation

Athletic participation, roughly 50% (21 out of 42) participated and/or started in 0-11 games in the previous season and 50% (21 out of 42) participated and/or started in 12-24 games in the previous season. Low athletic success was categorized as having participated



and started in zero to eleven games and high athletic success was categorized as having participated and started in twelve to twenty-four games.

### Racial Diversity of High School

Racial diversity of the high schools they attended, 45.2% (19 out of 42) attended high schools that had a black student enrollment between 0-50%; 54.7% (23 out of 42) attended high schools that had a black student enrollment between 50-100%. Over one-third of the participants attended high schools that were predominantly black.

### Personal Development

52.7% (22 out of 42) of the participants scored between five and eight 45.2% (19 out of 42) scored between nine and twelve; 2.4% (1 out of 42) scored between thirteen and seventeen. The lowest score possible for this section was five and the highest was seventeen.

### Social Harmony

35.7% (15 out of 42) scored between seven and ten; 57.2% (24 out of 42) scored between eleven and fourteen; 7.1% (3 out of 42) scored between fifteen and twenty. The lowest score possible for this section was five and the highest was twenty.

### Engagement with Strong Support System

28.6% (12 out of 42) scored between twenty-five and thirty; 45.2% (20 out of 42) scored between thirty-one and thirty-five; 26.2% (11 out of 42) scored between thirty-five and forty. The lowest score possible for this section was ten and the highest was forty

### Career Aspirations

0% (0 out of 42) scored between a 0-1; 33.3% (14 out of 42) scored between two and three; 76.7% (28 out of 42) scored between four and five. The lowest possible score for this section was zero and the highest was five.

### Time Management Skills

0% (0 out of 42) scored between five and ten; 61.9% (26 out of 42) scored between eleven and fifteen; 38.1% (16 out of 42) scored between sixteen and twenty. The lowest possible score for this section was five and the highest was twenty.

### Organized Religion

7.1% (3 out of 42) scored between zero and one; 21.4% (9 out of 42) scored between two and three; 71.4% (30 out of 42) scored between four and five. The lowest possible score for this section was zero and the highest was five.

**Table 1**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.857 <sup>a</sup>	1	.355
N of Valid Cases	42		

The Chi-Square test above reveals the statistical relationship between academic success (estimated GPA) and athletic success (total number of games participated and started in previous season). The Pearson Chi-square p-value was .355, therefore no statistically significant relationship was found.

**Table 2****Chi-Square Tests**

Variable	Academic Success (Recoded GPA)	Athletic Success (Recoded Games)
Personal Development (PD)	1.000	.513
Social Harmony (SH)	.513	.533
Engagement with a Strong Support System (EWSS)	.537	.537
Career Aspirations (CA)	.513	.513
Time Management Skills (TMS)	.204	.525
Organized Religion (OR)	.495	.495
N of Valid Cases	42	

Table 2 displays the Chi-square results for each critical success factor and their relationship to the participants' academic success and athletic success. Row 2 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between the participants' academic success and their level of personal development. The Pearson Chi-Square p-value of 1.000 indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between academic success and personal development. Row 2 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown between the athletic success of participants and personal development. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .513 indicates that no statistical relationship was found.

Table 2: Row 3 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between academic success and social harmony. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .533 indicates that no statistically significant relationship was found. Row 3 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown is between athletic success and social harmony. The Pearson Chi-Square p-value of .533 indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship.

Table 2: Row 4 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between academic success and engagement with a strong support system. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .537 indicates that no statistically significant relationship was found. Row 4 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown between athletic success and engagement with a strong support system. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .537 indicates no statistically significant relationship was found.

Table 2: Row 5 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between academic success and career aspirations. The Pearson Chi-square value of .513 indicates that no statistically significant relationship was found. Row 5 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown between athletic success and career aspirations. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .190 indicates no statistically significant relationship was found.

Table 2: Row 6 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between academic success and time management skills. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .204 indicates no statistically significant relationship was found. Row 6 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown between athletic success and time management skills. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .525 indicates no statistically significant relationship was found.

Table 2: Row 7 (cell #1) displays the statistical breakdown between academic success and organized religion. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .495 indicates no statistically

significant relationship was found. Row 7 (cell #2) displays the statistical breakdown between athletic success and organized religion. The Pearson Chi-square p-value of .495 indicates no statistically significant relationship was found.

**Table 3**  
**Academic Success and Personal Development**

		Low PD	High PD	Total
<=2.4	Count	14	7	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	14	7	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Total	Count	28	14	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and personal development. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized as high success academically only 33.3% (7 out of 21) reported a high level of personal development.

**Table 4**  
**Athletic Success and Personal Development**

		Low PD	High PD	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	15	6	21
	% within Recorded Games	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	53.6%	42.9%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	13	8	21
	%within Recoded Games	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	46.4%	57.1%	50.0%
Total	Count	28	14	42
	%within Recoded Games	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Recoded PD	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletic success and personal development. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized as high success athletically only 38.1% (8 out of 21) reported a high level of personal development.

**Table 5**  
**Academic Success and Social Harmony**

		Low SH	High SH	Total
<=2.4	Count	13	8	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	54.2%	44.4%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	11	10	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	45.8%	55.6%	50.0%
Total	Count	24	18	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and social harmony. Out of the 42 participants surveyed, 57.1% (24 out of 42) reported low levels of social harmony.

**Table 6**  
**Athletic Success and Social Harmony**

		Low SH	High SH	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	11	10	21
	% within Recoded Games	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	45.8%	55.6%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	13	8	21
	% within Recoded Games	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	54.2%	44.4%	50.0%
Total	Count	24	18	42
	% within Recoded Games	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Recoded SH	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletic success and social harmony. Out of the 42 participants surveyed, 57.1% (24 out of 42) reported low levels of social harmony.

**Table 7**  
**Academic Success and Engagement with a Strong Support System**

		Low EWSS	High EWSS	Total
<=2.4	Count	9	12	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	45.0%	54.5%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	11	10	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	55.0%	45.5%	50.0%
Total	Count	20	22	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and engagement with a strong support system. Out of the 22 participants who reported a high level of engagement with strong support system 54.5% (12 out of 22) were categorized a low success academically.

**Table 8**  
**Athletic Success and Engagement with a Strong Support System**

		Low EWSS	High EWSS	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	9	12	21
	% within Recoded Games	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	45.0%	54.5%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	11	10	21
	% within Recoded Games	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	55.0%	45.5%	50.0%
Total	Count	20	22	42
	% within Recoded Games	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
	% within Recoded EWSS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletic success and engagement with a strong support system. Out of the 22 participants who reported a high level of engagement with strong support system 54.5% (12 out of 22) were categorized a low success athletically.

**Table 9**  
**Academic Success and Career Aspirations**

		Moderate CA	High CA	Total
<=2.4	Count	6	15	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	42.9%	53.6%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	8	13	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	38.1%	61.9%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	57.1%	46.4%	50.0%
Total	Count	14	28	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and career aspirations. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized a high success athletically 61.9% (13 out of 21) reported a high level of career aspirations.



**Table 10**  
**Athletic Success and Career Aspirations**

		Moderate CA	High CA	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	9	12	21
	% within Recoded Games	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	64.3%	42.9%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	5	16	21
	% within Recoded Games	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	35.7%	57.1%	50.0%
Total	Count	14	28	42
	% within Recoded Games	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Recoded CA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletic success and career aspirations. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized as high success athletically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of career aspirations.

**Table 11**  
**Academic Success and Time Management Skills**

		Low TMS	High TMS	Total
<=2.4	Count	15	6	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	57.7%	37.5%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	11	10	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	42.3%	62.5%	50.0%
Total	Count	26	16	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and time management skills. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized as low success academically 71.4% (15 out of 21) reported a low level of time management skills.

**Table 12**  
**Athletic Success and Time Management Skills**

		Low TMS	High TMS	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	14	7	21
	% within Recoded Games	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	53.8%	43.8%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	12	9	21
	% within Recoded Games	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	46.2%	56.2%	50.0%
Total	Count	26	16	42
	% within Recoded Games	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	% within Recoded TMS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletically success and time management skills. Out of the 42 participants surveyed, 61.9% (26 out of 42) reported a low level of time management skills.

**Table 13**  
**Academic Success and Organized Religion**

		Low OR	High OR	Total
<=2.4	Count	7	14	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	58.3%	46.7%	50.0%
>2.41	Count	5	16	21
	% within Re-coded GPA	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	41.7%	53.3%	50.0%
Total	Count	12	30	42
	% within Re-coded GPA	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for academic success and organized religion. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized a high success academically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of organized religion.

**Table 14**  
**Athletic Success and Organized Religion**

		Low OR	High OR	Total
Low Athletic Success	Count	7	14	21
	% within Recoded Games	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	58.3%	46.7%	50.0%
High Athletic Success	Count	5	16	21
	% within Recoded Games	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	41.7%	53.3%	50.0%
Total	Count	12	30	42
	% within Recoded Games	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
	% within Recoded OR	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 14 displays the descriptive breakdown of the reported responses for athletic success and organized religion. Out of the 21 participants who were categorized a high success athletically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of organized religion.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary

The purpose of this study is to identify the critical success factors of current Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I Southeastern public PWI who exhibit a high level of success academically and athletically. This study examined the background variables of classification (year in school), academic success (estimated cumulative grade point average), athletic success (number of games participated and started in previous season) and high school demographic (racial diversity of high school) in relation to six critical success factors (personal development, social harmony, engagement with a strong support system, career aspirations, time management skills and organized religion).

Results for the relationship between academic success and athletic success (Table 1) revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship, thus my hypothesis was not supported. From the 21 participants who were highly successful athletically, 57.1% (12 out of 21) reported a low level of academic success ( $GPA < 2.4$ ). Although not statistically significant these results revealed an interesting inverse relationship between level of athletic participation and level of academic success. The intense emphasis placed on their athletic accomplishments as opposed to their academic performance may help explain why these student-athletes who participate at a higher level athletically had subpar academic success. The difference in the level of academic success among these participants is important to note because it accentuates the idea that increased athletic participation may have adverse impact

on a student-athletes' academic performance.

Table 2: Row 2 (cell #1) displays the relationship between academic success and personal development. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and personal development. Comparing the results, both groups of academic success (high and low) had higher percentages of participants who reported a low level of personal development. More specifically, both groups of academic success (high and low) had 66.7% (14 out of 21) reported a low level of personal development whereas only 33.3% (7 out of 21) reported a high level of personal development. Although statistically there was no significance, a possible explanation for these percentages is the idea that many of these student-athletes invested so much of their time toward their athletic and academic responsibilities they did not have the time to participate in extracurricular activities that could enhance their personal development. However, with a larger sample as used in previous research such as the study by Fleming (1984), this idea may have been supported which emphasizes the need for further research in this area.

Table 2: Row 2 (cell #2) shows the relationship between athletic success and personal development. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship between athletic success and personal development. Out of the 21 participants who experienced a high level of athletic success only 38.1% (8 out of 21) reported a high level of personal development. Out of the 21 participants who experienced a low level of athletic success only 28.6% (6 out of 21) reported a high level of personal development. Once again these results may suggest that the time and energy invested in their athletic roles may have a negative impact on their involvement in extracurricular activities. Regardless of their level of participation in the games, all football student-athletes are required to participate in workouts, practice and mandatory tutorial sessions.

Unfortunately, with the growing competitive nature of Division I athletics unless there is a mandate from the NCAA or the institution that promotes personal development aside from their athletic and academic participation it does not appear that this trend will reverse.

Table 2: Row 3 (cell #1) illustrates the relationship between academic success and social harmony. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and social harmony. From the 21 participants who reported a high level of social harmony 55.6% (11 out of 21) were highly successful academically in comparison to the 44.4% (10 out of 21) who categorized as low success academically. Although not statistically significant, these percentages did support the proposition that student-athletes who experienced feelings of lack of social inclusion at an institution were less likely to perform at a high level academically. Due to the fact that they were a marginalized group as Black male student-athletes at a PWI, it is no surprise that they possess feelings of isolation. Since 54.7% (24 out of 42) of the participants sampled in this study attended high schools with at least 50% Black enrollment, it is important to acknowledge and address the challenges associated with making a transition into a different cultural, academic and social environment.

Table 2: Row 3 (cell #2) shows the relationship between athletic success and social harmony. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship between athletic success and social harmony. Out of the 21 participants who experienced a high level of athletic success 61.8% (13 out of 21) reported a low level of social harmony. Although not statistically significant, these results may suggest that higher levels of athletic participation may further isolate a student-athlete from the general student body. It is imperative that coaches and athletic administrators remain cognizant of the pressures that are associated with being a football

student-athlete at a major Division I institution; in order to ensure that their athletic success is not pursued at the expense of their social well-being.

Table 2: Row 4 (cell #1) displays the relationship between academic success and engagement with a strong support system. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and engagement with a strong support system. From the 22 participants who experienced a high level of engagement with a strong support system, only 45.5% (10 out of 22) were highly successful academically. These results point out that those student-athletes who excelled academically often times do not require the same level of support from others as those who do not. Their level of confidence is reinforced through their academic success and thus they may not seek the same level of support academically or emotionally. A larger sample size may have supported my hypothesis, hence the need for additional research in this area.

Table 2: Row 4 (cell #2) illustrates the relationship between athletic success and engagement with a strong support system. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship exists between athletic success and engagement with a strong support system. Out of the 21 participants who were highly successful athletically 52.4% (11 out of 21) reported a low level of engagement with a strong support system in comparison to 47.6% (10 out of 21) of those who were categorized a low success athletically. These results suggest a shocking reality that many student-athletes who are successfully athletically may be opting to handle their challenges on their own as opposed to reaching out to their support system. Since they have experienced a high level of athletic success they may feel that they can handle their obstacles outside of athletics on their own which can have damaging results on their relationship with their support system. These results may also suggest that these student-athletes who experience a high level of

success athletically may be lacking the presence of an adequate support system, hence their lack of engagement. A larger sample size may further support my hypothesis hence the need for additional research in this area.

Table 2: Row 5 (cell #1) displays the relationship between academic success and career aspirations. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and career aspirations. From the 21 participants who were highly successful academically 61.9% (13 out of 21) reported a high level of career aspirations. These results indicate that a student-athlete's perception of a viable career after college may have a positive impact on their academic performance. If student-athlete's view their role as student first and athlete second they are more likely to view their academic responsibilities with diligence and persistence. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete as well as the athletic staff and faculty to ensure that their academic performance is prioritized at higher or equal level than their athletic performance.

Table 2: Row 5 (cell #2) reveals the relationship between athletic success and career aspirations. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship exists between athletic success and career aspirations. Although it is noteworthy to mention that this test produced the lowest p-value (.190) of all the tests and was the closest to a significant relationship of all the variables. Similar to the relationship between academic success and career aspirations those participants who were highly successful athletically also reported a high level of career aspirations. Out of the 21 participants who were highly successful athletically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of career aspirations. Many of these participants reported that becoming a professional athlete was their primary career goal. This statement is not unusual given that in order to play football at a major Division I institution a student-athlete must have performed at a



high-level athletically in high school. The low p-value (.190) suggests that with a larger sample size my hypothesis may have been supported.

Table 2: Row 6 (cell #1) shows the relationship between academic success and time management skills. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and time management skills. From the 16 participants who reported a high level of time management skills, 62.5% (10 out of 16) were also highly successful academically. These results suggest that those student-athletes who perform better academically had better time management skills. In order to be a successful student-athlete at a major Division I institution it is critical to possess superior time management skills. Not only did these student-athletes attend mandatory athletic activities such as practice, workouts and video sessions they also have to make time to complete their studies and attend class. Without a sufficient time management skills completing these tasks effectively can be overwhelming. With a larger sample size this hypothesis may have been supported therefore emphasizing the importance of future research in this area.

Table 2: Row 6 (cell #2) displays the relationship between athletic success and time management skills. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship exists between athletic success and time management skills. Out of the 16 participants who reported a high level of time management skills 56.2% (9 out of 16) were also highly successfully athletically whereas only 43.8% (7 out of 16) were low success athletically. The rigid schedule demands a high level of effective time management skills in order to successfully perform at a consistently high level athletically. With a larger sample size this hypothesis may have been supported and hence highlights the need for additional research in this area.

Table 2: Row 7 (cell #1) displays the relationship between academic success and organized religion. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship exists between academic success and organized religion. From the 21 participants who were highly successful academically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of organized religion. A student-athlete's religious beliefs can have a significant impact on their perception of their purpose in life as a student as well as an athlete. Coaches and administrators alike must be cognizant the role religion plays in the lives of the student-athletes in order to promote healthy behaviors and positive outcomes on and off the playing field. With a larger sample size this hypothesis may have been supported and additional research is necessary in this area.

Table 2: Row 7 (cell #2) shows the relationship between athletic success and organized religion. The results revealed no statistically significant relationship exists between athletic success and organized religion. Similar to the relationship between academic success and level of organized religion those participants who were highly successful athletically overwhelmingly reported a high level of organized religion. From the 21 participants who reported success athletically 76.2% (16 out of 21) reported a high level of organized religion. These results reveal that those student-athletes who participated at a high level value their religion. The student-athletes' religious beliefs and practice may have a positive impact on their athletic performance. Additional research in this area with larger sample size may have supported this hypothesis.

#### Limitations and Future Research Studies

A limitation of this study was the small sample size of participants who were college football student-athletes from one major Division I Southeastern public PWI. Although there were no statistically significant findings revealed from this study, few results that produced

lower p-values and possibly with a larger sample the p-values of all relationships would have been lower. Future research should include a significantly larger sample size including more than one institution to determine if any of these critical success factor variables have an impact on the academic and athletic success of Black male football student-athletes. Future research should also be expanded to include all Black student-athletes from various sports, both genders and different institutions.

Another limitation of this study was that it did not take into account various background variables such as parental background, socioeconomic status or the quality of high education attained by the participants. Each of these variables independently and collectively can have a significant impact on the academic and athletic success levels of Black student-athletes at higher level institutions. In addition, this study was limited to six critical success factors. Additional critical success factors that were not taken into account could be perceived emotional stability, perceived athletic abilities, academic course load, and preferential learning styles. A study that includes these variables could possibly help explain the relationship academic and athletic success as well as the prevalence of the six critical success factors.

## Implications

Despite the overall achievements for NCAA student-athletes, nationally Black male football student-athletes were still graduating at a significantly lower rate than their White student-athlete counterparts. In order to fulfill its mission the NCAA and its institutions must make more concerted efforts to improve the academic performance of Black male football student-athletes and not just simply celebrate their athletic accomplishments. Although men's basketball and football showed improvement over the six year period from 1995 to 2000, the

lower GSRs of both sports should alert athletic administrators and faculty that continual research should be conducted in conjunction with increased efforts from academic support services for these two sports to ensure that these student-athletes are earning an adequate education and attaining meaningful degrees. Institutions of higher education must reach beyond simply acknowledging the challenges facing Black male student-athletes and actively engage in dialogue with them in order to establish effective programs and services to assist them academically, socially, and personally. Studies such as identifying the CSFs of Black male student-athletes serve as a platform for granting a voice for Black male student-athletes at PWI.

In addition, not only are Black males matriculating at the same rate, but they are also not graduating at the same rate. In 2004, only 33% of all degrees were awarded to Black males (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). In 2003-2004, only 3.2 percent of the total degrees conferred were awarded to Black males (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). In comparison nearly 10 times as many degrees were awarded to White males at 29.7 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). It is vital to note these trends within the Black student population in order to highlight the dire challenges encountered by the Black male student-athletes. Black male student-athletes have three perceived negative factors that may affect their achievement: being a part of a stereotyped ethnic minority group at a PWI, being a male which as a group has consistently underperformed in comparison to the females, and being a part of a student-athlete group that is often praised more for their athletic performances than their academic achievements.

Additional research from the *Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sport* reveals a similar trend of educational attrition among Black student-athletes. From a sample of the 119 Division

IA schools, the graduation rate for Black male football student-athletes is 14% lower than their White football student-athlete counterparts, 50% and 64% respectively (Lapchick, 2007). Racial disparity in academic achievement at the college level is evident among non-student athletes as well. Black male non-student athletes had a graduation rate of 37% whereas White male non-student athletes had a graduation rate of 61% (Lapchick, 2007). Presumably, athletic participation has a positive impact on Black male student-athletes as their graduation rate was 13 percentage points higher than Black male non-student athletes. However, the graduation rate of Black male student-athletes at the Division IA level (50%) and Black male non-student-athletes (37%) was significantly lower than their White male student-athlete (64%) and White male non-student-athlete counterparts (61%) at the Division IA level (Lapchick, 2007).

## Recommendations

If institutions of higher education are committed to successful outcomes for African-American student-athletes, then they should collaborate with their athletic departments in efforts to support these types of culturally relevant support programs (Singer, 2005). All institutional faculty and staff, specifically athletic administrators, should provide African-American male student athletes with “opportunities to engage in experiences that are geared toward helping them to establish networks and leadership training that will assist them in gaining access to the upper echelons of administration in the sport industry” (Singer, 2005, p. 380). Singer (2005) found that participants felt that some of the academic counselors scheduled African-American student-athletes for certain classes with the goal of only maintaining their eligibility, not to help them graduate (p.380). By not providing these Black male student-athletes with the proper support services and assistance to help them succeed academically as well as athletically at the college

level is not only disservice to them, but counterproductive to the mission of intercollegiate athletic programs.

In addition, Singer (2005) reported from his study a general consensus from the respondents that the African-American athlete is treated in an unequal manner in comparison to the White athlete. The researcher asserted that “student-athlete academic support programs have become important components of university athletic programs” (Singer, 2005, p. 379). The growth of these programs has been motivated by pressure to reform intercollegiate athletics (Singer, 2005). For example, Sellers (2000) highlighted the critical role that these programs and their personnel play in nurturing the overall development of student-athletes in general and African-American student-athletes in particular. The services that the academic counselors in these programs provide are crucial to African-American student-athletes’ growth and development (Sellers, 2000).

Taylor (1996) reported that attentive instruction, high expectations, and collaborative study have proven beneficial to students and led more of them to completing their degrees. The effective use of athletic participation could assist Black student-athletes in the development of their interpersonal and leadership capabilities in effect to increase the probability of increased Black male student-athlete enrollment, improved graduation rates and better a chance at attaining a successful career after college.

If institutions seek to fulfill their mission of providing a quality education for all students, then more comprehensive efforts need to be taken in order to ensure that this mission is carried out effectively, particularly with marginalized groups such as Black male student-athletes. Several researchers suggested that institutions must implement stronger academic support

systems, freshman ineligibility, stricter enforcement of the 20 hours per week student-athletes spend on sport, and increased investment in the schooling of these student-athletes (Sellers, et.al, 1991; Wiley, 1991; Lapchick, 1991; Harris, 1993; Hawkins, 1999). Gordon (1986) recommended programs which focused on a student-athlete's social skills, career planning and decision-making skills, leadership development, self-concept, and self-empowerment development. The identification of CSFs of current Black male football student-athletes who have successfully navigated PWIs is another important step toward the development of future programs and support services for these student-athletes.

Carr (1992) examined fourth-semester persistence rates of Black male student-athletes and investigated the effects of athletic and academic support programs on persistence. The study showed that 100% of the Black male student-athletes involved in a highly supported basketball program persisted for four semesters. Significant components of the highly supported basketball program in Carr's (1992) study were an effective orientation, consistent communication between instructors and coaches, regular academic progress review, and tutoring for the student-athletes in the "home turf" or athletic department. Hence, the effective use of athletic participation can have a positive impact of Black male student-athlete academic performance.

Lapchick (1984) stated the best approach was one which provided an incentive for institutions of higher education to cater more to the academic needs of Black and White student-athletes. For instance, he suggested that a student-athlete's academic development should influence whether a college or university gains accreditation (Lapchick, 1984). Similarly, Barbalias (2004) supported this idea suggesting that "if an institution's reputation and integrity are at stake, it is more likely to make the commitment to ensure a quality academic experience" (p.4). If these institutions are not pressured to address these challenges, then these trends of low

enrollment and low graduation completion rate among Black male student-athletes will continue to persist. A heightened emphasis from high ranking administrators will force institutions to take the academic progress of their Black male student-athletes more seriously.

A major problem facing many Black male student-athletes at PWIs is the persistent lack of positive role models within the athletic department. In response to this challenge, Singer (2005) suggested that “athletic directors should take on a mentoring role with African-American male student-athletes by allowing those who were interested to intern or volunteer with the athletic department and gain a basic overview of how a university athletic department is run and operated” (p.380). The researcher also cautioned administrators not to treat African-American male student-athletes unfairly in comparison to their White male student-athlete counterparts. Conclusively, he stated that athletic administrators and institutional faculty must be cognizant of the threat mistreatment may have on the integrity of their college sport programs. Hence, institutions and athletic departments should be required to establish stronger and more positive relationships with African-American male student-athletes in order to bring about greater consistency in the reinforcement of academic and personal development initiatives (Singer, 2005).

Likewise, the solution to the problems facing Black male student-athletes also lies with the Black male student-athletes themselves. All student-athletes must accept the reality that being a student-athlete at a university means that they are responsible for developing all aspects of their lives and not just their athletic talents (Knight Commission, 1991). This reality must especially be acknowledged by Black male student-athletes because the ramifications for their post-college careers are significantly impacted as noted by the National Educational Statistics (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005). That is, the coaches of these teams must stress to these student-



athletes that “fewer than one in a hundred” will ever make a living from their athletic ability (Knight Commission, 1991, p.27).

If this reality is promoted and emphasized by the coaches then these student-athletes will be more likely to view their athletic participation as a means to develop their social, intellectual and physical capabilities with the end result being the pursuit of a viable career after sports. Moreover, university presidents, athletic administrators and faculty must continue to work together to implement programs that cater to the specific needs of minority student-athletes and programs that create more successful outcomes for these minority student-athletes (Knight Commission, 1991). It is the mission of the NCAA to provide a quality education for all its student-athletes, but according to the statistics there is major racial and gender disparity in terms of academic achievement between Black male student-athletes and their peers. In order to effectively fulfill their mission institutions must understand, connect with and alleviate the challenges facing Black male student-athletes.

## Conclusions

It can be concluded from this study that academic success is not related to athletic success for Black male football student-athletes at a major Division I southeastern institution. According to the percentages of reported responses, that personal development, career aspirations, time management skills and organized religion were among the critical success factors that both groups of high academic success and high athletic success participants reported an equal or higher number of high responses. Conversely, social harmony and engagement with a strong support were the two critical success factors that both groups of academic success and athletic success participants did not have higher number of reported strong responses. Additional

research of these critical success factors in relationship to academic and athletic success of Black male football student-athletes should be considered with a larger sample in order to possibly increase the discovery of significant relationships between variables.

## APPENDIX

### Critical Success Factor Survey

Implementation of this survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the completion of this survey should take about 10 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You reserve the right to at anytime withdraw your participation in this study. Information received from the subjects will be privately reviewed and analyzed by the principal investigator. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about your rights as a research subject in this study, please contact the Behavioral IRB at (919) 962-7761. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the survey, please contact Joseph N. Cooper at [jcooper@unca.unc.edu](mailto:jcooper@unca.unc.edu). Thank you for participation in this study.

### DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON ANY SHEET

**Classification/Year in School:**\_\_\_\_\_ (Second , Third or Fourth year)

**Cumulative GPA:**\_\_\_\_\_ (4.0 scale to the nearest tenth)

**Total Games Participated in Last Season:**\_\_\_\_\_ (0-12)

**Which of the following best describes the racial breakdown of your high school? (circle one)**

**a. Most White**

**b. Mostly Black**

**c. Mixed**

The purpose of this survey is to identify, classify and determine to what degree critical success factors are related to athletic and academic success. The following six (6) categories on this survey represent the *Six Critical Success Factors*. Each category has a total point calculation that will be calculated at the conclusion of the survey.

On a scale from 1-4 rank the degree to which you participate in the following:

1=Never

2=Sometimes

3=Frequently

4=Very Frequently

1. Leadership Organization (s):\_\_\_\_\_ (for example: Carolina Leadership Academy)
2. Service Organization (s):\_\_\_\_\_ (for example: Habitat for Humanity)
3. Social Organization (s):\_\_\_\_\_ (for example: Black Student Movement (BSM) or Fraternity)
4. Pre-professional Organizations (s):\_\_\_\_\_ (for example: Black Business Student Alliance (BBSA))
5. Extracurricular Organization (s):\_\_\_\_\_ (for example: Intramural Sports)

On a scale from 1-4 rank the degree of your relationships with the following:

1=Not Good

2=Somewhat Good

3=Good

4=Very Good

1. My teammates:\_\_\_\_\_
2. My classmates at school:\_\_\_\_\_
3. What percentage of the time outside of mandatory athletic activities do you spent with your teammates?
  - a. 0-20%
  - b.20-40%
  - c.40-60%
  - d.60-80%
  - e.80-100%
4. What percentage of the time outside of mandatory athletic activities do you spend with your non-teammates at school?
  - a. 0-20%
  - b.20-40%
  - c.40-60%
  - d.60-80%
  - e.80-100%
5. Overall, I am happy with my social life at school? (Circle one)

Yes

No

On a scale from 1-4 rank the degree to which you receive the support you need from the following:

1=None

2=Below Average

3=Average

4=Above Average

1. My family:  
Support for School \_\_\_\_\_ Support for Football \_\_\_\_\_
2. My coaches:  
Support for School \_\_\_\_\_ Support for Football \_\_\_\_\_
3. My professors:  
Support for School \_\_\_\_\_ Support for Football \_\_\_\_\_
4. My peers (friends, teammates and classmates):  
Support for School \_\_\_\_\_ Support for Football \_\_\_\_\_
5. My mentors:  
Support for School \_\_\_\_\_ Support for Football \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one answer for the following questions:

1. I plan on completing my degree requirements and receiving my bachelor's degree

Yes

No

2. My primary career goal is to become a professional athlete.

Yes No

3. My athletic participation (effort in games and practice) is important to my career goals.

Yes No

4. My academic participation (class attendance, study habits, etc.) is important to my career goals.

Yes No

5. It is important for me to have a career goal.

Yes No

On a scale from 1-4 rank your time management skills

1=None

2=Below Average

3=Average

4=Above Average

1. My time management skills with my school work:\_\_\_\_\_

2. My time management skills with my athletic activities:\_\_\_\_\_

3. My time management skills with my extracurricular activities:\_\_\_\_\_

4. My time management skills with my social activities:\_\_\_\_\_

5. My overall time management skills:\_\_\_\_\_

Circle one answer for each of the following questions:

1. My religion/faith is important to me.

Yes No

2. I attended religious services on a regular basis before college.

Yes No

3. I currently attend religious services on a regular basis.

Yes No

4. My religion provides me with a sense of purpose.

Yes No

5. My religious beliefs help me with my academic performance.

Yes

No

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