

Lessons Learned:
An Analysis of College Athletic Departments'
5th-year Scholarship Programs

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ABSTRACT

Many university athletic departments have instituted scholarship programs that are designed to help student-athletes who have finished their athletic eligibility but have not yet graduated. Often called a 5th-year scholarship, these programs help students with financial aid that is lost when they are no longer playing a sport.

An analysis of 11 such programs shows that the success rate of these to be remarkable. Of those studied, the mean graduation rate was 89.9 percent for those students who received a 5th-year scholarship. Compare that graduation rate of 89.9 percent to the university and university athletic department graduation rates, both with a mean of less than 60 percent, and a clear picture emerges about the effectiveness of these 5th-year scholarship programs.

This success rate was part of a triumvirate of information that was used to do a policy analysis of 5th-year scholarship programs to evaluate the viability of an institution adding such a scholarship. A second source of data came from surveys of 13 alumni who had graduated after earning one of these 5th-year scholarships. This feedback showed great support for the idea of these scholarships, but did not reveal a clear picture as to how much motivation the scholarships provided for these students to complete college. Most alumni said the scholarship helped their completion efforts, while others said they would have finished one way or another.

The third piece of information used for this analysis was interviews with representatives from nine athletic departments with a 5th-year scholarship program. These interviews revealed an overwhelming sentiment that these scholarships were “the

right thing to do” and they were an effective tool to help increase graduation rates in the department. The interviews also revealed these 5th-year scholarships may be a unique example of policy diffusion, as the programs appeared to have spread from university to university as others saw or heard about a nearby program that was working.

Following Eugene Bardach’s eight-step policy analysis, this program evaluation found these programs appear to be effective because they combine many of the components that experts say make up the best practices recommended today for effective student retention and graduation: financial support, motivated students; monitoring systems for student progress; academic and social support; an institutional priority for academic success; and the creation and enforcement of sanctions for the institution if graduation goals are not met. The analysis suggests the 5th-year scholarships are an effective tool to help students complete college and to help institutions with their retention, progression and graduation efforts. As with many other programs today, funding is a critical consideration, but the rewards appear substantial.

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DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

5th-year Scholarship: Financial aid awarded to a student-athlete who has finished his/her athletic eligibility, but who had not yet completed his/her academic studies.

ACT: An independent, not-for-profit organization that administers the *ACT* college assessment test. It also manages other tests and programs related to educational/career planning and workforce development.

APR: Academic Progress Rate - a measurement by the NCAA to keep track of the academic progress of student-athletes.

Athletic Scholarship: Money awarded to a student-athlete to entice him/her to a university to play in a particular sport.

College Completion: The awarding of a degree and/or certificate to a college student for successfully finishing of a certain course of study.

CSU: Columbus State University, a member of the University System of Georgia, about 90 miles southwest of Atlanta.

Enrollment: The total number of students taking classes.

Financial Aid: Any money awarded to a student to help him/her with college. They can be in the form of grants, loans, scholarship or assistantships.

GPA: Grade Point Average

Graduation Rate: Usually measured in terms of 6 years; the rate at which first-time, full-time freshman go from beginning college to graduating from college.

Higher Education: Same as post-secondary education.

HOPE scholarship: Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally - Georgia's state scholarship grant program, funded by the lottery.

NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association – governing body for college athletics.

Policy Diffusion: Also called policy innovation – the spread of ideas or programs from one government to another.

Postsecondary Education: Schooling after high school, such as in a college or university.

Progression: Keeping a student on track in college toward their degree.

Retention: The rate at which a college student returns.

RPG: Retention, progression and graduation.

Student-athlete: A college student who also competes in an NCAA intercollegiate sport.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background

A variety of athletic programs around the country have some variation of a privately funded scholarship program designed to help student-athletes who have finished their 4 years of athletic eligibility, but have not yet graduated from college. These scholarship programs were designed to fill a gap because, according to the National Center of Education Statistics within the United States (U.S.) Department of Education, the average number of years it takes a student to go from high school graduation to the completion of a bachelor's degree has been increasing. "The proportion of bachelor's degree completers graduating within 4 years after high school declined from 45 percent to 31 percent between 1977 and 1990, and the proportion completing their degrees more than 6 years after high school increased from 25 percent to 32 percent" (McCormick and Horn, 1996, 22). In fact, most graduation rates in the United States are now computed on a cycle of 6 years, measured by whether a first-time, full-time student graduates with a bachelor's degree within 6 calendar years of his or her first semester of college study.

While the average length of study in college is 6 years, the typical athletic scholarship only covers 4 years of college. This disparity is where these other scholarships assist the student-athlete. An example of this is at Columbus State University (CSU), a NCAA Division II member of the University System of Georgia. Athletic officials there discovered that many of the student-athletes who had completed their academic eligibility still had the desire to attend college, but no longer had the financial resources to do so.

CSU leaders approached their supporters and developed the 5th-year scholarship program, developed to fill that financial gap and to encourage student-athletes to complete the primary task for which they came to college: to graduate.

Purpose of the study

Since CSU's 5th-year scholarship program started in 1999, officials have touted its success. However, their boasts were based on anecdotal information. Data had not been compiled to show how many students received the scholarship and, most importantly, how many students who received the scholarship actually graduated from CSU.

Having these data would give the university and its athletic department information to use in recruitment of prospective athletes who would consider coming to CSU to both earn an education and play a sport. These data would also help the department report to its private donors about the effectiveness of the 5th-year scholarship program, and therefore the good results that came about because of their philanthropy. Showing this kind of effectiveness from a scholarship program could also help with future fund-raising efforts.

Informing donors about how their money was used is spelled out in guidelines CSU developed in 2005 to explicitly address donor stewardship. One of the main tenants of these guidelines is to explain to the donors about the successes that came about because of their generosity. Determining the success of the 5th-year scholarship program would be an important part of the athletic department's ability to adhere to this policy. These data would also set a benchmark for the department to track for all ensuing years to keep track of the program's success.

Study Outline

To answer questions about the program's effectiveness and to provide university officials useful information, I evaluated 10 years of CSU data to determine the success of CSU's 5th-year scholarship program by calculating the graduation rate of those who participated in the program. Having this quantitative success data is useful for several reasons:

- To use as a recruiting tool for student-athletes who are considering coming to CSU to earn an education and to play sports.
- To assess how successful the program is in helping students graduate.
- To assess how much, if at all, the program helps the athletic department's overall graduation rate, a figure the athletic department reports annually to the NCAA.
- To serve as a report of success or failure to the private donors who have supported the 5th-year scholarship program.

Research revealed a high rate of graduation by eligible participants in CSU's 5th-year scholarship program. The graduation rate for these participants was higher than the athletic department's graduation rate and significantly higher than CSU's graduation rate.

These results can be used by the department and the university to promote their success in graduating student-athletes, a claim that could be an added incentive for students being recruited to CSU's athletic program. Donors should also be pleased about these results, as they show a successful return on the private investment in the university and its main goal of educating students.

I then expanded on that CSU study for this project – a policy analysis with a triangulation approach for studying this topic: first, by comparing graduation rates of the 5th-year scholarship program to the athletic department and university graduation rates at several schools; secondly, by surveying some graduates of 5th-year scholarship programs from select institutions; and third, by interviewing representatives of these various athletic departments about their 5th-year scholarship program. A sampling of other universities that appeared to have similar, privately funded, scholarship programs for students who have completed their athletic eligibility include:

1. University of Mobile
2. University of South Alabama
3. Florida Atlantic University
4. Lander University
5. Montana State University
6. Columbus State University
7. University of New Mexico
8. Colorado State University
9. University of Denver
10. Augusta State University
11. California State University - Sacramento
12. Georgia College and State University
13. Francis Marion University
14. University of Montevallo
15. University of North Alabama

16. Flagler College
17. Jacksonville State University
18. Concordia University
19. Bemidji State University
20. University of Illinois at Springfield
21. University of South Carolina - Aiken
22. University of North Carolina - Pembroke
23. Georgia Southwestern State University
24. North Georgia College and State University
25. Armstrong Atlantic University
26. Clayton State University
27. Young Harris College

Of this group, the 11 universities that were able to confirm they had a 5th-year scholarship and were also able and willing to provide information about their program included:

- Florida Atlantic University, a multi-campus public university in southeast Florida with about 30,000 students.
- Lander University, a public university in South Carolina with about 3,000 students.
- Montana State University, a public university with more than 14,500 students.
- Columbus State University, a public university in Georgia with about 8,200 students.
- University of New Mexico, a public university with about 29,000 students.

- Colorado State University, a public university with more than 30,000 students.
- University of Denver, a private, university in the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado with more than 11,500 students.
- Augusta State University, a public university in Georgia with about 3,000 students.
- California State University - Sacramento, more commonly referred to as just Sacramento State, a public university with almost 30,000 students.
- Georgia College and State University, a public university in Georgia with more than 6,000 students.
- Francis Marion University, a public university in South Carolina with more than 3,500 students.

There is no central listing of schools with scholarship programs designed to provide financial help to student-athletes who have finished their athletic ability but who have not yet graduated. As I made contact with one university with such a program, I asked for the names of other universities with similar programs. I interviewed appropriate officials from these university programs to determine how many students have received their 5th-year scholarship, and how many of those students have gone on to graduate from their university. In some cases, the athletic director had this information but in some cases multiple contacts were needed to offices such as the registrar, alumni affairs and/or financial aid. Those graduation rates were compared to graduation rates of the athletic departments and of the universities. Once again, the graduation rates of the 5th-year scholarship program were higher than that of the athletic departments or the universities.

Limitations to this research include the inability to determine exactly how many universities have started such a program, or how many such programs exist today. In reviewing the 6-year graduation rate of the programs, athletic departments, or universities, there also were limitations on how many other factors may have impacted these graduation rates. On an institutional level, variables might include enrollment, student-faculty ratio, tutoring services, or majors offered. There are also a variety of variables that would come into play on an individual basis such as personal motivation, family support, socioeconomic status and educational background.

To identify these personal variables, I interviewed a small sample of students who received the scholarship to provide insight to some possible reasons behind what I believed would be a record of success in these scholarship programs. There could be some significant motivational lessons to be learned here, but there are an untold number of variables that prevented me from definitively explaining the success of these programs. Advising, quality of the education, affinity for the school, feelings of belonging tied to classmates or teammates, study/tutoring programs within the athletic departments, and individual motivations are some examples that would have an impact on a student's academic success.

However, the quality information with these data and interviews led to some implications for other scholarship programs, which are typically awarded at the beginning of a student's academic career. Most scholarship programs also are evaluated simply based on the caliber of student (be it athletic or academic) that are attracted to the university, not on the numbers of students who were awarded the scholarship then went on to graduate with a degree. Perhaps there are some motivations or incentives that come

into play with these 5th-year scholarship programs that also can be used with other scholarship programs.

Policy Analysis

Outlining the efficacy of these programs, in terms of increasing degree completion, is one element of a policy analysis that I undertook as part of this study to answer the question of whether a 5th-year scholarship program would be a worthwhile undertaking for an athletic department that does not currently have such a program. This analysis followed Eugene Bardach's "eightfold path" for problem solving and provided a blueprint for any athletic department considering the development and implementation of such a scholarship program.

Bardach (2009) describes his eight steps as: 1) define the problem, 2) assemble some evidence, 3) construct alternatives that could be considered, 4) select criteria by which you would consider the alternatives, 5) project outcomes, 6) confront tradeoffs and eliminate implausible alternatives, 7) decide, and 8) tell the story. The problem central to this project's consideration was whether or not a school without a 5th-year scholarship should adopt such a plan. Financial support certainly played a key role in this analysis process, but there were other considerations such as state policies, budget priorities and campus culture that came into play. I examined policies surrounding existing programs, analyzed applications and paperwork from schools with current programs, and talked to athletic directors about how and why they set up their scholarship programs.

When this study was completed, I was able to show these 5th-year scholarship programs for college athletes have been effective (in terms of how many student-athletes graduate), gave insight into whether these programs teach us anything about student

retention, and provided a complete argument about why an initiative such as the 5th-year scholarship program would be good for a university athletic department to consider.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Administrators in American universities have long struggled with the myriad of issues that surround attracting, retaining, and graduating students. State funding formulas and tuition revenue are often tied to enrollment, underscoring the importance of efforts to recruit students. Retaining students is a critical way to maintain enrollment and demonstrate the success of a college's education process. Graduating students is the ultimate goal of any university and is often a major data point examined when evaluating the effectiveness of any institution. Additionally, graduation rates are the centerpiece of efforts such as Complete College America and Complete College Georgia, which aim to drastically increase the number of students who have completed some level of post-secondary education.

Despite the importance of these efforts, statistics show that while more and more students are attending college, their success rate in finishing college is not stellar (under 60 percent) and completion rates have not shown much improvement over the last few decades (Bowen, Chingos and McPherson 2009). According to a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education*, "About 59 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2006 completed that degree within 6 years. The graduation rate for females (61 percent) was higher than the rate for males (56 percent)" (National Center, 2014, 1). In comparison, the institute reports, 55 percent of

first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree in fall 1996 earned a bachelor's degree within 6 years at that institution. This increase of just 4 percent in graduation rates came at the same time that enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities was growing at a much faster rate. The report indicates that between the years 2000 and 2010, undergraduate enrollment increased by 37 percent, from 13.2 to 18.1 million students. The trend is predicted to continue, with enrollment reaching 20.6 million students by 2021 (National Center 2014).

Student Retention Problems

A troubling picture emerges when enrollment grows drastically while graduation rates remain stagnant. The image is worse when considering universities in the South, particularly in the state of Georgia. These troubles are evident despite volumes of research into student retention and ways to improve graduation rates. At least two national academic journals (*Journal of College Student Retention* and the *Journal of College Student Development*) devote monthly research articles to retention issues, national conferences on the topic attract thousands of administrators and professors each year, and almost 15,000 publications or reports are available on the academic database JSTOR when searching for "college student retention." Obviously, it is an oft-researched topic with no definite formula on exactly what works for everyone. However, there are some commonly accepted practices that all universities should employ.

One of those practices is financial aid for deserving students. Universities typically offer some type of financial aid to students, in addition to that which is available through federal, and sometimes state, resources. Research has shown that financial aid can be an incentive for attracting students, and while that effectiveness has been

occasionally measured (Braunstein, McGrath and Pescatrice 1999), there seems to be less attention paid to figuring out how effective financial incentives are at retaining and – most importantly – graduating students who receive the aid.

Also, seemingly absent are scholarships that are made available to students to encourage them to finish school. Most awards are designed to attract students *to* college; few are designed for students currently in college to give them an incentive to finish their studies. The exception is an athletic scholarship that select universities around the country make available to student-athletes who have used all of their athletic eligibility, but have not yet completed their academic requirements. The scholarships, often called 5th-year scholarships, provide an incentive for these students to finish school. Research will allow the success of these programs to be measured and then compared to the graduation rate of the athletic department that provides the scholarship and also to that of the university that houses the department.

Policy Diffusion

These 5th-year scholarship programs appear to have expanded organically from larger institutions to others around the country, as officials heard about what colleagues were doing. This may be an interesting example of policy diffusion or policy innovation, the spread of ideas or programs from one institution to another.

McLendon, Heller and Young (2005) noted there are an increasing number of examples of policy diffusion in postsecondary education because of “increasing pressures on state budgets, escalating college costs, persistent criticism over the efficiency and productivity of public postsecondary systems, and emerging challenges of student access” (365). Additionally, the authors reported these innovations may have expanded to

other states and governments because there has been such an explosion in the numbers of, and participation in, professional associations for government and higher education employees. Just a few of the examples they cited include the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board (365). “These groups serve as conduits of interstate communication through which ideas are disseminated among peers, but they function also as networks for institutionalizing norms about the acceptability, desirability, and feasibility of new policy ideas. When a particular state adopts a policy that is viewed as ‘cutting-edge,’ interest in that policy among officials in neighboring states may increase in part because of the desire of officials to be perceived by their peers as leaders in policy design” (365). The authors provided six programs in the last few decades that illustrate this policy innovation across state borders: college savings programs, prepaid tuition programs, merit scholarship programs, performance funding, performance budgeting, and undergraduate assessment practices (365).

Graduation Rates

Brainard and Fuller in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* referred to college graduation rates the “rate that people hate” (A15) because the numbers exclude so many considerations, such as students who take longer than 6 years to graduate, students who leave and complete their studies at another school, and students who transfer into a school and eventually graduate. Because there is not standard way of measuring graduation rates, the *Chronicle* reported up to 50 percent of students at any given institution are not taken into account when a college or university’s graduation rate is

computed. And yet, that rate is universally computed and widely reported, often as the single most important measure of how well a university or college does what it is supposed to do: educate and graduate students. “It is clear in nearly every conversation about higher education accountability that graduation rates are increasingly viewed as a critical, if not *the* critical, measure of both student and institutional success” (Cook and Pullaro 2010, 2). Results are posted on university websites, reported to the federal government, reported to state governing boards, monitored by the NCAA and cited in national publications such as *U.S. News & World Report’s* rankings of the best colleges and universities.

Computing a university’s graduation rate became required after the passage in 1990 of the federal Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act (Library of Congress 1990). It is most often computed rather simply: take the number of first-time, full-time freshmen who start in any given fall semester and compute how many of those receive their bachelor’s degree at that institution within 4, 5 or 6 academic years after starting. The 6-year graduation rate is most often used. Each college in the country is required to report these rates to the federal government. They are collected and analyzed by the National Center for Education Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. On the center’s “Digest of Education Statistics” website at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_331.asp, visitors can find graduation rates of “first-time postsecondary students who started as degree-seeking students” at various types of colleges in the country for students who started at different years (Institute 2009). Combining rates from the previous 9 years, the average

percentage of students who completed a bachelor's degree within 6 years of starting is shown in the following table.

Table 1
Percentage of Students Completing Bachelor's Degree Within 6 Years of Starting College:

<i>Year cohort started college:</i>	<i>All Institutions</i>	<i>Public Institutions</i>	<i>Private, Not-For-Profit Institutions</i>	<i>Private, For-Profit Institutions</i>
1996	55.4	51.7	63.1	28
1997	56.0	52.8	63	24
1998	56.4	53.2	63.7	24.5
1999	57.1	54.1	64	29.1
2000	57.5	54.8	64.5	32.6
2001	57.3	55	64.4	24.5
2002	57.2	54.9	64.6	22
2003	57.4	55.7	65.1	20.4
2004	58.3	56	65.4	28.4

Note: This chart in more detail is available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_345.asp. The center's glossary, online at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary/?charindex=P>, provides the following definitions of the different categories listed above:

Public Institutions: educational institutions with programs and activities operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials and which are supported primarily by public funds.

Private not-for-profit institutions: receive no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses. These include both independent not-for-profit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.

Private for-profit institutions: receive compensation other than wages, rent, or other expenses.

When looking at different sub populations of university graduation rates, the picture does not improve. For black students who started in 2001 at 4-year institutions, the graduation rate is 21.4 percent, compared to 39.1 percent for whites. The rate for Hispanics was slightly higher at 25.8 percent (Institute 2009).

Looking in the South, the overall numbers are a bit lower. For the 16 states in the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), 49 percent of all students who started at a public 4-year college or university in 1997 graduated within 6 years. From the 2002 cohort, the number grew to 53 percent (SREB 2010). Obviously rates can vary widely by institution, but it is not uncommon to find a school such as CSU – a comprehensive, regional school with an access mission to its service area – to have graduation rates that regularly hover around 30 percent (CSU 2013).

Even more sobering numbers surface when the numbers examine how many eighth-graders went on to complete high school and complete college with a bachelor's degree. Bowen, Chingos and McPherson (2009, 28) report that of all the people in the country who were in the eighth-grade in 1988, only 28 percent earned a bachelor's degree by the time they turned 26 years old.

Retention Efforts

With the average for all types of institution still leaving about more than one third of students listed officially as non-graduates, it is easy to understand why student retention efforts have become so important. The issue becomes even more relevant when one understands the societal value of someone with even some college education. The most highly educated adults in our society earn more money, pay more taxes and have lower rates of unemployment (Baum, Ma and Payea 2010). Median annual earnings for

those with a bachelor's degree working full-time in 2008 were almost \$22,000 higher than those with just a high school degree. Even those with some college credit – but no degree – earned an average of 17 percent more in annual earnings than those with just a high school diploma. The numbers are even more noteworthy for young men and women. For women between 25 and 34 years old, those with a bachelor's degree or higher had yearly earnings 79 percent higher than median earnings for women with a high school diploma. For men in the same age range, the earnings advantage was 74 percent (Baum, Ma and Payea 2010). On a societal level, government agencies at all levels receive higher tax revenues from college graduates than from those who had only earned a high school diploma. For instance, in 2008, 8 percent “of high school graduates aged 25 and older lived in households that relied on the Food Stamp Program, compared to just over 1 percent of those with at least a bachelor's degree. The pattern was similar for the National School Lunch Program,” (Baum, Ma and Payea 2010, 4).

With such compelling evidence about the importance of a college of education, it is understandable why many colleges and administrators spend so much time and energy on retaining students and assisting students more as they progress through school and graduate. This retention, progression and graduation (RPG) rate is often closely scrutinized and widely reported. In Georgia, the state is implementing a funding plan for all universities and technical colleges to tie funding to their success rates in graduating students, rather than strictly on enrollment.

At the governor's urging, Georgia also has developed the Complete College Georgia initiative, which follows a nationwide effort called Complete College America. In Georgia, the initiative sets a goal that by 2020, 60 percent of adults aged 25 to 34

should have a college education. That means that throughout the system, institutions need to produce about 250,000 more graduates (Complete College Georgia, 2011). Such an effort will require enrollment trends to continue as predicted, and also require significant improvement in RPG rates.

So, what is the secret to RPG? Extensive research over the last several decades show there is no single best answer. Retaining and graduating students is best done by doing lots of things right on a college campus. The array of factors that play into the retention rate is staggering, and can range from the attractiveness of a college's grounds, the availability of leisure activities, career-enhancing degree options, proper advising and personal attention from faculty members.

ACT, the independent, not-for-profit organization commonly known for providing one of the two most recognized college entrance assessment tests, also provides an array of assessment and research information in the educational arena that helps give some insight into RPG best practices. During the last decade, ACT has conducted four surveys of college and university campuses across the country to show how these campuses are tackling the issue of student retention. *What Works in Student Retention, Fourth National Survey* came out in 2010, featuring input from 258 public 4-year colleges and universities. The results illustrate the wide range of techniques that colleges use to better their RPG rate, and emphasize that there is not one formula that works for every situation, every student or even every institution. The median graduation rate of the institutions surveyed mirrored the national rate, and the median retention rate of students who progressed from their first year to their second year in college was 75 percent (ACT 2010).

Some of the report's most telling findings came university representatives who were asked to provide the three best practices that made the greatest contribution to retention on their campus. There was such a variety of opinions that only nine practices were chosen by 10 percent or more of the institutions as among the top three practices they had found in impacting retention (ACT 2010, 10). Those nine were:

- Freshman seminar/university 101 course
- Supplemental instruction
- Tutoring
- Living/learning communities (residential)
- Advising interventions with select student populations
- Mandated placement of students in courses based on test scores
- Academic advising center
- Summer orientation
- Early warning system

Despite all the retention efforts that many institutions are undertaking, many researchers contend that ultimately the most important ingredient in the process is the individual student. "The apparent success or failure of recruitment and retention programs may be the result of events outside the control of campus administrators" (Hossler 1991, 3). Wilson (2006) agreed, reporting that "there is variation in retention and graduation rates both between and within institutions, so local contexts and conditions are important." However, that's not to say that researchers are suggesting that nothing be done. Most agree with Kuh and his colleagues (2005, 1) that "a commitment to improve is an essential condition for student success."

Financial Aid

Financial aid is one of the methods that many institutions use to offset the cost of higher education, and to make the institution more attractive to high-caliber students and stellar student-athletes. Some researchers such as Hossler (1991) have examined financial aid as a possible source of retention, but with mixed results. “The task of isolating the effects of financial aid on either the decision to enroll or to stay enrolled at that college is extremely difficult given the complexities of the variables involved” (Hossler 1991, 49). Such variables include personal and demographic characteristics of the student, advice from others, personal goals, family history, skills and abilities, and academic and social integration in college. Financial aid or scholarships are much more likely to be considered as an incentive for attracting students *to* a school, not keeping them *in* school. However, researchers such as Braunstein, have hinted that – especially in current economic times – financial aid could indeed be a powerful incentive to RPG.

It’s obviously a topic that’s on students’ minds. The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA surveyed more than 200,000 freshmen in 2010 to find the trends and attitudes of students going to college today. For the first time in the survey, researchers asked whether current economic conditions played a role in their choice of college. Almost two-thirds of the respondents reported economics “significantly affected” their college choice and, of that group, a majority had “major” concerns about how to pay for college (HERI 2010, 3).

Obviously more research is needed. An early study in the area (Jensen 1981) showed student financial aid has “small positive effects on the persistence of recipients” (293) and correctly predicted that financial aid would become a bigger and bigger part of

the higher education environment. Jensen implored researchers who followed to continually evaluate its impact on student retention and refine the financial aid process accordingly.

Only a few seem to have followed the advice. Financial aid is not even one of the 94 considerations on the ACT nationwide survey of universities about best practices in student retention. A few researchers have tried to make the case financial aid should be included in the RPG conversation. Hossler (1991) reports there are data to show financial aid does indeed improve student retention. In fact, financial aid is shown to have “a greater effect on persistence in later years than in the freshman year” (1991, 51). Vincent Tinto (1987), in his seminal book about why students leave college, emphasizes that financial assistance needs to be a consideration in looking at why students stay in college. Short-term financial difficulties “can and do” (179) cause students to drop out of school – thereby negatively affecting an institution’s retention rate. Long-term financial excuses may be more of an indication of a student’s social and intellectual satisfaction with his or her school, Tinto wrote. A more recent report by Neal Raisman titled *Why Students Are Leaving Your College or University*, reports that the leading reasons behind students leaving college voluntarily are because of indifference from the school about them as a person, some kind of bad personal experience they had with an institution employee, or they just did not feel like the experience was “worth it.” The report was developed from student surveys by an independent consulting organization that surveys hundreds of students a year “The results have been rather constant over the years with a shift of a percentage point or two. It seemed to hold that 72 percent of all students left school for academic customer service focused reasons” (Raisman 2010, 17).

Experts with Noel-Levitz, one of the most prominent consultants in today's educational efforts to attract and retain students, report financial aid is an important factor in RPG considerations, and has shown to have a positive impact on student retention (Crockett, Heffron and Schneider 2011). The aid not only eliminates – or alleviates – the cost of college, but also becomes another opportunity for an institution and its staff to connect with individual students, Maneuvering through the maze and red tape that is today's financial aid system is a daunting process and the institution that does it well is one that is known for its student service, an oft-repeated factor in student retention.

Scholarship Impact

Even less researched is the impact that scholarships have on attracting or retaining students, although some recent research seems to show a positive correlation between the two. Arfin (1986) examined the history of offering financial aid to those students interested in entering the military or the fields of law enforcement and various health professions, to determine what lessons could be learned as the country began trying to attract more people to the field of teaching. He pointed out that financial aid comes in three general categories: grants or scholarships, loans from some organization that have to be repaid by the students, and what he called “sponsored employment,” whereby a student's college costs are paid for with the agreement that the student will commit a certain number of years of working in a designated field. The most common variation of this is the military, which will pay for a student to go to college in return for several years of service.

Arfin's work revealed that not every type of financial aid worked for each student or for each discipline. When he looked at how these experiences could be applied to

recruiting teachers, he noted that scholarships could be an aid in recruiting by showing students how seriously they are needed in college. However, he ultimately questioned how effective it was to offer a scholarship to a student who could switch their course of study to something other than that which would lead them to teach in a classroom. There was no mention of how effective scholarships are to simply attracting students to college.

More recent studies have provided a bit more insight into the impact of financial aid to the RPG rates, but scholarships still have not specifically received due attention in terms of their impact on retention and graduation. Shuh (1999) reports financial aid has a “dramatic” impact on student retention by improving students’ overall satisfaction with their college experience. He set out to discover if he could narrow down some findings by looking at the impact that various factors – especially merit, non-need-based, scholarships – had on student attendance at a fine arts college. Ultimately, his findings showed that merit scholarships are only “likely” (199) to be among those factors that impact a student’s persistence in college to graduation, once again indicating that more work needs to be done to determine the role of scholarships in RPG.

HOPE Scholarship

One grant program that has been extensively studied is Georgia’s HOPE scholarship. An acronym for Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally, the HOPE scholarship began in 1993 (Georgia Student 2014). According to the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the program rewards students with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at eligible Georgia public and private colleges and universities, and public technical colleges. HOPE is funded entirely by the Georgia lottery department based on state-run lottery ticket sales. The program also funds

Georgia's statewide prekindergarten program (Georgia Student 2014). Since the HOPE Program began in 1993, the state reports that more than \$5.8 billion in HOPE funds have been awarded to more than 1.4 million students attending Georgia's colleges, universities, and technical colleges (Georgia Student 2014).

Two evaluations of the program have shown the successful impact HOPE has had on enrolling students in college and aiding their progress toward graduation. Henry and Bugler (1997) discovered that students on the HOPE scholarship have "slightly higher college GPAs and significantly more college credits" (2) than their classmates who are not on the scholarship. More importantly, they concluded that HOPE students are less likely to drop out of college. The figures are not overwhelming though. In the fall of 1996, researchers found that about 74 percent of all HOPE scholars who started in college 3 years ago were still in college somewhere in Georgia. That number is impressive, but only three percentage points higher than similarly achieving students who were not on the HOPE scholarship (Henry and Bugler 1997, 4). Dynarski (2000) took a slightly different approach in her analysis, comparing Georgia HOPE scholarship student attendance to student attendance at neighboring state institutions. Her evaluation determined that the scholarship increased the attendance rate at Georgia's colleges by 7 to 8 percent (Dynarski 2000, 629). Unfortunately, again, the analysis only measured attendance at college, not persistence to graduation as a result of the scholarship. Still, there is obviously a positive impact on educating Georgians that can be attributed to providing a substantial state-funded scholarship to deserving students. University System of Georgia research reports show that system 6-year graduation rates have indeed increased since the HOPE scholarship was introduced in 1993 (Board 2008). For the

1991 cohort, the system graduated 43.24 percent of its students who started that year and then graduated by the summer of 1997. For the latest cohort recorded – the class that began in 2006, 13 years after the HOPE scholarship began – the graduation rate for the system rose to 58.98 percent when looking at the number of students who graduated by the summer of 2012.

There is no research to definitively declare that that the HOPE scholarship has increased graduation rates, but it was designed to keep the brightest minds in the state, and logic would follow that if more and more of these better students are going to college, they would be more likely to graduate within 6 years. The correlation suggests a positive relationship could exist between scholarship awards and RPG.

It will be interesting to monitor this program, since its ability requirements are changing. A March 14, 2011 article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (Diamond and Badertscher 2011) reported lawmakers had to change the rules of the popular HOPE scholarship program because it was simply running out of money. Demand from students was outpacing funding from lottery sales. Under the new rules signed by the governor in March 2011, Georgia high school students with a 3.0 GPA will still receive grants through the HOPE, but the amount will not be set by tuition – it will be determined by lottery revenue. For the fall 2011 school year, that meant HOPE scholarship money covered 90 percent of the University System of Georgia tuition rates, provided the tuition is not raised by the Board of Regents before the fall semester begins. Only the brightest high school students will have all their tuition covered. Only those who graduate with at least a 3.7 GPA and a combined 1200 on the math and reading sections of the SAT or 26 on the ACT will have 100 percent of their tuition covered. Under the new rules, HOPE

will no longer cover any textbooks or institutional fees, and students in college will have their grades checked more frequently than in the past to ensure that they are qualifying academically to keep their HOPE scholarship money (Diamond and Badertscher 2011).

Student-athletes

While the HOPE scholarship struggles to keep up with demand, athletic scholarship programs do not seem to be having money problems. These financial incentives are designed to convince student-athletes to attend and play for a particular college program. According to the NCAA, the members of its association award about \$1 billion in athletic scholarships for undergraduate student-athletes at Division I and Division II schools. With that much money being spent on more than 126,000 students, researchers have long been studying the impact on retention and graduation by those students who were largely awarded scholarships not because of their academic ability, but because of their athletic ability.

Adler and Adler's (1985) research corroborated earlier work that largely found "a negative relationship between athletic participation and academic performance" (241). These studies conclude that student-athletes generally were more interested in athletics than academics and therefore had lower GPAs, lower retention rates and lower graduation rates. Adler and Adler's 4-year study was at a medium-sized private university where they did a participant-observation study of the basketball program. They found most of the student-athletes began their college career with high hopes of being successful on the field or court and in the classroom. The pair found that enthusiasm eventually drifted away as the athletic demands become more and more overwhelming, and the student-athletes became more and more isolated from the rest of the student body,

where it was more common to find study groups and other typically occurring academic-enriching activities. As the athletes become more attached to each other, and more isolated from the rest of the student population, this pattern continues and builds on itself until “most college athletes become disillusioned with academics by the time their athletic eligibility expires” (Adler and Adler 1985, 248).

However, Robst and Keil (2000) studied athletes’ grades and graduation rates at another institution, a NCAA Division III school, and found different results. While athletes at the university had, on whole, lower GPAs than the rest of the student body, Robst and Keil found athletes at Binghamton University were on a more stringent academic schedule and therefore took more credits per academic year than the non-athlete student counterparts. Consequently, at this Division III school, graduation rates among the athletes were higher than among non-athletes. Researchers suggested strong academic support services could be credited, but also postulated that the involvement in athletics at Binghamton boosted the connection to academics and encouraged the students to do better. Therefore, the pair concluded, “athletics can be a powerful, positive factor in a student’s success” (Robst and Keil 2000, 557).

Obviously, the research has shown that the academic success of student-athletes varies widely, from single-digit graduation rates in many “big-time” athletic programs, to a near 100 percent graduation rate among football players at the most selective universities. While some academicians (Mangold 2003; Adler and Adler 1985) have suggested that successful sports programs have a negative impact on graduation rates, most researchers have pointed out that the wide disparity of academic performance by school and by sport (DeBrock, Hendricks and Koenker 1996) make it difficult to

determine a specific correlation between sport and academics. In some programs, the athletes are not even in school to gain a degree – college is simply a stepping stone toward their profession. “The often dismal graduation rate of scholarship athletes in revenue sports generates laments from nearly all observers of college life. What is ironic in this attack is that no one mentions that graduation rates for non-athletes also vary quite dramatically across campuses. While Ivy League schools have graduation rates in the mid 90 percent range, many Division I schools have graduation rates, for the entire student body, below 20 percent. Shamefully, at some schools, the rates even approach single digits” (DeBrock, Hendricks and Koenker 1996, 533).

Conclusion

There is clearly a problem with graduation rates in this country, among all students. Equally clear is the significant amount of attention being paid to the issue and the number of attempts that are being made to improve retention, progression and graduation rates. As much as college administrators complain about the focus on these statistics by organizations such as *U.S. News & World Report*, the figures are tabulated at every institution in the country, reported widely and watched closely. More and more institutions are including retention and graduation rates when creating metrics, dashboard indicators, performance indicators so that all campus administrators will understand what the institution considers to be an important measurement of success, and how the institution is doing to increase the rate in each area.

There is no shortage of possible solutions to improve retention and graduation rates. Journals and books and conferences and seminars offer an abundance of ideas centered on the needs of the individual student. Universities around the country have

found success in different ways, but it is clear that the awarding of scholarships to students is not one of the incentives that has been thoroughly studied. Since research is not clear on the correlation between athletic participation and academic performance, the time is right to look at one specific idea that has been instituted at a small number of different institutions – a 5th-year scholarship program designed to help student-athletes graduate when their athletic scholarships run out before their coursework is completed. This researcher will look at the success of this program in helping scholarship recipients complete their degree. These graduation rates can then be compared to both the graduation rate of the institution overall, and of the institution’s athletic department. This information will be part of a policy analysis designed to answer the question for a university without a 5th-year scholarship program: Should we start a program like this? If so, what are the considerations we will have to take into account?

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is a policy analysis using Bardach's eightfold path to look at the efficacy of 5th-year scholarship programs using a three-pronged approach for studying this topic: 1) by comparing graduation rates of the 5th-year scholarship program to the athletic department and university graduation rates at several schools; 2) by surveying some graduates of the 5th-year scholarship program from select institutions; and 3) by interviewing officials about the decision to adopt the 5th-year scholarship program at various athletic departments.

The analysis started with calculating the success rate of the 5th-year scholarship programs, which are designed to help student-athletes finish their studies and graduate from college. This study examined how many scholarship recipients in these programs actually accomplished the goal of graduating from college, and compared that success rate to the graduation rate of the athletic departments that sponsor these programs, as well as the university or college to which the department belongs. The hypothesis of this study was that the success rate of the scholarship program would be very high, and significantly higher than the host athletic departments and the institution. The study investigated reasons for this success rate, and questioned whether institutional retention, progression and graduation rates could be impacted by having more scholarships designed to support students to finish college, rather than the traditional model of using scholarships to simply attracting students *to* a particular college. These success rates and insights were

then the basis of a policy analysis of these scholarship programs to evaluate their effectiveness and to provide sufficient information for a university considering the establishment of such a program. This chapter will discuss my methods of data collection and analysis, as well as limitations and variables that were encountered. Such an explanation is critical to the research process to provide credibility to the discussion and allow readers to make their own decisions on the credibility of the data presented, the conclusions drawn and the implications reached.

Success Rate Comparisons

As this research examined the success rate of the scholarship program designed to help student-athletes finish their college careers, the computation of that success rate was fairly straight-forward. Conversations with various athletic departments, Internet searches and Lexis-Nexus research search were used to locate different schools around the country that have a scholarship programs designed to assist student-athletes who have finished their athletic eligibility, but still want to complete their academic studies and do not have the financial resources to do so. Since I work at Columbus State University, I enlisted the help of CSU's athletic director, who emailed athletic director colleagues at those universities we identified that had a 5th-year scholarship program. He also emailed all athletic directors in his conference, the Peach Belt Conference, to ask for their help. For those who responded willing to help, I followed up with emails and/or telephone calls. I also repeatedly contacted several institutions I was convinced had a 5th-year scholarship program. Ultimately 27 different universities were contacted:

1. University of Mobile
2. University of South Alabama

3. Florida Atlantic University
4. Lander University
5. Montana State University
6. Columbus State University
7. University of New Mexico
8. Colorado State University
9. University of Denver
10. Augusta State University
11. California State University - Sacramento
12. Georgia College and State University
13. Francis Marion University
14. University of Montevallo
15. University of North Alabama
16. Flagler College
17. Jacksonville State University
18. Concordia University
19. Bemidji State University
20. University of Illinois at Springfield
21. University of South Carolina - Aiken
22. University of North Carolina - Pembroke
23. Georgia Southwestern State University
24. North Georgia College and State University
25. Armstrong Atlantic University

26. Clayton State University

27. Young Harris College

Of this group, 11 universities confirmed they had a 5th-year scholarship program, and were both able and willing to provide data for this study. The 11 included:

1. Florida Atlantic University, a multi-campus public university in southeast Florida with about 30,000 students.
2. Lander University, a public university in South Carolina with about 3,000 students.
3. Montana State University, a public university with more than 14,500 students.
4. Columbus State University, a public university in Georgia with about 8,200 students.
5. University of New Mexico, a public university with about 29,000 students.
6. Colorado State University, a public university with more than 30,000 students.
7. University of Denver, a private university in the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado with more than 11,500 students.
8. Augusta State University, a public university in Georgia with about 3,000 students.
9. California State University - Sacramento, more commonly referred to as just Sacramento State, a public university with almost 30,000 students.
10. Georgia College and State University, a public university in Georgia with more than 6,000 students.
11. Francis Marion University, a public university in South Carolina with more than 3,500 students.

When talking with representatives from these athletic departments, I requested the following information: how many student-athletes have been awarded these scholarships since the program started, and how many of those awardees actually went on to graduate from their college. Unfortunately, I was not able to make any concessions for students who may have left the school, died, or were otherwise prevented from graduating by outside forces. There were simply too many variables and there was too much difficulty in researching the individual circumstances surrounding each individual who received the scholarship, but then who did not graduate from college.

I then took the names of students who did receive the scholarship and checked alumni and institutional records – if not available in the athletic department – to see how many have earned college degrees from the institution. Dividing the number of participants by the number of graduates provided a percentage that was called Scholarship Graduation Rate. This rate was then compared to each athletic department’s graduation rate, which is based on the number of student-athletes in the athletic department who start school in any given year and then graduate from college within six consecutive years after beginning their studies. These rates are closely monitored by – and reported to – the NCAA. Each institution studied also computes a university-wide graduation rate, which is based on the number of students who start school as first-time, full-time freshman in any given year and then graduate from college within 6 consecutive years after beginning their studies.

For each institution, I then had three figures: 1) Scholarship Graduation Rate, 2) Athletic Department Graduation Rate, and 3) Institutional Graduation Rate. The sample size (n) and standard deviation for each rate was utilized to test for statistically significant differences. Comparing the three individual rates gives the reader a very clear picture of

whether the scholarship program is graduating students at a higher rate than the athletic department as a whole, and/or the university population as a whole.

Comparing these three rates provided a clear picture of how successful the scholarship program is at graduating students who are awarded aid in this program. That rate was easily comparable to the athletic department's graduation rate and the institution's graduation rate. The hypothesis was that the scholarship program rate would not only be higher than the other two rates, but will be significantly higher. We were able to test for statistically significant differences through a *t* test.

After this hypothesis proved true, the next two logical questions were: "Why is this rate so much higher?" and "Are there any lessons to be learned from this that can be applied to the overall issue of retention, progression and graduation?" To gain some personal insight into the first question about why this scholarship program has been successful, I asked each institutional contact for access to at least two participants (preferably one male and one female) in the program. For the few universities that complied, the names and contact information for each of these student-athletes was provided by the athletic departments that offer these scholarships. For purposes of this qualitative study, the subjects surveyed did have to be a graduate of the program to be able to provide salient information. Each subject was asked the same questions.

Student Surveys

To obtain qualitative information from student-athletes who graduated with the aid of a 5th-year scholarship, 27 athletic department representatives were asked for names and contact information of their graduates. Only 11 were able or willing to respond. Some representatives said providing the names and contact information would

be against academic privacy rules. Others said they were unable to locate the names of graduates. Since I work at CSU, officials there felt comfortable providing for this research a list of about 50 graduates from that school. When phone numbers were provided, I called graduates. I also sent multiple emails, ultimately contacting 62 graduates, asking them to fill out a survey pre-approved by previously approved by Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants (see Appendix B). Respondents were assured anonymity and given the opportunity to print out the survey and mail it back anonymously.

All graduates surveyed were reached through email and offered the opportunity to talk to the researcher in person or on the phone, or fill out a survey sent through email. Each asked for the survey to be sent electronically. The questionnaire asked for basic background information from each individual, such as gender and race. Fifteen students responded from three different institutions: CSU, Montana State University and California State University - Sacramento. However, two respondents had not yet graduated, so their responses were not included in the final analysis. Of the final 13, most were male (7 people, or 53.8%), the most commonly cited sport was tennis (6 people, or 46%) and the most frequently cited race was white (6 people, or 46%). The complete breakdown of the 13 respondents:

Table 2
Demographics of the Respondents

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>
Male	Tennis	Accounting & Finance	White
n/a	Baseball	Business management	n/a
Female	Tennis	Psychology	White
Female	Tennis	Marketing	Multi
Male	Golf	Business management	White
Male	Track	Biology	White
Female	Tennis	International business	Latina
Female	Skiing	Political Science	n/a
Male	Football	Microbiology	n/a
Male	Tennis	Accounting and Finance	White
Male	Baseball	Criminal Justice	Puerto Rican
Female	Track	Health Science	White
Male	Tennis	Finance	Hispanic

The survey also asked the following questions:

- When did you graduate?
- What was your major?
- What sport did you play?
- How many hours of school did you still have to finish when your athletic scholarship ran out?
- Were other academic support services available to you to help you finish college?
- If so, did you take advantage of them?
- Did the 5th-year scholarship provide you with any added incentive to graduate?
- Why or why not?
- Do you think you would have completed your studies and graduated if you had not been awarded this scholarship?
- Why or why not?
- How much, if any, motivation to finish your studies was provided by this scholarship program?
- Do you think more student-athletes would finish their studies if this type of scholarship program was made available to more students?
- Why or why not?
- Do you think more students in general would finish their studies if this type of scholarship was made available to more students?
- Do you think there would be a benefit to having more scholarships designed for students to finish college rather than just attracting them *to* college?

- Why or why not?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Thorough notes were taken for each interview starting with the date, time, method (i.e., telephone or in person) and duration of the interview. Obviously, copious notes were taken about the respondents' answer to the questions. Full responses from these surveys are included in Appendix A of this paper.

Athletic Department Interviews

Interviewing is one of the main staples of qualitative research, and is a widely accepted method of gathering information and drawing conclusions. It is important to provide questions that give the interviewees a direction, but also provides enough latitude to “respect how the participants frame and structure the responses. The participant’s perspective of the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it” (Marshall and Rossman 1999, 108).

Using these principles, my third group of data for this project – and the centerpiece of policy analysis using Bardach’s eightfold path – was interviews with representatives in charge of various athletic departments with a 5th-year scholarship program. Interview contacts were sought while initially soliciting the 27 universities thought to have a 5th-year scholarship program. I and CSU’s athletic director asked for names, phone numbers and email addresses for department representatives when we also asked for data about the 5th-year scholarship programs. Ultimately, nine athletic department representatives were interviewed, representing CSU, Francis Marion University, California State University - Sacramento, Georgia College and State University, Jacksonville State University, University of Denver, Augusta State

University, Lander University and Florida Atlantic University. They were all reached by telephone and asked:

- Why did your university start this scholarship program? (Was there a specific problem identified that your office thought might be addressed by this program? If yes, what was it?)
- If there was a problem identified that you thought this program might help solve, did you consider any other options?
- If so, how did you evaluate the options and decide on a 5th-year scholarship?
- What are the costs/benefits of this program?
- When did you start it?
- How is it funded?
- How did you hear about this as an idea?
- Can I have a copy of any documents you have that would detail the start of your program?
- How many students have been awarded the scholarships since it started?
- And how many of those have graduated?
- Do you believe this scholarship program has any impact on your department's retention efforts/statistics? Why or why not?
- Have you had any problems with the program that you might pass along to another athletic department considering implementing a 5th-year aid program?
- Is there anything you would like to add, or that I should have asked?

These notes were compiled and summarized, then used in conjunction with the student surveys, and with data uncovered on the scholarship graduation rates. The combination of quantitative data from the graduation rates studied, and the qualitative data gleaned from the surveys and interviews provided insight into how much success is being seen by these 5th-year scholarship programs for student-athletes, and why this group may be more successful at finishing college than the peer groups to which they belong. The interviews and surveys provided fodder for a discussion about whether there should be more consideration of scholarships designed for students to finish college, rather than just attract them to college. These three pieces of information – graduation rates, student surveys and athletic directors’ interviews – provided the backbone for a policy analysis about the effectiveness of these 5th-year scholarship programs, and whether they would be good practice for a university without such a 5th-year scholarship. The athletic director interviews were particularly useful in each of the eight steps in this policy analysis.

Limitations

There were, of course, limitations to the conclusions I was able to draw. Most significantly is the sample size of universities and graduates I was able to contact for this study. Additionally, as Holloway points out, qualitative research is not “completely precise because human beings do not always act logically or predictably” (1997, 3). There were other limitations, also. Interviewees may have been uncomfortable with the researcher, the topic being discussed, or for some other reason that is beyond the my control or expectations. There are also so many unique experiences by individual students in college that may have prevented a clear picture of any reasoning or motivation behind

the actions of a group. However, a good interview can provide a great deal of information and insight, will allow a greater depth of understanding of an issue, and allow for clarification and additional detail exploration during the data-gathering process (Marshall and Rossman 1999). When combined with the scholarship graduation rates, the athletic department graduation rates and the institutional graduation rates, the answers to these questions provided valuable insight into whether this type of scholarship program provides any additional motivation for the students who receive the awards. The approach to this project is a textbook example of what Silverman meant when he wrote that “many research questions can be thoroughly addressed by combining different methods, using qualitative research to document the details of, say, how people interact in one situation and using quantitative methods to identify variance” (Silverman 2009, 13).

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This project is a policy analysis using Eugene Bardach's eight-step plan to look at the efficacy of 5th-year scholarship programs and provide guidelines or recommendations to a university athletic department that may be considering starting such a program. To get to the policy analysis, there were three areas of research compiled: 1) graduation rates of the 5th-year scholarship program and the comparison of these rates to the athletic department and university graduation rates at 11 schools; 2) interview information from 13 graduates of the 5th-year scholarship program from select institutions and; 3) interview information from officials at athletic programs in nine schools concerning the adoption of a 5th-year scholarship program and the issues they discovered that could be useful for other athletic departments. Presented here are summaries of findings in the three areas that will serve as the basis for the policy analysis of college athletic departments' 5th-year scholarship programs.

Graduation Rates

To determine the graduation rates of 5th-year scholarship programs, multiple calls and emails were made to departments around the country. It was surprising how little information was readily available from athletic department officials relevant to the number of athletes given a 5th-year scholarship, and of those, the number that graduated with a bachelor's degree. A total of 27 universities were solicited for input, but only 11 could provide exact numbers of students who had been awarded the scholarship, and then

of that number how many went on to graduate. The universities that provided enough information to compare graduation rates in this part of the study were studied were:

Table 3
Universities Studied

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Public or Private</i>	<i>Athletic Division</i>
Florida Atlantic University	30,301 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division I
Lander	3,049 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division II
Montana State-Bozemen	14,660 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division I
Columbus State University	8,239 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division II
University of New Mexico	29,100 (<i>fall '12 main campus</i>)	Public	Division I
Colorado State	30,647 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division I
University of Denver	11,656 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Private	Division I
Augusta State	3,049 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division II
California State University-Sacramento	28,539 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division I
Georgia College & State University	6,446 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division II
Francis Marion	3,555 (<i>fall '12</i>)	Public	Division II

Data gathered for Table 3 came from the fact books on each institution's website. For the table below comparing graduation rates, the overall rates are from the individual institution's websites (often from question B11 from their Common Data Set responses) or from their system's websites. All athletic department graduation rates are from the NCAA's website, using the "Federal Graduation Rate" statistic, which counts transfers in

and transfers out of each college as graduation failures, and correlates more closely to how universities' overall graduation rates are computed. The NCAA also computes an "Academic Success Rate" for Division II schools. This rate does account for the academic outcomes of student-athletes who transfer from one institution to another and are traditionally higher than the Federal Graduation Rates. All 5th-year graduation rates and numbers of student-athletes are as of fall 2012, and are self-reported from interviews with representatives from each department. CSU's figures were verified with data provided by the department.

Graduate rates are computed in Table 4 on the next page. In each example in Table 4, the graduation rate among student-athletes with the 5th-year scholarship was substantially higher than the institutional graduation rates and than for the universities' athletic departments. Even if the 5th-year graduation rates were compared to the athletic departments' Academic Success Rate, which credits a Division II athletic department with a successful graduation if the student-athlete transfers and graduates from *any* institution, the disparity would be easy to see. These observations are supported by putting the numbers through a t test to determine if the mean of the two groups is statistically different from each other.

Table 4
Graduate Rate Comparisons:

<i>School</i>	<i>Institutional (6-year) grad rate for cohort that started in 2005</i>	<i>Athletic dept. (6-year) Federal Graduation Rate for cohort that started in 2005</i>	<i>Athletic dept. (6-year) Academic Success Rate* for cohort that started in 2005</i>	<i>5th-year scholar grad rate (self-reported)</i>	<i>Number of student-athletes who received the scholarship (n)</i>
Florida Atlantic University	43	54	n/a	69	26
Lander	42.1 (2004 cohort)	50	74	75	24 (since '07)
Montana State-Bozemen	51	60	n/a	84	59
Columbus State University	29.17	34	70	88	79
University of New Mexico	45	57	n/a	92	97
Colorado State	64	67	n/a	92	40
University of Denver	79	73	n/a	95	355
Augusta State	21.05	49	62	95	~70 (since '98)
California State-Sacramento	41.9	54	n/a	98	110
Georgia College & State University	55.28	65	88	100	~100 (since '02)
Francis Marion	41.4	57	69	100	44 (since '07)
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<i>Mean percentages of these 11:</i>	50.6	56.36		89.8	
<i>Standard deviation of these 11 institutions:</i>	16.4	10.4		10.1	

* NOTE: Academic Success Rate is only computed by the NCAA for Division II schools, and credits a Division II athletic department with a successful graduation if the student-athlete transfers and graduates from any institution.

Table 5
 Statistical Comparison of Graduation Rates

	<i>5th-year Scholarship Programs Grad Rate</i>	<i>Athletic Department Graduation Rate</i>	<i>Institutional Graduation Rate</i>
Mean Graduation Rate	89.8	56.36	50.6
Standard Deviation	10.1	10.4	16.4
Standard Error	3.05	3.14	4.95

$t_{score} = 7.65$ when comparing the 5th-year scholarship programs graduation rates to the athletic department graduation rates *

$t_{score} = 6.76$ when comparing the 5th-year scholarship programs graduation rates to the institutional graduation rates*

$t_{score} = 0.98$ when comparing athletic department graduation rates to the institutional graduation rates ($p = .337$)

* $p < .0001$

When comparing the 5th- year graduation rate to the athletic departments' graduation rates and then to the institutional graduation rates, the two-tailed P value for both comparisons was less than 0.0001, in each case. In statistical terms, this means the difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant between the 5th-year graduation rate and the institutional graduation rate, and between the 5th-year graduation rate and the athletic departments' graduation rate.

Computing a difference of means and developing a t score for both groups confirms this. With $p < .001$, and t scores of more than 6 and 7, the results comparing the groups are considered highly significant. The difference between the athletic department graduation rate and the institutional graduation rate is not statistically significant.

Surveys of Graduates

Fifteen students from three different universities responded to the survey. However, two of the respondents had not yet graduated, so their responses to the survey were not included in the final analysis. A total of 13 survey results are presented here, meaning there was a 26 percent response rate to the survey.

In addition to demographic information about themselves, respondents were asked eight questions, most centering on whether the 5th-year scholarship provided an additional incentive to finish their academic career. They were also asked if they thought a similar scholarship to encourage students to finish school would be beneficial for the general student population (not just for student-athletes), and if such a program should be made available to more students.

Eight males and five females responded to the survey. A diverse range of sports, including tennis, football, baseball, golf, track and skiing was represented. They also listed a broad mix of academic majors, including finance, criminal justice, health science, microbiology, political science, business, marketing and biology. Six listed themselves as white or Caucasian, three did not list an ethnicity, and the remaining four listed their race as Puerto Rican, Latino, Hispanic and multi-racial. A complete transcript of the students' answers is available in Appendix A.

Table 6
Summary of Graduates' Responses

<i>Question</i>	<i>Yes (percentage of total)</i>	<i>No (percentage of total)</i>
<i>Did the 5th-year scholarship provide you with any added incentive to graduate?</i>	9 (69%)	4 (31%)
<i>Would you have finished college and graduated without this scholarship?</i>	9 (69%)	4 (31%)
<i>Do you think more student-athletes would finish their studies if this type of scholarship program was made available to more students?</i>	10 (77%)	3 (23%)
<i>Do you think more students in general would finish their studies if this type of scholarship was made available to more students?</i>	13 (100%)	0
<i>Do you think there would be a benefit to having more scholarships designed for students to finish college rather than just for attracting them <u>to</u> college?</i>	9 (69%)	1 (7.7%)* *2 did not answer

When asked if the 5th-year scholarship aid they were awarded provided them with an added incentive to finish their academic studies, 9 students (69 percent) responded that the aid definitively was an added incentive. A microbiology major from Montana State University was among those who said the scholarship incentivized him: “Yes,” he responded, “I needed the extra time after I got done playing and knowing that I would have an extra year to finish up not only helped my grades but also let me focus on

graduating.” A 2011 marketing major from CSU had a similar response: “YES, it definitely did. I knew that this 5th-year [scholarship] was not offered to all students and not in all the universities. So [I] was blessed to get it and of course it motivated more to keep going.” Four students said the 5th-year scholarship did not really provide an extra push to them to graduate. Their responses indicated that the aid definitely helped their financial situation, but was not part of their inner motivation to finish their degree. An example of this attitude was found from a California State University-Sacramento criminal justice major, who said, “I don’t believe so. I would have still finished my schooling; it was just really nice to have my scholarship extended.”

The number of “yes” and “no” responses were the same when the students were asked if they would have finished their degree without the 5th-year scholarship. While the previous question indicated there was an incentive provided by the 5th-year scholarship, 69 percent reported the aid was not critically important to ensuring the students finished their degree. A 2011 biology major from Columbus State University summed up the responses when she said, “I would have completed my degree regardless. Like I said, I had already put in 4 years. There is no way in hell I [was] gonna quit now! It would have just been more difficult (with a side job) or more stressful (with loans).”

Thirty-one percent of those surveyed underscored the importance of the scholarship because they said the scholarship was indeed the reason they graduated and if they had not received the aid, they would not have been able to finish their degree. For instance, a 2011 marketing major from CSU responded, “I do not think I could have done it without the 5th-year scholarship. My family could have helped a little, but being an

international student, we have to pay a lot more fees than local student. So it would have been very hard for my parents to keep up with it even if they [tried] to help.”

Two additional questions were similar in nature when asking if the respondents thought a 5th-year scholarship would be beneficial to other student-athletes if there were money available to expand the program at their school, and then if it would be beneficial to students in general (not just those also involved in athletics.) Responses to both questions were overwhelmingly in favor (77 percent and 100 percent) of the concepts. A 2009 finance graduate from CSU said, “I am not sure how many student-athletes do not complete their studies; however, this is a strong incentive to complete your studies, especially to a student with limited finances.” For the minority of respondents (23 percent) who said such a program would not be particularly beneficial to other athletes, responses indicate they believed that student-athletes have an internal motivation that drives them and that more aid would not be particularly beneficial, at least in terms of increasing their desire to finish school. All the respondents said making such a program available to the general student body would be beneficial, at least on some level.

There was a similarly overwhelming response on the final question on the survey: should there be more scholarships designed to encourage students to finish college, rather than just enticing them to attend an institution of higher learning? Nine students (69 percent) said this would be a good idea, while one student disagreed. Two graduates did not answer the question. A 2009 psychology graduate from CSU summed up the responses when she said “Yes, many students (regular) have money to start college but after a couple of years they run out. Or it takes longer to finish than planned due to poor advising. International student-athletes will only come if they receive full scholarships for

their entire degree period.” Another Columbus State graduate said, “I do think there would be more of a benefit to have more scholarship programs designed to help a student finish college. I also think that if [administrators] designed something for people to further studies beyond a four-year [degree], that would be great too.”

Respondents were provided the opportunity to provide additional comments, if they so chose; four took advantage of the opportunity. Each talked about the struggle student-athletes have in balancing their college studies with their athletic commitments. For example, one said, “In the athletic department, 5th-year scholarships are usually given as respect and a way of showing the athletes appreciation. If an athlete plays a sport for 4 years and does not graduate, it’s kind of the right thing to do by giving them a 5th-year scholarship. If any athletic department ‘uses’ an athlete for 4 years and then just drops them, well then it is obvious in what the athletic department is most concerned about... NOT them graduating. But [just] throwing money at students, I don’t think is going to give them any ‘motivation’ or ‘incentive’ to graduate, but it will certainly help. They came to college.... they already have motivation and incentive. It may not be much... but there is something there.”

Athletic Director Interviews and Bardach’s Eight-Step Analysis

The notion that the 5th-year scholarships are a way of showing the department’s commitment to the “student” part of the student-athletes was not only stated by the students surveyed but also was revealed during interviews with the athletic directors, the third set of data collected as part of this project. The nine athletic department officials contacted talked extensively about a responsibility to their students-athletes to help them finish their degree, and also talked about how important graduation rates are to their

department and to their university. Coaches are evaluated in part on how many of their student-athletes graduate, and the department as a whole is closely monitored by the NCAA to ensure academic progress is up to par.

Interviews were conducted with officials at athletic programs in nine schools concerning the adoption of a 5th-year scholarship program and the issues they discovered that could be useful for other athletic departments. The interviews with athletic departments' leaders followed the logical framework of Bardach's eight-step process: 1) define the problem, 2) assemble some evidence, 3) construct alternatives that could be considered, 4) select criteria by which you would consider the alternatives, 5) outline project outcomes, 6) confront tradeoffs and eliminate implausible alternatives, 7) decide, and 8) tell the story (2009).

The Problem

The problem that athletic department officials – and most other university officials – face in today's academic environment is how to ensure they are graduating as many students as possible. Ushering a student-athlete through to his or degree is perhaps more important today than ever before because of increased scrutiny of graduation rates by the NCAA, and because of recent attention on higher education, its value, its cost and its effectiveness. U.S. President Barack Obama recently underscored these sentiments with a website that outlines importance of a college degree to a nation's economy, and also calls for universities to be more affordable and be more transparent in terms of costs and outcomes (White House). To that end, the federal government has established a "College Scorecard" that lists tuition costs and graduation rates at universities and colleges around the country. On top of this sort of scrutiny of universities, their athletic

departments face an added level of accountability from the NCAA, which keeps track of athletic department graduation rates, as well the numbers of people in individual sports who graduate. The NCAA's tracking of these rates is not simply for monitoring purposes; the NCAA has instituted rules that can punish an athletic department with sanctions such as reduced scholarships or post-season bans if it fails to graduate an adequate number of student-athletes every year. Athletic department representatives interviewed for this analysis unanimously agreed that graduation rates are an ongoing, critically important concern for them as administrators.

Evidence

The importance of graduation rates can be seen in funding formulas for university systems, ratings of schools by national publications, and through record-keeping and sanction-issuing done by the NCAA. The collegiate sports governing body is obviously serious about monitoring academic success in U.S. colleges and universities. According to the latest NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) report, 36 different teams across the country were penalized for inadequate academic performance by its student-athletes (NCAA 2013). Of those penalized, 18 teams would be prohibited from participating in any 2013-14 postseason games. Other teams that registered an APR score below the required minimum number of 900 were facing additional consequences that included restrictions on practice and regular season competition (NCAA 2013).

Officials with the NCAA and federal government would likely be less concerned about degree completion if it did not matter for the future of the country. Census data still reveals that the great majority of those with college degrees earn more money over their lifetime, compared to those without a degree. According a 2013 National Center for

Education Statistics projection report released in 2013 (National Center 2013), the total number of bachelor's degrees is projected to increase 21 percent between 2009-10 and 2021-22. However, that number could be much higher if universities could improve the rate at which students who start a program actually finish with their bachelor's degree. Increasing these rates would make the universities look more efficient, but would also be more beneficial to the students. "The gap in lifetime earnings between who complete at least a college degree and those who start college but do not graduate is more than \$750,000" (Tinto 2012, 1). According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (National Center 2014), the 2011 graduation rate for full-time, first-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2005 was 59 percent. That is, 59 percent of full-time, first-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2005 completed the degree at that institution within 6 years. Another report, titled "Time is the Enemy" from Complete College America (2011), computes the graduation rate for full-time students who achieve a bachelor's degree within 8 years at 60.6 percent, just barely higher than the Department of Education's 6-year graduation rate. The report notes that the Department of Education's numbers – and those of most other organizations that measure post-secondary graduation rates – are for full-time students. Complete College America contends that 40 percent of today's college students are part-time students. And only 24.3 percent of part-time students in college today achieve a bachelor's degree within 8 years, the 2011 report noted.

Many states are investing in the Complete College America's ideals and are developing specific plans to boost graduation rates in their states. For instance, Georgia is

projecting that by the year 2020, more than 60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of a college education, whether a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. Today, however, only 42 percent of the state's workforce has such an education (Complete College Georgia, 2012). To bridge the gap between what the state says it needs and its current percentage of educated workers, Georgia is hoping to increase the number of people who complete a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree over the next 8 years by 250,000 (Complete College Georgia, 2012). The athletic directors interviewed certainly have taken note of the newfound emphasis on graduation rates and praised their 5th-year scholarship program for taking a role in helping.

Alternatives

Thirty-three governors are identified in the Complete College America report (2011) as ones who have committed to develop plans to increase the number of post-secondary graduates in their states. Developing plans and partnerships, using data, and responding with a sense of urgency seem to be among the common themes for states trying to increase their number of graduates. Georgia recommends that colleges and universities do three things specifically to improve their performance: 1) transform remediation methods, 2) shorten the time to it takes to earn a degree and 3) restructure how they deliver courses (Complete College Georgia 2011). As a comparison, Ohio's plan addresses many of the same philosophies, and also outlines some more specific recommendations such as implementing "intrusive" advising practices, devising more innovative policies and practices, and expanding financial opportunities and incentives to encourage students to reach benchmarks and complete different levels academic achievement (Complete College America 2011).

National retention experts such as Tinto and the ACT say there is no magic elixir to improving these graduation rates. It takes an institutional investment in the philosophy of retention, and a multi-pronged approach. Tinto's (2012) first recommendation for universities serious about retention and completion is to "establish a cross-functional team of faculty, support staff and administrators whose task it is to oversee institutional planning and action for student success" (120).

For athletic departments, efforts to improve scholarly activity and graduation rates have included many alternatives, including mandatory study times, advising centers devoted to athletics, tutoring, peer academic counseling and more. This is on top of the academic progress that's not required to be reported to the NCAA. These reports keep tabs on each coach, each team, and each athletic department at U.S. colleges and universities.

Interviews with a sampling of officials from athletic departments around the country with a 5th-year scholarship program revealed that there was not one specific reason behind the implementation of a 5th-year scholarship program. The program was not started as an alternative to other retention efforts; it was yet another tool in their arsenal for student success. Most said either it was started as an effort to aid recruitment and/or graduation rates, or it just seemed like the right thing to do to help the students. A few said they did not know why or when their programs were started. Two said their scholarship programs were specifically started after a donor expressed an interest in doing something unique to help the program. Those discussions and subsequent donations led to the 5th-year scholarships.

The athletic department representatives were unanimous in their answers about why such an aid program was started at their universities. They spoke of an obligation they felt to the students in their programs and the importance for the department to help them graduate. They spoke with great conviction about the benefits of these programs because they put students first and foremost and also ultimately help the department and the school when students leave their university with a baccalaureate degree.

“What I wanted to do was put real efforts, as best I could, behind that idea that we’re serious about kids graduating,” said Sacramento State Director of Athletics Terry Wanless during an interview about why he started a 5th-year scholarship program (Wanless 2012). He said college athletic officials are sometimes guilty of “talking out of both sides of their mouths” when they recruit athletes to come to school with a promise of great academics and a great athletic program, but it ends up appearing that they really care more about the students’ athletic contributions than their scholarly pursuits. Wanless, like many of the others interviewed, said Sacramento State’s 5th-year scholarship program was proof of their commitment to academics (Wanless 2012). As another athletic director, Jeff May of Lander University, said: “The most important thing is they are students first. We tell them if you come here, go to class, do your academic work, be a good citizen, have some character, we’re going to help you get an education” (May 2012).

Criteria

The most effective criteria by which one would judge a program designed to assist retention and graduation is to simply evaluate how many people who entered the program also graduated with a degree.

For 11 different schools around the country with a 5th-year scholarship program, an evaluation showed the graduation rate among student-athletes with the 5th-year scholarship was substantially higher than the universities' athletic departments and then the institutional graduation rates. Even if the 5th-year graduation rates were compared to the athletic departments' Academic Success Rate, which credits a Division II athletic department with a successful graduation if the student-athlete transfers and graduates from *any* institution, the disparity would be easy to see. The mean graduation rate for the schools studied was 50.6 percent. When looking at just the athletic departments, 56.36 percent of all students who entered the program graduated with a bachelor's degree within 6 years. However, 89.8 percent of all student-athletes who were awarded some kind of 5th-year aid went on to finish their bachelor's degree. It is important to note that the selection of those who received the 5th-year scholarship is the critical element in this process. While the universities and their athletic departments have little knowledge of a student's academic motivation when accepting a student, these scholarship programs are able to pick who receives their aid based on how much the student and the department thinks the chances are the student will actually finish their degree.

Responses were varied when athletic department officials were asked about policies that guide their 5th-year scholarship program. Jeff May from Lander University revealed the most basic of policies among those representatives reached. "It's a really simple policy. As long as they are making progress, as long as the coach requested it, and if they need it to graduate, we'll give them the \$250 [per semester]," he said. That award may seem small, but allows the student to qualify for instate tuition, which is a substantial savings (May 2012). Other departments had little more than an application to

guide their scholarship process, but a few departments have published guidelines, applications, the requirement of a formal letter of recommendation, and a multitude of guidelines that must be met. For instance, Francis Marion University's policy, sent via email by their athletic director on August 15, 2012, says students must meet the following requirements:

- Must have exhausted their eligibility.
- Must have attained senior status.
- Must be within thirty hours of attaining a degree.
- Must submit a letter to the Director of Athletics 45 days prior to the term for which they would start their assistantship. Also must grant the Director of Athletics the right to look at their academic transcript and degree progress.
- Will be assigned specific duties within the department of athletics or with an intercollegiate team and they will need to fulfill these duties in order to keep their scholarship.
- Must have a 2.0 GPA or better and meet the respective minimum continuing GPA for their major.
- Must be under no disciplinary sanction from Student Life.

Just as criteria must be established to guide selection of candidates for the universities' 5th-year scholarships, criteria should be set to evaluate the effectiveness of such a program by a university considering starting one. Obviously, how many scholarship recipients graduate is an important criteria, but another important evaluation factor would be the cost of the program vs. its benefits. Funding for the programs varied widely from using whatever was left over from last year to an annual budget of \$75,000.

Awards given by the programs also varied widely, according to those interviewed, from \$250 per semester to \$5,000. This disparity was not surprising given the range of universities examined, from smaller regional universities to Division I schools that enroll about 30,000 students. Also not surprising was that most of those interviewed said they would offer more scholarships if they had more money to do so. Some universities, such as CSU, can use only private funds for scholarships so their money for 5th-year aid can vary from year to year. Other variations in yearly budgets were noted by officials who said their 5th-year aid was culled from other sources within the department, such as athletic scholarship dollars that were not awarded, scholarship awards that were returned because a student had to leave the program for some reason, or operational fund surpluses from the previous year. Jeff May at Lander University said he was unable to provide an annual budget figure, noting that their awards are only \$250 a year (May 2012). However, that amount was a major savings for most students because university policy says that any student who receives a financial award from the university is therefore charged only in-state tuition. Compare that \$250 award to the University of Denver, which made 15 awards last year of \$5,000 each, for a total program budget of \$75,000 (Grahame 2012).

About half of the officials interviewed said private donors were the specific target of solicitation to support the 5th-year scholarship. An official from Sacramento State said he was trying to create an endowment of \$1 million to support the program permanently. Several athletic department leaders said the 5th-year scholarship program was a favorite of donors, and they used it frequently when talking to supporters. “When I talk to donors, this is my message: it’s about helping kids,” said Terry Wanless from Sacramento State

(Wanless 2012). However, two officials said their program did not resonate at all with private supporters, and they have to fund their program by carving out funding from other sources within the department. Officials suggested that for any university considering a 5th-year scholarship, establishing guidelines should be first. These guidelines should be finished before any money was awarded, and that administrators should tie funding to a realistic, established budget, and suggested making sure there was someone – preferably a coach – who could vouch for the student seeking the aid. Herbert Greene, the athletic director at CSU when it started a 5th-year scholarship program, said he required students who applied for the scholarship to provide a personal letter to him, explaining why they were deserving of the scholarship and showing their intent to finish their degree (Greene 2008). This type of personal connection and commitment was suggested by other athletic directors also.

Outcomes

Projected outcomes for any university considering implementing a 5th-year scholarship program should center on the number of students that graduate with a degree. The analysis from this project shows that of those institutions contacted with a 5th-year scholarship program, the graduation rate of the students who received the aid is almost 90 percent and well above the graduation rate of the universities and their athletic departments. Any department considering instituting a similar program should expect similar outcomes.

The athletic department officials interviewed for this project unanimously cited improving graduation rates and/or academic retention as a positive outcome for these scholarship programs. Terry Wanless from Sacramento State said he previously worked

at the University of North Dakota before moving to California, and there was not any kind of a 5th-year scholarship program at his previous school because the students there did not need any added incentives to finish their degree as the graduation rates were already quite high. However, he said Sacramento State students did indeed need some additional help to complete their degree. During the interview, he acknowledged Sacramento State was a different kind of institution from his previous employer, and its students were also different. “When I came here, the academic performance of our student-athletes had been very marginal, and one of my objectives was to attack poor academic performance. A lot of it just had to be a cultural change – an attitudinal change that we can do better,” (Wanless 2012).

Wanless and all the other athletic department officials said the 5th-year scholarship program did indeed do what it was supposed to do: help students graduate. While they all talked about that goal being the “right thing to do,” they also admitted how important graduation rates are now to the overall performance and evaluation of an athletic department. Officials said the job evaluations of their coaches now include the rate at which their student-athletes graduate from the university. The graduation rate also is important for the athletic department because of how closely that figure is now monitored by the NCAA. The governing body for college athletics uses a measure called the Academic Progress Rate (APR). The NCAA holds Division I programs accountable for the academic progression of their student-athletes by looking every term at athletes’ grades as a measure of eligibility and retention. According to the NCAA’s website (NCAA 2013), if a program does not keep up with the APR, significant penalties are possible. Infractions could result in coaching suspensions, financial aid reductions and

restricted NCAA membership. More often cited by athletic officials, however, was the NCAA's rule that if an athletic department does not have an adequate APR, it is not allowed to compete in any postseason games, such as bowl games or championship tournaments. "Just as teams must win in competition to be eligible for championships, they now must also achieve in the classroom," (NCAA 2013). Ron Grahame from the University of Denver said that the APR is used "pretty stringently" with the coaches in their program, so anything that impacts academic progress and graduation rate is a priority for the department (Grahame 2012). Other officials also cited the APR when talking about the importance and success of their 5th-year scholarship program.

Negative outcomes of instituting a 5th-year scholarship program could include spending the extra money to incentivize students to finish their studies, but then not seeing any real results. That would appear to be unlikely as students surveyed for this study talked about the financial aid being an added incentive, but not the only incentive to finishing their degree. Many said their own drive to succeed will always be their main motivator – in the athletic *and* the academic arena.

Another negative outcome of such a program could be abuse of the system by students who might be looking for extra money, not an extra incentive to graduate. A review of CSU's records show that in the early years of its program, several students received the scholarship for multiple semesters, indicating they were not close to graduating when they first received their aid. Columbus State has since revised its policies to prevent a student from receiving a 5th-year scholarship for more than two semesters. Other athletic departments surveyed also instituted policies that guided how

their awards were made, who qualified for the aid, and the guidelines under which the scholarship would be awarded.

Trade-offs

The most significant trade-off for a department considering a 5th-year scholarship program is that careless management could take money away from another area of need within the athletic department, notably scholarship dollars set aside to entice students to become part of one institution's team. Terry Wanless from Sacramento State said he was not opposed to putting more money toward efforts such as the 5th-year scholarship program; he just did not want to take money away from scholarships that can help attract the best and brightest to the program. "The bottom line is that as long as winning is still measured, we need those athletes coming into the program," he said (Wanless 2012).

However, the success of the 5th-year scholarship programs in this study led to discussions about whether such programs should be expanded to the university, and whether there should be more scholarship programs designed to help students finish school, rather than just have all the scholarship money dedicated to attracting students *to* a school. "That's a really good question," said Murray Harzler from Francis Marion University. "You would be better off, in my opinion. You should take that money and put it into degree completion because it would have a far bigger impact" (Harzler 2012). The Athletic Director from Augusta State University said he also liked the idea. "It's one of the things that should be on the radar screen of institutions in general – how you can assist students who are close to graduating?" (Bryant 2012).

Decide

Several athletic department officials said they decided to institute a 5th-year scholarship programs at their schools because they found money to support it, and because they saw the idea work at larger, better-funded universities. This adoption appears to be an interesting example of policy diffusion, which is described as the spread of innovations from one government to another (Shipman and Volden 2008).

Athletic department officials interviewed for this project did not simply copy other 5th-year scholarship programs because they looked good. Officials seemed genuinely concerned about the academic success of their student-athletes and found this scholarship as an affordable, effective and manageable solution. “We have always felt an obligation that our kids who have finished their eligibility at our institution still get their degrees and that’s why we started this scholarship,” said Clint Bryant from the institution formerly known as Augusta State University, now called Georgia Regents University. “We know it was the right thing to do” (Bryant 2012). An official from the Peach Belt Conference, which counts Georgia Regents University as among its members, said Bryant’s sentiments were reflected throughout the conference at the schools with such a program. “We want to see those kids succeed,” said Peach Belt Conference Associate Commissioner Diana Kling. “We want them to be well-prepared. It reflects favorably on the institution, and when they have high graduation rates, we take a little pride in that too” (Kling 2012).

Those interviewed said practices and policies they use are learned or borrowed from other programs. While unable to provide specifics about what programs provided inspiration or the best examples, officials were quick to suggest that anyone considering

such a program was welcome to borrow from their policies or forms. “We asked some of the more prestigious institutions how they handled helping [students] get their degree,” said Ron Grahame from the University of Denver. One of the things that many officials cited as a learned practice from other 5th-year scholarship programs was using the recipients of the aid as assistants or helpers within the department. This idea was commonplace among the programs reviewed. Recipients of the 5th-year scholarship were expected to continue to give their time to the athletic departments. However, as 5th-year scholarship recipients, they would not be providing their athletic talents. They would be taking tickets, keeping scores during other competitions, selling concessions, checking compliance guidelines, helping out in the weight room or doing whatever else needs to be done. “Our program has a work requirement tied to it,” said Keva Anderson-Konsker from Florida Atlantic University (Anderson-Konsker 2012). “We could spend our money for workers, but we’re not.”

“If you are on 5th-year aid, you help out a lot with game-day stuff. We utilize them in various ways in the department,” said Misty Cassell from Jacksonville State University (Cassell 2012). Murray Harzler from Francis Marion University said their 5th-year scholarship recipients do the “majority of the grunt work” around the department in exchange for their scholarship. It’s a trade-off that benefits both sides, he said. “We’ve made a commitment to them. We need to help the people graduate. As long as they are doing the right things, we need to help them out as much as possible” (Harzler 2012).

None of the athletic department representatives contacted had any regrets about their decision to implement and/or fund a 5th-year scholarship program in their department. The only barrier to creating or expanding these programs was funding, and

the benefits far outweighed the costs when considering the positive impact the program has on graduation rates and how they fulfill an obligation to the student-athletes to help them finish their school. It was clear from the interviews associated with this project that if there is funding available, starting a 5th-year scholarship program was a good idea as a complement to other academic support initiatives that should be made available to student-athletes.

The Full Story

University athletic officials across the country have instituted different forms of a scholarship program that is designed to help student-athletes who have finished their athletic eligibility, but have not yet graduated. Called a 5th-year scholarship by most, these programs help students with financial aid that is lost when they are no longer playing a sport. The 5th-year scholarship fills a financial need – and provides an added incentive for some – to help the students to reach graduation day.

For programs that provided enough information for this study, an analysis shows that the success rate of these programs to be remarkable. Of 11 institutions studied, the mean graduation rate was almost 90 percent, meaning that almost every student who was awarded a 5th-year scholarship went on to graduate with a bachelor's degree. Compare that graduation rate of 89.9 percent to the athletic department graduation rates and to the university's, both with a mean of less than 60 percent, and a clear picture emerges about the effectiveness of these 5th-year scholarship programs.

The programs are so effective because they provide an important component (financial support) to what national retention experts say is the recipe for effective retention, progression and graduation of college students: recruit motivated students; pay

attention to them and monitor their progress; help them financially, academically and socially; make their academic success an institutional priority; and create and enforce sanctions for the institution if graduation goals are not met.

Fifth-year scholarship programs appear to be a simple, affordable and extremely effective way to:

- Help individual students to graduate;
- Raise the graduation rates for universities and their athletic departments; and
- Address a national problem of too many students who start school, but never finish.

The 5th-year scholarship programs appear to work so well, it begs two questions: whether the NCAA should consider implementing and funding such programs throughout the country, and whether universities should consider implementing and funding such programs for the general student body so there are scholarships available to help students finish school, not just scholarships available to attract a student *to* a school. NCAA President Mark Emmert may have indicated an interest in doing just that when he recently testified before a U.S. Senate committee hearing on college athletics. According to a *USA Today* story about the hearing, “Emmert, in his opening remarks, also earnestly said he supports the advent of athletes being able to receive scholarships that would enable them to complete their degrees, regardless of whether they do well after their college eligibility has ended” (Berkowitz 2014).

Summary

This triumvirate of information – graduation rates, student surveys and interviews with athletic directors – provides a good groundwork of data to analyze university 5th-

year scholarship programs. For the quantitative analysis, graduation rates of the institutions, their athletic departments and their 5th-year scholarship programs were studied. The mean graduation rate of the institutions indicated that only about half of all attendees at these 11 universities finished a bachelor's degree in 6 years. By comparison, the athletic department graduation rate had a mean of just over 56 percent, and the graduation rate of students in the 5th-year scholarship programs, which had a mean of close to 90 percent. An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the figures via a t test showed that, in statistical terms, the difference noted between the groups is considered to be extremely significant.

For the qualitative analysis, surveys of graduates and interviews with athletic directors provided a diversity of information and opinions. From the students, there was agreement about that the 5th-year scholarships provided motivation to finish the degree, but a bit of disagreement on how much motivation. Some said the aid provided a great deal of motivation and was critical for them to complete college, while others said they already had the internal motivation to succeed and the scholarship was simply a financial aid benefit. Students and athletic department officials were intrigued about the idea of providing more scholarships for students to finish their studies, rather than the usual model of a scholarship that is designed to attract someone to attend a particular school. Athletic department officials said the 5th-year scholarships have had an impact on their retention and graduation rates, which are becoming ever-more important in the world of college athletics. Methods of funding, policies guiding the program, and amount of scholarship awards varied widely among those interviewed. While that information may not have been consistent, the athletic officials' input did show a uniform depth of

commitment to the students and their success, critical ingredients in the model that athletic departments with 5th-year scholarships have developed. The success seen in these programs may provide lessons that other university departments can learn from to increase college graduation rates.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS

This chapter will summarize the study and findings presented previously, offer an analysis of the findings, draw conclusions about the research as it relates to the literature reviewed, discuss implications of this research, acknowledge limitations, and discuss ways in which future research could fill in some gaps identified during the course of this research.

Study Summary

This research project was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of scholarship programs intended to help student-athletes finish their schooling when their financial aid has run out by virtue of their athletic eligibility expiring. This evaluation was done by determining answers to three core research questions:

- 1) How effective are these 5th-year scholarship programs in graduating students who receive aid, compared to the graduation rates available for the university and for its athletic department?
- 2) What lessons can be learned from these scholarship programs about student motivation or incentives that impact a scholarship program designed to help students finish school (in contrast to scholarships designed to attract them to a particular school)?

Using Eugene Bardach's "eightfold path" for problem solving and policy analysis, is it possible to determine if these scholarships are a worthwhile endeavor for athletic departments that do not currently have such a program?

Fifth-year scholarship programs are designed to give financial assistance to student-athletes who have exhausted their athletic eligibility, but have not yet graduated from college. Often called 5th-year scholarships, these programs are designed to fill the gap many students face as they try to figure out how to pay for college while completing their degrees, an issue they never dealt with while playing sports. Using information from online resources, news clippings, and athletic directors, officials at 27 universities were contacted to obtain information about their fifth-year scholarship programs. To determine the effectiveness of these 5th-year scholarship programs, I used data from 11 institutions to determine how many students at these schools received a 5th-year scholarship and then went on to graduate. The rates at which scholarship recipients graduated were compared to athletic department graduation rates and then to institutional graduation rates. As was expected, the graduation rate of students who received the scholarships was significantly higher than the graduation rates of the athletic departments and their home institutions.

In addition to this quantitative data, I also interviewed athletic department officials from nine schools to determine whether common themes or lessons developed about how and why these programs started; how important they are for student progression and completion; why they are successful; and whether or not a 5th-year scholarship program would be the right choice for a university considering implementing such an initiative. The athletic department officials unanimously talked about the significant impact their scholarship program played in overall retention efforts, and how such a program was “the right thing to do” for their student-athletes.

A third component of research was a survey of student-athletes to determine whether the scholarships provided them added motivation to finish their degrees.

Although it was difficult to reach students who had graduated after receiving their scholarship, 62 former student-athletes were contacted, and 15 provided feedback. Two of the 15 who responded had not yet graduated, so there were 13 useable surveys, constituting a survey response rate of 26 percent. The graduates who were contacted represented a diverse range of sports and backgrounds and elicited a wide range of feedback that provided interesting anecdotal information. However, the sample size for this part of the research was a limitation that prevented me from identifying any common trends or drawing any major conclusions about the impact that these scholarship awards had on the student-athletes' drive to graduate with their bachelor's degree. If future research could add additional respondents, this anecdotal information could more reliably be turned into additional results.

Findings

I created a "Scholarship Program Graduation Rate" for 11 universities around the country that were able to provide information about how many of their student-athletes had received a 5th-year scholarship, and how many of those actually earned their degrees. The graduation rates of these student-athletes were then compared with each university's athletic departmental graduation rate and the university's institutional graduation rate. In each instance, the 5th-year scholarship graduation rate was substantially higher than the athletic department rates and their institutional graduation rates. A significant gap emerged even if the 5th-year graduation rates were compared to the athletic departments' Academic Success Rate, which credits a Division II athletic department with a successful graduation if the student-athlete transfers and graduates from *any* institution.

The mean 6-year graduation rate for the 11 universities studied was 50.6. The mean graduation rate for the athletic departments was 56.36. Additionally, the mean graduation rate for students who received 5th-year scholarships was 89.8. A two-tailed *P* value for both comparisons showed the difference to be statistically significant between the 5th-year graduation rate and the institutional graduation rate, and between the 5th-year graduation rate and the athletic departments' graduation rate. A *t* test showed that the difference in the means was considered to be highly significant. Complementing the quantitative data was qualitative information collected through surveys of 13 student-athletes who received a scholarship and then graduated, and from interviews with 10 officials from athletic departments offering 5th-year scholarships.

The graduates were asked to provide demographic information and respond to eight questions that explored how much motivation, if any, that the 5th-year scholarship provided to them, and might provide to other students, if available. Eight males and five females from a range of sports, academic majors and backgrounds responded.

When asked whether the 5th-year scholarship aid provided an added incentive to finish their academic studies, nine responded (69 percent) that the aid definitively was an added incentive. The others indicated they would have finished their degree with or without the extra financial aid. All of those surveyed said they thought more students in general would finish their studies if this type of scholarship was made available to more students.

When asked more specifically about how scholarship money might be used, a majority of respondents (69 percent) said they thought it was a good idea to offer

financial aid to incentivize students to finish their degree, not just to attract them to a college.

The interviews with the athletic officials also revealed support for finding ways to help students complete their degrees because retention has become such an integral part of their administration. They unanimously agreed that financial aid can help with their retention efforts, and that their 5th-year scholarship was an important aid in those efforts. However, one official pointed out that as long as academic officials are judged on the department's wins and losses – and they always will be – it will continue to be important to have financial aid to use to entice the best student-athletes to a particular school, hoping they will help the university succeed on the field or court.

Lessons Learned

Program Effectiveness

In addressing the first question about how effective these programs have been, the data certainly showed that an overwhelming number of students who received these scholarships went on to graduate. These programs are successful because they bring together into one program many of the practices that the literature has identified as being a best practice for retention. Experts in student retention such as Vincent Tinto (1993, 2012), ACT (2010) and Bowen (2009) stress that there is no one magic formula in retaining and graduating students, but there are some best practices, and there are plenty of examples of policies that have proved effective. The 5th-year scholarship programs are stellar examples of how success can be reached when all the elements come together.

These elements include:

- Motivated students who have to apply for the 5th-year scholarship, many times with an accompanying letter about why they want to finish college, and how they plan to achieve their goal;
- Financial aid from the scholarship;
- An institutional commitment to helping students graduate by allocating funds to the 5th-year scholarship;
- A screening process through the scholarship application process that eliminates those students who may fail;
- Monitoring programs to track students' grades and academic progress;
- The availability of tutoring and other academic assistance, and through academic support efforts such as dedicated tutors and study spaces specifically for student-athletes;
- A culture within the athletic department that encourages students to succeed and graduate; and
- Penalties against individual coaches and/or the athletic departments if graduation targets are not met.

Each of these descriptors of the 5th-year scholarship programs was revealed as a best practice in ACT's nationwide survey of colleges and universities (2010) to determine how they are addressing student retention, are included in Tinto's *Compete College* (2012), and are suggested in other publications examining how to improve student retention. Because the students in this program are already in a community that is a microcosm of the university, it is naturally easier to control all the variables that impact a

student during their college career. Athletic departments often have academic support systems in place for their student-athletes, so the 5th-year scholarship program recipients have a natural advantage over the general student population where the larger numbers make it harder to monitor individual students, aid them academically, provide additional resources, and ensure their success.

These “lessons learned” would be greatly enhanced if a larger number of 5th-year scholarship programs could be identified and more graduates of these programs could be contacted and interviewed. Numerous athletic departments contacted for this research reported not knowing exactly how many students had been awarded their scholarship or how many of that number had graduated. Athletic departments were largely unable to provide names and contact information for their graduates. It is unclear if this is a deficiency with universities’ record-keeping, or an unwillingness to turn over information that officials feel should not be shared.

Incentivizing Success

The second research question at the basis of this research was whether there were any lessons to be learned from a scholarship program designed to incentivize college completion, rather than just attending a particular school. Surveys of graduates of 5th-year scholarship programs formed the basis for answering this question. While some interesting anecdotal information was revealed through this research, having a small number of respondents limited these conclusions.

It was expected that the financial awards were a big boost to the students’ efforts to complete college. However, the 13 students surveyed were divided on how much motivation the 5th-year scholarship played in their drive to finish their degrees. Nine

respondents (69 percent) indicated the financial aid they received provided at least some incentive to complete their studies, while four (31 percent) said they would have graduated with or without the extra aid. This internal motivation also may have been a factor in these students' pursuit of the 5th-year scholarship in the first place, a concept that was not tested during this research but could easily be included if further research was done.

Ten of those surveyed (77 percent) said they believed more student-athletes would benefit from a 5th-year scholarship, if it were more widely available. All those surveyed (100 percent) thought it would be a good idea for their university to offer more scholarships to help all students finish school. While the respondents liked the concept for the general student population, they were still apparently unsure how much of a motivation it would ultimately play. Perhaps this is an indication they are weary of college costs and simply in favor of any program that provided more financial aid to students. The literature was inconclusive about how much impact financial aid plays in a student's desire to attend or complete college, so this research adds little to that body of knowledge.

Athletic directors interviewed were similarly inconclusive about the idea of these programs providing motivation, but they largely were in favor of the idea of scholarship programs being made available to help a larger number of students "cross the finish line" in their pursuit of a college degree. Each seemed to like the concept in general, but two pointed out that such a program could not replace the traditional scholarship model for student-athletes because athletic departments rely on aid packages to attract star athletes to their program.

Shuh and Afrin (1999) are among those who have studied the impact of financial aid in attracting, retaining and progressing students in college. Using financial aid as an incentive to attend college is easy to verify – and Georgia’s HOPE scholarship is an obvious example of success – and there is some evidence that lowering costs of college helps with students’ satisfaction of their experience. But there is little evidence of whether financial aid of any kind helps students actually finish their degree. In fact, Doyle (2006) pointed out while programs such as HOPE have indeed increased college enrollment, they have not been shown to help with degree completion and there is “no conclusive evidence on whether they have been influential in increasing long-term educational attainment.” Among the graduates studied for this research, it would be impossible to tell if the students would have actually completed their college degree without the 5th-year scholarship, but the findings here do, in fact, show a much higher graduation percentage rate among scholarship recipients than among the general student population, perhaps providing at least anecdotal support of the idea of using financial aid to incentivize degree completion.

Worthwhile Programs?

The final research question central to this research was: Is it possible to determine if these scholarships are a worthwhile endeavor for athletic departments that do not currently have such a program? Eugene Bardach’s “eightfold path” for problem solving and policy analysis (2009) was a logical method for answering this question through the interviews with athletic officials. This eight-step process started with 1) defining the problem that the policy is designed to address, which in this case was how to graduate more student-athletes. The process then calls for 2) assembling evidence of the problem

and 3) constructing alternatives that could be considered to address the problem.

Evidence abounds about the need to increase graduation rates in Georgia and the nation. Many states are embarking on a variety of efforts to increase college completion rates, and officials, including the athletic directors interviewed for this project, are trying any and all ideas to graduate more students. They unanimously praised their 5th-year scholarship program because it was making a positive impact on college completion rates.

The fourth step of Bardach's analysis process involves selecting criteria by which you would consider the alternatives, and funding availability was the key component to be considered. The process then calls for 5) outlining project outcomes, and 6) confronting tradeoffs and eliminate implausible alternatives. Interviews with athletic directors indicated their main desired outcome was to increase student-athlete graduation rates, and they wanted to do so without taking valuable resources away from money dedicated to scholarships that are used to recruit student-athletes to their schools. The final steps in the analysis are to 7) decide, and then 8) tell the story (2009). I demonstrated there is overwhelming support for these programs by those most closely involved, and it is indeed a good policy for programs to adopt where money is available because they combine all the college completion best practices. The 90 percent success rate of the programs in terms of graduating students also plays an important role in this recommendation. There are, of course, considerations to take into account when developing and implementing a 5th-year scholarship program. Most critical would be financing for these scholarships so money is not taken away from other critical operations

as well as developing guidelines for the scholarship process, the selection process, how the aid is distributed, and what expectations there are of the recipients.

These 5th-year scholarship programs appear to have expanded organically from larger to smaller institutions around the country as officials heard about what their colleagues were doing. This is an interesting example of policy diffusion or policy innovation, which is the spread of ideas or programs from one government to another, and may be a rare example of policy diffusion applying to college athletics.

There are two generally accepted schools of thought on how policy diffusion occurs (Doyle 2006). One theory is that policies that are successful in one geographic area or institution are noted, and adopted by, officials in neighboring jurisdictions. A second way diffusion is believed to occur is through networks of individuals with similar concerns or backgrounds. The spread of the 5th-year scholarship programs certainly seems to be an example of the second method of policy diffusion, as athletic directors interviewed said they heard about these programs from other athletic officials. There is no evidence of who first started a program or at which institution it originated. There is the definite possibility that both theories are at play here if the scholarships originally started with neighboring states, then spread nationwide, but the culture and conferences of athletics suggest that it is much more likely that these programs spread through colleagues, rather than geographical ties.

Shipman and Volden's (2012) recent article "Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners" provides a review of policy innovation literature and offers a series of rules that govern policy diffusion. These include:

1. Policy Diffusion Is Not (Merely) the Geographic Clustering of Similar Policies

2. Governments Compete with One Another
3. Governments Learn from Each Other
4. Policy Diffusion Is Not Always Beneficial
5. Politics and Government Capabilities Are Important to Diffusion
6. Policy Diffusion Depends on the Policies Themselves
7. Decentralization Is Crucial for Policy Diffusion

The 5th-year scholarship programs could easily fall with several of these rules. For instance, Shipman and Volden's rule (2008) that policy diffusion is not just geographic clustering of similar policies would hold true here since 5th-year scholarships are evident in all parts of the country. Additionally, the rules that say policy diffusion comes about as governments compete with each other and as governments learn from each other also are true with 5th-year scholarship since the athletic directors interviews clearly revealed that these programs compete with each other for quality student-athletes (and for wins) and that they willingly share policy practices with each other. The point could be made that the concept of decentralization applies here also since these programs appeared to have developed through the athletic departments, not as the result of an order from university administration. Another rule by Shipman and Volden that appears to apply here is axiom that policy diffusion depends on the policies themselves. The authors' point is that policies are adopted by other institutions or governments not only if the political and financial climate is right, but also if the policy makes sense, is easily observable and easily transferable. Again, the interviews of athletic directors plainly revealed the 5th-year scholarships were an example of this policy diffusion rule.

Outside of briefly mentioning efforts to attract professional sports franchises to a community, the policy diffusion literature has historically not included university sports or athletics. This illustrates the absence of sports as a consideration as a policy area worth studying for policy diffusion scholars. That may mistakenly devalue its impact. However, while sports administration and programs may be absent from policy innovation study, that gap may give even more importance to this program being considered not only in athletics, but how a university program could have a significant impact on the most important measure used to evaluate university effectiveness: the graduation rate.

McLendon, Heller and Young (2005) noted there are an increasing number of examples of policy diffusion in postsecondary education because of “increasing pressures on state budgets, escalating college costs, persistent criticism over the efficiency and productivity of public postsecondary systems, and emerging challenges of student access” (365). They provided six programs in the last few decades that illustrate this policy innovation across state borders: college savings programs, prepaid tuition programs, merit scholarship programs, performance funding, performance budgeting, and undergraduate assessment practices (365). The 5th-year scholarship programs could easily be included in this list as another example of a successful policy that was adopted by other states. These programs are usually privately funded (thereby providing no extra strain on state budgets while helping with college costs), have been shown through this research to be efficient and productive, and help students achieve success through college completion.

Implications

Since almost 45 percent of all students who begin college fail to graduate with a bachelor's degree within 6 years (National Center, 2011), the implications of this research could be significant for those looking for an example of a program that has proved successful in assisting student progression through college to their bachelor's degree. This research shows a program with a success rate of about 90 percent, compared to a national graduation rate of less than 60 percent. With current research reporting that median annual earnings for those with a bachelor's degree earn almost \$22,000 higher than those with a high school degree (Baum, Ma and Payea, 2010), any program with such a high success rate would likely be welcomed in the academic community and by those concerned with economic development.

The success rate of these scholarship programs is also a strong endorsement for the importance of financial aid in the retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) formula. Previous research has been inconclusive about the impact of financial aid in the decision-making process of a student to start college or stay enrolled in school. However, with the price of a university education escalating, state support declining, and an escalating emphasis on efficiency in higher education, there may be a renewed interest in the importance of financial aid in RPG. If more programs could be developed to provide financial aid as an incentive to finish school, it might become easier to determine the real role that personal motivation plays in these 5th-year scholarship programs.

Future Research

The results of this research could be significantly strengthened by identifying and interviewing more student-athletes who have received a 5th-year scholarship. The first

step in this process would be better record-keeping by individual institutions and their alumni offices to track students.

A wider net could also be cast to find more universities with these programs. A nationwide survey could be constructed asking directors of athletic programs if their institution has a 5th-year scholarship program and if they have information about its success. Garnering information and attitudes from a larger sample size would validate some of the opinions expressed during the surveys. Future research could also be done to evaluate the success of these 5th-year scholarship programs against the success of other scholarship programs. If money could be made available, it would also be interesting research to start a similar 5th-year scholarship program for non-athletes to determine whether the success rate among non-athletes would be similar or better to the approximately 90 percent of student-athletes who graduate after receiving their scholarship.

Summary

This research was designed to gauge the effectiveness of 5th-year scholarship programs to determine whether there are any lessons to be learned from how they were created, the students who participate in them, and the administrators who implement them. The programs' success was clearly identified, as 89.8 percent of the students who received these scholarships actually went on to graduate. This stellar graduation rate seems to indicate the success that can be attained when a great majority of college completion best practices come together in one program: motivated students, building of a community, financial assistance, institutional expectation of success, close monitoring of progress, and sanctions for failure. This success rate is significantly higher than the

current national average 6-year graduation rate, which hovers around 60 percent (National Center 2011).

Through qualitative and quantitative research, the value of these programs has been clearly identified for the role they play in the retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) of students. They appear to be stellar examples of the success that can be found when many of today's best retention practices are combined in one program. Because of a small number of respondents in this research, more could be understood as to whether there are any motivational lessons to be learned from these scholarship programs. Administrators and students interviewed generally liked the idea of more scholarship programs designed to help students finish school – rather than to simply attract a student to a school – but it is unclear if they would simply be a nice thing for students, or actually create an additional personal motivation for students to complete college. More research in this area would be helpful in answering these additional questions.

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APPENDIX A – Summaries of Student Surveys

STUDENT 1	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2009
Major	Accounting and Finance
M/F	M
Race	W
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Yes. As a student-athlete I had added pressure on graduating during the standard 4-year term with all the travelling that goes with playing a sport. The 5th- year scholarship helped me focus on each and every class and enabled me to achieve a strong GPA and it gave me the additional time needed to complete my course of study.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	No. The extra travel time makes it difficult to complete all courses on time.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	A high level of motivation
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Yes. I am not sure how many student-athlete does not complete their studies, however this is a strong incentive to complete your studies, especially to a student with limited finances.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Yes
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	12
Did you have other support available?	No

STUDENT 2	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2009
Major	Business Management
M/F	--
Race	--
Sport	Baseball
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Personally the 5th- year scholarship I was given was not something that added incentive my graduating. I certainly appreciated the fact that I was given said scholarship because it was definitely helpful, but in terms of graduating I can't say that it helped me to make the decision that I should finish school. I say this because prior to receiving the scholarship I was unaware of it, and would have continued my education regardless, but as I said it was very helpful in a monetary sense.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	Yes, I would have continued my studies and graduated without the scholarship. I was lucky enough to have the money to pay for the rest of my schooling had the scholarship not been in place. If I didn't have the money then I would have applied for a loan. For me the decision to graduate from college was not based around the fact that I was given a 5th- year scholarship to help me pay for it, but rather that I realized the value of having a college degree, plus I felt it would be unwise to be so close and not finish.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	For me, very little motivation in regards to my deciding to finish my studies was garnered from having been given this scholarship
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	I believe that if money is the only factor that is stopping the person from finishing their schooling then yes this scholarship would certainly help those people to finish, and finish in a timely manner. The fact that they can get this scholarship for the extra year might incite them to finish but I doubt that it would be the sole motivator.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	This is a hard question to answer. I mean as an athlete you should realize that you are given a scholarship because they want you to perform as an athlete, not because they want you to graduate college. Having said that I think the 5th- your scholarship is helpful when you take in to consideration that it may take longer for athletes to finish college as opposed to those students whose sole focus can be school and school alone. College athletics is a year round process and is certainly a grind. Athletes tend to take the minimal requirements of classes in order to be a full time student and therefore eligible to play and

	meet the terms of their scholarship. The 5th- year scholarship helps because it will be the first year that an athlete can focus solely on their education and they can do this while still being on scholarship.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	--
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	Year
Did you have other Support available?	--

STUDENT 3	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2009
Major	Psychology
M/F	F
Race	W
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Yes. The scholarship provided ALL the incentive to graduate. It gives you the chance to earn a degree even if you do not have the finances to pay for it. I would not have completed my degree without this scholarship because it is just too expensive. Even with this scholarship it was difficult because I still had to pay for fees and mandatory student insurance, while being only aloud to work 19 hours per week on campus. It is close to impossible to pay for your expenses while only working 19 hours.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	No, I would not have completed my degree without the scholarship. International tuition is very high and it is impossible for an international student to pay the out of state tuition, especially if the Dollar is so much stronger than their home currency and when they are only aloud to work 19 hours per week on campus.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	The scholarship provided ALL the motivation for completing my degree. Without the scholarship I would have not a degree.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would	Yes, definitely, especially if they are out of state students or international students. During my undergrad, my tuition was

help other student-athletes?	approximately \$10 000 per semester. As an international student it is close to impossible to pay that. You can't get a loan from your home country if you study out of your home country and if you want a loan from here then you need an American co-signer. There aren't many Americans that would co-sign for an international student because it is risky if they suddenly decide to leave the country. Also, international students can't work off campus or full time on campus so it is impossible to earn an income that can pay for their studies.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	YES. It is all about the money. Students drop out either because they are failing everything or because they can't pay.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes, many students (regular) have money to start college but after a couple of years they run out. Or it takes longer to finish than planned due to poor advising. International student athletes will only come if they receive full scholarships for their entire degree period.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	3 hours remaining – 1 class.
Did you have other support available?	No

STUDENT 4	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2011
Major	Marketing
M/F	F
Race	Multi
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	YES it definitely did. I knew that this 5th- year was not offered to all students and not in all the universities. So was blessed to get it and of course it motivated more to keep going.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I do not think I could have done it without the 5th- year scholarship. My family could have helped a little, but being an international student, we have to pay a lot more fees than local student. So it would have been very hard for my parents to keep up with it even if they try to help.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to	A lot of it, because as I mentioned before if I did not have the 5th- year scholarship how would I even have motivation if I do not have the means to pay for school

complete your degree?	
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Of course. With the economy nowadays everybody is struggling to get their kids to finish college, so the 5th- year scholarship is like a gift from God to all these families
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Yes with no doubts.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes, I do think so because I really do believe that students are being attracted to colleges but then they don't get a lot of help especially if they cannot pay for it. Also, when there are scholarships available I don't think that schools are doing a good job of letting students know about them, thus leaving those scholarships with no recipients.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	About 24 credits
Did you have other support available?	I had the 5th- year scholarship and I was tutoring Arabic and French which by the way is a great program because it helped me a lot and it also helps students in need as well

STUDENT 5	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2012
Major	Business management
M/F	F
Race	W
Sport	golf
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	I do think the 5th- year scholarship did give me an extra incentive to graduate. I would have anyways but it definitely helped my parent out tremendously with costs and also allowed me an extra year to focus on my studies only instead of sports and studies.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I would have completed my studies even if I hadn't gotten the fifth year scholarship but it helped a lot with financial support for myself and my parents
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	There was a significant amount of motivation due to the fifth year scholarship I wanted to finish what I started 4 years ago.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would	I believe more student-athletes would finish their studies if more fifth year scholarships were awarded because it is not

help other student-athletes?	cheap to be in school and the more money you can get to help out with costs is crucial especially for international students.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Same [as above]
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes I agree the more scholarships the better during our financial crisis many great young minds can not afford a good college education.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	I had 19 hours left
Did you have other Support available?	I'm not sure I didn't really look around because I had already gotten the graduate assistant job as the assistant coach of the men's golf team

STUDENT 6	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	Not yet
Major	Health and physical education
M/F	F
Race	W
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	I haven't graduated yet, but yes the 5th- year scholarship provide me incentive to graduate. Because without the scholarship I would never be able to graduate or get close to it like I am right now.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	No, I would of gone back home in Brazil. Because my parents cannot help me pay for my classes.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	Right now I am 5 classes to graduate and the 5th- year scholarship provided me to take 10 classes in two semester which is a year of school that gave me motivation to keep fighting for my dream.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-	Absolutely! The most reason for students to not finish with college is because they don't have a incentive to keep going when they are

athletes?	getting close to finish, and money is a big issue as well.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	I can guarantee that more student will have a degree.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	60 hours
Did you have other support available?	For this year I got International Scholarship which will give me a opportunity to pay in-state tuition instead of out-state tuition. Like I said above, International Scholarship will give me a opportunity to pay in-state tuition instead of out-state tuition.

STUDENT 7	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	Not yet
Major	Exercise Science
M/F	M
Race	W
Sport	baseball
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	To a slight degree the 5th-year scholarship did provide added incentive for me to graduate. Mainly because the scholarship helped pay for some of my school and because I never would have got the scholarship if it were not for sports.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I believe I would have completed my degree with or without the scholarship due to the simple fact that my parents have pushed me to get a college degree since day one.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	The scholarship motivated me partially because in order to keep it I had to stay on top of my grades, just like I would have had to do if I was still playing a sport.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	I believe it in today’s society and the way the economy is currently that this type of scholarship would be very beneficial to many former student-athletes. I do believe it would help motivate more athletes to finish their degree like I am currently doing.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would	yes

help other students in general?	
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes, I do believe scholarships like this would benefit more student to finish college rather than attract them to it
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	Roughly around 25 hours. Give or take.
Did you have other support available?	HOPE scholarship to a degree. However, out of state hours from my previous school still go towards HOPE's hours attempted. So I never got the full benefits of the HOPE scholarship. Took as much of an advantage as I could with HOPE

STUDENT 8	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2011
Major	biology
M/F	M
Race	W
Sport	Cross country/track
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Incentive... I suppose so. I mean, I already had a lot of incentive to graduate. I had already been in college for 4 years and I needed to be done! But I guess the 5th- scholarship could be seen as a “get your butt in gear and get on with it!” scholarship.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I would have completed my degree regardless. Like I said, I had already put in 4 years. There is no way in hell I'm gonna quit now! It would have just been more difficult (with a side job) or more stressful (with loans).
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	Motivation?? Maybe a little...
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Of course it would. I'm not sure what the alternative would be in your question but if your asking would more people graduate with scholarships than without scholarships then... yes. 1) If there is no scholarship, they may not go to school. 2) If there is no scholarship, they may go to school but it will be more difficult. 3) They get the scholarship... then they ARE going to school regardless (because you wouldn't get the money if you didn't go)
Do you think this kind	Same answer as above.

of scholarship would help other students in general?	
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	I'm curious to what statistics show however I think I could predict the statistics. People that get scholarships are usually good students. People that don't... well... not necessarily bad but.. we just don't know. But throwing money at students will NOT help them graduate. They will graduate whether they want to or not. Make sure you read my additions comments at the end.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	Hmm... I think maybe 20 hours? It was only two semesters.
Did you have other support available?	Academic support services?? You mean like tutoring? Or an advisor? Sure, there is tutoring at CSU and advisors.... they help. I did. Because it helped...

STUDENT 9	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2010
Major	International Business
M/F	F
Race	Latina
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Yes. Gave me time to do an internship, get more working experience, and being ready to graduate.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I think I would have completed only one career instead of two and a minor.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	Very motivating
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Well, I feel that this is a good year for them to pursue an extra major.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Yes. Transfer students need this extra year to finish their careers.
Should there be more	There should be both. Certainly, rewarding academic

scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	achievement within the career could be encouraging. But there is no doubt that a scholarship bringing people to college is very successful.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	20
Did you have other support available?	I actually applied for the Resident Assistant program and so they accepted me and I didn't have to pay for my housing.

STUDENT 10	
University	Montana State University
Year Graduated	2011
Major	Political Science
M/F	F
Race	--
Sport	Alpine Skiing
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Yes, the 5th- year scholarship did give me incentive to graduate. I felt that it was a very generous gift that we are given to have that additional year of school paid for, because it is hard to graduate in four years regardless of being an athlete and we are given a really great chance to be able to have another year paid for to accomplish our goals. There should be no reason that an athlete cannot graduate with five years of scholarship offered. It relieves any added pressure that one may have to sacrifice academics or athletics in order to finish in four years.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	Yes I would have finished my studies and graduated if I had not been awarded this scholarship. Higher education is highly regarded in my house and I did not really have a choice in whether or not I wanted to finish college, I had too. I am also a first generation graduate so it really meant a lot that I was obtaining my college degree, and that I was setting the example for younger siblings as well as the future generation of kids in our family. The scholarship was obviously a giant help, but I would have found any means possible to finish school.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	I don't think there was any special sort of motivation provided by the program. The athletic department stressed how important it was to finish and how lucky we were to have this opportunity. They also stressed how our lives will be better because of obtaining higher education, and that our chances of finding jobs will be drastically higher. We also knew what would be the consequences of not finishing our studies (i.e. our sport losing our scholarship to give to future athletes, and how it reflect on the school).

Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	No, I do not think that this program and its benefits affect student-athletes in regards of motivating them to finish their studies. Most student athletes have a larger goal of pursuing their athletic goals and ability over their scholastic goals. When they have finished their four years of eligibility it is more frightening knowing that their sport career may be over, however finishing school will always be available. It may not be on a scholarship, but there are other ways to get money for school. Making it available to more students would tarnish the prestige that comes along with being a student athlete and having the opportunity to obtain a scholarship.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Students would definitely be more likely to finish their studies if this type of scholarship was made more available. The general student body has a higher stress of finishing school because a good majority of them are taking on the large monetary load themselves, and the quicker they finish or the more help they have available eases that stress. Knowing that they could have a fifth year that had financial help, that they did not have to perhaps pay back, would increase students graduating.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	I think that it would be a benefit, but also the novelty of college education has taken a hit. Yes, scholarships while in school would help, however a bigger benefit for students to finish college would be knowing that whatever financial debt they may have accumulated in school could be taken care of, or that a good, high-paying job would be promised to them when they graduated.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	12
Did you have other support available?	Yes, tutors, mentors, and the entire athletic academic center was there for help. Yes, all the time. I needed tutors and we had access to them for free. My coordinator was always there to help me make my schedule and help me talk to professors about leaving for my sport. They make it easy for you to take advantage of these support services.

STUDENT 11	
University	Montana State University
Year Graduated	2009
Major	microbiology
M/F	M
Race	--
Sport	football
Was the 5th-year	Yes. I needed the extra time after I got done playing and

scholarship an incentive for you?	knowing that I would have an extra year to finish up not only helped my grades but also let me focus on graduating.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	Yes. It might have taken longer
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	I knew I only had a year so that was quite a bit of motivation.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	I think so. It is easy to get burned out toward the end and this might be the spars some people need.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	I imagine so. If they spent four years getting beat up on the football field they might deserve it.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Definitely, but that’s not good for business;)
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	20
Did you have other support available?	Yes tutors. They were great Helped move my grade in a class from a B to an A

STUDENT 12	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2012
Major	Accounting/Finance
M/F	M
Race	W
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	No. 5th- year scholarship was more important because of its financial, and not motivational aspect.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	Yes. If I did not receive the 5th- year scholarship I would have to find another financial source in order to graduate.
How much motivation did the	N.A

5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Yes. Students who quit school because of lack of funds would graduate if they receive a 5th- year scholarship.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Yes
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	24
Did you have other support available?	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, did you take advantage of them? No I did not have that specific need.

STUDENT 13	
University	California State University-Sacramento
Year Graduated	2011
Major	Criminal Justice
M/F	M
Race	Puerto Rican
Sport	baseball
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	I don't believe so. I would have still finished my schooling, it was just really nice to have my scholarship extended.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	I would have finished either way because I was only a semester away from graduating.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	Not much at all.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would	I think so because getting a scholarship to go to school is always nice.

help other student-athletes?	
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Yes, especially if they have put in all that time already with their studies.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	n.a.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	15
Did you have other support available?	FASFA. Yes because I needed the extra money for living

STUDENT 14	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2009
Major	Health Science
M/F	F
Race	Caucasian
Sport	Cross country and track
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Fifth year scholarship for me was just an extra bonus.... I was already planning on graduating because it was part of my goal in life and I was going to do it no matter what the cost was.. God definitely blessed me to be able to receive a scholarship during the first four years I was here.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	--
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	I was always motivated to finish my studies. I had a plan. The plan was to be the first in my family to get a college degree right after high school and I succeeded in that goal. I am once again a college student here at CSU to achieve bigger goals.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	I think the motivation to finish studies comes from within the student and their surroundings. It won't matter what you offer people... if they want the help, they will take it
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	I think the fifth year scholarship is definitely an incentive for those who are trying to reach a goal.
Should there be more	I do think there would be more of a benefit to have more

scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	scholarship programs designed to help a student finish college. I also think that if they designed something for people to further studies beyond a four year that would be great too.
How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	One semester
Did you have other support available?	If there were I didn't know of any.

STUDENT 15	
University	Columbus State University
Year Graduated	2011
Major	Finance
M/F	M
Race	Hispanic
Sport	Tennis
Was the 5th-year scholarship an incentive for you?	Yes it did, if not because of it I would not have been able to finish my major in Finance at CSU. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of a Columbus State University team and thanks to this scholarship I have been able to get a decent job in my home country of Colombia.
Would you have finished your degree without it?	No, it would have been very complicated for me to finish my studies at all if not for the 5th- year scholarship. Because I would not have the sufficient financial support to finish my Bachelors degree.
How much motivation did the 5th-year scholarship provide to you to complete your degree?	Thanks to this scholarship program and to my tennis coach at CSU, Evan Isaacs, it encouraged me to work and study harder so I could become the man I am today.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other student-athletes?	Yes. Because not every student athlete has the financial support to pay for a 5th- year at a University and specially some international students who have played and sacrificed a lot for the school and their respective teams who have come from difficult circumstances to achieve a greater level of life thanks to this scholarship.
Do you think this kind of scholarship would help other students in general?	Absolutely, Yes.
Should there be more scholarships like this – designed for students to finish school, not just to attract student to a school?	Yes, after all what matters is what the students learn all the way through college, not just the college itself.

How many hours did you have left to graduate when you received this scholarship?	24
Did you have other support available?	Yes, the CSU tennis Team. It helped me finish my bachelors.

Other comments:

- I think the use of a 5th- year scholarship can be validated by the fact that most athletes do not have the time to take more than 4 classes a semester and do as well as they would be able to had they not also been practicing every day and traveling every week to play ball during the season, as well as summer ball during the summer.
- Many student athletes use the 5th- year scholarship. For student who are in state it is not a very big deal if they have to pay for a semester or two, but for out of state or international students it is close to impossible. I started college in spring 2006 and graduated fall 2009, so technically I was only in school for 4 years, but I had to use the 5th- year scholarship for my last semester because all my tennis seasons were over. Students who start school in the fall semester get their 4 full years of scholarship.
- The fifth year scholarship was a great opportunity and really helped me get through my college career not only as an athlete but as a student!
- Yes. I'm not sure where you are going with this John but here are my main points. In the athletic department, 5th- year scholarships are usually given as respect and a way of showing the athletes appreciation. If an athlete plays a sport for 4 years and does not graduate it's kind of the right thing to do is by giving them a 5th- year scholarship. If any athletic department "uses" an athlete for 4 years and then just drops them. Well, then it is obvious in what the athletic department is most concerned about... NOT them graduating. But throwing money at students, I don't think is going to give them any "motivation" or "incentive" to graduate but it will certainly help. They came to college.... they already have motivation and incentive. It may not be much... but there is something there.

APPENDIX B – Protocol Exemption Report



Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-02726-2011

INVESTIGATOR: John C. Lester

PROJECT TITLE: Lessons Learned: Are 5th-year scholarship programs for college athletes successful, and can they teach us anything about student retention?

DETERMINATION:

- This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) 2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

 - Exemption of this research protocol from Institutional Review Board oversight is pending. You may **not** begin your research until you have addressed the following concerns/questions and the IRB has formally notified you of exemption. You may send your responses to irb@valdosta.edu.
-

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal. If you make any of these suggested changes to your protocol, please submit revisions so that IRB has a complete protocol on file.

The researcher should be aware that any request for VSU student contact information should be made as an open records request through the Division of Academic Affairs (Ms. Honey Coppage, Records Custodian), rather than directly from athletic department personnel, using the form attached to the cover email. There is an \$85.00 charge for this request. Please direct any questions regarding VSU's open records policy and procedures to Ms. Coppage (hhatcher@valdosta.edu).

Other institutions may have similar policies, preventing athletic program personnel from divulging names of, and contact information for, students who meet your study requirements. The IRB recommends that you investigate this possibility at each institution from which you hope to draw participants. Since departmental assignment for records management may vary across institutions, you may find it helpful to first contact the Institutional Research office at each institution.

Barbara H. Gray Date: 1/20/15

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.

Barbara H. Gray, IRB Administrator
or 229-259-5045.

Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu

cc: Dr. James Peterson (Dept. Head)
Dr. Nolan Argyle (Advisor)

Form Revised: 09.02.2009