GRAPPLING WITH MONEY: A STUDY OF FUNDRAISING PRACTICES OF NCAA
WRESTLING COACHES

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ABSTRACT

LEE H. ROBERTS: Grappling with Money: A study of Fundraising Practices of NCAA Wrestling Coaches
(Under the direction of Coyte G. Cooper, Ph.D.)

A shift in institutional priorities related to enhancing revenue-generating sport programs combined with economic factors has driven the elimination of many men's programs (Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2009). The purpose of this study is to explore fundraising practices of top NCAA wrestling coaches to determine strategies that programs can implement to encourage sustainability initiatives. Coaches can support their own budgets by raising financial support of their program which will eliminate the budgetary pressure paramount to the decision to eliminate a sport (Weight, 2010). Ten NCAA Division I wrestling coaches were identified as the preeminent fundraisers in their field. In order to determine why people give to wrestling and the fundraising strategies of these coaches, interviews were conducted. The interviews were coded and analyzed for common themes. These themes and their sub-categories are discussed in order to provide a foundation for all coaches to implement fundraising initiatives of their own.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"These programs appear to promise a quick route to revenue, recognition and renown for the university. But along that road, big-time athletics programs often take on a life of their own. Their intrinsic educational value, easily lost in their use to promote extra-institutional goals, becomes engulfed by the revenue stream they generate and overwhelmed by the accompanying publicity. Now, instead of the institution alone having a stake in a given team or sport, the circle of involvement includes television networks and local stations that sell advertising time, the corporations and local businesses buying the time, the boosters living vicariously through the team's success, the local economies critically dependent on the big game, and the burgeoning population of fans who live and die with the team's fortunes."

- Knight Commission, 1991

"It is time for colleges and universities to resist the never-ending pressure to increase spending on intercollegiate athletics. Even as this report goes to press, high-profile athletic conferences are expanding their memberships in an effort to boost television market share and revenues they hope will follow…The predictable result: increased subsidy of athletics programs at the cost of academic programs, higher mandatory athletics fees for all students at many institutions, and a reduction in sports offerings – including dropping of teams that are not generating revenues. Such outcomes are indefensible for an enterprise that exists for the benefit of student participants and should serve to strengthen the academic mission of the university."

- Knight Commission, 2010

The Knight Commission's concerns about college athletics expressed in its initial report in 1991 still ring true 20 years later, as the effect of financial pressures continue to be seen on campuses around the country. In September of 2010, the University of California at

Berkeley decided to cut five varsity sports in an effort to reduce the university's subsidization of the athletics program (Berkowitz, 2010). The decision by Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau was part of a comprehensive plan for Cal's athletic department. Birgeneau claimed the plan will "contain costs, reduce institutional support to reasonable levels, increase revenues and enhance the program's ability to help student-athletes succeed on and off the field" (UC Berkeley, 2010). It is interesting, yet not surprising, to note that three of the four reasons given by the chancellor were financial.

Ironically, in February 2011, after significant fundraising campaigns raised close to $13 million, three of the five sports cut by the Chancellor were reinstated (Associated Press, 2011). A few months later, the baseball team was also reinstated after generating $9.7 million through private donations to the program (Benenson, 2011). This was the final of the five sports initially cut to be reinstated, all as a result of fundraising efforts to generate the additional revenue the school would not provide. With the university only contributing $5 million in institutional support, Athletic Director Sandy Barbour indicated they will create and implement a multi-year fundraising effort in order to be able to continue to maintain a broad-based program of 29 sports (Benenson).

Elimination of non-revenue programs at Division I institutions happens every year, and overwhelmingly men's sports are the ones being cut. In 2010, 25 men's sports teams were dropped from Division I institutions' athletic departments while only 15 women's programs were cut. At the same, though, 21 women's teams were added while only 12 men's teams were added throughout Division I (NCAA, 2010). This trend has existed for at least the last twenty years, as the number of men's sports programs in Division I has had a net decrease of 300 since 1988-1989, while women's sports programs have enjoyed a net

increase of 720 in the same time frame (NCAA). While Title IX is certainly a factor in the

increase in women's sports opportunities, the "driving force behind the loss of many men's

sport programs over the past 20 years has been a shift in institutional priorities related to

achieving excellence in football and basketball coupled with economic factors involving the

arms race, not the drive for equality" (Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2009,

pg. 267). The reason universities are striving for excellence in football and basketball is the

fact Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions averaged net revenues of $3,148,000 and

$788,000 in those sports, respectively (NCAA, 2011). It is also clear that these two sports

are receiving the majority of expenditures in athletic departments across Division I, as FBS

institutions median values for expenses in football and basketball were $12,367,000 and

$4,003,000, respectively. Meanwhile, FBS institutions spent an average of $719,000 on their

wrestling programs, the eighth-most of any sport offered in Division I. Unfortunately,

wrestling programs also generated the seventh-least revenue on average of any sport offered

in Division I (NCAA). This discrepancy makes wrestling programs frequent targets of

eliminations when athletic departments decide to cut sports (Williamson, 1983; Gray &

Pelzer, 1995). However, wrestling coaches do not have to sit back and accept that their

program will be cut. Weight argues that wrestling coaches can "ensure the longevity of their

sport through self-sustaining financial support through fundraising, because the financial

pressure paramount to the sport dropping decisions would no longer be an issue" (2010, pg.

13).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore fundraising practices of top NCAA wrestling coaches to determine strategies that programs can implement to encourage sustainability initiatives.

Research Questions

[RQ1] What are the primary factors that top coaches believe influence someone's decision to contribute financially to a wrestling program?

[RQ2) What fundraising strategies do top coaches implement to support the sustainability of their program?

[RQ3] Are there trends in the specific strategies that top coaches are implementing in their fundraising initiatives?

Operational Definitions

- Relationship Building – Any activities performed by the coach to build and enhance the relationship between potential or current donors to the wrestling program at that coach's institution.

- Marketing & Promotions – Any special events organized and hosted by the coach of a Division I wrestling program for the specific purpose of fundraising. These events may happen one time or be ongoing

- History, Tradition & Success – The length of time the program has been in existence and the competitive accomplishments of the program measured in individual won-loss records, team won-loss records, individual and team national and conference

championships and other awards for competitive excellence bestowed on the team or individuals.

Definition of Terms

- Development Office: Fundraising arm of an athletic department.

- Discontinued program: An intercollegiate varsity team that an institution decides to no longer sponsor to participate in NCAA competition.

- Donor: Someone who gives money to a college or university's athletic department.

- Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS): Subdivision of NCAA Division I comprised of institutions which provide maximum support of football by offering up to 85 scholarships. These institutions determine a champion through the Bowl Championship Series (BCS).

- Football Championship Subdivision (FCS): Subdivision of NCAA Division I comprised of institutions which provide reduced support of football by offering up to 63 scholarships. These institutions determine a champion through an NCAA sponsored Championship tournament.

- NCAA Division I: Highest classification of athletic department determined by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). An athletic department must sponsor 16 varsity level sports and comply with NCAA academic standards and governance requirements to be classified as a Division I athletic department.

Assumptions

- The measures used to conduct research were valid and reliable.

- Mike Moyer, Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA), is the most qualified source to determine the top coaches in the area of fundraising among all NCAA wrestling coaches.

- Data obtained through interviews were recorded in a timely and accurate manner.

- The respondents provided honest answers.

Limitations

- Only wrestling coaches were interviewed so results should not be generalized to other sports.

- Only coaches from NCAA Division I wrestling programs were interviewed so the results should not be generalized to other NCAA divisions.

Delimitations

- Only ten head coaches of NCAA Division I wrestling programs were invited to participate in this study. The ten coaches were chosen by the Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA).

Significance of Study

With wrestling programs being a frequent target for program elimination, coaches must do everything in their power to help their program. The ability to raise money privately to supplement the operational budget is an incredible asset for any wrestling coach to possess. However, not all coaches have the same understanding of the importance of fundraising, as well as the skills necessary to be an effective fundraiser. By interviewing the ten most effective fundraisers among NCAA wrestling coaches, this study will provide valuable information for all wrestling coaches as to the strategies and tactics necessary to be a successful fundraiser.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a foundation for this study, there are several areas of previous research that impact the issues facing coaches in their attempts to sustain their programs. This review of literature will focus on men's program elimination, Resource Allocation Theory, the economic realities facing college athletic departments, fundraising strategies and non-revenue coaching behaviors.

Men's Program Elimination

Despite an overall increase in men's sport sponsorship within the entire NCAA, there were a total of 300 men's sports programs cut at Division I institutions between the 1988-1989 academic year and the 2009-2010 academic year (Zgonc, 2010). At a time when multiple men's teams (Baseball, Cross Country, Golf, Gymnastics, Rifle, Soccer, Swimming & Diving, Tennis, Water Polo) suffered double-digit losses in sports sponsorship, there were a total of 720 women's sports added at the Division I level (Zgonc). While each of these men's programs has been negatively impacted, Tennis, Swimming & Diving and Wrestling have suffered a more significant brunt of these eliminations that others. In total, 150 programs of these three sports have been eliminated since 1988 which is half of all sport eliminations during this time period (Zgonc). In a report by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO), the level of student interest was the most often cited factor in a school's decision to eliminate a sport (2001). Ironically, participation in high school wrestling is at its highest point since 1980 and ranks sixth among all boys' sports in terms of

participation numbers (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2011), so it would appear that some other reason causes wrestling programs to be eliminated. Blame for losses to men's sports, especially wrestling, has also been placed on Title IX. The National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) filed a lawsuit against the Department of Education, claiming that the DOE's interpretation of Title IX legislation discriminates against men and causes colleges to eliminate men's sports (*NWCA v. DOE*, 2003). Dan Gable, the former head wrestling coach at University of Iowa, argues that wrestling programs will continue to be cut in the future because athletic directors have demonstrated a preference to cutting men's sports rather than creating new participation opportunities for women (2005). However, there is a growing body of literature that argues the culprit for the elimination of men's non-revenue programs is athletic department's decisions to maximize profits and allocate funds to compete in the financial arms race in college athletics (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar, 2003, Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2008; Weight, 2010).

In 2001, the GAO conducted a study to determine what changes had taken place from 1981-2001 in the number of participation opportunities in college athletics and to explore the factors which influenced the decisions to add or discontinue teams. In addition, the GAO sought to discover what strategies institutions used to avoid cutting teams. Wrestling programs suffered the largest decreases in number of teams during the time studied. Among the 272 responding schools that discontinued a men's team, "91 cited lack of student interest as a great or very great influence, 83 cited the need to meet gender equity goals or requirements, and 82 cited the need to reallocate budget resources to other sports" (2001, p. 18).

The elimination of wrestling programs has been studied on three occasions, all of which surveyed athletic directors to determine the reasons these programs were being cut (Gray & Pelzer, 1995; Weight & Cooper, 2011; Williamson, 1983). Williamson's study utilized a survey of 18 NCAA athletic directors to identify the reasons wrestling was discontinued from 1979-80 through 1981-82. The author concluded that the top reasons wrestling programs were discontinued were lack of student interest, high cost, lack of recruitable prospects and lack of spectator appeal. Williamson's study found that athletic directors ranked Title IX as the seventh most important reason for cutting a wrestling program.

In 1995, Gray and Pelzer wanted to update Williamson's research, as the authors believed that in the time since Williamson's study in 1983, "Title IX has become a driving force behind the restructuring of college athletics" (p. 121). Gray & Pelzer utilized Williamson's results to determine the common reasons wrestling programs were eliminated and created a survey that was sent to 63 NCAA Division I-A athletic directors who discontinued wrestling between 1981 and 1995. Of the population, 41 responded to the survey. The survey responses indicated that the top reasons for eliminating wrestling at those schools were conference alignment, shifting resources, inconvenient travel, and cost, while Title IX was the seventh-most influential factor (Gray & Pelzer).

Weight and Cooper sought to build upon the previous research of athletic director decisions to eliminate nonrevenue sports through a mixed methods approach that utilized a multiple embedded case study and a survey (2011). The authors surveyed athletic directors and wrestling coaches at Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions and also interviewed coaches, athletic directors and a leader of a major national wrestling association to determine

how FBS athletic directors justify cutting wrestling as well as what criteria coaches believe is being used to rationalize eliminating wrestling programs. The athletic directors' responses indicated that the most influential factor on program termination was "departmental budget shortages resulting from decreases in institutional support, donor support or revenue" (p. 66). The coaches' responses indicated that they believed gender equity was the most common factor for cutting wrestling. When comparing the responses between coaches and athletic directors, the budget shortage factor was significantly more important to athletic directors than the coaches. Based on these results, Weight and Cooper argue that coaches "need to place a higher emphasis on the ability to increase revenues realized by their program during the season" (p. 71).

Resource Allocation Theory

The theoretical foundation through which this study is based is the theory of resource allocation, which was initially described by Adam Smith, who wrote:

The market price of every particular commodity is regulated by the proportion between the quantity which is actually brought to market, and the demand of those who are willing to pay the natural price of the commodity, or the whole value of the rent, labour, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither (1776, p. 84).

In 1985, Hackman studied university administrations and their budgeting process and developed the theory of resource allocation in the university setting. The author stated the "theory is based on five concepts: centrality, resource allocations, environmental power, institutional power and resource allocation strategies" (1985, p. 61). Hackman defines centrality as how closely a unit of an organization matches the central mission of the institution and resource allocation is the share of resources acquired by a unit. The author's

theory suggests "environmental power is the relative ability of a unit to bring in outside resources that are critically needed by the institution" (p. 63) while "institutional power is the unit's relative influence within the institution, independent of its environmental power" (p. 63). The fifth concept of resource allocation strategies refers to the tactics utilized by unit heads to obtain resources. The study found that a unit's centrality interacts with the unit's environmental power and resource negotiation strategies and has a significant effect on its resource allocations (Hackman).

Hackman divides units within an institution into core units and peripheral units. Core units are "essential to the central mission of an institution. Without the core, the organization would have another purpose" (pg. 62). Peripheral units, on the other hand, are not essential to the institution's overall purpose. While both units can receive resources, they must seek to obtain resources through different negotiation strategies. Hackman suggests that core units will receive internal resources when they emphasize their individual unit needs because their needs correspond directly with the mission of the organization as a result of their centrality. In contrast, peripheral units will only gain internal resources when they focus their negotiation on "broader institutional needs and bring in external resources that contribute to the whole" (p. 75).

The theory of resource allocation has been utilized in sport management literature by Weight (2010), who examined the perceptions of athletic directors on the influence of coaches in sustaining Division I-A wrestling programs. With Adam Smith's belief that resources seek their most profitable uses as a foundation, male non-revenue sports are being eliminated due to a lack of demand (Weight). Weight argues that "if a program were self-sustained, and/or had significant enough demand form the community to balance the resource

allocation equation, then wrestling programs would never be cut" (p. 11). Using this

backdrop to conduct interviews in the study, Weight found that athletic directors were in

agreement that a program would most likely never get cut if it was garnering demand from

the community or if it was self-sustained.

Economic Realities

When examining college athletics through the lens of resource allocation theory,

Marburger and Hogshead-Makar argue athletic departments will continue to move resources

away from non-revenue sports and into football and men's basketball because the financial

incentives to reach a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) bowl game or the Men's NCAA

Basketball Final Four are so great (2003). If the only sports creating demand are football

and men's basketball, fully embracing this theory would lead athletic departments to cut all

sports. Of course, the NCAA requires a Division I member institution to support 14 sports

(NCAA Manual, 2011). Since women's sports are also needed to help meet gender equity

requirements, men's sports like wrestling are the first to get cut in efforts to maximize profits

(Marburger & Hogshead-Makar). In the past, the education value of wrestling was enough to

justify its existence in an athletic department, but with the arms race, the reality is that the

sport is cut for financial reasons (Weight, 2010). As Leland & Peters argue, "the real

expenses starving minor men's sports of funding are the disproportionate share of university

athletic dollars spent on one or two teams – football and men's basketball" (2003, pg. 7).

The sport of wrestling is unique among non-revenue sports because there is no female

equivalent currently offered for NCAA institutions. It's only companion as a male sport with

no equivalent is football, but yet only four Division I institutions discontinued their football

program between 1988 and 2010, compared to 50 eliminations of wrestling teams (Zgonc,

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2010). Financial data from the NCAA shows that revenue generation is the major difference

between wrestling and football. According to the NCAA's Revenues & Expenses report for

fiscal year 2010, the football programs at FBS institutions earned $3,148,000 net revenue on

average (Fulks, 2011). By contrast, wrestling programs at these same institutions lost

$373,000 on average during the same fiscal year. Wrestling programs, on average, are the

eighth-most expensive programs to operate while generating the seventh-lowest amount of

revenue (Fulks). This information provides a clear backdrop to the reasoning for eliminating

wrestling programs in the face of a budget deficit. From a business perspective, there is a

clear rationale based on the dollars and cents of the reality facing wrestling programs.

However, "intercollegiate athletics exist first and foremost for the student-athletes who

participate, whether male or female, majority or minority, whether they play football in front

of 50,000 or field hockey in front of their friends" (Knight Commission, 1991, p. 24). In this

context, the idea of eliminating a program for budget reasons seems to be in direct conflict

with the educational benefits of college athletics.

　　　While the Knight Commission's belief regarding the purpose of college athletics

sounds ideal, it is not a realistic expectation for non-revenue programs such as men's

wrestling at this point. Varsity programs are being cut and predominately, male sports are

the ones suffering these losses. Based on their research, Ridpath et al. believe that the

driving force behind these losses over the past 20 years is the shift in institutional priorities,

as a result of the arms race (2009). For example, Rutgers University poured money into its

football program in the late 1990s and early 2000s, culminating in a bowl appearance in 2005

(Associated Press, 2006). With the university facing $66 million in budget cuts, Rutgers cut

six men's sports and one women's sport to meet the financial bottom line while at the same time increased its football expenditures (Rimbach & Alex, 2006).

Marburger & Hogshead-Makar argue that athletic departments acting as profit-maximizers have incentive to eliminate all non-revenue sports (2003). Using the profit-maximization theory for the firm, if a Division I athletic director acts a true profit-maximizer, spending for non-revenue sports would diminish until the last dollar spent on a non-revenue sport provides as much profit to the university as the last dollars spent on revenue sports. Ultimately, this means athletic directors are economically incentivized to cut all non-revenue sports (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar). With minimum sport sponsorship requirements, the NCAA shows it understands this principle and works to maintain non-revenue sports, and therefore this profit-maximization argument needs to viewed under the perspective of the reality that not all sports will be cut in the current NCAA model (2010). However, the profit-maximization of the firm theory should not be discounted, as from 1978-1996, only Division I schools which support football have seen a net decrease in total men's sports sponsored, while all other divisions saw net increases in men's sports offerings (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar). So, while athletic departments are not allowed to reduce their sport offering to only revenue-producing programs, there is a clear trend of removing men's sports for Division I athletic departments that support football. As a response, wrestling coaches should heed the information gleaned in Weight and Cooper's study and realize the importance of financial concerns in the decision to eliminate programs (2011). By understanding the real financial pressure influencing athletic directors' decision, coaches "can potentially develop strategies to increase financial support to the program" (Weight & Cooper, p. 69).

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Fundraising Best Practices

The first step for a fundraiser is to have a strategic plan in regards to how to achieve the desired results (Leonhardt, 2011). Development officers believe that strategic initiatives such as cultivation of donors, setting development priorities and stewardship of gifts are more important in fundraising than traditional technical skills that have been the focus of most development programs (Hall, 2002). A critical element of a strategic plan for any fundraiser is to have a clear mission that supports the organization and allows the desired constituencies to become involved in supporting the organization (Lowman & Bixby, 2011). The following paragraphs will outline the elements of a strategic plan that have been identified in previous literature.

A fundraiser's main function is to seek external funding to increase an organization's resources and to accomplish this goal, the fundraiser must be able to identify and cultivate the key constituency that is necessary for a strong donor base (Leonhardt, 2011). Building relationships with the community is one of the essential practices for a fundraiser to develop good will and increase the possibility of future gifts (Lowman & Bixby, 2011). Wedgeworth writes that the process of creating and maintaining a relationship is at the heart of any successful fundraising campaign (2000). Fundraising seeks to build mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its key stakeholders (Hall, 2002). While Berry was the first to use the term "relationship marketing" as a technique for businesses to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships (1983), Burnett translated this to "relationship fundraising" and promoted the idea of dealing with donors as individuals (1992). He felt that each donor was unique due to his or her giving history, motivation for giving and the expected standard of service quality from the organization supported, so the relationship

must be handled on an individual basis (Burnett). In a study of charitable donors, Sargeant found that service quality had a significant impact on donor longevity (2001). In this study, responsiveness, feedback and effectiveness were the three main factors of service quality (Sargeant). Communication appears to be a key element in fundraising, as lapsed donors in Sargeant's study did not believe the organizations they supported provided adequate feedback (2001). In addition to keeping donors informed of developments within the organization, fundraisers also need to recognize gifts of all kinds and sizes through timely acknowledgements and thank you letters (Leonhardt). Effective relationship fundraisers will allow the donor to select the type and frequency of communication that he or she will receive (Sargeant). Sargeant explained the importance of this process when stating the following:

> By taking the step of asking donors to specify how they would like to be treated, one is in effect engaging the donor with the organization and requiring the person to think through the desired nature of the relationship. The donor thereby requests the communications he or she will subsequently receive, moving the organization's approach to marketing away from 'intrusion' and toward 'invitation' (2001, p. 189).

Sargeant's study (2001) did not incorporate donors to university athletic departments, yet Shapiro performed a study to examine donor perceptions of service quality in college athletics (2010). Shapiro found that service quality had a significant influence on donor satisfaction, yet did not have a significant influence on donor longevity or gift amount, which was contradictory to Sargeant's study. This differentiation may be a result of other factors unique to college athletics, such as team success and tangible donor benefits, which are not present for other charitable organizations (Shapiro). Despite the lack of influence on donor

behavior found by Shapiro, he still advocated its importance clearly in the following statement:

> Service quality is something that athletic development offices can control…Athletic development offices can focus attention on providing a consistent level of service to donors regardless of team performance in order to take advantage of service quality effects on donor satisfaction (p. 163).

Sargeant's three factors of service quality – responsiveness, feedback and effectiveness – were also used in Shapiro's study. Shapiro found evidence of the relationship between all three service quality factors and donor satisfaction (2010).

Effectiveness in service quality refers to the perception of donors that the organization cares about its donors, honors its promises and delivers the desired impact to the beneficiary group of the organization in a way that recognizes the needs of its supporters (Sargeant, 2001). It is essential for donors to understand the importance of their contribution, regardless of amount (Leonhardt, 2011; Shapiro, 2010). Sargeant's study found that "lapsed donors have a significantly poorer view of the quality of service they receive than active supporters do; in particular they tend not to regard the organization as giving them adequate feedback on how their donation has been used" (p. 189). However, a fundraiser must be careful to not give full control over the use of donations to the donor as a mutually beneficial relationship is most effective so the fundraiser must communicate the organization's needs and priorities to the donor (Hall, 2002).

A relatively new tool to communicate and build relationships with current and potential donors is technology (Goecks, Voida, Voida & Mynatt, 2008; Olsen & Frazier, 2001; Olsen, Keevers, Paul & Covington, 2001). Specifically, email is the critical instrument

for communication and on-line donor development because email is a more effective and direct communication tool than a website since it reaches people quicker and provides an opportunity for interaction (Olsen et al.). Where a website is a passive communication tool, email is the best way to reach out to donors with the information that the organization wants them to read (Olsen & Frazier). Olsen et al. argue that email communication is the most dynamic tool a fundraiser can utilize other than face-to-face interaction. By providing donors with the option to receive email communication, an organization is enhancing the chances that they are offering information to its supporters in a timely, appealing manner that will lead to increased donor loyalty over a greater period of time (Sargeant, 2001).

A basic role of technology in fundraising is to communicate the activities, goals and impact of the organization to current and potential donors (Goecks et al., 2008). There are several benefits to an organization that employs email communication as part of its fundraising strategy (Olsen & Frazier, 2001). Olsen and Frazier suggest the benefits associated with using email communication for an organization are increased response rates that allow a message to reach a larger audience, creating a dialogue with donors to personalize the messaging, having the ability to utilize interactive media in communications and possessing the capacity to measure the behavior of donors. Reaching out to donors through email can take on a variety of forms with the ability to use text to tell a story or using rich-media messages with pictures or video (Olsen et al., 2001). Organizations can also provide links in emails to donors and use click-through data to track what information the donors are choosing to learn more about and then utilize this information to target specific communication to donors that fits their needs and interests (Olsen et al.; Olsen & Frazier).

Olsen et al. suggest that "email appeals that are based on donor-specific preferences are more likely to solicit a gift" (p. 367).

Database technology is another integral and effective tool that even the smallest organizations can use to track the preferences and requirements of their donors (Sargeant, 2001). Donor databases traditionally contain demographic data that can be used for segmentation of communications (Olsen & Frazier, 2001). Fundraisers need to acquire email addresses of its donors to include in these databases (Olsen et al., 2001). Since Sargeant's study found that donors prefer to have a choice in the type of communication they receive, it is essential to provide donors with the opportunity to opt in and opt out of email communication (Olsen et al.). Organizations can implement On-Line Donor Relationship Management which allows the fundraisers to acquire new information about its donors online through surveys, click-through data and reply-based responses in the form replies of email communication (Olsen & Frazier). Olsen & Frazier write:

> On-Line Donor Relationship Management is an intricate but practical strategy that can be used to predict and stimulate donor behavior. By building a relational database of donor profile information an organization can make future interactions more relevant to their donors and thus build deeper relationships with them (p. 66).

One way that technology has helped organizations develop better relationships is the ease of providing feedback to the donor as well as the ability for the donor to provide feedback to the organization in a simple manner (Goecks et al, 2008; Olsen & Frazier, 2001). Sargeant (2001) emphasized the importance of providing donors with information on what their gifts are being used for and technology has significantly enhanced the ability of an organization to provide this feedback to its donors (Goecks et al.). Conversely, email allows

donors an immediate reply mechanism which provides them with the ability to provide

feedback that can be tracked and therefore, it is more important than ever to take this

feedback seriously in order to enhance future communication (Olsen & Frazier, 2001).

Technology can also help turn those enhanced relationships into actual donations.

The ease with which individuals can donate is a key factor in their decision to give, so

providing a fast and simple donation mechanism online is a key technology for fundraisers

(Goecks et al., 2008). An email appeal for a donation must include the ability to give

through a secure online credit card processing system, which will enable the organization to

capture additional donor preference data if the gift is made online (Olsen et al., 2001).

Organizations need to recognize gifts of all kinds and in ways they will appreciate (Sargeant,

2001; Leonhardt, 2011). The same is true for online donations, as organizations should thank

donors for online gifts promptly, in the same medium as the donor used to make the gift and

by using the online communication to express how the gift will be used (Olsen et al.).

Enabling donors to make online contributions is a simple technology which is useful due to

the ease and convenience for the donors (Goecks et al.).

Donor Motivation

While this study will not focus on why donors give to wrestling programs, it is

relevant for a fundraiser to understand the research that has previously been completed

regarding athletic donor motivation. Shapiro suggests that giving to athletics is a unique

donor environment, due to the presence of other factors like team success and tangible

benefits as a result of giving (2010). Previous research on donor behavior in college athletics

has pointed to benefits like priority seating, parking privileges, special recognition and social

events available to donors (Isherwood, 1986). Hall and Mahony suggest that for schools with

a consistently successful team, the development office benefits from its donors desire to have good seats for that team's games (1997). Stinson and Howard suggested that team success in football and men's basketball leads to an increased demand for tickets and in order to obtain the best seats for these games, fans must make a donation to the athletic department (2004, 2007). No research has been done on whether winning in wrestling leads to additional contributions but it is the aim of this study to see if coaches feel their athletic success has an effect on their ability to raise money.

Other factors found to have a significant impact in previous research on Division I athletic fundraising are the public or private status of the institution, win-loss percentage, state of the economy and level of competition in the local community (Hall & Mahony, 1997). In addition to the aforementioned factors, the years of experience for the Director of Development, number of living institutional alumni and size of an athletic department's donor list are all significant predictors of increasing annual contributions (Wells, Southall, Stotlar & Mundfrom, 2005). While some of these factors are beyond the control of the coach, it would appear useful for the coach to have an understanding of them.

Other previous research identified more philanthropic and altruistic motives for giving to athletics (Mahony, Gladden & Funk, 2003; Staurowsky, Parkhouse & Sachs, 1996; Verner, Hecht & Fansler, 1998). Gladden, Mahony and Apostolopoulou identified helping student-athletes in the form of scholarships and educational opportunity as well as repaying the university and its athletic program as primary motives for athletic contributions. Staurowsky et al. and Verner et al. also found evidence that there is a social motive for giving, as donors enjoy the interaction with other donors who closely follow the teams they support. However, with so much competition for charitable contributions, athletic

departments are able to offer tangible benefits not available elsewhere, which may ultimately attract more donors (Stinson & Howard, 2004).

Non-Revenue Coaching Behaviors

The role of the coach in non-revenue sports has only seen limited previous research, yet one recent study examined the importance of the coach's behavior in sustaining non-revenue sports (Weight, 2010). Robinson and Miller studied the impact of Bobby Knight on the Texas Tech basketball program and found that he had a significant influence on the brand and revenue at Texas Tech (2003). However, Bobby Knight is a Hall of Fame Coach with a national recognition from his tenure at Indiana and men's basketball is a major sport, so his actions and influence on Texas Tech may not be generalizable to wrestling or other non-revenue sports (Weight). In a popular press article, former Stanford tennis coach Dick Gould said that "the only way many men's tennis programs will survive is if coaches get endowments to fund them" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 37). Gould's statements echo the results of the United States General Accounting Office's 2001 study of decisions to discontinue sport teams and what strategies were used to avoid cutting sports. The GAO report found that the 693 schools which added at least one varsity sport without discontinuing a team "pursued creative strategies to build athletic programs" (2001, pg. 25). One of the primary strategies that the report found these schools engaged in was seeking donations (General Accounting Office). Coaches who believed they had critical influence on the sustainability of their programs reported implementing relationship-building and fundraising efforts to partially subsidize their budget (Weight, 2006).

In 2010, Weight conducted the first study specific to this niche by examining Division I-A athletic directors beliefs regarding the effect wrestling coaches have on their

program's sustainability as well as what specific activities coaches can undertake to enhance the program's chance for survival. In interviews with athletic directors, Weight discovered that building relationships and fundraising were two of the activities a coach can engage in that would have the biggest impact on the program's sustainability. Coaches need to build relationships with influential people in the local community as well as on their campus (Weight, 2010). By building these relationships, the coach can then leverage them to generate revenue, most often through fundraising (Weight).

Weight introduces the concept of Complimentary Entre-lationship Promotion, which essentially calls for wrestling coaches to take the initiative to make their programs indispensable on their respective campuses (2010). Calling on Smith's (1776) theory of resource allocation, it can be argued that "if a program were self-sustained, and/or had significant enough demand from the community to balance the resource allocation equation, then wrestling programs would never be cut" (Weight, p. 11). Fundraising can help to "pay for the rent, labor and profits that are necessary to bring the product to market" (Smith, p. 63). Therefore, "non-revenue sport coaches can ensure the longevity of their sport through self-sustaining financial support through fundraising, because the financial pressure paramount to the sport dropping decisions would no longer be an issue" (Weight, pg. 14).

To this point, no research has been conducted on coaches' beliefs on the value of fundraising or their strategies and tactics implemented to fundraise. This study will assist non-revenue coaches in the pursuit of sustainability for their programs. Some coaches have already taken the initiative to create value for their program by sustaining funds and additional community support to supplement their budgets (Weight, 2010). This study will

examine the fundraising practices of top NCAA wrestling coaches to determine strategies

that other programs can implement to encourage sustainability.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This research study was pursued through the use of qualitative research to examine the best fundraising practices among top NCAA wresting coaches, as determined by the Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA). This purposeful sample was selected in order to focus the research on a select number of coaches who are dedicated to raising money for their programs rather than surveying all coaches, some of whom may not implement fundraising strategies. A qualitative method was selected because this approach pieces together empirical data and interpretive practices to achieve an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The goal of this research was to develop a comprehensive evaluation of the fundraising strategies employed by wrestling coaches in order to facilitate fundraising efforts of other coaches to enhance the sustainability of their programs.

Participants

Ten NCAA wrestling coaches were interviewed for this study. These ten coaches were identified by the Executive Director of the NWCA as the ten top coaches in the field of fundraising. It was important for this study to focus on the activities of the best fundraisers in the field, as their collective insights and knowledge could help other coaches improve their

ability to fundraise. All ten coaches were interviewed by telephone and the interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription.

Procedure

This study was submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Human Subjects Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After receiving approval for the study, the ten coaches were contacted via email. The email explained the purpose of the study and asked if the participant was willing to participate in the study. If no response was received to the email after two weeks, a phone call was placed to the participant. Once the participants agreed to take part in the study, a phone interview was scheduled at a time convenient to the participant. Each participant was asked for permission to audio record the interview in order to ensure accuracy.

Prior to each interview, demographic information was gathered about each coach and their program. Gathering this information prior to conducting the interviews was critical to the research. First, it was important to be knowledgeable of the coach and their program during the interview in order to enhance credibility with the coaches. The sooner this trust could be built, the more open the coaches would be with their responses in the interview. Second, by eliminating the need to discuss these items during the interview, the interview was more efficient and focused on their fundraising activities, which is the critical data to gather for the purpose of the study. This data will be used to triangulate interview data which will serve as additional support for validity and reliability of the study.

In order to obtain the information from these coaches, it was necessary to interview them personally. Interviewing requires interaction between the researcher and the participants involved in the study (Seidman, 2006). Amis (2005) wrote that "interviews offer

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a depth of information that permits the detailed exploration of particular issues in a way not possible with other forms of data collection" (pg. 105). The chosen method of data collection would be the most appropriate for the goals of the research project as it was essential that the participants chosen had a deep understanding and knowledge of fundraising and the specific challenges that wrestling programs face. These coaches, on the recommendation of the Executive Director of the NWCA, possessed this knowledge base essential to ensuring the quality of information gleaned from the interview.

Phone interviews were conducted with the coaches. Creswell writes that "one-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, who are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably" (2012, p. 218). Coaches who have been identified as expert fundraisers should fit that description and therefore in one-on-one interviews was the best method. While in person interviews would have been preferable, it was not feasible given the time and budget constraints of this study to see all coaches in person.

All of the interviews were audio recorded in order to focus on the conversations with these coaches. By recording the interviews, precise quotes of the coaches were captured to be used in the study, rather notes and/or memory of the conversations. Each participant gave written consent to be recorded and they were informed that the recordings would be destroyed once the study was complete. After each interview, member-checking was conducted by sending a follow up email which included the transcription of the interview to each participant and asked if they would like to add or clarify anything in the transcript. Member-checking will increase the validity and reliability of this study.

Instruments

        The interviews were semi-structured, which is between a structured interview with every interview being the same and unstructured where there are no set questions (Fontana & Frey, 2005).   Qualitative interviews do not necessarily have uniform questions for each participant; instead the questions should flow based on the responses of the participant (Weiss, 1994). A semi-structured interview has similar questions, but they may differ between interviews. An interview guide was used to assist in conducting the interviews, as it helped to initiate the interview but not all questions in the interview guide were used in every interview. This method of interviewing with a guide has been found to be the most popular interview method in qualitative studies performed in sport studies literature (Amis, 2005). A semi-structured interview was helpful because it helped to ensure all research topics were covered while also providing flexibility to amend the questions during the interview (Amis). Research indicates that this type of interview provides more depth in the data gathered because it allows the interviewer more freedom to change, remove or add questions that seem pertinent during the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

        The interview guide was generated in consultation with a panel of experts to enhance instrument validity. This panel consisted of the researcher, two Sport Administration professors with areas of expertise in non-revenue sport fundraising, a Director of Major Gifts for a Division I athletic department and a research expert from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Odom Institute for Research in Social Science. Upon review, the guide was deemed appropriate to examine the fundraising practices of the wrestling coaches in an effort to determine the most effective ways to raise money for the sport. The interview questions covered topics about how to identify potential donors, tactics to build relationships

with potential and current donors and how to leverage those relationships into increased donations (See Appendix A).

Analysis

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed the audio recording word for word. Seidman (1998) suggested that the researcher transcribing the recordings oneself enables one to become more familiar with the responses of the participants. The transcripts were independently reviewed to develop a coding scheme which was used to find trends throughout the interviews. The trends found can reasonably be considered as best practices for wrestling fundraisers, given the assertion that the ten participants are the best fundraisers among NCAA wrestling coaches. The unique characteristic of qualitative research is that it is interpretive research, and the researcher's personal views regarding the meaning of the data are included in the research study (Creswell, 2012).

Validity and Reliability

The concepts of validity and reliability within qualitative research are more difficult to define than in quantitative research because qualitative researchers "do not assume that a single, objective, paramount reality exists to be measured; instead they assume that reality is constructed through human social interactions" (Plymire, 2005, pg. 155). In qualitative research, validity requires the researcher to determine the credibility of the findings through strategies such as triangulation, member checking and auditing (Creswell, 2012). In this study, I employed triangulation, which Creswell defines as "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions or themes" (pg. 259). By interviewing ten different coaches, it ensured the accuracy of the study. By also gathering demographic data of each wrestling program and its

institution, this further enhances the study's credibility. In an effort to further increase the trustworthiness of the study, I utilized member checks. Member checking requires the researcher to ask the participants to verify the accuracy of the transcripts (Creswell). I accomplished the member checks by emailing each coach the transcript of his interview to verify the contents and for clarification of anything that was recorded. Finally, my study was audited by my thesis advisor and members of my thesis committee who provided written and oral reviews of all aspects of my study throughout the research process. By utilizing all three of the primary methods of validation in qualitative research, this study fulfills the criteria of a reliable and valid research study.

CHAPTER IV

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction

A shift in institutional priorities related to enhancing revenue-generating sport programs combined with economic factors has driven the elimination of many men's programs (Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2009). The purpose of this study is to explore fundraising practices of top NCAA wrestling coaches to determine strategies that programs can implement to encourage sustainability initiatives. Coaches can support their own budgets by raising financial support of their program which will eliminate the financial pressure paramount to the decision to eliminate a sport (Weight, 2010). Ten NCAA Division I wrestling coaches were identified as the preeminent fundraisers in their field. In order to determine why people give to wrestling and the fundraising strategies of these coaches, interviews were conducted. The interviews were coded and analyzed for common themes. These themes and their sub-categories are discussed in order to provide a foundation for all coaches to implement fundraising initiatives of their own.

Elimination of non-revenue programs at Division I institutions happens every year, and overwhelmingly men's sports are the ones being cut. This trend has existed for the last twenty years, as the number of men's sports programs in Division I has had a net decrease of 300 since 1988-1989, while women's sports programs have enjoyed a net increase of 720 in the same time frame (NCAA, 2010). The "driving force behind the loss of many men's sport

programs over the past 20 years has been a shift in institutional priorities related to achieving excellence in football and basketball coupled with economic factors involving the arms race, not the drive for equality" (Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2009, pg. 267).

The reason universities are striving for excellence in football and basketball is the fact Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions averaged net revenues of $3,148,000 and $788,000 in those sports, respectively (NCAA, 2011). It is also clear that these two sports are receiving the majority of expenditures in athletic departments across Division I, as FBS institutions median values for expenses in football and basketball were $12,367,000 and $4,003,000, respectively. Meanwhile, FBS institutions spent an average of $719,000 on their wrestling programs, the eighth-most of any sport offered in Division I. Unfortunately, wrestling programs also generated the seventh-least revenue on average of any sport offered in Division I (NCAA). This discrepancy makes wrestling programs frequent targets of eliminations when athletic departments decide to cut sports (Williamson, 1983; Gray & Pelzer, 1995).

Men's Program Elimination

There were a total of 300 men's sports programs cut at Division I institutions between the 1988-1989 academic year and the 2009-2010 academic year (Zgonc, 2010). Tennis, Swimming & Diving and Wrestling accounted for 150 of these eliminations since 1988 (Zgonc). In a report by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO), the level of student interest was the most often cited factor in a school's decision to eliminate a sport (2001). Ironically, participation in high school wrestling is at its highest point since 1980 and ranks sixth among all boys' sports in terms of participation numbers (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2011), so it would appear that some other reason causes

wrestling programs to be eliminated. Blame for the cutting of wrestling programs has also been placed on Title IX (Suggs, 2005). However, there is a growing body of literature that argues the culprit for the elimination of men's non-revenue programs is athletic department's decisions to maximize profits and allocate funds to compete in the financial arms race in college athletics (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar, 2003, Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence & Galles, 2008; Weight, 2010).

The elimination of wrestling programs has been studied on three occasions, all of which surveyed athletic directors to determine the reasons these programs were being cut (Gray & Pelzer, 1995; Weight & Cooper, 2011; Williamson, 1983). Williamson concluded that the top reasons wrestling programs were discontinued were lack of student interest, high cost, lack of recruitable prospects and lack of spectator appeal. Her study found that athletic directors ranked Title IX as the seventh most important reason for cutting a wrestling program. In 1995, Gray and Pelzer wanted to update Williamson's research, as the authors believed that in the time since Williamson's study in 1983, "Title IX has become a driving force behind the restructuring of college athletics" (p. 121). The survey responses indicated that the top reasons for eliminating wrestling at those schools were conference alignment, shifting resources, inconvenient travel, and cost, while Title IX was still just the seventh-most influential factor (Gray & Pelzer). Weight and Cooper sought to build upon the previous research of athletic director decisions to eliminate nonrevenue sports through a mixed methods approach that utilized a multiple embedded case study and a survey (2011). When comparing the responses between coaches and athletic directors, the budget shortage factor was significantly more important to athletic directors than the coaches. Based on these

results, Weight and Cooper argue that coaches "need to place a higher emphasis on the ability to increase revenues realized by their program during the season" (p. 71).

Resource Allocation Theory

The theoretical foundation through which this study is based is the theory of resource allocation, which was initially described by Adam Smith, who wrote:

The market price of every particular commodity is regulated by the proportion between the quantity which is actually brought to market, and the demand of those who are willing to pay the natural price of the commodity, or the whole value of the rent, labour, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither (1776, p. 84).

In 1985, Hackman developed the theory of resource allocation in the university setting. The author stated the "theory is based on five concepts: centrality, resource allocations, environmental power, institutional power and resource allocation strategies" (p. 61). The study found that a unit's centrality interacts with the unit's environmental power and resource negotiation strategies and has a significant effect on its resource allocations (Hackman). Hackman divides units within an institution into core units and peripheral units. Core units are "essential to the central mission of an institution. Without the core, the organization would have another purpose" (pg. 62). Peripheral units, on the other hand, are not essential to the institution's overall purpose. While both units can receive resources, they must seek to obtain resources through different negotiation strategies. Hackman suggests that core units will receive internal resources when they emphasize their individual unit needs because their needs correspond directly with the mission of the organization as a result of their centrality. In contrast, peripheral units will only gain internal resources when they

focus their negotiation on "broader institutional needs and bring in external resources that contribute to the whole" (p. 75).

The theory of resource allocation has been utilized in sport management literature by Weight (2010), who examined the perceptions of athletic directors on the influence of coaches in sustaining Division I-A wrestling programs. Weight argues that "if a program were self-sustained, and/or had significant enough demand from the community to balance the resource allocation equation, then wrestling programs would never be cut" (p. 11).

Economic Realities

When examining college athletics through the lens of resource allocation theory, Marburger and Hogshead-Makar argue athletic departments will continue to move resources away from non-revenue sports and into football and men's basketball because the financial incentives to reach a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) bowl game or the Men's NCAA Basketball Final Four are so great (2003). Since women's sports are also needed to help meet gender equity requirements, men's sports like wrestling are the first to get cut in efforts to maximize profits (Marburger & Hogshead-Makar). According to the NCAA's Revenues & Expenses report for fiscal year 2010, the football programs at FBS institutions earned $3,148,000 net revenue on average (Fulks, 2011). By contrast, wrestling programs at these same institutions lost $373,000 on average during the same fiscal year. Marburger & Hogshead-Makar argue that athletic departments acting as profit-maximizers have incentive to eliminate all non-revenue sports. With minimum sport sponsorship requirements, the NCAA shows it understands this principle and works to maintain non-revenue sports, and therefore this profit-maximization argument needs to viewed under the perspective of the reality that not all sports will be cut in the current NCAA model (2010). So, while athletic

departments are not allowed to reduce their sport offering to only revenue-producing programs, there is a clear trend of removing men's sports for Division I athletic departments that support football. As a response, wrestling coaches should heed the information gleaned in Weight and Cooper's study and realize the importance of financial concerns in the decision to eliminate programs (2011).

Fundraising Best Practices

A fundraiser's main function is to seek external funding to increase an organization's resources and to accomplish this goal, the fundraiser must be able to identify and cultivate the key constituency that is necessary for a strong donor base (Leonhardt, 2011). Building relationships with the community is one of the essential practices for a fundraiser to increase the possibility of future gifts (Lowman & Bixby, 2011). The first step for a fundraiser is to have a strategic plan in regards to how to achieve the desired results (Leonhardt). A critical element of a strategic plan for any fundraiser is to have a clear mission that supports the organization and allows the desired constituencies to become involved in supporting the organization (Lowman & Bixby). Wedgeworth writes that the process of creating and maintaining a relationship is at the heart of any successful fundraising campaign (2000). While Berry was the first to use the term "relationship marketing" as a technique for businesses to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships (1983), Burnett translated this to "relationship fundraising" and promoted the idea of dealing with donors as individuals (1992).

Communication is a key element in fundraising, as lapsed donors in Sargeant's study did not believe the organizations they supported provided adequate feedback (2001). In addition to keeping donors informed of developments within the organization, fundraisers

also need to recognize gifts of all kinds and sizes through timely acknowledgements and thank you letters (Leonhardt, 2011). Effective relationship fundraisers will allow the donor to select the type and frequency of communication that he or she will receive (Sargeant).

A relatively new tool to communicate and build relationships with current and potential donors is technology (Goecks, Voida, Voida & Mynatt, 2008; Olsen & Frazier, 2001; Olsen, Keevers, Paul & Covington, 2001). Specifically, email is the critical instrument for communication and on-line donor development because email is a more effective and direct communication tool than a website since it reaches people quicker and provides an opportunity for interaction (Olsen et al.). Olsen et al. argue that email communication is the most dynamic tool a fundraiser can utilize other than face-to-face interaction. Olsen and Frazier suggest the benefits associated with using email communication for an organization are increased response rates that allow a message to reach a larger audience, creating a dialogue with donors to personalize the messaging, having the ability to utilize interactive media in communications and possessing the capacity to measure the behavior of donors. One way that technology has helped organizations develop better relationships is the ease of providing feedback to the donor as well as the ability for the donor to provide feedback to the organization in a simple manner (Goecks et al.; Olsen & Frazier). Sargeant (2001) emphasized the importance of providing donors with information on what their gifts are being used for and technology has significantly enhanced the ability of an organization to provide this feedback to its donors (Goecks et al.). Conversely, email allows donors an immediate reply mechanism which provides them with the ability to provide feedback that can be tracked and therefore, it is more important than ever to take this feedback seriously in order to enhance future communication (Olsen & Frazier).

Donor Motivation

Shapiro suggests that giving to athletics is a unique donor environment, due to the presence of other factors like team success and tangible benefits as a result of giving (2010). Previous research on donor behavior in college athletics has pointed to benefits like priority seating, parking privileges, special recognition and social events available to donors (Isherwood, 1986). Other previous research identified more philanthropic and altruistic motives for giving to athletics (Mahony, Gladden & Funk, 2003; Staurowsky, Parkhouse & Sachs, 1996; Verner, Hecht & Fansler, 1998). Gladden, Mahony and Apostolopoulou identified helping student-athletes in the form of scholarships and educational opportunity as well as repaying the university and its athletic program as primary motives for athletic contributions (2005). Staurowsky et al. and Verner et al. also found evidence that there is a social motive for giving, as donors enjoy the interaction with other donors who closely follow the teams they support.

Non-Revenue Coaching Behaviors

The role of the coach in non-revenue sports has only seen limited previous research, yet one recent study examined the importance of the coach's behavior in sustaining non-revenue sports (Weight, 2010). In a popular press article, former Stanford tennis coach Dick Gould said that "the only way many men's tennis programs will survive is if coaches get endowments to fund them" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 37). Gould's statements echo the results of the United States General Accounting Office's 2001 study of decisions to discontinue sport teams and what strategies were used to avoid cutting sports. Coaches who believed they had critical influence on the sustainability of their programs reported implementing relationship-building and fundraising efforts to partially subsidize their budget (Weight, 2006). In

interviews with athletic directors, Weight discovered that building relationships and fundraising were two of the activities a coach can engage in that would have the biggest impact on the program's sustainability. By building these relationships, the coach can then leverage them to generate revenue, most often through fundraising (Weight).

With wrestling programs being a frequent target for program elimination, coaches must do everything in their power to help their program. The ability to raise money privately to supplement the operational budget is an incredible asset for any wrestling coach to possess. However, not all coaches have the same understanding of the importance of fundraising or the skills necessary to be an effective fundraiser. By interviewing the ten most effective fundraisers among NCAA wrestling coaches, the purpose of this study is to provide all wrestling coaches information on the strategies that programs can implement to encourage sustainability initiatives. The research questions that guided this study were: (1) What fundraising strategies do top coaches implement to support the sustainability of their program, (2) Are there trends in the specific strategies that top coaches are implementing in their fundraising initiatives and (3) What are the primary factors that influence someone's decision to contribute financially to a wrestling program.

Method

This research was pursued through the use of qualitative research to examine the best fundraising practices among the ten most effective NCAA wresting coach fundraisers, as determined by the Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA). The Executive Director of the NWCA collects data regarding all NCAA wrestling programs, including their structure, budgets and fundraising amounts per year. With this information, he was determined to be the individual that could most accurately assess

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fundraising efficiency among NCAA wrestling coaches. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone with all ten participants using an interview guide which was developed with the assistance of two Sport Administration professors with expertise in non-revenue sports, a Major Gift Director from the University of North Carolina's athletic department and a qualitative research expert from The Odum Institute, a social science research institution at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Upon completion of the interviews, the transcripts were sent to the participants for member checking to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

Once the transcripts were approved, the researcher developed a coding scheme to address the research questions of the study and a second coder was trained on the coding scheme. Both coders initially coded 20% of the transcripts together in order to ensure intercoder reliability. Scott's Pi was calculated and found to be .817, which is above the generally accepted level of agreement (.800) to have intercoder reliability (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). After establishing reliability, the remaining transcripts were split between the two coders.

Results

The themes resulting from the analysis were divided into two sections based upon the research question of this study: *Factors for Giving* and *Fundraising Strategies*. Three themes emerged from the analysis of each section. Within *Factors of Giving*, the themes identified were Connection, Belief in Program and Program Status. For *Fundraising Strategies*, the three themes to emerge were Customer Service, Marketing and Promotion and Relationship Building.

Factors for Giving

In order to understand how to entice people to give money to a wrestling program, it was important to decipher what motivated someone to give to a wrestling program. Given the unique donor environment for athletics presented by Shapiro (2010), this study sought to determine what coaches believe motivates a donor and how this corresponds to the previous literature on the subject. Would the primary motivation be to receive ticket and parking benefits as Isherwood (1986) found or would donors have more altruistic motives, like in the research done by Gladden, Mahony and Apostolopoulou (2005)?

Connection

The coaches believed that having a connection to the wrestling program was a major key to the decision to contribute financially to that program. As illustrated in Table 1, that connection manifests itself in a number of different ways, two of which were identified by all ten coaches: Alumni and Wrestling Fans. "Alumni are the most important because they are the ones who have a vested interest. Hopefully, they had a good experience and want to be able to provide the same type of opportunities they had as an athlete" (Coach #8). The two additional categories of connection which the majority of coaches felt contributed to the decision to give were access to the program and high school wrestling coaches. The local community and parents of wrestlers were each mentioned by less than five coaches.

Table 1

Top Fundraising Coaches' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Giving in Olympic Sport Programs

Factor	Coaches Response (# of mentions)	Example
Connection		
Alumni	10	"Alumni are the ones who have a vested interest."
Wrestling Fan	10	"They're a wrestling fan, and we keep them involved so they feel important."
Access to Program	8	"People feel a part of the program because they get to know the team."
High School Coach	6	"We're always trying to make contacts with high school coaches."
Local Community	4	"In the last couple of years, we're targeting the local community more."
Previous Donor	4	"We get a list from our athletic department of overall donors."
Parent of Wrestler	3	"I target anyone who has a child who wrestles."
Belief in Program		
Mission of Program	6	"We share our vision, where we want to be and how we plan to get there."
Return on Investment	6	"[Donors] want to know their money is making a difference."
Coach as Leader	5	"[A donor] has to believe in you."
Program Status		
Winning	10	"People like to give to winners."
Citizenship	6	"[Donors] aren't going to give to kids that are punks."

Belief in Program

The second theme to emerge as a factor for becoming a donor of a NCAA Division I

wrestling program was belief in the program. The three categories within this theme

included Return on Investment, Coach as a Leader and Mission of the Program (See Table

1). Six coaches mentioned Return on Investment and Mission of the Program as a factor for giving, while only five coaches mentioned Coach as a Leader.

Program Status

The two categories to emerge under of Program Status are winning and citizenship. Winning refers to having success on the mat, while citizenship alludes to the student-athletes representing the program well off the mat (See Table 1). Winning can have varying degrees, depending on the school. "If you're at a school that has three scholarships, you're not going to win a national championship. So maybe to be third in the conference is winning. So, really, it all depends on your definition of being successful" (Coach #1). Every coach responded that winning is a factor in the decision to give, while six of the coaches felt the citizenship of the student-athletes was a determining factor.

Fundraising Strategies

After identifying why wrestling coaches believed donors gave to their programs, the study sought to determine what strategies these coaches implemented to obtain increased revenue through fundraising. The three themes to emerge from the coding were Customer Service, Marketing and Promotion, and Relationship Building.

Customer Service

The theme of customer service consisted of seven different categories, as shown in Table 2: Contact Database, Constant Communication, Specific Giving Campaigns, Recognition of Gifts, Thank You Notes, Thank You Gifts and Ticket Benefits. Of these seven, four categories were found to be the most prevalent. Constant Communication, Specific Giving Campaigns and Thank You Notes were all mentioned by nine coaches, while Contact Database was cited by eight coaches. Some examples of Specific Giving Campaigns

are the "Equip-A-Wrestler" campaign cited by Coach #8 or simply having a list of twenty

different specific items a donor could give toward at varying price points, as mentioned by

Coach #7. Thank You Gifts, such as team memorabilia, was mentioned by six of the ten

coaches. Recognition of Gifts and Ticket Benefits were only cited by three coaches each.

Table 2

Coaches' Perceptions of Customer Service Strategies to Enhance Giving in Olympic Sport Programs

Factor	Coaches Response (# of mentions)	Example
Constant Communication	9	"It's just a matter of regular communication."
Specific Giving Campaigns	9	"[Donors] want to know specifics, almost like a business plan."
Thank You Notes	9	"Anytime anyone gives us a dime, I write them a handwritten thank you note."
Contact Database	8	"Every person I ran into I tried to get a business card or email address."
Thank You Gifts	6	"We make sure to give them some wrestling polos."
Recognition of Gifts	3	"Singling [donors] out, giving them credit is important."
Ticket Benefits	3	"Make sure [donors] have access to NCAA tickets."

Marketing and Promotion

The theme of Marketing and Promotion produced twelve different categories,

illustrated in Table 3, which suggests there are a large number of different marketing

strategies to increase awareness, and ultimately fundraising, for a wrestling program. The

one category that every coach mentioned was Regular Program Updates. The manner by

which coaches disseminate these updates can vary, but it helps create a sense of ownership

among donors. "The more ownership people have in a program, the more loyal they are

going to be to our program. The key to having ownership is knowing the cast of characters"

(Coach #1). The most popular tool to provide these regular updates is Facebook, which nine

coaches said they used. Coach #7 noted that Facebook is better for the "new guard" of

donors who are more comfortable with the technology because it can be more interactive.

The other categories which were reported by over 50% of the coaches were Twitter (6

coaches), Videos (6), Match Updates (7) and Partner with Athletic Department (7).

Newsletters, Website, Text Messages, Scheduling for Attendance, Spend Money and

Supplementary Materials were all mentioned by fewer than half of the coaches interviewed.

Table 3

Coaches' Perceptions of Marketing & Promotional Strategies to Enhance Giving in Olympic Sport Programs

Factor	Coaches Response (# of mentions)	Example
Regular Program Updates	10	"I send our regular, timely updates on our team's performance."
Facebook	9	"We've got over 11,000 Facebook fans."
Partner w/Athletic Dept.	7	"We do a lot of cross-marketing with other sports to get in front of their crowd."
Match Updates	7	"We won our meet on Saturday and first thing Monday I sent out my thoughts on the dual."
Twitter	6	"If you're not using it, you are falling behind."
Videos	6	"It's more eye-opening and it gets people to actually open your emails."
Newsletters	4	"I created a newsletter with a team preview, Q&A with student-athlete and bios of all our coaches."
Spend Money	3	"I spend a good amount of money but it's worth the investment."
Supplementary Materials	3	"We'll sign a few hundred posters and send them out to our donors."
Scheduling for Attendance	2	"We schedule matches on Sunday to make sure we capture the high school wrestlers."
Text Messages	2	"I'll text alumni in the area to get them to come to a match."
Website	2	"Wrestling Insider" another tool to keep fans updated

Relationship Building

The final theme of Fundraising Strategies was Relationship Building. The most common strategy for relationship building was Special Events, which nine coaches mentioned. Some examples were golf tournaments, tailgate parties, comedy shows and youth wrestling events. Face to Face Meetings, Student-Athlete Interaction and Make Donors Feel Valued were strategies for relationship building mentioned by eight coaches. On Campus Reunions and Provide Info on Expenses were each discussed by seven coaches, while Personal Phone Calls and Know Donors on a Personal Level were cited by six coaches apiece. The only two strategies not mentioned by a majority of coaches were Personal Letters and Work Ethic. These results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Coaches' Perceptions of Relationship Building Strategies to Enhance Giving in Olympic Sport Programs

Factor	Coaches Response (# of mentions)	Example
Special Events	9	"We have golf tournaments, banquets with guest speakers, comedy shows and auctions."
Face to Face Meeting	8	"I don't think there was a person we sat down with that didn't give."
Make Donors Feel Valued	8	"You have to make them feel important because they are important."
Student-Athlete Interaction	8	"Go meet these kids. This money is not for the coaching staff. It's for the 18-23 year olds."
On Campus Reunions	7	"The most important thing is getting alumni to come back to campus."
Provide Info on Expenses	7	"I broke down what it costs for shoes, singlets, pads, everything, for each person on team."
Know Donors (Personal Level)	6	"You have to take personal interest, kind of like recruiting. You have to get to know them"
Personal Phone Calls	6	"We have a list of alumni that we target with individual phone calls."
Personal Letters	5	When donors receive a handwritten letter from an athlete, it means a lot."
Work Ethic	4	"There are creative things you can do to raise money, but bottom line is you have to work at it."

Discussion

The results of this study provide a clear blueprint for the basic reasons why people give and the strategies being used to cultivate and steward donors to NCAA wrestling programs. There are two groups that coaches need to focus their efforts on – alumni and wrestling fans.

Connection

Alumni appear to be the most important, especially in terms of fundraising. Their motivation ties in with Gladden, Mahony and Apostolopoulou's research which identified helping student-athletes and repaying the university as the primary motivations for giving to athletics (2005). Coach #8 spoke to this motivating factor, when he said alumni "want to be able to provide the same type of opportunities they had as an athlete."

Wrestling fans, as well as high school coaches, are great demographics to target for attendance and marketing efforts, but the coaches surveyed appear to not focus their fundraising efforts on these groups. Coach #7 mentioned that he primarily asks the local wrestling community to "support us by putting their butt in the seat. When the administration comes in and sees 1,000 people in the arena for our match, that's as powerful as someone writing a $50,000 check." Coach #4 echoed this sentiment and mentioned he convinced his administration to let all the gate receipts from every home wrestling match go directly back into the wrestling budget. This strategy allows them to see immediate benefits when bringing in the local wrestling community to matches. Creative methods like Coach #4 described help wrestling fans contribute to the success of a wrestling program without the coach having to specifically ask them for private donations.

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Belief in Program

The three sub-categories of the Belief in Program theme - Return on Investment, Coach as Leader, Mission of the Program – were mentioned by a slight majority of coaches. However, seven different coaches each mentioned two of the three sub-categories in their interviews. Based off those responses, it appears that the overall theme of Belief in Program is an important factor motivating donors. Ultimately, the sub-categories may be too intertwined for it to be appropriate to separate them in future studies. The following quote from Coach #6 sums up the interplay between these factors:

> "This is going to sound so cliché, but people give to people, they don't give to ideas. I think the bottom line is whenever you feel like you have a guy that wants to help; you have to prove to this guy that you are worth it. He has to believe in you. He's got to buy in to you, who you are, what your mission statement is, what your vision is for the program and can he trust that you have the stones to get it done."

Customer Service

If alumni are the primary source of fundraising for wrestling programs, coaches need to learn how to bring their former wrestlers into the fold and make them feel like they are still an important part of the program after their wrestling careers are over. The results of this study provide coaches with a few specific, yet simple strategies to implement. Since service quality has been found to impact donor longevity (Sargeant, 2001) and donor satisfaction (Shapiro, 2010), the most common things the coaches in this study did to maximize service quality were maintain a contact database, be in constant communication, provide specific giving options and write thank you notes when a contribution is received. Constant communication is absolutely vital, as every coach spoke of its importance. "Whether it's

through emails, newsletters, Facebook, phone conversations or meetings, that's really the key: communication. We make our alumni feel, and rightfully so, like a part of the program. And we give them ownership in our program. So that it's not my problem, it's our problem" (Coach #1). The easiest way to maintain constant communication with current and potential donors is to maintain a contact database, something that even the smallest organizations can use to track their donors and their preferences (Sargeant, 2001). Coach #10 said that every person he meets, he gets a business card or email address to include in his database. Coach #2 saves every email address from every email he or one of his coaches receives about the program. Collecting contact information and maintaining a database isn't difficult, but it does require time and energy. "A lot of it is tedious - data entry, always being on the lookout, updating emails, asking people for their business card. It takes hard work" (Coach #8).

Providing specific giving options to donors was emphasized by nine of the ten coaches in this study. The strategy behind these different options did vary though. Some coaches discussed having annual contributions like membership dues in a club, so they have something that keeps them involved with the program, even if it's just $25, which is what Coach #10 said membership in his Takedown Club costs. Other coaches discussed providing specific cost amounts for various expenses within their budget to donors so they can have a choice as to how much of a contribution they would like to make. One example of this strategy was Coach #8's "Equip a Wrestler" campaign which provides exact costs for everything in his equipment budget and allowed donors to sponsor a wrestler for the year. A third example of a giving option was Coach #1's "Pin Pool." This campaign allowed donors to pledge to a certain amount of money for every time one of that school's wrestlers pinned

an opponent. The campaign was beneficial in a variety of ways. First, it allowed donors to give at any level they wanted, whether it was $1 or $100. Second, it provided an opportunity for donors to increase giving without the coaches having to ask directly for more money. It also engaged the donors, as they would keep up with the matches more since it affected them directly. Ultimately, it increased the program's base of support and increased the amount of gifts the program was receiving.

Once a gift is received, an effective fundraiser must recognize gifts of all kinds (Leonhardt, 2011). Nine of the ten coaches interviewed all mentioned writing handwritten thank you notes whenever they received a gift. This strategy is simple, yet appears to have a profound effect on donors. There are other ways to thank donor, as six coaches also mentioned sending donors some form of a gift, but a thank you note is vital to providing quality customer service. Coach #7 mentioned a small touch to add to thank you notes that he feels is important. "Anytime I talk to a donor, I take notes on family members, kids' names, dog names or anything that comes up," he said. "If I'm writing a letter and ask about their dog or their wife, it goes a long way." Ticket benefits, however, were not found to be a popular method of recognizing gifts, which contradicts Isherwood's (1986) findings, suggesting that donors to wrestling are not as motivated by tickets benefits as overall college athletics donors.

Marketing and Promotion

With constant communication being important to these coaches fundraising efforts, it is also critical to know what they communicated and how it was communicated. These strategies fell under the theme of Marketing and Promotion. The one strategy every coach discussed was providing regular updates on the program. These findings echo Sargeant's

study which found lapsed donors did not believe the organizations provided adequate information and feedback (2001). The methods by which coaches relayed these updates varied, but nine of the coaches reported using Facebook. Twitter was cited by six coaches, as was video. Interestingly, the program website was only mentioned by two of the coaches. The lack of use of the website could be a result of websites being less interactive (Olsen, Keevers, Paul & Covington, 2001). Social media tools like Facebook and Twitter allow users to share information more readily than a traditional website, so the information posted on these sites can have a greater reach. Coach #2 made some interesting points about using videos as a means to communicate with donors. "It's a lot more personal. It is more eye-opening…they click on them and you're right there in their face and you're talking. So, they have a tendency to listen more."

Seven coaches also mentioned partnering with the athletic department as whole to better promote your program, and in turn increase fundraising. These partnerships took many forms. Coach #7 discussed cross-marketing efforts with other sports at the institution which have a strong base of support in the local community. Coach #5 obtains tickets to a home football game and hosts a large tailgate for alumni to come back to and sit together at the game. Multiple coaches discussed the importance of the relationship with the institution's fundraising department, whether it is just building a good relationship with their staff, attending meetings with the fundraising board or setting up meeting with donors in conjunction with a staff member from the fundraising department. "Reaching out for help is important. Not to raise money, but to help you with it. You can't do it all on your own. I really struggled with that, but in the last five years I've gotten people in the athletic department saying 'Coach, I want to help'" (Coach #10).

Relationship Building

In order to receive help from others, whether it's athletic department staff helping put on a banquet or donors making financial contributions, a fundraiser must build relationships. Building meaningful relationships will lead to good will and increase the possibility of future gifts (Lowman & Bixby, 2011). The four most common strategies to build these relationships were face to face meetings, holding special events, providing opportunities for student-athlete interaction and making donors feel valued. Practically, all these strategies can be utilized in connection with each other. If a coach hosts an event the night before a match, he can meet with donors in person, have his wrestlers attend the event so they are able to meet the donors and providing this opportunity makes a donor feel valued. Since seven coaches also mentioned the importance of on-campus reunions, an event like this could encapsulate all these strategies to build relationships. Coach #4 provided a prime example of this type of event. "At every home match, our donors are allowed to use our lower club lounge where they have food and beverages available to them pre and post-match. I'll get in there post-match and thank them for their contributions. Basically, just interact with them and let them know where the program is headed." When building a relationship, a coach needs to treat them as a friend and not just someone that can give them money. Having open lines of communication and not always asking for money allows donors to become more comfortable with the coach and "more often than not, they come to me asking what they can do" (Coach #1).

The three themes in fundraising strategies correspond with the previous literature on fundraising. Shapiro found that service quality positively affects donor satisfaction (2010), and the results of this study suggest customer service is a key strategy for wrestling coaches

as well. Meanwhile, Weight's concept of "Complimentary Entre-lationship Promotion" touches on the need for promotion of wrestling by coaches as the primary advocate for their programs which translates nicely into the theme of marketing and promotion among the best fundraisers. Finally, Burnett's call for "relationship fundraising" (1992) is answered by these coaches as well, who spoke of the need for a personal relationship as vital to cultivating donors. Coach #3 enunciated this theme, saying, "I think what can help influence anyone to give is having a relationship. If you're just getting a letter once or twice a year asking for money, I don't think that's going to go as far as someone from the program reaching out to an individual and get to know them on a personal level." The clear message from these strategies is personal interaction with donors is necessary to build a relationship that will lead to a financial contribution. It's clearly been effective, as Coach #9 reported an incredible success rate. "We sent out a big letter which we got some response but we sat down with donors and talked one on one and that was the most effective. I don't think there was a person we sat down with that didn't give."

Unique Practices

By using qualitative research, this study was able to reach a greater depth of understanding of fundraising practices by wrestling coaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The common trends in strategies were evident, as previously discussed, but one of the reasons these ten coaches were selected was their ability to innovate. The interviews provided an insight into some of the creative strategies that these coaches are using which are unique and could be instituted at other programs. One of these strategies was starting a PayPal account. Coach #9 said that opening a PayPal account made it easier for donors to give, as he could include a link in an email and someone can just make a quick donation while it is at the

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forefront of their thoughts. The ease at which a donor can make a donation is a key factor in their decision to give (Goecks et. al, 2008).

Coach #7 also had a unique way to combine customer service, marketing and relationship building strategies. Every summer, he gives each of his student-athletes ten names of donors and they each write handwritten letters to those donors. These letters allow the donors to hear directly from the individuals who are benefitting from the donor's gifts. By doing it in the summer, it reminds the donors about the wrestling program in the offseason, which helps them stay connected, even without match updates. It also builds the relationship between the program and donor because it is not a solicitation, merely a thank you with no action required on the donor's part.

Coach #10 instituted a special event that brings the wrestling community to his program's doorstep. His program hosts annual Youth Dual tournaments in their home arena. The Youth Duals, held in conjunction with a home meet, bring in 300 youth wrestlers to compete against each other and then stay to watch a college wrestling match. The event is free for youth wrestlers to participate in and it brings in approximately 1,000 extra people to the match. The coach takes time before his meet to speak to the crowd, the current wrestlers officiate the Youth Duals and it exposes 300 youth and their families to his program. This event has led to increased fan support and increased donations. Coach #10 says, "It's one of the easiest ways to grow your program. You are increasing your fan base and getting more people involved. You are getting 1,000 parents involved and they want to be involved. They want to see the sport grow now that their son is in it."

Limitations & Future Research

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This study was limited to ten NCAA Division I wrestling coaches. It would be useful to expand this to more wrestling coaches, especially to identify other unique strategies being implemented at other programs that have proven to be successful. Due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, there may be strategies used by these coaches which were not discussed. However, the results from this study could form a solid foundation for a survey instrument to be distributed among all NCAA Division I wrestling coaches. Discovering which of these strategies set these ten coaches apart from the rest of their peers would provide guidance to coaches who are trying to raise money but are not being as successful. In addition, a case study of one of the ten coaches could provide valuable information. Since the study focused exclusively on wrestling, future research should interview coaches from other non-revenue sports. The results from this study cannot be generalized to all non-revenue sports, but given the similarity between previous fundraising literature and this study, it would not be surprising to find similar results.

Conclusions

Fundraising is not easy. It requires hard work, organization and energy to constantly be on the lookout for people and businesses that can help your program. However, it is an essential skill for a wrestling coach in the current economic environment facing college athletics. When viewed through the lens of Resource Allocation Theory, wrestling is a peripheral unit in an athletic department. Under this theory, in order to receive additional funding from the athletic department, the coach would need to convince his athletic director that those additional resources would benefit the entire athletic department. Unfortunately, that is a tough sell. Therefore, coaches need to find other ways to generate money and fundraising is their best option. For many coaches, fundraising is likely not their best skill,

but it is something you can develop with practice. Coach #10 spoke about his program's philosophy of "One More." Everyone in their program – coaches, student-athletes and donors – are asked to give One More. While they may not have a formal philosophy like Coach #10, all wrestling coaches ask their student-athletes to push themselves. The coaches need to heed their own advice and push themselves to become better fundraisers or they face the prospect of program elimination. Coach #1 summed up the pressure to raise money on wrestling coaches the best. "You can't be just a technician these days if you expect to be a successful coach. You need to embrace fundraising and marketing programs or, in a lot of places, you won't have a program."

APPENDIX A: Interview Guide

1. What have you done to help bring attention to your program and its financial needs?

2. How do you connect with potential donors?

3. Can you talk about a recent interaction you had with a potential donor? How did you try to connect with them?

4. Once you have identified a potential donor, is there anything that can increase the chances that they will support your program? What have you tried to do to increase these chances? (Follow up: What strategies have you used to increase loyalty and giving among current donors?)

5. Do you target specific demographics/groups for donations? What groups do you get the best response from?

6. Have you integrated technology into your fundraising campaign? (Follow-Up: How important is technology in your fundraising efforts?)

7. What factors commonly influence donor's giving to your program? (Follow-Up: How important is success on the mat to your fundraising efforts?)

8. Is there anything you would like to add that we did not discuss?

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